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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Preamble

This research investigates the influence of the Shona folktale on the writing of Shona novels in Zimbabwe. This influence is investigated in six novels that comprise both early narratives and contemporary ones. The structures of the selected folktales and novels are studied with specific focus on plot, setting and characterization. In the two genres, features of resemblance, and the hallmark of influence, are singled out and commented upon. The type and extent of the influences are also discussed.

### 1.2 Background to the problem

The first Shona novel to be published in Zimbabwe is Feso Mutswairo, (1956). Other early novels include Karikoga Gumiremiseve (1956), Jekanyika (1968), Pfumo reropa (1961) and others. The first three novels are used in this study (*see scope of study for details*). The stories in early novels were based on journeys. They had simple plots made up mainly of an exposition, complication, climax and resolution. But prior to the publication of Feso there was very little Shona literature.

The little Shona literature available took the form of biblical literature on morality and Christian values as well as primary school textbooks. Kahari (1990) discusses this literature judiciously. He says biblical literature was in the form of translations of the four gospels as well as Bible stories. Kahari also notes the place of school textbooks as literature providers. He says the Chishawasha Seminary published 8 000 copies of textbooks covering grades one to six. He notes that Book 5 had the folktales "Karikoga Gumiremiseve", "Pimbirimano" and "Chimedzanemburungwe" These folktales probably inspired the writing of novels of similar titles later. The folktale "*Pimbirimano*" is extensively used in this study.

In the same work, Kahari mentions that translation of English classics like Dicken's *Great Expectations*, Gulliver's travels and others added to Shona literature. Many of these novels were based on travelling and had simple plots. It would be no wonder then that early Shona novels appeared to have features common to both the folktale and the Western novels.

### 1.3 Problem Statement

While reading through a number of Shona novels, the researcher observed that many of the novels, especially the early publications, appeared to have a preponderance of “defects” making the narratives different from the novel as we know it in the West.

Some of the “defects” the research noted are that:

- (a) The plot structure in many Shona novels is just a loose narration of separate events e.g. the plot in *Pfumo Reropa*.
- (b) Many Shona novels have unconvincing characterisation in that often characters are lifeless. They are mere pegs on which events hang. The characters do not grow e.g. the characters in *Pfumo Reropa*.
- (c) Many Shona novels are unnecessarily didactic, often disturbing the natural flow of the story e.g. the novels *Nzvengamutsvairo* and *Karikoga Gumiremiseve*.
- (d) Many Shona novels are characterised by weird improbabilities. Many incidents and events are not realistic e.g. incidents in *Karikoga Gumiremiseve*.
- (e) The novels in Shona are characterised by a didactic ending e.g. endings in *Feso* and *Musango mune nyama*.

The researcher suspected that the apparent defects in the novels could be a result of folktale influence as plots in folktales are often a loose narration of events, most folktale characters are normally didactic and characterised by mysterious and weird incidents. For example, in *Karikoga Gumiremiseve*, Karikoga the hero single handedly kills a lion at 18 years of age.

It would appear, however, that these defects are not peculiar to the Shona novel only, as the researcher noted, but characterise the African novel whether it is written in Zulu, English or Swahili. After examining all the critiques on the Zulu novel, Gerard (1971) reaches the conclusion;

... comments teem with rather damaging structures: clumsiness in plot development, unconvincing characterisation, unnecessary didacticism, weird improbabilities...

(Gerard, 1971:226)

In the same vein, Larson (1978), in his criticism of the African novel in West Africa agrees with the observations of Gerard (1971) as well as those of the researcher. He notes:

From a western point of view, many African novels are almost totally devoid of characterisation especially character introspection Plot, the conception of a well made story in Western critical terms takes on a widely different importance in much contemporary African fiction. The plot structure of many African novelists is the narration of separate events, stories or tales... Another major difference commonly noted in the fiction of African writers is the frequent occurrence of the didactic ending. The Western reader is especially conscious of the high frequency of didactic endings because our own literary tastes have changed so considerably since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

(Larson, 1978: 17-19)

Having noted the “defects” above the researcher felt that there was great need to find out why the Shona novelist in particular produced such “second class” work. It was also greatly felt and hoped that an investigation into the cause of the production of such defective novels would help future writers and critics. Scholars would also benefit from this appraisal.

NB. The word ‘defects’ has been put in quotation marks as it might be possible to

show that these ‘defects’ are merely deviation from the western conventions.

## **1.4 Aim of the Study**

This study is not primarily an analysis of Shona folktales. Its primary aim is to find out to what extent the Shona folktale has influenced the Shona novel. In this analysis and assessment, the researcher will consider only those motifs, motifsemes and core-images which occur in both the folktale and the novel. Secondly, an attempt will be made at finding out if the influence suspected has had a positive or negative impact on Shona novel writing.

### **1.4.1 Objectives of study**

The research has the following objectives;

- a) to investigate the applicability of Propp, Dundes, Scheub and Olrik’s folktale structure theories on Shona folktales.
- b) to investigate whether the folktale tradition which was an important oral art in Shona society had any influence on the pre-independence and post independence writers of Shona narratives.
- c) to evaluate the effect of folktale influence on the quality of narratives produced and to account for the apparent defects in these works.
- d) to find out other factors that might have influenced written narratives in Shona especially the Shona novel
- e) to add depth to the work already done by other scholars on the subject of folktale influence on the Shona novel.

### **1.4.2 Assumptions**

The study squarely rests on two assumptions. First, it was considered indisputable that the folktale must have influenced the emergence of the Shona novel since it is the only genre that resembles the novel and the only indigenous background

against which the Shona novelist composes his novel. The second assumption is that the folktale is a significant bearer of norms and values that form the cultural framework in which the novelists compose their works. Incidentally, the stories in Shona novels are based on the same norms and values.

### **1.4.3 Hypothesis**

The researcher holds the view that it is the norm that people speak a language before they can write it. It follows that their writing styles are very likely to be influenced by their speaking styles. Oral art is therefore bound to have an influence on written art. As such, it is assumed that the influence of Shona oral art (especially that of the folktale) will be visible in Shona narratives. Alternatively, it may be proved that there is no relationship between the folktale and Shona novels written i.e. the defects found in Shona novels are not a result of folktale influence.

## **1.5 Literature Review**

In Zimbabwe, work on the Shona folktale has been mainly on collection and compilations of stories. At the forefront of these collections were Hodza (1980), Doke (1932) and Fortune (1974). Of the three authors it is Fortune who has made a rather serious attempt to look at the structure of the folktale. In *Ngano Volume 2* which he edits, he successfully applies the Scheubian as well as the Proppian model to analyse the structure of a folktale laconically entitled 'A wife and a husband.' In this tale, the core-images, core-cliches, transitional details and images are illustrated. In the same tale, Fortune illustrates five of the thirty-one Proppian functions. More functions could have been illustrated. Finally, the illustration could have been more revealing had Fortune shown how Dundes and Olrik's models could be applied to the same tale. Unfortunately, to the researcher's knowledge nobody has investigated the influence of the folktale on the writing of Shona novels.

With regard to folktale influence on the Zimbabwean novel, there are four key

writers namely two ex-University of Zimbabwe students-Mwawoneni C. (1997) and Matshakayile-Ndlovu T. (1994) as well as Vambe M. T. (2001) and Kahari G. P. (1990).

In her M.A. dissertation, Mwawoneni (1977) focused on Shona folktales as celebration of the Shona people's philosophy of life. In the dissertation Mwawoneni discusses the nature and essence of story telling, the various things that happen during the live delivery of Shona folktales as well as how folktales reflect the Shona people's perception of their environment and of themselves. It is the first two aspects she discusses that are relevant to this study. The last aspect however sheds light on themes that Shona folktales address. Unfortunately Mwawoneni does not link themes in the folktales to those in Shona novels. Equally unfortunate is the fact that this study does not look at folktale influence on themes in Shona novels.

Vambe is one Zimbabwean author who has written on the link between African oral story –telling tradition and the Zimbabwean novel in English. In this book, the author presents a break from the previous literary works that vilified orality in an attempt to understand the influence between orality and the black Zimbabwean novel in English as the novel is grounded in the Zimbabwean oral tradition. The discussion on the influence of orality on the Shona novel *Feso* is quite relevant to this study. The author cites myths, legends and folktales among others as pertaining to the genre that significantly influence the Zimbabwean novel in English. But Vambe's focus is mainly on orality in general and does not particularise the folktale and its influence on the Zimbabwean novel in English. Had his focus been on the Zimbabwean novel in Shona his study could have sufficed, hence there would have been no need for this research. His scanty discussion of only one novel *Feso* does not do justice to this very important area.

In his M.A dissertation, Matshakayile-Ndlovu investigated the influence of folktales and other factors on early narratives in Ndebele literature. In the study,

Matshakayile-Ndlovu comes to the conclusion that the African past cannot be ignored when writing about present issues. He states that, “Story-telling has been part and parcel of the writer-every winter night they listened to folktale from their parents-therefore the features of oral art often find their way in to the works of these new writers.” (Matshakayile-Ndlovu, 1994:44)

Matshakayile-Ndlovu further observes that the Rhodesian authorities often tended to limit the creativity by explicitly telling the aspiring writers what they had to include in their works. He notes that, “The bureau wanted the story to have a set structure; any deviation was not tolerated. The result was the production of works with the same plot.” (Matshakayile-Ndlovu, 1994: 53)

Worldwide, many writers have recognised the influence of oral art on narratives. One such writer is Beauchat who argues that William Shakespeare drew on oral traditions for many of his plays. She says, “It has been said that not one of his (Shakespeare) plays does not contain some reference to events or people who originated on the oral traditions.” (Beauchat, 1964: 118)

In the same vein, Swanepoel in Matshakayile-Ndlovu (1994) noted the positive role of folktale in the genres of Southern Sotho literature. He writes that, “...the prompt availability of a variety of oral forms and performances, in fact facilitated the transition from the oral to the written medium.” (Matshakayile-Ndlovu, 1994:122)

The views and opinions of Matshakayile-Ndlovu as well as conclusions he reached in his research are very relevant to this study. The only problem is that he investigated folktale influence on early narratives in Ndebele literature. It is in this light that the researcher felt a similar study investigating folktale influence on Shona novels was very necessary.

Finally, Kahari (1990:110) is the only known Zimbabwean to write about the

development of the Shona novel (from 1890-1984) in general and in the same work focuses on the influence of oral literature on the Shona novel. In this large volume of work, Kahari describes the folktale as “...a wide term which embraces tales of all kinds; myths, historical legends and ordinary imaginative tales.”

He goes further to discuss the structure of the folktale. He says “The *rungano* is bound at both sides –the beginning by the introductory remark...and the end by a concluding remark.” (Kahari, 1990: 110)

In the same work, Kahari briefly discusses the folktale plot. He says plots are either “complex or simple,” but he does not exemplify. He does not examine the composite aspects of plot namely exposition, complication, climax and resolution; precisely what this study will address. Kahari does not look at plot in the Shona novel nor does he try to compare and contrast the folktale plot with plot in the Shona novel.

With regard to the influence of oral literature on the Shona novel, Kahari devotes ten pages to the topic. The folktale features that he says influenced Shona novel writing include songs, characterisation, (especially the idea to advance an author’s point of view) myths and fantasy as well as the story’s ending. Kahari briefly discusses and exemplifies these features. It should, however, be pointed out that Kahari focused only on the positive influence on Shona novels and left out possible negative influence. This research will address this omission.

The greater part of Kahari’s ten page discourse discusses other forms of oral literature which influenced the Shona novel other than the folktale. Furthermore, Kahari hardly discusses folktale influence on the themes, style and setting in Shona novels. This research will at length discuss folktale influence on setting in the Shona novel as well as discuss to a small extent folktale influence on style in Shona novels. Be that as it may, Kahari’s rather scanty discussion partly inspired this research as the researcher was not only spurred into filling in the knowledge gaps he left but was also spurred into checking the trend of folktale influence on



novels published after 1984.

## 1.6 Justification

Traditional folktale, like modern stories, belongs to the same genre in that they are both narratives. Because of this relationship, one surmises that the folktales which were part of the first authors must have influenced their works, which in this regard necessitates this study.

The similarities observed prompted the researcher to analyse in detail these early narratives in Shona in order to determine the extent to which the writers were influenced by the folktale and any other factors. The realisation that some of the writers of these narratives like Mutswairo, Kuimba, Chakaipa and Hamutyinei had grown up at a time when the folktale was still popular in Shona society reinforced the desire to carry out this study. It was therefore quite likely that these writers had borrowed a lot from the folktale in the process of writing their narratives. Furthermore, the observation of apparent defects in Shona novels such as over didacticism, poor characterisation and plot development prompted the researcher to investigate these defects and come up with a position ascertaining whether these were really defects or simply influences of the folktale.

The research, therefore, endeavours to fill up a critical need by providing a comprehensive analysis of folktale influence on the early and 'late' novels in Shona. It is the relationship between folktales and written Shona narratives that this research focuses on.

The research is also in some way a pioneer work as there is no work that the present researcher is aware of, (published or unpublished) that analyses written Shona novels from the point of view of their link with folktales structurally. It is only in Ndebele, as pointed out in literature review, that an attempt has been made.

Existing critical work on folktale structure has been mainly in the form of introductions to the different anthologies e.g. Fortune's (1974) *Introduction to Ngano Volume 2*. There is therefore need for a comprehensive work that studies folktale structures such as is attempted in this research. Fortune's very limited introductory work alluded to, only applies the Proppian and Scheubian models to a shallow depth. It is felt that it is necessary to add depth to this introductory but crucial study. The application of complementary models like those of Olrik and Dundes would make the study wholesome.

The approach used in the analysis of folktale structure in this study will also be used to study the structure of the novels targeted in this research. This is for easy identification of influence in the motifs and motifemes which occur in both the folktales and novels being studied.

As Kahari's study only investigated novels published between 1956 and 1984 this research will go a step further and study selected novels published after 1984 in order to check the trend of folktale influence from then on.

## **1.7 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

In this dissertation, much use will be made of the theories of Propp (1958), Dundes (1964), Olrik in Dundes (1965) and Scheub (1975) in analyzing the structure of folktales. These theories have been chosen for the reason that they have been successfully applied in the analysis of folktales structure internationally and in Africa especially in West and Southern Africa.

In the writing of ngano, in a short but insightful *Introduction to Ngano Volume 2*, Fortune (1974) shows that the Proppian and Scheubian models can be used to analyse the structure of Shona folktales.

### 1.7.1 Propp's Theory

In his work, *Morphology of the folktale* (1958) the Russian structuralist and folklorist Vladimir Propp seeks to analyse the tale according to its component parts. Dundes says that by morphology of the tale, Propp meant "...the description of the folktale according to its component parts and the relationship of these components to each other and to the whole." (Dundes, 1964: 93)

Propp divides the tale's component parts into two categories, namely variables and invariables. Variables are the dramatis personae and items in a tale. The invariables (which he calls functions) are the unchanging actions in a tale for instance the role of trickster. This role can be played by a hare or a lizard in a tale. In summary, Propp says:

The names of the dramatis personae change (as well as the attributes of each) but neither actions nor functions change. From this we can draw the inference that a tale often attributes identical actions to various personages. This makes possible the study of the tale according to the function of its dramatis personae.

(Propp, 1958:20)

The basic structural unit of Propp's theory is the function. In his study of 100 Russian folktales, Propp identified 31 functions although the functions do not all appear in one tale. Some of the functions are absentation, interdiction, violation, consequences. The notion of variables has important consequences for the structure of the folktale. It means that the number of functions in a tale is limited and that the sequence of functions in any tale does not change. Also, these functions remain constant regardless of who performs them. Finally, this means that all folktales have one and the same structure.

In a nutshell, exponents of this approach, describe the structure or final organisation of the folk-tale following the chronological order of the linear sequence of its elements. This analysis is termed the syntagmatic structural analysis. This term is borrowed from the notion of syntax in linguistics.

### **1.7.2 Dundes theory**

The American folklorist Alan Dundes is described by Oosthuizen (1977: 20) as "...the foremost of Propp's disciples." His theory is based principally on Propp's ideas and modifications from Kenneth Pike's (1954) theory. Dundes' theory is therefore structuralist and syntagmatic. Dundes noted that Propp's theory could also be applied to non Indo-European folktales. He also noted that Propp had ignored the context in which tales were told and had failed to isolate and specify the contents of his functions.

Dundes' theory has three main aspects. First, he says that a folktale must be studied in its social and cultural context. He calls the unit of content, the etic unit and that of structure, the emic unit. The terms etic and emic unit were coined from the word phonetic and phonemic. An etic unit is a unit of content while an emic unit is a structural unit in a folktale. It is the emic unit that he termed the motifeme, an equivalent to Propp's function.

Dundes' motifeme is composed of three modes namely the feature, the distribution and the manifestation mode. The feature mode describes the action of the folktale characters, the manifestation mode defines the elements which fulfil the action and the distribution mode is concerned with the place of the feature mode within the storyline.

Dundes notes that motifemes cluster to form motifeme sequences e.g. lack-trickery-lack liquidated. Propp also observes that motifemes tend to cluster but notes functions only as pairs e.g. 'lack' coupled with "lack liquidated." Like

Propp, Dundes notes these functions; interdiction, violation, trickery, complicity, lack, lack liquidated, difficult task and solution. He, however changes some of Propp's, terminology. Dundes sees a function pair as a nucleus motifeme sequence. He further says that motifemic depth is determined by the number of motifemes intervening between the initial situation and the last motifeme. When certain sequences recur in a tale, for example in cyclic tales, then we have sequential depth.

### **1.7.2.1 Application of Propp and Dundes' theory**

According to Msimang (1986:13) Marivate was “ ... among the first to establish that African tales have a fairly simple plot compared to European ones if motifemic depth is considered i.e. each tale consists of a small number of motifemes.”

In a study of Tsonga folktales, Marivate (1973) concludes that despite the lack of motifemic depth the folktales have a tremendous complex plot. This is due to a combination of the simple motifeme sequences to form a number of moves which result in sequential depth. This is clearly the case in cyclic folktales. This feature of sequential depth which is so characteristic of African folktales was first observed by Dundes. This is why a number of scholars applied the Proppian model as modified by Dundes. Likewise, the same model will be used and precisely for the same reason to study Shona folktales in this research. This is because many Shona folktales have simple plots and a small number of motifemes that give them sequential depth when combined.

### **1.7.3 Scheub's Theory**

According to Makgamatha, (1991:22) Harold Scheub does not concern himself “... only with the structure and function of folktales, but mainly with the performer and the performance occasion, regarding the folktale as a dramatic oral

art.”

He thus emphasizes the dynamic creativity and living quality of this form of art. Scheub (1975) says the basic structural unit of the folktale is the core-image. The core-image fleshes out the tale structure. Scheub further says that the centre of the core-image is the core-cliché, which is itself a chant or song. During performance the core-image is expanded to create tensions of conflict and resolution. The repetition of the core-cliché moves the plot forward, heightening tension and suspense. Although the core-image has constant distinctive details, it appears more of a semantic than a structural unit. Oosthuizen (1977:109) feels the same. In disagreement she says, “We cannot agree with Scheub that the core-image is primarily a structural unit. It is essentially a semantic unit, a unit of content, although there is admittedly a structural relevance in the fact that its distinctive details are constant.”

Despite the criticism, Scheub’s theory is very useful. Scheub’s analysis of character portrayal and theme is insightful. He competently distinguishes between complex characters that are realistic and stock characters that are mostly allegoric. He argues that the setting of the folktale is the real world while that of cannibals and ogres is fantastic.

### **1.7.3.1 Application of Scheub’s theory**

Since Scheub’s core-image is more semantic than structural, it shall be applied alongside Propp’s theory (which is more structural than semantic) in analysing the structure of folktales. The core images (the unit of content), although they have a structural relevance, must be chosen in relation to the pattern of function sequences in a move.

In the folktale *Pimbirimano* the core image and core-cliché is the blowing of the magical horn and the chant, ‘*Fe-e, zinyere ndiudze zano*’ ( Fe-e, big horn advise

me). In the folktale "Gore renzara" (Folktale 2 in appendix) the core –image and core-cliche are the visit to the pot and the siphoning of honey coupled with the song "*Ada ngoma ngaatevere*" (If you love this song, follow me).

In the folktale "*Mukadzi nemurume nyoka*" the core-image and core cliché are the home visit and the encounter with the snake man coupled with the song "*Kanga Mariya*" (Little Mary). These core-images and core clichés are so catchy that one is reminded of the folktales once they hear them.

#### **1.7.4 Olrik's 13 Epic laws**

The structuralist Axel Olrik is one exponent of the oral formulaic approach. He looks to the narrator and his performance for the key to the composition and structure of the folktale. Olrik in Dundes (1965: 129-141) contends that there are common rules for the composition of the folktale. He calls these rules the epic laws. According to Olrik these laws are universal. Olrik's epic laws included the law of opening and closing, the law of contrast, the law of two to a scene, concentration on a leading character, the law of repetition, the law of three, the law of single strandedness, the law of patterning, the logic of the sage, the use of tableaux scenes and the unity of plot.

According to Canonici (1993:17), Olrik maintains that, "An oral narrative, as most narratives has a beginning, a body and an ending."

The implication is that Olrik's theory sets limits that govern the composition of folktales. A tale will consequently have a beginning, a body (made up of rising action, a climax and falling action) and a definite end. This is clearly the structure of Shona folktales.

#### **1.7.4.1 Application of Olrik's Laws**

In this study, and in the analysis of Shona folktale structure use will be made of Olrik's law of opening and closing, (a tale begins with a leisurely introduction, proceeds to and beyond climax, to a point of stability and does not end abruptly), the law of contrast, (i.e. contrasting characters) encounter each other in a tale, for example hero and villain, good and evil, the law of concentration on the leading character, the law of unity of plot and the law of repetition (manifested by repeated episodes). Elements of these laws which appear in both the folktale and the Shona novel will be investigated and highlighted in this research.

#### **1.7.5 Research Methods**

This section focuses on the methods used in conducting the research. The primary method is that of collecting folktales and the secondary method is that of reading novels.

##### **1.7.5. 1 Collection of folktales**

The researcher travelled fairly extensively throughout Makoni rural district in Manicaland province where he witnessed folktale performances from villagers who were willing to enact them. The researcher used a battery powered tape recorder to record the folktales. Over twenty folktales were recorded. These were then analysed and only selected for use in this study.

Further, published folktale anthologies were perused. Collections by Hodza A. C. (1980) and Fortune G. (1974) were used. A number of folktales appeared in both collections. The researcher saw it fit to use one folktale from each collection.



### **1.7.5.2 Questionnaires (*see appendix for sample*)**

Ten questionnaires were sent out to secondary school teachers and lecturers at teachers' colleges. These were meant to find out the opinions of respondents on the influence of folktales on Shona novels. Five questionnaires were sent and completed by Advanced Level Shona teachers while the remaining five were sent to and completed by lecturers in the department of Shona at teachers' colleges in Mutare. The data collected was compiled, processed and interpreted. Sixty percent of the respondents were positive that the folktale influenced Shona novel writing significantly. Forty percent felt that folktale influence declines with time and is not very significant today. The result strengthened the researcher's assumption and hypothesis that the folktale significantly influenced Shona novel writing. As a result, the researcher was inspired and spurred to embark on the research more determined and vigorous.

### **1.7.5.3. General reading of novels**

A general reading of the six novels was made to acquaint the researcher with similarities between the stories in the novels read and those in the folktales to be used. The researcher also used his memory of his childhood experiences of folktales. Any such experiences were compared and contrasted with similar experiences in the novels read.

### **1.7.5.4 Main Procedure**

Basically, the main procedure includes seeking the opinions of other scholars in order to corroborate the researcher's hypothesis, collecting oral folktales and reading published ones, reading and studying the six primary sources and finally identifying motifs and motifemes found in both the folktales and novels in the study. These motifemes are the pointers and markers of folktale influence on the novels.

### 1.7.5.5 Limitations, validity and reliability of data

The researcher encountered problems during the recording of folktales. Folktales were not recorded in the evening, the prime folktale performing time. At times potential performers had to suspend their own activities to tell a folkstory. Often, there was no audience; hence the quality of folktales was affected. Most performers were women and the older they were the more easily they seemed prepared to tell a *ngano*. Most male respondents declined to tell, citing lack of time. In a few cases it was necessary to provide an incentive often in the form of liquor in order to induce story-telling. While justice seems to have been done when all folktale anthologies were consulted, it is rather different with oral folktales which were collected from one district only.

### 1.7.5.6 Scope of Study

The study is limited mainly to a review of six Shona novels. Three novels, dubbed the early novels, were written before independence while the other three were written after Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. The six novels were randomly selected. They are:-

- a) *Feso* (1956) written by Mutswairo, S.M.
- b) *Karikoga Gumiremiseve* (1958) by Chakaipa, P.
- c) *Jekanyika* (1968) Mugugu, F.
- d) *Musango mune nyama* (1989) by Hamutyinei, M.A.
- e) *Ndinofa Ndaedza* (1991) by Honzeri, B.
- f) *Chemera Mudundundu* (2002) by Moyo, A.C.

The first three novels were selected on the assumption that if there are any novels that were greatly influenced by the folktale genre, it must be the very first novels published in Zimbabwe. Incidentally *Feso* was the first novel published in

Zimbabwe. The last three were selected in order to find out if the folktale genre continues to influence Shona novel writing.

With regard to folktales, use will be made of both oral and written folktales.

Finally, due to limited space, time and resources the research will look at folktale influence on plot, characterisation and setting only leaving out theme and style in the six primary sources.

## **1.8 An overview of the research**

The first chapter presents the aim and scope of the research. In it, an overview of the dissertation is given, the method of research and the approach to be taken is discussed and a review of relevant literature is carried out. Further, the chapter discusses a justification of the study as well as the theories that will be used.

Chapter two discusses characteristics of the folktale, the classification of traditional prose narratives as well as characteristics of the novel and its development from the epic to the contemporary novel.

The third chapter mainly looks at plot. In it, plot is defined and three aspects of plot are discussed. Plot of the Shona folktale and novel is also looked at and the aspects of exposition, body and resolution examined and compared. Specific functions which form the body of plot in a folktale and novel are identified and discussed. Other aspects of plot viz climax, functions that lead to the climax and unity of plot are further discussed and compared to check for folktale influence.

It is in chapter four that setting is discussed. Setting is first discussed in general then specifically as it appears in Shona folktales. Setting is discussed as social circumstances, as a place where events happen and as the time specific events happen. Finally, the folktale influence on the Shona novels in this study is discussed

as the setting in folktales and novels is compared and contrasted.

Chapter five looks at characterisation. In it characterisation is defined. Direct and indirect methods of character portrayal are examined. Round and flat as well as minor and major characters are discussed. The chapter then looks at characterisation in the selected folktales and compares this characterisation with that in the novels in this study to check for folktale influence in the latter.

In conclusion, chapter six sums up the results of this study. The applicability of Propp, Dundes, Scheub and Olriks theories on the structure of folktales to the analysis of Shona folktales is appraised. Folktale influence on Shona novels is discussed and the apparent defects in Shona novels accounted for. Finally, other influences on the Shona novel are commented upon.

## **1.9 Conclusion**

The chapter has looked at the background to the problem, the aim of the study, related literature and the methods and theories to be used. All said and done, the research will now move on to discuss the notion of influence as well as the characteristics of the folktale and the novel.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FOLKTALE AND THE NOVEL

#### 2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the notion of influence will be discussed. Thereafter, the two genres to be used in this dissertation will be discussed also. These are the folktale and the novel. The folktale and its characteristics will be discussed first while characteristics of the novel will be discussed soon after. Finally, the chapter will trace the development of the novel.

#### 2.1 Influence defined

As stated in the objectives of this study, (see aim of the study above) the first task is to show how the Shona novel is similar to the folktale whereas the second task is to show in what way the two genres differ and possibly explain why. This comparison and contrast summarily captures the essence of influence. Berman (1964:93) defines influence as "... the power to produce a good or bad effect on something."

The implication of this definition is that influence on something is either positive or negative or both. West, (1976:139) says, "Influence is the cause of an effect." This statement implies that influence produces a specific outcome or result. Msimang (1986:8) further defines influence as "The presence of certain elements in a later work similar to those found in a former work."

The implication of the definitions is that the similarity of features in both works are such that the author of a later work was induced by the former to produce such work. The influence may be positive or negative. Influence may also be clear and overt as happens when a later author emulates or adopts down right, the works of

a former author. When influence is subtle and covert, a later author is subconsciously stimulated by the former. This is the case when a later author takes specific elements in a former author's work and fuses them with his own creativity. At times whole motifs may be borrowed from a former author's work.

## **2.2 Folktale defined**

As a resident of Zimbabwe, what the researcher has noted is that in Zimbabwe folktales are mainly told in non-literate and semi-literate communities. These communities are prevalent in rural areas. Folktales are a form of pastime, told after supper. Folktales help to prepare the young ones for bed.

The researcher has noted that folktales are handed down vertically from generation to generation. The folktales that the young tell are usually the tales their parents or grandparents have told them. Folktales have also been noted to move from place to place as they are told by the usually nomadic master story-tellers. These master story-tellers are usually senior citizens, especially women. However, it must be pointed out that school teachers, radios and televisions have taken over the role of these master story-tellers especially in the more literate and affluent communities.

During performance, the master story-tellers use dramatic devices such as gestures, facial expressions, impersonation and mimicry.

Normally, folktales are told to children, just for fun. Tellers expect their folktales to be amusing, entertaining and interesting to audience. The researcher has noted that the audience at times includes adults. Fortune, (1978: x) in agreement, with the idea of adult audiences writes that "The audience is usually a group of people drawn from the neighbourhood e.g. a village and its environs. It may include people of all ages and the venue will be the house of a gifted story-teller, often a grandmother."

In addition, Canonici, (1993:56) says “Sometimes story telling is preceded by a brief period of riddling ...to sharpen the children’s minds.”

After this short mental preparation, folktale performance begins and the audience partakes in the performance. An active audience laughs, comments, asks questions, joins in the singing or in rhythmic hand clapping during the period of performance.

Folktales are about every day events. Canonici (1993: 54) sees the folktale as a mirror of the society in which it is created. He says folktales are constantly adapted to reflect present conditions. Folktales play significant roles in the daily affairs of a particular group of people. They are usually meant to instruct and teach morals. Virtues like bravery, co-operation, obedience, love etc are dramatized and exemplified while vices like selfishness, jealousy, cruelty and others are snubbed.

Be that as it may, folktales are set in a world of fantasy and are therefore not serious. They are just meant for amusement! However, below the amusement is the didactic tenet of the tale. Marivate, (1973:95) aptly sums up this observation. He states, “Folktales belong to the realm of fiction. They are not to be taken seriously. They are basically for amusement”

The setting in folktales is almost timeless and placeless. Bascom (1965:4) is of a similar opinion and writes that folktales may be set at any time and place. ”

Be that as it may, it is pertinent to say that folktales are usually set in the remote past, i.e. they are set at any time as long as it is in the remote past. The setting in folktales is usually unidentifiable. In most folktale settings it is usually not possible to give an exact location of the place described.

Another characteristic feature of the Shona folktale is a similar/ single structure. All folktales start with an opening formula and end with a closing formula. In between the two formulae lies the body of the folktale, itself comprising the initial action, complication, climax and resolution.

Finally, it should be pointed out that, technically speaking, folktales are prose narratives. Bascom (1965:7) classifies these narratives into three categories, namely myths, legends and folktales. The three categories will now be discussed.

### **2.3 Classification of prose narratives**

If Bascom's classification cited above is followed, three types of prose narratives can be distinguished in Shona folklore, namely; myth, legend and folktale. The three types will be defined and their essential features discussed subsequently. For consistency, Bascom's definition will be quoted principally.

#### **2.3.1 Myth**

Bascom, (1965:4) says, "Myths are prose narratives which, in the society in which they are told are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past."

Further still, Malinowski (1926:30) says, myths "...are regarded not merely as true but venerable and sacred. They are told when rituals to which they refer are to be performed or when the validity of these rituals is questioned."

Finnegan, (1970:328) rounds off the definition of myth with the addition of the dimension that " Myths are concerned with the origin of things or the activities of deities."



Fortune and Mutasa (1991:27) judiciously define myths as,

... tales that tell of events in a person's life such as his origin or birth, and his relationship with man or God. They are told to be believed and are sighted as authority. Myths are said to be sacred and are associated with theology. Their main characters are human beings with supernatural powers. They are believed to have happened in the remote past.

### **2.3.1.1 Essential features of myths.**

From the definition of myth above, the essential features of myths may be summarised as:-

- (a) having happened in the remote past.
- (b) told to be believed and accepted on faith.
- (c) being not only dogmatic and sacred but also associated with theology and ritual.
- (d) having their main characters as deities and animals with human attributes.
- (e) explaining the origin of the world, mankind, death as well as the character and behaviour of animals.

### **2.3.2 Legend**

According to Bascom, (1965:4), "Legends are prose narratives which, like myths, are regarded as true by the narrator and audience, but they are set in a period considered less remote, when the world was much as it is today". The definition implies that both the narrator and audience identify with the setting and some social circumstances in the myth told.

Guma, (1964:3) writes more about legends. He says: "Legends are more secular than sacred...(although) in a legend the element of belief is strictly local (and that) distant people may not identify with the particular historical character or

event...’’

Furthermore, Finnegan (1970:315) adds to our understanding of legends when she writes that “... their principal characters are human...They tell of migrations, wars, victories, deeds of past heroes, chiefs and kings...”

From the above definitions the essential features of legends may be summarised as below.

### **2.3.2.1 Essential features of legends.**

Legends are prose narratives;

- (a) believed to be true
- (b) whose setting is in the remote past
- (c) which deal with non-religious deeds of past heroes, chiefs, kings etc.

In Shona and Tonga folklore, the story of the river god Nyaminyami who (lived in the Zambezi river and) several times destroyed the giant Kariba dam wall during its construction in the early 1950s due to the shock waves, floods and storms he induced is a good example of a legend.

### **2.3.3 Folktale**

As the folktale has already been defined what follows is just a summative definition of the folktale. The definition is from a micro point of view i.e. in a narrow sense it is meant to refer specially to a fictional prose narrative as opposed to myth and legend. Bascom’s definition is so wholesome that it shall be quoted at length. He states:

...Folktales are prose narratives which are regarded as fiction. They are

not considered as dogma or history, they may or may not have happened, and they are not to be taken seriously. Nevertheless, although it is often said that they are told only for amusement, they have other important functions, as the class of folktales should have suggested. Folktales may be set in any time and any place, and in this sense they are almost timeless and placeless...a variety of subtypes of folktales can be distinguished including human tales, animal tales, formalistic tales and moral tales or fables...

(Bascom, 1965:4)

### **2.3.3.1 Essential features of folktales**

The essential features of a folktale already pointed out above are not necessary to repeat. The features that apply when the term folktale is used in a broad and in a narrow sense are almost one.

However, it should be pointed out that the most common and the most popular Shona folktales include the subtypes: trickster tales especially those revolving around the cunning and wily hare (*tsuro*); human tales e.g. "Pimbirimano" (folktale 1 in Appendix), ogre or monster tales as well as etiological tales e.g. "How the rabbit got a short tail". It is important to note that the etiological tale cited resembles myths in that it seeks to explain the origin of things yet it is not, as it has no religious element if the content is analysed.

As alluded to, in this research all prose narratives will be referred to as folktales even though they may be myth, legend or folktale in the narrow sense. But first, the novel must be defined.

## 2.4. The novel

This section defines the novel and looks at its characteristics and development.

### 2.4.1. The novel defined

To come up with a water-tight, rigid and concise definition of novel is a mean task as the novel has been all time changing and developing. Grobler (1992:29) observes the same and says, “Coming up with a clear cut definition of novel is a difficult task as the novel is one of the most varied and most complex of literary narratives.”

Despite the apparent difficulty in defining the novel, a number of authorities have attempted to define the novel. Grace asserts:

...Novel is a term originally derived from the Italian novella, a probable abbreviation of the Latin novella narration (new narration) ... (The novel) is a long form of fiction; (in contrast to the short story); it is meant to represent what is thought to be real life, whether historical or contemporary with the author's life... The characters frequently develop or evolve in some way, though in a novel of pure adventure they may remain static. The novel may have a great variety of emphasis-humorous, satiric, tragic, psychological, socially critical, didactic, escapist....

(Grace, 1965:252)

Similarly Peck and Coyle also define the novel as:

...a form of literature which looks at people in society. Along side the fact that novels look at people in society, the other major characteristic of the genre is that novels tell a story. In fact novels tend to tell the same few stories. Novelists frequently focus on the tensions between individuals and

society in which they live, presenting characters that are at odds with that society...

(Peck and Coyle, 1984:107)

Finally Gillie (1977:678) defines the novel as:

A work of narrative fiction of some length, nearly always in prose, and bearing a close resemblance to daily life in psychology, environment and time scale.

From the above definitions, a novel is thus a fictional prose narrative of substantial length, creating fictional personalities dwelling in an imaginary world usually close to our own. The stories in novels have clear intentions. They may be didactic, humorous, satiric or otherwise. It is conflict that moves the stories' plot forward.

#### **2. 4. 2 Characteristics of the Novel.**

As stated above, a comprehensive definition of the novel may be hard to come by. However, Abrams includes the following requirements in this definition of the novel.

- (a) a complex plot
- (b) it is about human beings and their actions in real life.
- (c) it has complex characters
- (d) it is a relatively long fictional prose narrative.

(Abrams, 1981: 119)

The last characteristic feature of the novel mentioned; that of length is rather controversial as the different critics concerned about it do not give a precise length of the novel. Be that as it may, some critics feel that novel length is not an issue. Burgess (1971) sees length not as something characteristic of the novel, but

as a quality the novel borrowed from its predecessor, the epic. He writes:

It is perhaps because of its mocking relationship to the epic that we expect one of the properties of the novel to be length...(that the novel we think great are long) does not mean that great length is a prerequisite of artistic importance ... The epic hangover remains and we are willing to dignify books of say fifty thousand words (about 100 pages) and under with the title of novel.

(Burgess, 1971: 15-6)

From Burgess' authoritative view on length it can be argued that length is not an essential characteristic of the novel but that a novel which is less than a hundred pages might be taken as a novelette. Focusing on the six novels in the study, it is clear that four of the novels are over one hundred pages long. It is only *Karikoga Gumiremuseve* and *Musango mune nyama* that are less than a hundred pages long each. These two would pass for novelettes.

Having looked at the Western novel and its characteristics, the focus now shifts to the development of the English and Shona novels.

### **2.4.3 The development of the novel.**

The English novel has surely developed slowly and gradually over the centuries that it has been in existence. Msimang (1986) notes the same when he writes that "The novel is a dynamic literacy genre which has been changing its form through the centuries ever since Cervantes published his *Don Quixote* in 1605" (Msimang 1986:30)

In the Zimbabwean context, it is the English novel that has provided a model for the Shona novel. Slowly and gradually the Shona novel has transformed in form since the publication of the first Shona novel *Feso* by Solomon Mutswauro.

Apparently, the trend seems to be that the early Shona novels adopted many aspects from the form of the folktale than from the realism of the English novel. Kahari (1990:35) aptly sums up this view; “The Shona novel has moved slowly but impressively towards the new realism achieved in the contemporary English novel.”

Although the word novel means ‘new’ the novel is not an entirely new literary genre. It is greatly indebted to its preceding literary works like the epic, romance, allegory and picaresque. Liberman and Forster (1968:80) corroborate this view. They observe that, “... the contemporary English novel is modelled on various earlier forms of narrative, the first of which was the epic.”

Preceding literary works like the epic, romance, allegory and picaresque will be discussed now.

#### **2.4.3.1 Epic**

Of the four narrative forms preceding the novel, the epic is the oldest. Traditionally the epic was, “... A long poem telling the story of the deeds of gods and great men, or the early history of a nation.” (Procter, 1978: 367) The word epic itself denotes qualities of heroism and great beauty or power. As the epic was oral and meant for recitation, its language was full of repetition and parallelisms. Gillie (1977) defines the epic as:

A narrative of heroic actions, often with a principal hero, usually mythical in its content, offering inspiration and ennoblement within a particular cultural or national tradition ... Epics occur in almost all national cultures, and commonly give an account of national origins or enshrine ancient, heroic myths central to the culture.

(Gillie, 1977: 505)

Msimang (1986) further enhances our understanding of epic when he notes: the epic .... is a piece of verse narrative whose plot usually deals with a journey and whose theme is based on a sacred myth, or legends grown around actual historical events or on folktales. Its main character is a larger than life hero... who performs super human feats on a grand scale. (Msimang, 1986: 31)

From the above definitions it can be concluded that an epic is a verse narrative which deals with the heroic deeds of great men and gods. The epic is usually based on a myth or legend. The plot of an epic deals with a journey and its main character is usually a super-human hero whose actions are outside the ordinary.

#### **2.4.3.2 Romance**

Baldick (1990) defines romance as "...a fictional story in verse or prose that relates improbable adventures of idealised characters in some remote or enchanted setting. The term embraces ...the popular escapist love story."

But first, Msimang (1986:31-3) tells us the origin of romance. He write, "Romance narrative depicted events and characters of the age of chivalry in about twelfth century France."

Romance was first written in verse like the epic and later in prose.

Other authorities like Grobler and Mafela (1992:29) define romance as "...an adventurous tale of royalty and nobility introducing a heroine and making love its central theme."

Both Baldrick (1990) and Grobler (1992:29) concur that romance is not only adventurous but is also based on country love. Further still, Kahari (1990) concurs with Grobler (1992) as he states:



The most important elements of plot in romance are adventure (which is sequential and processional) and quest. To these are tacked on a love story with a courtly setting. The story is complete when the quest is successful and it is always successful as the heroes are not allowed to fail, which emphasizes the idealisation of the romance.

(Kahari, 1990:81)

It must be added that characters in romance are so clearly defined that we can easily distinguish between the victim and villain. “The scenes and incidents (in which these characters appear) are remote from every day life. They are therefore based on traditional folktales and myths,” writes Mutasa (1986:26.) The events in romance are somewhat fantastic and melodramatic.

In this study, the novels *Karikoga Gumiremiseve* and *Feso* are typical romances. In the two novels the eponymous heroes each seek a wife from a distant land. The heroes perform super-human feats that are fantastic and melodramatic and both stories have a courtly setting. Above all, the stories only end when the quest succeeds.

### **2.4.3.3 Allegory**

According to Gillie (1977:383) the word allegory comes “...from Greek ‘speaking in other terms.’ (Allegory) is a way of representing thought and experience through images, by means of which complex ideas may be simplified.”

And in another work Gillie (1977:5) further defines allegory as: “...a story or visual image with a second distinct meaning partially hidden behind its literal or visible meaning.”

In agreement with Gillie above, Barnet (1964:13) similarly defines allegory as: “A narrative of which the true meaning can be obtained by translating its persons and events into others that they are understood to symbolize.”

Finally, Abrams (1981:19) says that “an allegory’s plot deals with a journey while its themes and characters are symbolic.”

From the definitions above, allegory is a written narrative of not less than two levels of meaning. This implies that allegories represent something other than what they mean. An allegory’s plot deals with a journey and its themes and characters are symbolic. The themes may be political, moral or religious.

In Shona literature, the novel *Feso* fits characteristically into Abrams' (1981) definition of a historical and political allegory. The novel symbolizes the political life of Zimbabwean people in general and the people of Mazowe in particular. The colonial regime represented by Chief Pfumojena (white spear) subjugates, exploit and impoverish the natives who are represented by Chief Nyan’ombe and called the *vaNyai* in the novel. The politics fit in clearly with the events and history of Zimbabwe’s colonisation and subsequent liberation in a protracted war. Mutswairo, the author, in his own words clearly states the political inclination of his novel. *Feso* He says: “My first chapter dealt with how we were dispossessed of the land (by the white colonisers.) I was unconsciously expressing the oppressive nature of the whites. I was projecting the suffering I had undergone.” (Mutswairo in Chiwome, 1994: 35)

Finally, from the discussion and exemplification in 2.4.3.2 and 2.4.3.3 it has been shown that the novel *Feso* has both the qualities of romance and allegory.

#### **2.4.3.4 Picaresque**

The picaresque is also known as the novel of adventure. It has to do with a

journey. Peck and Coyle observe so. They say the picaresque "...describes the events on a long journey where the character is in some glorious mission but repeatedly caught up in farcical situations."(Peck and Coyle, 1984: 114)

The picaresque hero was known by different names in various narratives.

In England, he was generally known as a rogue, knave or sharper, in France he was a schelm (Shona-*chikerema*), rogue, vagrant, while in Zimbabwe (Shona) he is called *chikerema*, a person always on the move, *swerakuenda*, *mugaradzakasungwa* ...

(Kahari, 1990: 190)

Msimang (1986) notes that the picaresque developed in Spain then spread to France, Germany and Italy. He also says that the picaresque is also characterised by an episodic structure, is based on the realism and the main character lives on his wits. The picaresque and is also said to have developed in the mid –sixteenth century and preceded the novel by about half a century.

A typical Shona novel of adventure is *Murambiwa Goredema* written by Mutswairo S, who also wrote *Feso*. In this novel, the author captures the adventures of the eponymous hero Murambiwa breaking away from the rather "closed" village situation to enter the industrial environment of the city. Like the romance, the picaresque keeps its link with oral literature by being comical and fantastic. Clearly, Murambiwa's journey is full of pitfalls and problems but somehow he overcomes them all.

#### **2.4.4. The novel today**

As pointed out earlier, the novel is not a new form but a fusion and synthesis of the characteristics of its predecessors. Watson (1979:15) identifies three grand forms of European fiction. These are the memoir novel, (which prevailed in eighteenth century England and France) the letter or epistolary novel (dating back

to fifteenth century Spain) and the novel in the third person which came at the end of the eighteenth century and still prevails today.

The novel allows for the treatment of a complex plot and characters. These characters are usually ordinary people. Character delineation in the contemporary novel is based on characters' internalised experience, soul and psyche. The contemporary novel is reader oriented. The European novel is a product of centuries of development whereas the Shona novel is a product of only four decades of development.

A one on one comparison of the European and Shona novel would therefore be unfair. Be that as it may, there are many similarities between them as the Shona novel is modeled on the European one, especially the English novel. The assumption is that early Shona novels adopted many aspects from the folktale as well as from the epic, allegory, romance and picaresque while more recent novels have adopted many aspects from the contemporary English novel and perhaps less from the folktale.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The chapter has discussed characteristics of the folktale and the novel. It has also looked at the development of the novel. Having discussed the folktale and the novel (the two genres to be used in this dissertation), the aspects plot, setting and characterisation will be discussed in chapters three, four and five. Under each aspect, folktale influence on the selected Shona novels in this study will be investigated and commented upon. In order to establish the nature of the influence, in chapters three, four and five, features of resemblance will be singled out and differences will be explained.

The next chapter focuses on plot.

## CHAPTER THREE

### PLOT

#### 3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, plot will be defined and aspects of plot will be discussed. The plot of the folktale will also be examined with special focus on exposition, body and resolution. Finally, features of the folktale plot that also appear in the plot in each novel under investigation will be pointed out.

#### 3.1 Plot defined

According to Abrams (1981:137), “The plot in a dramatic or narrative work is the structure of its actions, as these are ordered and rendered towards achieving particular emotional and artistic effects.”

Of similar opinion are the writers Barry and Wright (1966:69) who define plot as, “An author’s arrangement of events in narrative for a planned effect.”

The above definitions imply that the events in a story are arranged in a specific pattern to produce a desired effect. The order of events in a plot often differs with the order in which they happen in a story. As such, the order of events in a plot are so constructed and arranged that no incident can be displaced without the unity of the whole plot being compromised. The events presented are therefore in their causal sequential order. Visser (1982:20) Plot is therefore, “an artistic arrangement of events”

The concern in this chapter is the plot of a narrative work. It is on the organisation of the actions which form the story line that emphasis is laid. Further, it is on the cause and effect of the actions that emphasis is put, not on the chronology of the actions.

Actions are performed by characters. Any discussion that separates action from actor is rather unrealistic. Crane (1967:142) is of the opinion that, "it is incorrect to reduce plot to action alone" "He suggests that plot should be analysed as something made up of character, style and technique. It must be added that plot also conveys the theme of the narrative yet it would be unscientific to discuss plot, theme and character under one heading. Separating the three, would however not be practical as overlapping cannot be avoided. And so, according to Canonici (1993:14) in a sense, "plot becomes the shell in which characters act and grow. In it conflict and suspense is maintained, and theme (the author's message or point of view is revealed."

### **3.2 Plot Structure**

Conflict and suspense are the building blocks of plot. Conflict forms the basis of narrative literature. It is what makes a story engrossing and worth telling, because it is the very soul of the story. Conflict shows the relationship between the protagonist and antagonist. It therefore results in the character's reaction to each other. The reactions may be interesting and hence worth retelling. It is conflict that moves the plot from the beginning right through to its final climax and denouement. Initial disagreement kick starts conflict, and conflict gives rise to plot.

Canonici (1993: 145) points out a number of characteristic features of conflict. He states that conflict may be external or internal. It is external when man fights man, or when man fights against animals, nature or the environment. Conflict is also external especially in the physical and social confrontations found between people in love triangles and even in jealous and strife-torn polygamous situations. External conflict is also found in cases where cultures clash.

Conflict may be internal as pointed out above. Examples abound. Conflict is internal where a person fights against himself or his conscience. Similarly, conflict is internal when a person fights against fate or against God.

Suspense is another important element in plot. As plot unfolds, it creates expectations (in the audience or reader) about the future course of events and how characters will respond to events. This uncertainty about what is going to happen is known as suspense. On the other hand, surprise is when an action violates our expectations. The interplay of suspense and surprise is a prime source of the vitality in a traditional plot. The components of a unified plot will be examined now. According to Abrams:

The order of a unified plot, as Anstotle pointed out, is a continuous sequence of beginning, middle and end. The beginning initiates the main actions in a way which makes us look forward to something more; the middle presumes what has gone before and requires something to follow; and the end follows from what has gone before but requires nothing more; we are satisfied that the plot is complete.

(Abrams, 1981:140)

The three stages that Aristotle cited in Abrams (1988) were reaffirmed by Olrik (1908) in his epic laws of folk-narrative (cited in Dundes 1965). Freytag (1863) also came up with three key stages in the development of plot namely, the beginning or exposition, the body or middle part of plot as well as the end, denouement or resolution.

The beginning (of plot) is termed the exposition. In the exposition is found a dynamic stability; things are virtually calm. There is harmony between the protagonist and antagonist as well as their supporters. There is however some possible hint of possible conflict. Next comes the inciting moment when a disturbing event occurs putting the calm off-balance. This event causes the

antagonism of the leading characters to be revealed.

The body is described by Canonici (1993:143) as: "... The major section of the story in which the conflict situation develops up to its climax."

Thus the body forms the middle part of plot. From the onset of imbalance, conflict runs through the complication and crisis right up to the climax-the turning point in plot development. When we experience tension and suspense, conflict intensifies and action subsequently rises reaching breaking point, the climax.

The last part of plot is the resolution. It comes after the climax. "In it action subsides and the situation slowly returns to normality (as at the beginning)" Canonici (1993:144). In this part of plot, the resolution, ruffled ends are smoothed and all issues are cleared. In some cases, "there is a moment of reversal or last suspense when the antagonist tries to gain the upper hand once more unsuccessfully" Canonici (ibid). Finally, all conflict is resolved. A permanent change in the relationship of the two opposing parties appears is established.

### **3.3 Plot of the Shona folktale**

This section discusses the opening and closing formulae, exposition, body and resolution in plot.

#### **3.3.1 The law of opening and closing**

According to the law of opening, a folktale does not commence with instant action but with a leisurely introduction. Olrik in Dundes (1965:115) says: "The opening formula indicates calm, a lull before the storm; for a tale does not begin with sudden movement or conflict, but begins by moving from calm to excitement."



The purpose of the opening formula is to set the mood for the start of the folktale event and to involve the audience as participants in folk-story telling. It also elicits their formal response in the form of the response phrase. In Shona folktale telling, the response phrase is '*Dzepfunde.*' The opening formula thus marks the formal beginning of a tale. In English the opening formula is usually once upon a time.

In Shona folktales, the law of opening is manifested through various opening formulae. Hodza, A.C cites three such formulae i.e.

- (a) *Kare kare.* (Long, long ago)
- (b) *Ndokunge ari.* (There used to be)
- (c) *Rimwe zuva.* (One day)

(Hodza, 1983:10)

When the folktale moves from calm to excitement, it develops into a gradual description of conflict, drives to its climax and ends unabruptly with the restoration of the initial harmony. When the tale ends, the end is marked by a closing formula.

In Shona folktales common closing formula include:

- "Ndipo pakafira sarungano"*  
(There died the story teller)
- "Ndopaperera rungano"*  
(There ends the tale)

(Hodza, 1983:10)

Finnegan (1970) notes that the closing formula serves to round off the story telling event which was started by the opening formula. By means of this formula

the story-teller, "... not only indicates that the story is concluded, but also hands over, as it were, to the audience and thus crosses the boundary once more, this time from the world of fantasy back to the world of reality."

(Finnegan, 1970:335)

Hugh Tracey (1933:57) agrees with Finnegan on the purpose of the closing formula. He writes, "The magical spell that a story can weave round you (the listener) must not remain unbroken or, as the saying goes, the little birds will come down and eat your crops."

In *Ngano* Volume 2, Fortune (1974) cites some interesting variations of both the opening and closing formulae. It is therefore clear that the beginning and end of Shona folktales are clearly marked.

### **3.3.2 Exposition**

Exposition is the beginning of a story. The theme, the main characters and their milieu are introduced in the exposition. Propp (1968) calls exposition, the initial situation.

The initial situation usually contains a number of implications. These are not made explicit as the story-teller usually has a common background with her audience. To an outsider, any omissions or perceived irregularities "in the development of a plot are due to the unspoken common assumptions." (Fortune, 1985:33). He further writes, "The instability in the initial situation which sees the plot in motion will generally not be made explicit at the beginning but will emerge as the story-teller chooses the direction in which she wishes to develop her plot."

Thus, the initial situation may clearly state an abnormality like drought or famine but without giving any clue as to the conflict it is going to brew.

Dundes (1965) calls this instability or disturbing event “lack”. Lack may take the form of famine, death, illness, emotions of desire or want. These disturbing events disturb the stated or implied calm state of affairs.

### 3.3.2.1 Exposition in the folktale "Gore renzara" folktale 2 in Appendix.

The tale begins with the formula “*Kare kare, pasichigare* (Long, long ago; in the olden days) and proceeds to the exposition with the words.

*Kwaive nemumwe murume nemukadzi wake. Murume uyu ainzi harugume. Vaiva nevana vatatu, vaviri vakomana, wechitatu musikana.*

(Hodza, 1983:100)

(There was a man and his wife. The husband was called Hushambiri and the wife Harugumi. They had three children, two boys and one girl)

In this very short exposition, the artist introduces the five characters. In no time, the imbalance is spelt out. In addition Hodza, (1983:100) says,

*“Rimwe gore kwakaita chabvuriri chenzara.”*

(One year there was a great famine)

It was food that the family lacked. The assumed and implied calm is that before great famine food was abundant. This instability in the initial situation is what is called the lack in folktale language and style.

### 3.3.2.2 Folktale influence on exposition in *Feso*

The novel begins with the opening formula *Kare kare* (Long, long ago). Immediately after the stylised opening, a whole chapter is devoted to exposition.

It is in this chapter that the main characters Feso the hero, Chief Nyan'ombe and the herdboys Chokumarara and Manzira are introduced.

In typical folktale style, the lack is immediately given in the second chapter.

*Vahosi vemba huru vakafanira kuchivapo*

(Mutswairo, 1956:5)

(It is time the "queen" is put in place.)

Chief Nyan'ombe (who is still a bachelor) should now marry. It is a (beautiful) woman for a wife that the chief lacks. In this chapter, the social circumstances are provided by the conversation between Chokumarara and Manzira. In typical folktale style the plot will unfold in an effort to liquidate the lack that Chief Nyan'ombe experiences in the initial situation.

### **3.3.2.3 Folktale influence on the exposition in *Karikoga Gumiremiseve***

This narrative starts with the folktale style opening formula *Kare kare* (Long, long ago). Chapter one is the exposition. In this chapter, the hero Karikoga is born. The birth of a child, especially a baby boy, triggers joy and general merry making. Unfortunately, the calm and peace that accompanies Karikoga's birth is disturbed by the untimely death of his parents. A disequilibrium or lack is created as Karikoga now lacks not only his parents but also parental love and care. In the next two chapters we read more about Karikoga's life as well as the Matebele raids on the Shona people. It is in chapter four where we read about Karikoga's desire to marry. It is a wife that he also lacks. Unfortunately, no sooner than he marries is his wife Marunjeya captured by the Ndebele raiders. Incidentally, it is on his life as an orphan as well as his determination to recover his captured wife that the whole romance is woven. The exposition ends here. In folktale style the determination to recover his wife is akin to lack liquidation. The narrative therefore starts and develops in the mould of the folktale.

### 3.3.2.4 Folktale influence on exposition in *Jekanyika*

The novel *Jekanyika*, (1968) does not start with the conventional folktale opening formula but however ends with one. The absence of an opening formula could have been an omission. The presence of a closing formula resembles the folktale.

The novel however starts with a dialogue between two girls Maidei and Sarudzai. This writing style is not folktale style but was probably adopted from the western novel.

The novel's exposition is in chapter one, entitled *Mumuzinda waMambo Dendera*. (In chief Dendera's court) In it, the major and minor characters as well as their roles are spelt out. Chief Dendera and his son Jekanyika (the hero) are presented. Chief Dendera's senior wife (*vahosi*) and the Chief's councillors who run the chiefdom when the chief is away are also presented. In the same chapter minor character like the herdboys Manzira and Chokumarara as well as the village girls Sarudzai and Maidei are presented. The two girls are eyeing Jekanyika for husband. Jekanyika's mother Mumbamarwo also expects Jekanyika to pick on one of the chief's councillor's daughter for a wife immediately after the impending initiation ceremony. The village boys are initiated and alas, Jekanyika neither stays home nor marries. Instead he decides to track his father who had left home eighteen years before. This is the disturbing moment caused by the void or lack in Jekanyika's life. It is this lack/ instability in the initial situation that drives the plot. He greatly desires not only to know his father but also join his mighty army. It is at that point that the story really begins. In typical folktale manner, the plot unfolds to restore the disequilibrium that has been spelt out in the initial situation i.e. the exposition.

### 3.3.2.5 Folktale influence on exposition in *Musango mune nyama*

The narrative does not start with an opening formula. Instead, the author straight away introduces the narrative's, main character in the first chapter entitled "Pfumo rakabva Putukezi" (The spear from Portuguese East Africa-present day Mozambique). The chapter focuses on the legendary spear with which Chapakati the hero achieves formidable tasks. In the same chapter, the hero's family is described. Chapakati's polygamous father Nhongonhema and his wives Ndakaitedzva (Mbengo and Jichidza's mother) and the expectant junior wife Mandisema (Chapakati's mother) are introduced. Other characters like Gunzvenzve, the midwife and Dzasangana the traditional healer are presented.

The rivalry and jealousy between Nhongonhema's wives and children is clearly and immediately spelt out. Everything had been well and calm in Nhongonhema's family until the birth of Chapakati. The birth of Chapakati is the disturbance in the initial situation. In folktale style it is at that point that the story really begins. Ndakaitedzva and her sons fear that Chapakati will be appointed heir to Nhongonhema resulting in them losing the heritage they so much eye and desire. It is this fear that results in rivalry, jealousy and open hostility that drive the plot. The plot unfolds until the disturbance in the initial situation is calmed. This is typical folktale style.

### 3.3.2.6 Folktale influence on exposition in *Ndinofa Ndaedza*

The narrative starts with a disturbing event:

*Mwanangu, ini ndakaedzawo nepandinokwanisa kukuchengeta.*

*Zvino midzimu yekwangu yaramba kuti urambe uri mubango muno.*

(Honzeri, 1991:5)

(My child, I tried my level best to keep you. Now my ancestors have

refused your continued stay in this home.)

The beginning of the narrative appears free from folktale influence at first glance but on looking further one discovers that indeed the story is told as a folktale as the rather concealed folktale style opening formula only appears on page two where it reads:

*Pasichigare, kwaive naishe ainzi Chokupamba.*

(Honzeri, 1991:6)

(Long ago, there used to be a chief called Chokupamba.)

Adjoined to the opening formula is the exposition. This is as it usually is in folktales. One of the main characters chief Chokupamba is presented there and then. In the next few lines the orphan hero, Revai is also introduced, as well as some of the minor characters like Vengai, Revai's foster mother and Revai's friend Tafirei.

After the presentation of the characters the narrative goes back to the main problem: Revai is chased from Vengai's home as his parents have died in unfortunate circumstances. In typical folktale style, the normalcy that prevailed before the death of Revai's parents is disturbed. Revai now lacks parental love, biological parents and a home. It is the lack of love, parents and a stable home that the plot seeks to liquidate.

### **3.3.2.7 Folktale influence on exposition in *Chemera Mudundundu***

This modern world narrative does not start with an opening formula as happens in folktales. Instead, it starts when the calm that prevailed has been disturbed. It is in this respect that it resembles the folktale. It is in the very first paragraph that we read about Joyce's terminal illness; a cancer as well as her mother's profound worry over the uncertainty of her own welfare. The implication is that before this

illness, Joyce had been well (the state of equilibrium) and Joyce's mother had no worry about her own welfare as her daughter Joyce, a nurse by profession, could work, care and fend for her.

It is however precisely in the first of the twenty chapter narrative that almost all the characters are introduced. In the chapter, Joyce and her husband Isaac as well as their sons Tinos and Peter are introduced. Isaac's friend Victoria and her husband Charles Kapako are also introduced together with their children Bernard, Veronica and Tawanda. Other minor characters namely Charles' father Sekuru Kapako, the orphan Chenga and Joyce's mother *Mbuya* Chisi are introduced. In no time, a state of disequilibrium occurs; Victoria's husband tragically dies. This disturbs the smooth running of everything in the family. The plot, in folktale style unfolds until calm is restored.

### **3.3.2.8 Significance of the transition from balance to imbalance**

The state of balance does not make a story. It is only when this state is upset that the story begins. People are not worried when things are running their normal course. They only become concerned when the normal trend is disturbed. Their wish is that the state of equilibrium be restored. "A narrative includes all the events in a work of prose whereas story includes only the sequential events." (Smiley, 1971:52-3)

This implies that an initial element marks the beginning of a narrative while it is element of imbalance which marks the beginning of the story." This disturbing event causes opposition of the leading character to be revealed. (Canonici, 1993:143) The space between the beginning of a narrative and the element of imbalance is the transition. Transition will be more effective if it is short and takes place suddenly. "Where it is not immediate we get a dragging exposition and the plot consequently lacks tension and suspense." (Msimang, 1986: 48)



Where the state of equilibrium is merely implied e.g. in Ndinofa Ndaedza where the beginning of the story is also the beginning of the narrative, there is more impact. It therefore means that there is more impact. It therefore means that where the beginning of the narrative is not linked to the beginning of the story, relevancy is lost.

### **3.4 The body of the folktale plot**

This is the middle part of the plot. From the onset of the imbalance, conflict and suspense run through the complication and crisis until the turning point is reached conflict can be summed up as action and counter action. Propp (1968) and Dundes (1962) refer to action in conflict as function and motifeme respectively and so a discussion of conflict in the folktale is essentially a discussion of functions or motifemes. Thus, rising action, conflict, climax and resolution are all expressed by functions and sequences in folktales.

#### **3.4.1 Functions which form the body of the plot in a folktale**

Although functions which form the body of the plot in a folktale are unlimited, Propp (1928) identified 31 but Dundes (1962) discovered some outside Propp's 31. As pointed out the function, 'lack liquidated' is part of the resolution. Following Propp (ibid) this leaves us with 29 other functions and possibly others outside these. Those found in Shona folktales in this study, and therefore pertinent, include absention, interdiction, violation, consequence, command, obedience, disobedience, flight-pursue, rescue / escape, test and test accomplished, deceit/trickery, deception complicity as well as counteraction , reconciliation and reward.

### 3.4.2 Absentation + Interdiction + Violation and Consequence

When one or more members of a family leave home, this is absentation. Usually this absence is for a short period. It can take the form of going to work, visiting some body, etc. Propp (1958: 26) says that "...the death of parents represent the intensified form of absentation." Moephuli (1972) calls this function absence. He says that usually an interdiction is violated during absence. Absentation is regarded as a free function as it does not link up with other functions to form a function formula.

Interdiction is essentially an order not to do something. The order may be an overt statement or it may be implied. An explicit interdiction is usually a pronouncement, rule or law while an implied interdiction takes the form of acceptable social behaviour. It is during absence that an interdiction is violated. Interdiction links with violation to form a function formula.

Violation is the breach of an interdiction. It is behaviour that runs contrary to accepted norms in a society. When one breaches an interdiction, one suffers for it. This suffering is the consequence of violation. Consequence is a result of a violation of an interdiction and may include punishment. Consequence is normally a free function but can be coupled with interdiction and violation to form what Dundes (1964) calls a motifemic sequence. It should also be pointed out at this juncture that besides 'lack' the functions, absentation as well as violation of an interdiction can also initiate disequilibrium following the period of calm when a folktale commences.

The function formula 'interdiction + violation + consequences helps to move the plot to its climax. When the violation occurs, the audience becomes anxious and fears the reprisals for violating the interdiction. The audience also fears for the victim's fate. It is this feeling that is known as suspense. Further, violation complicates matters by pitting the interests of the victim against those of the

villain. This results in a crisis.

### **3.4. 2.1 Absentation + Interdiction + Violation + Consequence in "Gore renzara" (Folktale 2 in Appendix)**

In this tale Hushambiri finds a beehive, collects the honey into a clay pot and secretly hides it far from home. He doesn't want his wife and children to know about it. Often he leaves his home and family to feed on the honey alone. When he returns home, he refuses to eat and offers the children his portion of food. One day he visits his pot and unknown to him, a son follows him and witnesses everything. This is the beginning of counteraction. The son returns home and relates to his mother what he had seen thus violating the interdiction. The following morning, while Hushambiri is asleep, mother and son visit the clay pot. In this period of absentation, they collect all the honey and leave the pot filled with ash, water and sand.

When next Hushambiri visits the clay pot, he is disappointed. He arrives home and forthwith accepts his portion of food. When asked why he has changed, he tells a lie. He is however shown the honey from his clay pot. He is shamed and rejected by his wife Harugumi, reaping the consequences of selfishness.

### **3.4.2.2. Absentation +Interdiction +Violation + Consequence in *Feso*.**

In one episode in the novel, the interdiction is that the beautiful are always guarded. Chipochedenga should neither meet nor talk to strangers on her own.

One day, her father, Chief Pfumojena, happens to leave court. It is during the Chief's absence that Chipochedenga violets the interdiction by talking to the stranger Feso. The result of this talk is that she succumbs to Feso's demands and runs away from home with the stranger. Consequently, Pfumojena agonisingly loses her.

### **3.4.2.3 Absentation + Interdiction + Violation + Consequences in *Karikoga***

#### ***Gumiremiseve***

This function formula subtly appears in the novels. When Karikoga the hero is born, his parents immediately die in tragic circumstances. It is in the absence of parents that he grows. As is the norm in Shona society, orphans are supposed to be sympathized with and assisted in their upbringing. This is the implied interdiction. Kufakunesu breaches this age old interdiction by ill-treating and abusing the hardworking and helpful Karikoga. She starves and beats him. The consequence of the violation of this interdiction is two pronged.

First Kufakunesu realises her mistake and apologizes to Karikoga. The consequence of her improper behaviour is the mental anguish she suffers before apologising. Although Karikoga pardons her, this does not help much as Karikoga has already decided to leave her household. She consequently loses Karikoga's company as well as his helpful hand.

On the other hand the ill-treatment Karokoga goes through helps to harden and prepare him for the difficult tasks ahead. With this experience Karikoga single handedly tracks and rescues his captured wife Marunjeya from her dreaded and brutal Ndebele captors.

### **3.4.2.4 Absentation + Interdiction + Violation + Consequence in *Jekanyika***

In this novel, Chief Dendera leaves home on an expedition of conquest. As it is the practice whenever he leaves home, he leaves his principal wife Mumbamarwo and councillors in charge. He sends emissaries to check on the situation at home time and again. Mumbamarwo and the councillors are obliged to give the emissaries correct information about the situation at home. This is the interdiction they shouldn't violate.

When Dendera leaves home this time around, Mumbamarwo is pregnant. She then delivers a son Jekanyika, but tells the emissaries it is a baby girl. The lie she tells breaches the interdiction, but this is not without consequence. Jekanyika refuses to marry and doesn't stay at home as his mother wishes. He instead runs away from home. This not only disappoints Mumbamarwo but (she) also has to wait very long before father and son return.

#### **3.4.2.5 Absentation + Interdiction + Violation + Consequence in *Musango mune nyama***

In this narrative, Ndakaitedzva poisons her husband, headman Nhongonhema. As senior wife, she would like to secure the headmanship and estate for her sons but Nhongonhema who prefers the junior wife Mandisema's son Chapakati for heir, stands in her way. When Nhongonhema dies, Chapakati and Mandisema are exposed.

In Shona culture, widows and orphans are not supposed to be ill-treated. Ndakaitedzva does not observe this interdiction. She exploits Nhongonhema's absence and boldly arranges to poison Chapakati, who alone, now stands between the headship (she eyes and yearns for) and her sons. However, her plan backfires. Before the poisoned food gets to Chapakati, Ndakaitedzva's sons, unknown to her, get home in her absence and eat all the poisoned food. She only comes in when her sons are finishing off the last portion of the food. As a result, the two die instantly. In shame and disappointment, Ndakaitedzva takes her life. The three deaths are serious consequences of the breach of the interdiction stated above.

### 3.4.2.6 Absentation + Interdiction + Violation + consequence in *Ndinofa*

*Ndaedza.*

On the second page of the novel it is immediately spelt out that Revai the hero's parents are dead.

*Amai nababa va Revai ....vakanga vafa.*

(Honzeri, 1991:6)

(Revai's father and mother ...had died)

The death of one's parents is what Propp (1958:26) terms the "intensified form of absentation." During this period of absentation, Shona society has its expectations on the care and treatment of orphans: orphans are supposed to be well treated and cared for. All heritages must be handed over to the surviving child. This is the implied interdiction in the story. But, alas! where there is a rule someone is bound to breach it. This is exactly what Revai's foster mother does. She chases the orphan from her home on the pretext that she is obeying an order from the Chief.

*Mazwi angu ekupedzisira kwauri anoti chizivawo kwaungaende.*

(Honzeri, 1991:5)

(My final words to you are that you should leave my household and find somewhere to go)

When Revai leaves, the chief and some of his subjects appropriate all that Revai's parents left.

*Zvipfuwo zvakange zvasiyiwa naaTiritose zvakaparadzwa  
nevaichengeta Revai, zvizhinji zvakatorwa nashe (Chokupamba)  
wacho.*

(Honzeri, 1991: 6)

(All the livestock left by Tiritose (Revai's father) were appropriated by the chief [Chokupamba] and those people who once fostered Revai)

The breach of the interdiction comes in the form of the ill treatment of Revai as well as the appropriation of the heritage entitled to him. This breach is not without consequence. After being expelled from Vengai's household Revai goes away bitter and this bitterness brews a spirit of vengeance in him. He travels on a hard road till he gets to his father's birth place. After a reunion with his kinsmen, he trains a group of warriors whom he instructs to visit chief Chokupamba and recover his stolen heritage. Chief Chokupamba is overpowered and not only do the warriors take (from the chief) what belongs to Revai but also other livestock that belong to the chief and his subjects. Thus, Chief Chokupamba and his subjects pay dearly for ill-treating Revai.

#### **3.4.2.7 Absentation + Interdiction + Violation + Consequence in *Chemera Mudundundu***

In this contemporary novel, the function formula being discussed is still discernible. The novel's plot is complex; it does not have the simplicity of the folktale plot. The function formula is therefore rather covert and subtle. In addition, it is found midway through the plot not at the beginning as in the cases discussed above.

Absentation in this novel is of the intensified form-death. Charles Kapako, Victoria's businessman husband, dies in an accident. He leaves behind two shops, a few cars, a rural home and livestock as well as an urban home. The interdiction is that the deceased's estate should be settled in the traditional Shona custom.

The expectations of the Kapako family as well as most interested parties is that Charles' estate should be distributed among his relatives especially his father, his children and wife. Traditionally the wife is included in the distribution of the

deceased's estate as long as she elects to remarry in the same family or to stay single in the same family and matrimonial home. In such cases she is entitled to enjoy the benefits from as well as the deceased's estate .If she elects to remarry elsewhere then she would lose everything.

As is predictable, shortly after Charles' death, Victoria finds a lover in the form of her accountant Vasco Antonio. Vasco cunningly and calculatingly fills the void in Victorias' life as he has an ulterior motive. He coaxes Victoria into a legal marriage in a very short time. But before the Kapako family knows anything about the fast-tracked marriage things go topsy-turvy.

First, Victoria brings Vasco home. They co-habit in Charles' home. This infuriates *Sekuru* Kapako (Charles' father) and the children. *Sekuru* Kapako says:

*Haakwanisi kuroorwa nemurume mutsva uyu achizogara mumusha wemuji.*

(Moyo, 2002:124)

(She [Victoria] cannot marry a new man and stay with him in the deceased's [Charles] home.)

In no time, the children are restricted in the use of their fathers' cars and as well not allowed entry into their fathers' shops. To add insult to injury, grandfather and grandchildren are driven out and away from Charles' Avondale home. They flee to Charles' rural home but only do so after a heated altercation with Victoria.

But before the dust has settled Victoria and Vasco visit Charles' rural home. They sell the home and cattle there. This does not go well with *Sekuru* Kapako, the children, the village head and the generality of the villagers. Victoria and Vasco thus breach the interdiction on the sharing of the deceased's estate. *Sekuru* Kapako shouts:



*Chidzokerai kwenyu ikoko kwamunotevera tsika dzamabvakure  
munotengesa mombe dzamasiye ikoko*

(Moyo, 2002:122)

(Go back, where you follow alien customs, and sell the cattle you left there.)

Tempers flare and Vasco, Victoria and the prospective buyers flee to Harare. The breach of the traditional customs on inheritance soon result in serious consequences for Victoria.

On the way to Harare, a serious disagreement on the sale of the rural home and livestock ensues between Victoria and Vasco. For the first time, Victoria realises that Vasco is extravagant, wayward and only interested in her money. Later, words get into her ears that Vasco is going out with many women of loose morals. But this realisation only comes after she has wronged and infuriated the Kapako family at large as well as her children. But before long, she falls ill from the dreaded and incurable Aids. She succumbs to it and is wheel chair bound. And, fed up of caring for the invalid Victoria, Vasco takes her to a nursing home without her consent. As she travels her last mile, Vasco sells Charles' Avondale home and flees to Mozambique. As a consequence of her reckless disregard for traditional custom and practice Victoria agonisingly witnesses her family disintegrate and loses all she had worked for with her former husband Charles. The discovery and loss of her pseudo-lover Vasco also shatters her.

#### **3.4.2.8 Significance of the sequence Absentation + Interdiction + Violation + Consequence.**

When the development of plot from exposition, through complication to crisis in both the folktale and novel is compared, it is interesting to note that exactly the same motifemic pattern has been adopted. In both genres the artists have used the sequence, absentation followed by violation of an interdiction resulting in serious

consequences.

### **3.5 Climax**

Swanepoel, (1987:9) describes climax as: "... the inevitable eruption, the breakpoint the pinnacle of tension, the phase of final decision. A change sets in which decides the lives and interests of the characters involved"

The climax or turning point of a story is therefore reached after a build up of crises. Here, fortune will favour one of the parties. Either the protagonist or the antagonist becomes the winner or the villain when the two main characters meet. Skills are matched. From then on the events turn against the character that had dominated them so far. Conflict then diminishes.

#### **3.5.1 Functions that lead to the climax**

Msimang (1986) observed that the functions that accumulate crises that lead to the climax include flight, flight + pursue + escape or rescue, Trickery and complicity, struggle + defeat/victory, villain exposed + villain punished, task and task accomplished to cite a few.

Focus will now fall on those functions found in my example tales (found in the Appendix) beginning with struggle and victory.

##### **3.5.1.1 Struggle and Victory in "Pimbirimano" (folktale 1 in Appendix)**

In this tale Pimbirimano faces many problems. Three times his mother commands him to do something that endangers his life. First, she asks him to check a set trap outside their home where a hyena waits to devour him. Second, she asks him to fetch tomatoes from the garden and third she asks him to gather mazhanje fruits from the grove. In both cases a hungry hyena waits to eat him. It is only through

the magic horn which he consults that he successfully plans and executes suitable responses to these challenges that he eventually triumphs and survives.

### **3.5.1.2 Struggle and Victory in *Feso***

In this novel, Feso physically and mentally struggles against many obstacles. On his way to Pfumojena's court he meets a dozen rebels bent on killing him. He only survives after physically fighting and defeating the cut-throats' boastful leader Masarapasi. In another episode Feso cunningly escapes with Pfumojena's daughter Chipochedenga after outwitting both the Chief and the guards at the Chief's court's main entrance. He, thus, emerges victorious.

### **3.5.1.3 Struggle and Victory in *Karikoga Gumiremiseve***

In *Karikoga Gumiremiseve*, the hero Karikoga faces many uphill tasks. He struggles to survive, orphaned as he is, when his foster mother starves and abuses him. It is only through hunting game as well as collecting wild fruits that he survives.

Further, Karikoga struggles against ill-treatment by fellow herdboys. In one episode he fights the herdboys' leader, the big, fiery-tempered and cruel Benyumundiro and defeats him. It is only after this hard won victory that the goat herding errands forced on him stop.

Finally, in a mother of all battles, Karikoga single handedly fights and smartly defeats scores of Matebele warriors in a battle across the Munyati River. Karikoga's defeat in this battle would have signified his instant capture and subsequent death. Deservedly Karikoga romps home in victory and is once again a free man in his motherland.

#### **3.5.1.4 Struggle and Victory in *Jekanyika***

As Jekanyika treks his father, he struggles against many natural dangers-thirst, hunger and wild animals. Often he travels long distances on an empty stomach and nearly starves. Jekanyika also has to cope with spending the nights on trees.

Furthermore, on this protracted journey, he is twice taken captive, first by Chief Chipezvero and second by Chief Chaitezvi. In both cases, Jekanyika the hero, only survives and gets his freedom after diligently fighting on behalf of the two chiefs in do or die battles against their adversaries.

#### **3.5.1.5 Struggle and Victory in *Musango mune nyama*.**

In this narrative, Chapakati the hero faces many difficulties. He goes through three struggles and emerges victorious. First, in a pool, he fights a crocodile that had bitten Cherai's leg. He continually spears the crocodile until it let loose the girl's leg.

Second, Chapakati saves Mabwazhe's life. He fights with and spears dead a leopard that had attacked Mabwazhe. This he does heroically at a time when elders were fleeing from the marauding animal, leaving Mabwazhe to face death.

In a third incident the young Chapakati falls into the hands of two cut-throats in a forest in the thick of night. The cut-throats tie his hands and feet then place him in a deep hole, three quarters his height. They cover the hole with sand, ramming it as the sand height increases. Using his legendary spear, Chapakati spectacularly sets himself free.

*Kunze kuchindoti hwe-e, akabva atiwo tukunyuku, pakadaro go.*

(Hamutyinei, 1989:113)

(Towards sunrise [Chapakati] frees himself and sits [to take a rest])

But unknown to Chapakati, the cut-throats are his half brothers attempting to kill him. He thus emerges victorious in the three trying incidents.

### **3.5.1.6 Struggle and Victory in *Ndinofa Ndaedza***

In *Ndinofa Ndaedza*, Revai the hero travels long distances, lasting several weeks, on foot. He has to struggle and take head on the challenges of swollen feet, hunger and thirst as well as sleeping on trees. In Chapter Four this is substantiated

*Revai akahutanga zvakare upenyu hwake hwekurara mumuti seshiri yesango.*

(Honzeri, 1991:37)

(Revai was at it again, namely the practice of sleeping on trees like a bird of the forest.)

As if the struggle of crossing the country on foot was not enough, Revai falls into the hands of the ruthless Chief Dendera. He is declared an intruder and trespasser and is threatened with death. As is predictable with all folktale heroes, Revai somehow escapes capital punishment although just by the skin of his teeth. He emerges victorious in this second struggle.

### **3.5.2 Villain exposed + Villain punished.**

In both, the folktales and novels we have incidents in which the wicked characters are exposed and punished.

**3.5.2.1 Villain exposed + Villain punished in "Gore renzara"**  
**(Folktale 2 in Appendix)**

When the selfish Hushambiri leaves his family to starve while he survives on the honey hidden in a bush, he thinks the selfish practice will not be known. Unknown to him, his wife and sons get to know about the hidden honey clay pot. They take it. When next Hushambiri visits the clay pot to feed, he finds no honey. He goes home hungry and uncharacteristically accepts his portion of food. On being asked why, he tries to conceal the truth. He is told the truth and is also shamed.

*Mukadzi akati, 'Ini handichakuda ... hauna rudo rwechokwadi.'*

*Mukadzi ndokubva asunga twake achibva aenda kumusha kwake.*

(Hodza, 1983:104)

(The wife said, 'I no longer love you. You do not truly love me.' The wife then packed her bags and returned to her home.)

As punishment, Hushambiri's wife deserts him. He is not only shamed but also left, all alone.

**3.5.2.2 Villain exposed + Villain punished in Feso.**

In this novel, the despotic and tyrannical Chief Pfumojena's wicked practices are exposed. One such practice, witch sniffing that resulted in the murder of suspects, was exposed and condemned. Consequently he is tricked and his much loved daughter Chipochedenga is taken for a wife by Feso the hero's master, the popular and democratic Chief Nyan'ombe. Pfumojena tries to use force to rescue her but loses his whole regiment. Pfumojena's chieftainship ends. His chieftom is annexed to Chief Nyan'ombe's.

*Pfumojena akachengetedzwa asisiri mambo. Mambo Nyan'ombe ndokusanganidza nyika idzi dziri mbiri.*

(Mutswairo, 1982:66)

(Pfumojena was dethroned and taken captive. Chief Nyan'ombe subsequently annexed [Pfumojena's land])

### **3.5.2.3 Villain exposed + Villain punished in *Karikoga Gumiremiseve***

Karikoga, the hero in this story, has his life spoiled by the Ndebele king and his warriors. First, the warriors capture Karikoga's wife Marunjeya, burn Karikoga's village and take captive many young men and women. Finally, they kill all the old people in Karikoga's village then loot their victims' grain and livestock. The warriors return home unpunished. Karikoga travels to Matebeleland to rescue his wife.

By wiles and guile he escapes with Marunjeya. The Ndebele King sends scores of warriors to track them. The Ndebele warriors catch up with the couple as they are about to cross the Munyati River into Mashonaland, Karikoga's birth place.

Karikoga comes face to face, not only with Marunjeya and his enemies but also the enemies of his own (Shona) people. The villain is thus exposed. In this battle most of the warriors are killed by Karikoga. The few that remain drown in the flooded Munyati River. The villain is thus punished.

### **3.5.2.4 Villain exposed + Villain punished in *Ndinofa Ndaedza***

In the novels' exposition it is learnt that Chief Chokupamba had taken for himself all Tiritose, Revai's Father had left when he died. The appropriate heritage was mostly livestock.

It is in Chapters Ten and Eleven where the villain Chief Chokupamba is exposed and punished. In Chapter Ten Revai's regiment trains and then visit Chokupamba's court. In Chapter Eleven Revai's regiment engages Chokupamba's warriors and a bloody battle ensues. It ends in Chokupamba's warriors losing, as well as the capture of Chief Chokupamba himself. Chief Chokupamba admits his wrong doing. Revai's regiment recovers their 'stolen' wealth and takes it home.

*Vakatinha mazangwandira ezvipfuwo zvaisanganisa mombe, mbudzi nehwai vakananga kumusha kwavo.*

(Honzeri, 1991:115)

(They drove home much livestock that included cattle, goats and sheep)

### **3.5.3 Task and Task accomplished**

In the folktales and novels in this study there are many incidents in which major characters are given different tasks or tests to accomplish. In typical folktale style the characters tested should and will accomplish the tasks by wiles and wit.

#### **3.5.3.1 Task and Task accomplished in "Pimbirimano" (Folktale 1 in Appendix)**

After trespassing on to strange land Pimbirimano is apprehended. He is given difficult tasks to accomplish in return for his freedom. First, a whole bag of rapoko is scattered in a forest. Pimbirimano is asked to pick up all the grains. His magic horn advises him to seek the assistance of ants. They pick up all the grain.

Next, five full bags of grain are scattered. Again the ants help. Finally, a big feast of *sadza* and meat is prepared for Pimbirimano. He is to be released if he eats up all the food. Overnight the ants eat up everything. The chief feels he



cannot keep such a glutton. Pimbirimano is released forthwith.

### **3.5.3.2 Task and Task accomplished in *Feso***

When Chief Nyan'ombe's subjects unanimously agree that it is time for their bachelor chief to marry, *Feso* is chosen to go far and wide in search of the bride. He accepts the task and sets off forthwith.

*Feso* succeeds in accomplishing his task albeit through wit and wiles. He lures the hard and tyrannical Chief Pfumojena's beautiful and only daughter Chipochedenga into becoming his chief's wife. This, however, is not without bloodshed. Twice, Chiefs Nyan'ombe and Pfumojena fight over Chipochedenga and Nyan'ombe wins. But after all this turbulence, matters come to a rest, people rejoice and celebrate as *Feso* accomplishes his task.

### **3.5.3.3 Task and Task accomplished in *Karikoga Gumiremiseve***

In this story, *Karikoga's* wife *Marunjeya* is captured in Mashonaland by Ndebele warriors and taken to their home in Matebeleland. *Karikoga's* main task is to rescue his wife. Although he eventually succeeds in doing so, he goes through many trials and tribulations. He walks great distances on foot, he has to endure hunger and also encounters dangerous wild animals. He also has to fight Ndebele warriors a number of times. He eventually succeeds in rescuing his wife, albeit after a bloody fight across the Munyati River.

### **3.5.3.4 Task and Task accomplished in *Jekanyika***

When the hero *Jekanyika* is initiated, he decides not to marry as his mother wishes. He instead vows to track his father, whom he has never seen until he finds him. The road is hard and arduous. He has to cross vast plains and mountains. *Jekanyika* encounters wild animals and often goes hungry.

Twice, Jekanyika is taken captive after falling into the hands of Chief Chaitezvi and also Chief Chipezvero. Both Chiefs ask him to fight for them successfully in exchange for his freedom. He does this with distinction until he eventually meets his father in the last battle. Father and son unite. The main task is accomplished and the story ends.

### **3.5.3.5 Significance of the sequence Task and Task accomplished**

In comparing the development of the plot from exposition through complication to crisis in both the folktale and the novel, it is quite interesting to note that exactly the same motifemic pattern has been adopted and used by artists of both genres. The desire to achieve the task on hand has driven the plot in both genres.

### **3.5.4 Flight + Pursuit + Escape**

There are many functions which accumulate crises which eventually lead to a climax. These include flight on its own or flight + pursue + escape. The function is exemplified below.

#### **3.5.4.1 Flight and Pursuit and Escape in "Mukadzi nemurumenyoka" (Folktale 3 in Appendix)**

When Chenjerai's husband turns into a snake, she and her sister pick sticks and attempt to kill it. The snake charges at them. They flee with the snake in hot pursuit. On seeing other people nearby, the snake disappears into the grass. Chenjerai and her sister escape. They head straight to their home, leaving the snakeman sprawling on the grass.

#### **3.5.4.2 (Deceit) + Flight + Pursue + Escape in *Feso***

Feso, the novel's main character, disguised as a spirit from the underworld, scares and tricks Chief Pfumojena into letting go his jealously guarded daughter Chipochedenga. Feso and Chipochedenga flee. They are pursued by Chief Pfumojenas' warriors. The two reach Feso's home before the warriors catch up with them.

#### **3.5.4.3 Flight + Pursue + Escape in *Karikoga Gumiremiseve***

When Karikoga rescues his wife Marunjeya from the Ndebele kings court, they are dressed as Ndebele. Nobody suspects them of anything and so they flee. Their absence is only noticed days later. Immediately a group of warriors is instructed to pursue the couple.

The warriors catch up with the couple at Munyati river. A fierce battle ensues. Karikoga and Marunjeya win and they escape to their home leaving the Ndebele warriors either dead or drowning in the cascading fury of the flooded Munyati River.

#### **3.5.4.4 Significance of motifemes that lead to the climax**

These motifemes intensify conflict as well as generate tension and suspense. It is through these motifemes that the audience or readers of the folktale or novel identify and sympathize with the heroes. When there is tension and suspense the listener/reader becomes curious to know the story's outcome thus maintaining interest in it.

### **3.6 Resolution**

Resolution, the last aspect of plot, is the ending of the story. According to Olrik's

law of closing Dundes, (1965:131) a folktale moves from excitement to calm in its resolution. This is so with Shona folktales; they comply with the requirements set out in Olriks law of closing. Usually all Shona folktales are rounded off after reaching the climax. This is the period in which calm is restored. No loose ends and bits are left at the end of performance. No questions are left unanswered.

### **3.6.1 Resolution in "Mukadzi nemurumenyoka" (Folktale 3 in Appendix).**

When the tale comes to an end, Chenjerai sees for herself her husband change into a snake. Although when asked, Chenjerai's husband denies he is a changling, he turns into a snake when Chenjerai's sister sings the core-cliché "Kanga Mariya". The witnessing of the husband's antics in changing into a snake is a "revelation" (of the all along hidden fact) to his wife Chenjerai. This revelation is characteristic of a resolution. The snakeman is stoned to death. The persecution of Chenjerai's sister ends. There is peace and calm at last. The two sisters leave for their original home and normatively Chengerai marries a real and perfect man. She lives happily ever after. All ruffled ends are thus smoothed, so to speak.

In typical folktale manner, the tale ends with the closing formula, *Ndipo pakafira sarungano*. (There died the story teller).

### **3.6.2 Folktale influence on resolution in *Feso***

In this narrative the climax is reached when Chief Pfumojena is defeated in battle. The resolution there and then commences. The "lack" in the plot – Nyan'ombes' bachelorhood is liquidated when he marries Chief Pfumojenas' coveted daughter Chipochedenga. In this resolution the artist smoothens the end of the plot in three paragraphs. In the paragraphs Chief Nyan'ombe marches home triumphantly, rebuilds his court, annexes Pfumojenas' area of jurisdiction and rules peacefully. All matters are concluded.

The tale's end marked by the word "*Magumo*" (The end) ends in typical folktale style.

### **3.6.3 Folktale influence on resolution in *Karikoga Gumiremiseve***

The climax in this story is reached when Karikoga the hero engages the Ndebele warriors in a do or die battle across the Munyati River. The resolution follows thereafter.

After the defeat of the Ndebele warriors, conflict is resolved. The author devotes a whole chapter to winding off outstanding issues. After the decisive battle, Karikoga heads home, is heartily welcomed, but is asked to leave because his Chief fears Ndebele reprisals. He relocates far away, and is given an area to rule and becomes a successful Chief. This is the period of calm. Equilibrium is restored. The couple, Karikoga and Marunjeya, once together but separated by the Matabele raid are once again reunited.

Although the novel has an opening formula, it does not have one to close it. Either the author forgot to do so, or deliberately left it out adopting the style of the novel.

### **3.6.4 Folktale influence on resolution in "*Jekanyika*"**

In this novel, the climax and resolution are in the last chapter entitled "*Jekanyika anorwisa baba vake Dendera*". (Jekanyika fights his father, Dendera)

This climax is reached when father and son unknowingly square up in a fight with Jekanyika fighting for Chief Chaitezvi and Dendera (Alias Godzi) fighting on behalf of his warriors. From sunrise to noon Jekanyika (alias Hohodza) and Dendera engages in a blood and thunder battle. They only stop fighting when Godzi reveals that he is Dendera when he shouts, "*Hokoyo naDendera*". (Beware

of Dendera). Immediately conflict ends and in three pages the loose ends are tied. Jekanyika explains who he is and Dendera acknowledges that indeed Jekanyika of the Garwe (crocodile) totem is his son. Although Jekanyika is wounded and weary he is carried home on a rack. Chief Chaitezvi and his warriors are left in peace. For the first time in eighteen years Chief Dendera's warriors return home to once again fill the void they have left in their families.

The story ends with the closing formula, "*Ndipo pakafira sarungano.*" (That's where the story teller died.) This is typical folktale style.

### **3.6.5 Folktale influence on resolution in *Musango mune nyama***

The major conflict in this novel is between Chapakati the Hero and his step-mother Ndakaitedzva and her sons Jichidza and Mbengo. For the greater part of the plot Ndakaitedzva, in a bid to secure heritage and chieftainship for her sons, plots the downfall and death of Chapakati. The situation continuously gets complicated until the climax is reached when Ndakaitedzva accidentally poisons Chapakati's rivals, her own sons. Conflict then subsides. Ndakaitedzva commits suicide and conflict ends.

In the last five pages of the novel, in typical folktale style, all matters are clarified and brought to rest. Shortly after the burial of Ndakaitedzva a feast to bestow chieftainship on Chapakati is arranged and then thrown. Chapakati is handed Nhongonhema's coveted gun Chikwendengwende as well as the respected scepter of office and the traditional *ngundu* (chief's ceremonial hat), and before the Chief, in comes Cherai. She covers her face and head in the typical manner of a bride. Chapakati loves her and she becomes his wife. Calm is restored as all ends happily.

### 3.6.6 Folktale influence on resolution in *Ndinofa ndaedza*

To all intents and purposes, the climax in this novel is reached in Chapter Eleven when Revai the protagonist's warriors engage in combat with chief Chokupamba's warriors.

Conflict is resolved when Chief Chokupamba loses the battle and is captured. All loose ends are tied and all questions are answered. The wealth (mainly livestock) he stole from the late Tiritose (Revai's father's) estate is recovered and taken back to Tiritose's motherland where Revai patiently waits. After this victory Revai ascends to his clan's throne, left by his ailing and late grandfather Chief Machingauta. This happens in Chapter Thirteen, incidentally the novel's last chapter. People rejoice and feast over Revai's ascension (to the throne). Calm is restored.

### 3.6.7 Folktale influence on resolution in *Chemera Mudundundu*

The major conflict in this novel is between the Kapako family led by *Sekuru* Kapako on one hand and Victoria and Vasco on the other. The climax is reached when the two parties fight over the sale of livestock and Charles Kapako's rural home. After the fight, Victoria, *Sekuru* Kapako's daughter-in-law and her newly found lover and husband, flee to Harare and abandon the idea of selling the home and livestock. As this modern novel has a complex plot, the author devotes three chapters to the resolution although many issues are resolved in chapter eighteen. There are so many issues/matters to be resolved in this rather long (151 page) novel that the resolution is deservedly long. Be that as it may, the author resolves all conflict and ties all loose ends just as the folkstory teller does.

When Victoria's home selling move aborts *Sekuru* Kapako thanks his village head for standing by him during this trying time. *Sekuru* Kapako then goes on to sell most of the livestock at this home leaving only five head of cattle. This

effectively brings the issue to rest. It is learnt that Bernard, one of Victoria's sons, uses the proceeds from the cattle sales to buy a house in Mkoba, Gweru where he now works as a temporary teacher. In that very house, his sister Veronica's bride price is paid.

On the other hand, Victoria contracts and succumbs to Aids. She gets wheel chair bound and is thrown into a nursing home by her lover Vasco. While in the nursing home, her urban home is sold by Vasco. The shops are also sold and she is left without anything but illness. Therefore, in this resolution just like in the folktale, the hero *Sekuru Kapako* and his family are the winners. Victoria and Vasco lose. Tradition triumphs over western values. And when Vasco deserts Victoria and goes back to his home in Mozambique leaving the invalid on her death bed, all conflict ceases. The story ends in a reconciliation between Victoria and her children as Veronica and Bernard visit her during her last moments. Calm is restored in folktale style.

### **3.6.8 Significance of a lengthy resolution**

Whether a lengthy and detailed resolution is a merit or demerit is arbitrary. Some critics like Forster (cited in Msimang 1986:76) think that is a demerit as "characters go dead while he (the artist) is at work". It is however interesting to note that novels of the great English tradition also had a long line of falling action. Be that as it may, short and scanty resolutions are still good enough. A story that ends on a climax ends too abruptly for many Shona readers or listeners. They are satisfied with a resolution of the conflict therein.

Shona folktales usually have short resolutions. These resolutions usually culminate in death, marriage or the coronation of a king. The folktale "*Pimbiramano*" ends in the coronation of the hero. Likewise the heroes in *Karikoga Gumiremiseve*, *Musango mune nyama* and *Ndinofa ndaedza* end up crowned kings. This is clear folktale influence. In the folktale "*Mukadzi*



*nemurumenyoka*" the evil changeling and villain ends up killed. In *Karikoga Gumiremiseve*, *Musango mune nyama*, *Ndinofa Ndaedza* and *Chemera mudundundu* the wicked characters who are also the villains end up being killed or dead. It goes without saying that in both the folktale and novels in this study, heroes triumph while the antagonists suffer/falter or lose.

On the question of whether a lengthy or short resolution is desirable, it depends on whether the author thinks and feels it necessary or not. If an author explains the obvious, then the resolution is unnecessary and boring. But if the story contains mysteries and unclear issues then a detailed resolution is desirable.

Finally, it should be pointed out that three novels in this study namely *Feso*, *Karikoga Gumiremiseve* and *Jekanyika* have very short folktale type resolutions while *Musango mune nyama* and *Ndinofa Ndaedza* have fairly long resolutions. The novel *Chemera Mudundundu* has a very long and detailed resolution. There appears to be a positive correlation between the simplicity of plot and the resolution as well as the period/date of publication and the resolution. The early novels have simple plots and short resolutions while latter novels have more complex plots and longer and more detailed resolutions.

### **3.7 Unity of plot**

Orlik cited in Dundes (1964:134) asserts that there should be no loose organisation or uncertain action in the structure of a plot. Each narrative element must pave way for the other events in the story line. Orlik stresses unity of action and unity of time. In folktales this unity is determined by concentrating on the leading character, transitional details and images as folktales usually focus on certain events in the life of a hero. Scheub (1975:135) stresses the role played by legendary elements as interlocking details and images in bringing about coherence in the plot structure.

### **3.7.1 Concentration on the leading character in novels in this study**

In the six novels in this study, concentration is on the leading characters namely Feso, Karikoga, Jekanyika, Chapakati, Revai and perhaps Victoria. The first three characters are eponymous, clearly the leading character in their respective novels. In *Chemera Mudundundu* Victoria is apparently the main character but clearly not the hero.

The concentration on the leading character in novels that has been discussed above also occurs in folktales. For instance in the folktale "*Pimbiramano*" concentration is on the leading and eponymous characters Pimbiramano who is apparently the only character fully developed. Incidentally the folktale has an episodic plot in which the episodes are bound by concentrating on the leading character among other techniques. Thus the six novels in this study adopted the folktale technique of concentration on the leading character.

The novel *Musango mune nyama* is episodic. The episodes are about Chapakati's birth, Chapakati's fight with a crocodile, Chapakati's encounter with the savages- Jichidza and Mbengo-as well as that of Chapakati's fathers' death. It is concentration on the leading character that binds the episodes into the lively narrative that it is.

The technique and style of concentrating on the leading character that we find in this novel should have come from the folktale.

### **3.7.2 Transitional details and images**

Sheub (1975:135) says, "While transitional images and details are not as sophisticated as interlocking images and details in binding images together, they are nonetheless the most commonly used."

The basic transitional image is travelling or lapses in time.

In the folktale "*Pimbirimano*" the transitional image is travelling. Pimbirimano the hero travels to the field to gather tomatoes, travels to the grove to collect *mazhanje* and also travels to a foreign land. On each occasion he travels, he comes back home.

In the folktale "*Gore renzara*", Hushambiri the main character travels from his home to the claypot hidden in the forest. He does so a number of times. Also, in the tale "*Mukadzi nemurumenyoka*", Chenjerai's sister travels from the field back home to collect porridge for the baby. She makes these errands a number of times. The same transitional detail of travelling is found in some novels in this study as detailed below.

### **3.7.3 Transitional details / images in the Shona novels in this study**

It is in the novel *Musango mune nyama* that transitional images resemble those in the folktales whose transitional images have just been discussed. In the novel, Chapakati the hero leaves home for the pool in Zozori River and comes back. He also leaves home and travels with his father to Gwirawadya Mountain and comes back. In yet another episode he leaves home with his half brothers on a hunting mission and then returns home alone this time around.

In the novel *Karikoga Gumiremiseve, Feso, Jekanyika* and *Ndinofa Ndaedza* the main characters each make one long journey until the 'lack' in the narrative is liquidated. These long and single journeys that are punctuated by struggles and victories, resemble the journeys the main characters in the epic, romance, allegory and picaresque make. It is however pertinent to point out that in some Shona folktales e.g. "*Gudo naTuro*" in Hodza (1983: 30-52 the main character also makes a single and long journey.

There is thus a great possibility that inspiration for the transitional images in Shona novels in this study could have come from the folktale or more so from the predecessors of the Western novel like the epic, romance etc.

#### **3.7.4 Legendary elements as interlocking details and images**

Interlocking details and images bind episodes together in folktales. They complement the device of concentration on the leading character that also serves the same purpose.

As an example, in the folktale "*Pimbirimano*", the hero Pimbirimano is born holding a magic horn. When he blows it, the horn tells him how to overcome obstacles in his way. The horn is consulted in each of the four episodes that comprise the tale. It thus helps bind the episodes together. The same device is used to bind episodes in the novels *Karikoga Gumiremiseve* and *Musango mune nyama* as indicated below.

#### **3.7.5 Legendary elements in the Shona novels in this study**

In the novel *Karikoga Gumiremiseve*, we find a legendary spear, a bow and ten legendary arrows. The spear, picked from the rubble and rubbish, belonged to one of Karikoga's ancestors. With the spear, bow and arrows, Karikoga fends for himself, defends himself and fights and wins the decisive battle against the Ndebele warriors. The legendary weapons help him achieve the almost impossible tasks he faces in spectacular ways.

In *Musango mune nyama*, Chapakati the hero is given a legendary spear (incidentally also called Chapakati) from Portuguese East Africa. The spear is so deadly that when it is used to kill, it pierces the heart of its target. With it, Chapakati kills a crocodile and then a leopard. This feat would not have been accomplished by a youth of Chapakati's age using an "ordinary" spear. Chapakati

also uses the spear to free himself when tied up and buried in a burrow by two savages, his half brothers. The mythical feats of this spear bind the three episodes in the novel in typical folktale style.

There are no legendary elements in the other four novels. In this regard, they deviate from the folktale genre and steep more to the realm of the Western novel.

### **3.7.6 Significance of unity of plot**

Most Shona folktales are short and said to lack motifemic depth. They however have sequential depth. In order to achieve sequential depth, a number of moves are crafted in a single tale. These moves are joined together by transitional and interlocking details. The plot of the tale is unified by concentration on the leading character. This unity of plot is strengthened by interlocking and transitional images. Legendary elements also enhance unity of plot. It is this device that has been adopted and adapted by the authors of some novels in this study.

## **3.8 Conclusion**

The discussion in this chapter has revealed crucial links between the folktale and the Shona novel. Features of the plot like exposition, functions which form the body of the plot as well as the resolution and unity of plot that are found in the folktale have been found in use in the novels under investigation. Although the origin of the plot of the novel is not in folklore the simple plot of the folktale has had tremendous influence on the plot of the Shona novel.

The next chapter looks at setting.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SETTING

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the locale of Shona folktales, define setting, examine setting in Shona folktales and as well investigate the influence of Shona folktales setting on the Shona novel. Features of resemblance in the setting in Shona folktales and novels will be identified and commented upon.

#### 4.2 Setting in general

Like all human beings, even in literature, characters do not exist in isolation. Social interaction in places of work, at home etc, give human beings their identity. Likewise, stories must necessarily include descriptions of places, objects and backgrounds that are the setting. Setting improves credibility; the events of the work become more believable.

Setting is generally a person's surroundings; physical, social and temporal. Abrams, (1981:175) defines setting as "...the general locale, historical time and social circumstances in which he occurs."

Setting is at times referred to as milieu or environment of the story. Setting comprises three aspects. It has to do with the place in which the story happens and with the time or historical period in which the incidents described are supposed to have happened. Setting also has to do with the social circumstances which give rise to the action or against which the events must be seen and interpreted. In a tale, setting establishes its cultural context. It is in this light that Roberts (1995:88) summarises setting as "...the natural, manufactured, political, cultural and temporal environment. Including everything that characters know and own."

Thus, setting is one of the most crucial aspects of a narrative. It not only gives us the locale, time and social circumstances of the narrative as pointed out above, but is also important as it is relevant to other aspects of the narrative, especially characterisation, plot, theme and style. Setting is also important in establishing the right atmosphere or mood for the narrative. As an example, a narrative set in pre-colonial Zimbabwe of Munhumutapa's time may not have characters riding trains, using cellphones or speaking English. As a result, it must be appreciated that setting has a direct bearing on the artist's style as it involves a particular diction used by the characters. Thus, setting also underlies the type of characters to be found in such a novel.

Cohen (1973:29) sees setting in a similar way. He observes that "the setting will explain the social, moral or religious code through which characters operate." Setting may even suggest a character's social status or position. A character's social status may also dictate their mode of dress and manner of speech. The character's psychological make up is often reflected by shifts of setting.

Finally, it should be pointed out that if a work of art is to be true to life then the artist should outline his milieu clearly and convincingly.

### **4.3 Setting in Shona Folktales**

Three aspects of setting in Shona folktales namely the social circumstances (for example, customs, traditions and beliefs), the locale and time of happening will be looked at.

#### **4.3.1 Social Circumstances as Setting**

These include descriptions of the way of life, beliefs and traditions of the society described. This aspect of setting therefore involves the society's way of life at the

time and place in which the story takes place.

During performance, one of the folkstory tellers' aim is to entertain and educate her audience. The audience should learn a lesson from the narrative. In order to learn the lesson well and easily, the audience must be able to understand the social circumstances of the characters in order to relate to them and to feel that what happened to the characters may just as well happen to anybody. Folktale characters operate between the fantastic world and the real world. The narrator and audience know the social institutions within which the folktale characters act, making the tales credible.

In Shona folktales, the locale and time aspects are usually vaguely described. This is so in the interest of remoteness and it is quite important that these tales be set in the distant past. In order for children, usually the target audience, to believe the weird impossibilities often found in these tales, the performer will need to tell them that the folktale world and time in the story was a little different from that of today. The result is that the children will accept the tales and morals without question.

Finally, it must be pointed out that social circumstances include pointers about the social status of various characters. This includes their mode of dress and manner of speech. As pointed out above, this also influences style or the right form of speech; and as Canonici (1991:147) exemplifies, "a commoner speaks differently from royalty"

#### **4.3.2 Setting as place where the story takes place.**

As pointed out in 4.3.1 above, the locale of the folktale is normally described vaguely to add to the mythical and fantastic atmosphere of the tale. In an effort to make the story convincing, many narrators locate the action in an area close to the audience. They usually choose a place that contains elements of wonder or fear.



As an illustration, in the folktale "*Pimbirimano*", Pimbirimano the main character trespasses onto mysterious land, a celestial place outside our real world. The setting is quite appropriate, as the place described is able to keep the children's fantasy alive.

### 4.3.3 Setting as time when story takes place

In Shona folktales, the opening formula sets the story in mythical time. This gives scope to fanciful play and fantasy. The narrative time is characterised by the remote past tense. Special phrases in the remote past tense are used to give effect to this requirement. The remote past is quite ideal for folktales as it gives credibility to the story. When children listen to the story they should really think that these things actually happened. This helps them to accept the story's moral.

The two most popular Shona phrases for setting the folktale in the remote past are *Kare kare zvako* (Long, long ago) and *Kwaivepo* (There once was). Although these opening formulae are not always found in all Shona folktales, the remote past is still maintained by the use of the remote past tense formatives e.g. /-ka- / in *Pakange* (There was).

Although in folktales the story is set in the distant past, the artist must still bring it live to his audience. The performer tries to bring the action to the present time. Everything must be seen to be happening today and now. This is achieved through the use of dramatic dialogue or direct speech. The artist takes on the personality of the human or animal characters. Finnegan observes the same. She notes, "The narrator (takes) on the personalities of the various characters; acting out their dialogue, their facial expressions, even their gestures and reactions..." (Finnegan, 1970:383-4)

#### 4.3.4 Folktale influence on setting in the Shona novel.

The novels in this study clearly show some folktale tendencies in their setting. Places are described vaguely. Some are not even described, they are just mentioned.

Stories are set in the remote past and some incidents in the plots border on weird improbabilities. Examples of folktale influence on setting in the Shona novel are given below.

##### 4.3.4.1 Folktale influence on setting in *Feso*

The novel starts with the formula *Kare kare* (Long, long ago) depicting time in the remote past. In the preface the author writes,

Asi (vanhu ava) vanomirira vanhu vekare, vachionesa tsika nemagariro evanhu.

(Mutswairo, 1956:4)

(But [these characters] stand for our ancestors and reflect our traditional life style and customs.)

The statement makes the narrative relevant and credible (to the reader).

As regards the locale, the story happens in Mazowe Valley, near the Glendale Railway Station, along the Mazowe river and near the Mazowe Dam. The Hota people resided in this area then, but today a significant fraction of these people

.... vagere mudunhu riri Marondera rinonzi Chihota Ruzevha.

(Mutswairo, 1956:1)

(...are now settled in an area of the Marondera district called Chihota Reserve.)

All these places can be located in Zimbabwe today while the Hota people are indeed found near Marondera today in the Chihota Communal Lands. This realism is apparently borrowed from the western novel.

The social and environmental circumstances are based on the history of Zimbabwe. The circumstances are historically correct and convincing. These circumstances take the form of wars of conquest between local chiefs, the existence of the vaHota clan as well as the abundance of poles and firewood. These are historical facts and realities the Shona, especially the Zezuru, people identify with and know.

#### **4.3.4.2 Folktale influence on setting in *Karikoga Gumiremiseve***

The opening formula *Kare kare* (Long, long ago) depicts a setting in the remote past. The formula proceeds with the words *vaRungu vasati vauya* (before the coming of the whites). The story happened well before 1890. This remote past setting is in tandem with the folktale genre.

The story happens at no specific place. Karikoga the hero's home is not even described. The locale is just described generally. The story takes place in two places only namely Karikoga's home (somewhere in Mashonaland, east of the Munyati river) and the unidentified Ndebele king's court (somewhere in Matebeleland, west of the Munyati River). This type of setting is a result of direct influence of the folktale style of art.

The social circumstances in the novel are true to time. The story happens during the time of the Shona-Ndebele ethnic wars in pre-colonial Zimbabwe. All Shona readers identify with this historical reality in Zimbabwe.

Finally, the artefacts that are used by the characters clearly make the reader think of time in the remote past. Karikoga uses a spear, a bow and arrows. Shambamuto puts on *nhembe* (skin apron).

#### 4.3.4.3 Folktale influence on setting in *Jekanyika*

The narrative is in the remote past and is characterised by remote past tense formatives as in the following:

*Ndakataurira kamwe kamuremwaremwa kakauya ndichangobva mukupona kuti ndakapiwa mwanasikana.*

(Mugugu, 1968:5)

(I told one spy that came immediately after I had delivered that I had delivered a baby girl)

Further, the pictures on pages 23, 40, 61 and 74 (Mugugu 1968) depict people of the remote past. They wear skin aprons (*nhembe*) and other ancient people's regalia.

The narrative ends in a typical folktale closing formula, *Ndipo pakafira sarungano* (There died the story teller). This shows that the author was actually telling a folktale.

The story in *Jekanyika* happens primarily near and along the Zambezi River. Dendera, the hero's father's kingdom is described as being between Burutsamwana Mountain to the east, Chebadze Mountain to the west, Mutungagore Mountain to the south and Kudzainhewe River to the north. This description is steeped in the realism of the western novel.

#### 4.3.4.4 Folktale influence on setting in *Musango mune nyama*.

Like the other novels discussed above, *Musango mune nyama* is set in the remote past. Although there is no opening formula, Hamutyinei the author clearly spells out the time when the story happens. This is on the first page, in the first chapter!

*Ndiyo nguva yamakare-kare. Kwakanga kusina manapukeni...*

(Hamutyinei, 1989:3-4)

(It was long, long ago; before the advent of the napkin).

In Zimbabwe, it is that time before the coming of the white man.

The story happens in Nhongonhema village situated near Gwirawadya Mountain and the Zozori River. The setting is realistic and therefore suited more to the modern novel than the folktale.

The social circumstances in the story are that of traditional chieftainship and the rivalry in polygamy. The social circumstances are easily identified with the Shona way of life. There are many novels and folktales on polygamy and chieftainship. Its not clear whether the social circumstances and theme in Jekanyika are folktale inspired.

#### 4.3.4.5 Folktale influence on setting in *Ndinofa Ndaedza*

The story is set in the remote past when people put on skin clothes and used skin blankets. Revai the hero also sleeps under a skin/hide blanket.

*“Nhewe yaaifuka akaisiyawo iri mumbamo.”*

(Honzeri, 1991:8)

(The hide he used as a blanket was left in the hut.)

The use of spears as weapons for defense and conquest also pertains to times long, long ago.

The story happens in northern Zimbabwe, close to the Ruya River and just by the Mutenure mountain. The setting is realistic.

#### **4.3.4.6 Significance of folktale influence on the setting in Shona novels.**

The setting of a story in the distant past is clearly influenced by the folktale. This influence, however, does not appear to have any adverse effect on the Shona novels as it is the normal trend for narratives to be in the past. Narratives are usually accounts of past events.

The geographical setting in *Karikoga Gumiremiseve* is typical folktale style. That in *Feso* appears quite realistic. The setting in the other novels is inclined more to the realism of the novel than to the folktale although the deceptions seem rather inadequate and fictitious. It should be pointed out that vague and scanty descriptions suit and incline more to folktales while they lend less credibility to novels. A setting that is not adequately set and described makes a story less realistic.

The social setting which seems to be influenced to a significant degree by the folktale appears not to have any adverse effect on the Shona novel. It helps to ground a story in an appropriate and convincing background.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

Shona novelists in this study have used well the remote past setting, the vague description of local and relevant social circumstances that come from the folktale genre. It is clear that, with regard to setting, the folktale genre was adopted and adapted to suit the circumstances prevailing when the story was written. The

discernible trend is that the folktale style was used more by the early novelists and less by the latter writers as they tended to adopt more from the realism of the western novel. *Chemera mudundundu* the latest publication in this study has very little folktale influence on its setting. The story is set in modern day Harare, the places are realistic and social circumstances are equally modern.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CHARACTERISATION

#### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, discussion will focus on characters and methods of character portrayal. Shona folktale characters will be analysed and in the final analysis focus will be on folktale influence on characterisation in the Shona novel.

#### 5.2 Characterisation in general.

Literature is about people. People in literature may be fictitious or real. They are the result of an author's imagination. People in literature may be represented by animals or even stock characters.

Three things describe a successful literary work. They are the author's ability to produce a good story (i.e. plot), to convey a clear message (theme) in good style and to create images of life like characters. This is not easily achieved .A good author should know and understand the nature of human beings so that the characters will appear plausible, representing people in a balanced manner. Readers easily identify with life-like characters.

##### 5.2.1 Characterisation defined

In literary art, characterisation is about, "...the creation of images of imaginary persons". (Shaw 1972, cited in Msimang, 1987:99) This means that when an author writes a narrative, he thinks of the type of portrait he intends to paint in the work. The characters therein, will therefore have a chosen and specific physical outlook, a moral standpoint and an emotional disposition. These imaginary persons must be grounded in reality in order to convince the reader. With regard



to the credibility of characters Canonici, 1993:149 observes:

In order to be convincing, the imaginary characters must be steeped in life and in reality... They must be true, not so much to the world of our experiences but to the world in which the artist created and placed them. Characters, to be credible, must also be dynamic.

In summary, characterisation can be said to be the whole range of techniques that an artist uses in literary work. The techniques chosen, aim at painting a character who, when perceived by the reader / audience, should appear true to life and be convincing.

### **5.2.2 Character portrayal methods.**

According to Roberts (1995:64-5) authors use five ways to portray characters. These are:

- (a) actions: what characters do e.g. walking in the woods is recreation for most people.
- (b) personal and environmental descriptions: appearance and environment reveal much about a characters' socio-economic station but also tell us a lot about character traits.
- (c) Statements by other characters: By studying what characters say about each other, one can enhance their understanding of the character being described.
- (d) dramatic statements and thoughts: Speeches of most characters produce material from which conclusions about their personality can be drawn.
- (e) and statements by the author speaking as story-teller or observer: What the author says about a character is usually accurate, as the authorial voice can be accepted as fact.

### **5.2.2.1 The direct method of character portrayal**

In this method, the artist describes or comments about a character. The artist says what a character looks like physically and how and what a character feels and thinks. There will be nothing to hide to the writer and nothing for the reader to discover.

Monologues in which confessions are made are typical of the direct method of character portrayal.

### **5.2.2.2 The indirect method of character portrayal**

Neethling (1990) says that in the indirect method of character portrayal

Characters are defined by their actions or their words or dialogues (dramatic method, which is the method used in drama): different characters are compared and contrasted on the basis of the actions they follow. (Neethling, 1979:319)

In this context, a character's name is also often a marker of his qualities. Folktale characters sometimes define or describe the attributes of their bearers. For example; in the folktale "Pimbirimano", the name aptly describes what the hero, Pimbirimano does. "The name Pimbirimano is made up of the ideophone *pimbiri* and the noun *mano* (plan). Pimbirimano therefore means one who plans on the spur of the moment." (Kahari, 1990:285) In the folktale "Pimbirimano", this is exactly what Pimbirimano does. Each time he meets an obstacle, he immediately blows his horn and is advised of the appropriate solution.

In other Shona folktales not cited in this study, the main characters act as their names tell. In the tale "Chimedzanemburungwe", the eponymous hero Chimedzanemburungwe leaves no stone unturned and succeeds in all he does.

Nothing stops him as his name suggests. In the tale "Mbimbindoga", the hero Mbimbindoga (bigoted) strongly believes in something so much that he doesn't listen to reason; he simply bulldozes his way.

In the novels in this study, Karikoga, the hero in *Karikoga Gumiremiseve* is born, but unfortunately his parents died immediately after. He is raised as an orphan. Because he has no siblings or known relatives, he is all alone throughout the story as is suggested by his name.

In the novel *Jekanyika*, Jekanyika the hero crosses mountains and plains in search of his father. The name Jekanyika itself means "one who cuts across the country = traveler/explorer." (Kahari, 1990:182).

The direct method of character portrayal used in *Karikoga Gumiremiseve* and *Jekanyika* is used in like manner in the folktales discussed above. This implies that the novelists were influenced by the folktale genre.

### 5.3 Types of characters

With regard to types of characters, Roberts says:

No character can present an entire life history of a protagonist, nor can each character in a story get 'equal time' for development. Accordingly, some characters grow to be full and alive, while others remain shadowy .... E.M. Forster in *Aspects of the Novel* calls the two major types "round" and "flat.

(Roberts, 1995:63)

The implication of this statement is that in any narrative we get two types of characters namely the dominant and lively one and the shadowy ones i.e. round and flat ones respectively.

### **5.3.1 Round characters**

Abrams, (1981:20-1) summarises a round character as being a complex person in temperament and motivation. He resembles people in real life and often surprises us. This character is not readily predictable and changes as circumstances change. Such characters are discussed as revolving or dynamic.

Forster further says, “The test of a round character is whether it is capable of surprising us in a convincing way. If it never surprises then it is flat. If it does not convince then it is flat pretending to be round.” (Forster, 1974:73)

A round character is therefore one that surprises us and resembles people in real life.

### **5.3.2 Flat characters**

Roberts writes that:

Flat characters do not grow. They remain the same because they may be stupid, or insensitive or lack knowledge or insight. They end where they begin and are static, not dynamic. Flat characters are not worthless, however, for they usually highlight the development of the round characters. Usually flat characters are minor (e.g. relatives, acquaintances, functionaries) although not all minor characters are necessarily flat.

(Roberts, 1995:65)

Canonici adds another dimension to the definition of flat characters. He says:

Such characters are not true to life... Many folktale characters are stock

characters or flat characters; they are immediately recognized. They can be described in a single sentence or even a single word e.g. The greedy and stupid cannibal.

(Canonici, 1993:147)

In a nutshell, flat characters are therefore not dynamic and minor. They are easily recognized and not true to life.

### **5.3.2.1 Round and flat characters in folktales in this study**

In Shona folktales, most characters are flat, although here and there round characters are also found.

In the folktale "Pimbirimano", (folktale 1 in Appendix), Pimbirimano's mother, though nameless, is a round character. She behaves naturally in response to changing circumstances. Although expectant, this woman loves her husband. She also enters into a bond with a hyena. She does this for a favour-to get a supply of (buck) meat. Pimbirimano's mother promises to give the hyena the baby she expects. This, she doesn't tell her husband. This incident reveals that she is not only unfaithful (to her husband) but also hates her child.

The main characters in the folktales in this study are flat. They are constructed round single ideas, expressible in single words or sentences. For example in the folktale "Mukadzi nemurume nyoka", Chenjerai's husband-the villain-is a predictably evil and malicious changling. In the folktale "Gore renzara", Hushambiri is a predictable selfish glutton. In Pimbirimano it is predictable that whatever the obstacles he encounters, Pimbirimano the hero will triumph.

### **5.3.2.2 Round and flat characters in novels in this study**

The predictability that we find in "Pimbirimano", the hero in the folktale of the

same name is what we find in the main characters Karikoga, Feso, Jekanyika, Chapakati and Revai who appear in the first five novels in this study. As one reads these novels one gets the impression that these heroes will triumph in their endeavours. Indeed they do so, the heroes Feso, Karikoga, Jekanyika and Chapakati possess so much extra-ordinary physical and mental strength that they are assured of success in all they do. In addition, Karikoga and Chapakati also have legendary items that help them achieve feats outside the ordinary. Although these characters pretend to be round they are infact flat. They surprise us but do not convince us.

In the novel *Chemera Mudundundu*, there are two flat characters namely *Sekuru Kapako* and *Vasco Antonio*. *Sekuru Kapako* stands for traditional custom while *Vasco Antonio* stands for the love of money pertinent to modern society. The two can be described in a few words as the steadfast traditionalist *Sekuru Kapako* and the selfish and avaricious spendthrift *Vasco Antonio*.

In the same novel, we have the main and round character, *Victoria Kapako*. She changes with time and circumstances. She has time to agree and disagree with her first husband Charles, especially over her reluctance to leave her job and join him in the family business. Before Charles' death, she is in harmony with *Sekuru Kapako*, her children and the greater Kapako family but changes completely, immediately after Charles' death when she marries *Vasco Antonio*. She then has time to love *Vasco* and agree with his plans. Not much later, she disagrees with *Vasco* over principles of business and other family matters. Throughout the story, *Victoria* learns and develops. At the end, she realises that *Vasco* does not love her but her money. She also realises her mistake in forsaking *Sekuru Kapako* and her children. She however elects to reconcile with her children and the *Kapako* family. She is indeed unpredictable and convincing.

The portrayal of flat characters that pretend to be round appears to be a carryover from the folktale genre.

## **5.4 Kinds of characters**

Characters are classified according to their function in the story. Since a good story is built on conflict and opposition of forces, the two major roles will be those of the hero and of the villain or anti-hero. Secondary or minor characters may also be found. These are commonly called foils.

### **5.4.1 Hero**

The hero or main character is also called the protagonist. He is the hero if he wins and the victim if he loses. He receives the most attention from the artist.

Canonici, (1993:148) aptly describes the hero. He says, “He is centre of the narrative; everything in the story focuses on him; he is the centre of the action and identifies with important element of theme.”

### **5.4.2 Villain**

The villain is only second in importance to the hero. The villain is also a main character. He / She is also called antagonist in drama. Msimang, (1986:104) spells out the role of the hero. He says, “He features in the story with the purpose of thwarting the very interests that the hero is trying to promote. He constantly puts obstacles in the way of the hero.”

The villain’s actions therefore help to generate suspense and tension, adding dynamism to the plot. Finally, it must be added that a villain is usually evil than good. It is he whose actions reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the hero.

### **5.4.3 Foil**

A foil is a minor or secondary character. Cohen (1973:185) says that; “A foil

serves as a commentary upon, or a supporter of the hero or villain.”

A foil may be an individual or a group of characters.

## **5.5 Folktale characters**

To date, novels in Shona maybe with the exception of Shanje Ndimauraise (Chikowo 1981), have only employed human beings as characters whereas Shona folktales have used animate objects-be they human or animal, as well as inanimate objects like trees and rocks. Because the world of the folktale is intermediate, i.e. it is between the real and fantastic worlds, it therefore shares characters from both realms. The novel purpots to represent only the real world and in real life inanimate objects are not known to possess human traits.

Canonici, (1993:15) asserts that folktale characters are flat. He says, “Both main and secondary characters in folktales are often flat characters: they do not change or develop, do not surprise us; they are mostly type-cast and predictable.”

## **5.6 Characters with supernatural powers**

Shona folktales are set in the everyday human world. Many of the characters are fabulous. These characters are supernatural. They have powers which enable them to practically do anything-nothing is impossible to them; they accomplish feats that are highly improbable in real life. Characters with supernatural powers in selected folktales and novels in this study are discussed below.

### **5.6.1 Characters with supernatural powers in "Pimbirimano"**

Pimbirimano, the eponymous hero in the tale, is born and bred under suspicious and mysterious circumstances. The hero is born holding a magic horn. This horn had been swallowed by his mother while he was still in her womb. After delivery,



the boy wakes up, sits and talks there and then. This is quite unusual. In addition, Pimbirimano asks his mother not to give him a name, but asks the horn to give him a name instead. The horn pronounces the name Pimbirimano.

In three episodes, the magic horn helps Pimbirimano escape death by a whisker. Three times he is trapped, and each time a hyena lies in ambush for him. Pimbirimano outwits his evil mother and the hyena using the pieces of advice the horn suggests to him.

Finally, in a break from normal practice, Pimbirimano's adventures one day take him on a visit to a celestial body. This departure from the normal laws of nature allows the impossible and improbable to happen. This introduces fantasy.

### **5.6.2 Characters with supernatural powers in "Mukadzi nemurume nyoka" (folktale 3 in Appendix)**

In this folktale, the husband changes from human form into a snake and then from snake into a human being. This only happens when a particular song is sung.

Many examples of characters with supernatural powers abound in Shona folktales. In the anthologies consulted in this research, a number of characters are changlings. In the tale "Vasikana nevakomana shumba", "Mukadzi neshumba munhu" and "Chikava chaipinduka chichiva munhu" (Hodza, 1983) the suitors therein are changlings; human beings changing into lions and a jackal respectively.

### **5.6.3 Supernatural folktale type of characters in *Karikoga Gumiremiseve*.**

In the novel *Karikoga Gumiremiseve*, Karikoga the hero is born with odd body marks, namely ten warts from which the 'surname' Gumiremiseve is coined. The circumstances on which Karikoga is born are as superstitious and mysterious as

those in which Pimbirimano is born. Like Pimbirimano, Karikoga is the only child.

In the narrative, Karikoga performs nigh-impossible feats. At a very tender age he fights and defeats the might and fiery-tempered “king” of the herd-boys, Benyumundiro. At the age of eighteen he single-handedly kills a lion. Further, he travels to distant Matebeleland on his own and rescues his wife Marunjeya from the captivity of the mighty and high Ndebele king.

Finally, Karikoga fights and defeats scores of Ndebele warriors in the battle at Munyati River. He succeeds, all alone, in this mammoth task and only gets assistance from Marunjeya, who hacks to death only one of the survivors of the scores of warriors. Indeed the character Karikoga Gumiremiseve is modelled on those of the folktale.

#### **5.6.4 Supernatural folktale type of characters in *Musango mune nyama*.**

In this novel, Chapakati the hero has extra-ordinary physical strength which he uses to accomplish very difficult tasks. Besides physical strength, Chapakati also has an extra-ordinary spear named Chapakati. The spear is so deadly that when used it pierces the heart of its target.

In this story, the lad Chapakati fights a crocodile until it lets loose Cherai, its victim’s leg. In another episode, Chapakati fights and kills a leopard. In both cases the spear pierces the hearts of the target creatures. The feats that this lad accomplishes are those that fully-grown men hardly accomplish. He is a character of supernatural powers and ability. This characterisation is typical of the folktale.

### 5.6.5 Supernatural folktale type of characters in *Jekanyika*

In this novel, the youthful and eighteen year old Jekanyika crosses vast mountains and lands in pursuit of his father. This is unbelievable. The courage is dazzling and unheard of. No eighteen year old dares undertake such a difficult task. Further, during the initiation ceremony prior to his departure on the 'great trek', Jekanyika is courageous and unmoved when an elder draws a crocodile on Jekanyika's chest using live red-hot irons. Unlike Jekanyika, other youths cry, wail, shiver or withdraw their candidature.

In similar feats of courage and bravery, the young Jekanyika fights with distinction in Chief Chaitezvi's army often outwitting the chief himself regarding tactics of battle. At the end, Jekanyika volunteers to fight chief Godzi when all other warriors are reluctant. Such courage and bravery is incredible. Undoubtedly the character Jekanyika resembles folktale characters.

### 5.6.6 Supernatural folktale type of characters in *Ndinofa Ndaedza*.

When Revai and his grandfather Chief Machingauta visit the sacred *muuyu* (baobab) tree they crouch and Chief Machingauta recites a chant to his ancestors. At the end of the recitation, he claps his hands and then something unusual happens.

*Vachiombera kudaro zimuti rakazunguzika ndokubva pazaruka chimusiwo.*

(Honzeri, 1991: 84)

(As Chief Machingauta was clapping the big tree shook and a door opened.)

The feat Chief Machingauta accomplishes is fantastic. It is typical of the

folktale world.

## **5.7 Impromptu marriages in folktales.**

Folktales are littered with impromptu marriages. “The idea that characters who have never really fallen in love should marry at the end of the story is a carryover from the traditional folktale where it is possible for a male character to win a wife in a contest.” (Kahari, 1990: 143)

In the folktale "*Pimbirimano*", Pimbirimano is given all he needs after a showdown with the chief. He is given all he wants namely cattle, goats, sheep, fowls, a wife and servants. He marries and also becomes chief.

In many other folktales in the collections consulted, the main characters, especially the heroes, end up marrying girls they never proposed love to. An example is the pimpled and scabbied Chinyamapezi who marries the chief's daughter after accomplishing a set task. (Hodza, 1983: 108-14).

### **5.7.1 Impromptu (folktale) type of marriage in *Feso***

In the novel *Feso*, Feso the hero travels far to seek a bride for his chief. He arrives at Chief Pfumojena's court and through folktale type wiles and guile, he escapes with Pfumojena's daughter, the beautiful Chipochedenga. Feso takes her home, and in folktale style, she immediately becomes the chief's wife. This happens without the chief proposing love to the beauty as is the norm in life. This impromptu marriage with no proposal, no bride price paying, is typical of the folktale world.

### **5.7.2 Other marriages in novels in this study.**

The marriage in *Karikoga Gumiremiseve* is well motivated. Karikoga takes time

to and proposes love to Marunjeya. Marunjeya also takes time to decide on who to love, old Shambamuto or Karikoga. She falls for the youthful Karikoga who then arranges to mortgage his labour as a substitute for bride price for her since he is poor.

Equally motivated is the marriage in *Chemera Mudundundu* in which Victoria marries Vasco. In the story Vasco calculatingly proposes love to Victoria. Victoria takes her time to decide on marrying Vasco. Eventually she does and the two legally marry. This marriage is different from the impromptu folktale type marriage discussed above.

An interesting type of marriage is the one we find in *Musango mune nyama*. At first sight, it would appear like the impromptu folktale type but on a second look it appears not.

In this story, Chapakati the hero marries Cherai. The two live in the same neighbourhood. Earlier on, in one episode Chapakati saves Cherai's life when she is caught by a crocodile in a pool. The two never engage in love talk and at no time does either party show love for the other. But, at the end of the narrative when Chapakati is enthroned we see Cherai advance to the just enthroned chief to present a love token-a green leaf placed on the chief's ceremonial hat .

*Akasimudza shizha riya ndokuriti pamusoro pengundu ya  
Chapakati, nechepakati, nechepakatai payo, dzi.*

(Hamutyinei, 1989:132)

(She raised a leaf and placed it square on Chapakati's hat).

In the next paragraph it is learnt that:

*Vakapembera mweya ndokubva vamuisa mumba maMandisema*

*mhururu ichira.*

(Hamutyinei, 1989: 133)

[The people ullulated in praise of the bride whom they then placed in Mandisema' (her mother in-laws) hut.]

In this incident, Cherai simply and silently declares love for Chapakati. This manner of love proposed is traditionally known as *kuganha*. In this type of love proposal, the would be fiancée is not supposed to reject the proposal. Expectedly, Chapakati accepts Cherai's proposal and the two marry there and then. Thus, although this marriage is fast tracked, it is not folktale. It is normative.

## 5.8 Conclusion

In the six novels in this study, the round characters are depicted according to the Western convention in that the authors use the omniscient point of view with the result that we know what the characters in the individual books think and feel.

On the contrary, flat characters in novels are depicted in the manner of the folktale. The characters are easily remembered as they are attractive, fascinating and predictable. Forster sums up these advantages. He writes:

One great advantage of flat characters is that they are easily recognized whenever they come in-recognized by the readers' emotional eye, not by the visual eye which merely notes the recurrence of a proper name. A second advantage is that they are easily remembered by the reader afterwards. They remain in his mind as unalterable for the reason that they were not changed by circumstances; which give them in retrospect a comforting quality and preserve them when the book that produced them may decay.

(Forster, 1962: 74)

When characterisation is looked at, a folktale resembles a play more than a novel. The folktale teller plays the part of each character with the result that it is not necessary to describe characters. When folktales are reduced to writing (see those in Appendix) the characters in them appear vaguely portrayed. This is because the missing details are fleshed out during performance. Many devices are used by performers in projecting the characters.

The foremost of these devices is mimicry. When used by talented performers mimicry gives humour and vividness to a whole tale. The vividness mimicry lends to a tale is further enhanced by gestures, bodily movements etc. the performer may employ in performance.

The inevitable conclusion is that portraying novel characters in folktale manner produces less convincing and inferior characters. Gaps in folktale characterisation are filled in as the tale is dramatised. This does not happen when an individual reads a novel. Folktale characters represent two worlds-the fabulous and the real, whereas novels focus on the individual in a real world. This influence tends to be negative.

It goes without saying that characterisation in the novels in this study has been greatly inspired by the characterisation in folktales. The influence appears more in the earlier novels than those published later.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION

#### 6.1 Introduction

Comments in the general conclusion of this study will fall into three categories. First, comments on the theories adopted and the aim of this study will be made then remarks on the findings and observations made during the course of this study will be made and finally general concluding comments will be made.

#### 6.2 Comments on theories used in this study.

One of the study's objectives is to investigate the applicability of Propp, Scheub and Olrik's models in the analysis of the structure of Shona folktales. It has been shown in the first and third chapters that theories which were successfully applied not only to Russian and American Indian folktales but also Zulu, Xhosa, Tsonga and Southern Sotho folktales can also be successfully applied to Shona folktales. Fortune's (1974) application of the Proppian and Scheubian model in a Shona folktale as well as the detailed exemplification of their applicability cited in this discourse are enough testimony. Despite the convincing application of the models, it has been noted in the course of this research that it would be better to apply the Scheubian and Proppian models separately [not jointly as did Fortune (1974)] in a tale. This is because if the two approaches' different structural units are applied in the same context they may be accompanied by a certain amount of confusion.

It has been noted that Scheub's analytical model has the core-image as its basic structural unit while the Proppian model has the function as its basic structural unit. Although both Scheub's core-image and Propp's function are presented as basic structural units, Scheub's core image can not be equated with Propp's function. Scheub's core image can be further broken down into smaller units



which could probably pass as Propp's function. The two approaches should be seen to be complementary rather than opposing. The approach to be applied in the case of an analysis of the structure of any given folktale will therefore depend on the choice of a particular student. Comments on folktale tendencies in plot will now be made.

### **6.3 Concluding remarks on folktale influence in the plot of Shona novels**

It is a fact that four of the novels in this study have an episodic plot. Episodic plots deal with the life history of the hero i.e. from childhood to adulthood. The novels *Karikoga Gumiremiseve*, *Musango mune nyama* and *Ndinofa Ndaedza* all deal with their heroes' lives from their youth to adulthood. One of the example tales entitled "Pimbirimano" is also episodic. It deals with Pimbirimano the hero's life from birth to marriage. The similarity is not hard to find. Folktale influence here is clear. Chances are high that the episodic plot could have come from the folktale. But, it is also true that it could have come from the great English novels of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. English novels like Dickens' *Great expectations* and Defoe's *Robin Crusoe* were characterised by episodic plots.

However, it should be pointed out that episodic plots are not defective. An artist, through the use of interlocking details and transitional images, can compose a coherent plot such as are found in four of the six novels in this study.

Besides the opening and closing formulae that we find in both the folktale and some of the novels in this study, the research has also shown that the exposition in the Shona novels studied resembles exposition in the folktale. Immediately after the opening formula comes the initial situation. The initial situation is characterised by a calm or state of equilibrium which is destabilised by a 'lack'. This lack marks the beginning of the story. The function "lack" coupled with "lack liquidated" is found in both the Shona folktales and Shona novels in this study. The influence here is clear and positive. Further, the study has revealed that

the function sequences absention + interdiction + violation + consequence, struggle + victory, task set + task accomplished as well as villain exposed + villain punished are found in both the folktales and novels studied.

The folktale resolution has exerted significant influence on resolution in the novels in this study. In folktale resolution, the tale is rounded off after reaching the climax. Calm is then restored. In like manner, the folktale resolution culminating in marriage and coronation appears in four of the six novels in this study.

The technique of concentrating on the leading character which is used in folkstory telling is adopted, and used well and often in Shona novels. In five of the six novels in this study-i.e. those with episodic plots-the technique is effectively used to unify the plot. In addition, the Shona folktale performers and the Shona novelists have used legendary elements and transitional images to bind episodes together, unifying their plots well.

It therefore goes without saying that the folktale plot has significantly and positively influenced the plot of the Shona novel. Next the focus is on setting.

#### **6.4 Concluding remarks on folktale influence in setting in Shona novels.**

The setting of the folktale is that of the remote past. Novels in this study are also descriptions of events in the past. The setting of a story in the distant past is therefore clearly influenced by the folktale. This influence is positive and seems to have no adverse effect on the Shona novel as it is normal for narratives to be set in the past.

The physical / geographical setting in folktale is characterised by vague and scanty descriptions; that of the novel is steeped more in realism. However, the early novels in this study tend to have more folktale influence than those written

later. The locale in first four novels is vaguely and scantily described while that in *Ndinofa Ndaedza* and *Chemera Mudundundu* is more realistic as the place can be identified within Zimbabwe. Thus, the setting in the early novels resembles that in folktales more than the setting in the late novels.

The social setting in folktales helps ground the story giving it credibility in the eyes and ears of the audience in the same light, the social circumstances in novels in this study serve the same purpose; to ground the story and make it credible is positive and helpful. Folktale influence on characterisation will now be summarised.

## **6.5 Concluding remarks on folktale influence on characterisation in Shona novels.**

Most folktale characters are flat. They are static, easily recognised and predictable. In folktales in this study the main characters are flat and easily predictable. We find this predictability in all the main characters in the first five novels in this study. The influence is clearly from the folktale.

Similarly, the main characters in many Shona folktales including those in this study have supernatural powers. They do many extraordinary things. Examples are "Pimbirimano" and the snakeman in folktales 1 and 3 in Appendix. In Shona novels in this study, the heroes have supernatural powers that help them accomplish feats outside this world. Such characterisation is characteristic of the early novels while the characters in modern novels e.g. *Chemera Mudundundu* are quite ordinary and naturally convincing. It appears the modern writers have liberated their works from the simplistic approach set by early writers like Chakaipa, Mutswairo and Mugugu to a complex realistic approach. The contemporary writers like Moyo A. C. tend to involve the emotions of the reader in a way that the reader identifies with the various characters.

Finally, the folktale device of giving characters allegorical and apt or particularised names in an effort to advance the author's point of view is one Shona novelists adopted from the folktale genre. The names Karikoga and Chapakati clearly describe the traits we expect in the characters so named. The adoption of this technique is a carryover from the folktale genre.

## **6.6 Concluding remarks on aim of study.**

The primary aim of this study was to investigate whether the Shona novelist shows any folktale tendencies in his work and further to assess the effects of folktale influence on the narrative if any.

It is hoped that in the analysis of plot, setting and characterisation a strong case has been made to show that consciously or subconsciously the Shona novelist has been influenced to a significant extent by the Shona folktale. For instance, the opening and closing formulae in most of the novels studied constitute compelling evidence that the novelists were under the influence of folktales when they wrote their novels. Brief conclusions on the investigation of folktale tendencies in plot, setting and characterisation will now be made.

## **6.7 Remarks on other folktale influences on the Shona novel**

Although this study did not have time and space for the study and discussion of folktale influence on style in Shona novels a few points will be raised.

The folktale style in which the third person (omniscient) narrator is used is also employed in the novels in this study and indeed in many other Shona narratives. In a similar way Shona novelists have taken a leaf from folkstory telling in adopting the use of repetition in their narratives. Scheub's expansible image is repeated as a tale is fleshed out, so is the core-cliché. As such, many folktales, including those in the appendix are characterised by repeated songs or chants.

Four of the novels in this study use songs, chants and /or poems. As an example, in the novel *Ndinofa Ndaedza* two songs namely "Mberere-mberere nenyika" (Pg. 19-20) and "Hangaiwa dzinofira mudendere" (Pg. 81) are used. In addition the same author uses poems and recitations to a great extent. He uses at least eight poems in the narrative. Similarly, the authors of the novels *Feso* and *Jekanyika* also employ orality in recitations. The two novels have poems that evoke the readers' feelings and emotions e.g. the poem "Nehanda Nyakasikana" in *Feso* (page 35).

On another note, some Shona novel titles were taken from folktales with the same titles. Examples include the novels *Sajeni Chimedza* and *Garandichauya* whose titles come from the folktales "Chimedza nemburungwe" and "Garandichauya" respectively.

#### **6.8 Remarks on foreign influences in the novels in this study.**

The novels in this study were not only influenced by the folktale when then they were written but were also influenced by some other factors.

First, it will be pointed out that the Christian background, from which some of the authors like Chakaipa, Hamutyinei and Mutsvairo came, greatly influenced their writing. Chiwome notes this background and influence. He writes:

Some popular authors who grew up under church tutelage to become mission school teachers, lay and full-time preachers include Chakaipa, Hamutyinei, Mutswairo, Zvarevashe and Ribeiro.

(Chiwome, 1994: 40)

The Christian teachings through which these authors went, influenced their writing. The result of this influence was moral and conformist writing. Reading through the works of these authors, it is clear that these early writers' intentions

were to teach morally acceptable behavioural attitudes. The novels are clearly didactic and moralistic.

Following closely the line of Christian influence, it will be noted that many of these novels have several allusions to the Bible. Two citations shall suffice.

In *Ndinofa Ndaedza*, Revai's travels and stay in the forest are likened to Jesus' forty days and nights in the wilderness. Honzeri writes:

*Akati (Revai) afamba kwemazuva makumi mana achitambura ari mukati mesango....*

(Honzeri, 1991: 19)

(After travelling for forty days facing difficulties in the forest...)

In *Karikoga Gumiremiseve*, there is another allusion to the Bible. In one incident, the hero Karikoga fights scores of Ndebele warriors at Munyati River. During battle, Karikoga and his wife Marunjeya swim across the flooded river with the warriors hot on their heels. When the two just manage to cross the river, the warriors pursuing them are all drowned. This incident is very similar to the Bible incident in which Moses led the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt, across the Red Sea, to their promised land-Canaan. When the Israelites just manage to cross the sea, the Pharaoh's soldiers all drown in the Red Sea. The flood thus cleans the society of evil, it acts as a purgative.

The division of a narrative into chapters is indeed a device borrowed from the Western novel. Folktales are not characterised by such divisions. In the novels *Chemera Mudundundu*, *Feso* and *Karikoga Gumisemiseve* the narratives are divided into numbered chapters while the chapters in *Musango mune nyama* and *Jekanyika* are given titles.

Another influence from the Western novel is that of using pictures. In *Karikoga Gumiremiseve*, *Jekanyika* and *Chemera Mudundundu* pictures are used illustrate specific incidents.

On another note, one of the novels that has great folktale tendencies, namely *Ndinofa Ndaedza*, has been greatly influenced by Western narrative techniques, techniques not known in the folktale genre. The novelist uses the flashback technique punctuated by analepsis and prolepsis.

Finally, the literature bureau in colonial Rhodesia had a fettering effect on narratives produced then. This is especially so with regard to the early narratives in this study. Matshakayile -Ndlovu (1994) notes:

Writers complained that the Bureau tended to limit their creativity by explicitly telling the aspiring authors what to include in their works. The bureau wanted a story to have a set structure, any deviation was not tolerated.

(Matshakayile-Ndlovu, 1994: 53)

The result of this dictate and demand was that authors produced works with the same / stereo typed linear plot structures. Such is the plot in *Feso*, *Karikoga Gumiremiseve* and many other novels of pre-independence Zimbabwe.

To sum up, it can be emphatically said that Shona novels germinated from oral tradition, especially from the folktale, and came into existence under both the authors intrinsic inspiration and foreign inspiration.

The chapter will now be summarised by general observations and conclusions made on folktale influence in Shona novels.

## **6.9 General observations and conclusions on folktale influence on Shona novels**

An interesting point is that out of the novels in this study, the novels set in the period before the advent of the whites (those Kahari (1990) calls old world narratives) have more folktale tendencies than those set after the arrival of the whites (those Kahari (1990) calls new world novels). Perhaps, it is because the old world setting suits well the folktale world. For the same reason the new world narratives are steeped in the realism of the contemporary, modern world. The setting is less suitable for the folktale realm.

The influence of the folktale on the Shona novel has been positive. It is on the folktale genre that the early Shona novels were written and based. The plot of these novels was modelled along that of the folktale. The result is that the folktale genre laid the foundation for the humble beginnings of the Shona novel.

The resultant Shona publications gave the Shona people their very first significant collection of works of prose. In these early Shona novels, the authors were able to preserve Shona people's philosophy of life. These novels also stimulated a reading appetite among the Shona as they provided variety and an alternative to the monotony of (reading) Bible translations and extracts that were so dominant and prevalent then.

These novels were and are modelled on the folktale genre with its characteristic didactic endings, moralism, simple plot, simple characterisation and weird improbabilities. Because of the traits these works of art were found to be quite amusing, simple and straight forward and character building. They were thus popular with young Shona readers especially the school going age. The defects the researcher perceived are indeed not defects at all but are techniques that originated from the Shona people's culture and literature especially the folktale. If looked at from the Shona people's culture and perspective they are not defects but a solid foundation on which the novel was built.



In fact, these early novels become so popular with readers that they become self inspiring i.e. they inspired readers to write similar novels. *Ndinofa Ndaedza* is a novel inspired by some old world novels. In this novel the hero Revai, like the hero Karikoga in *Karikoga Gumiremiseve* is born all alone, with no siblings. The hero's parents die in strange and tragic circumstances and the hero becomes an orphan who struggles to survive. There are so many parallels. In the same novel is a chief named Dendera. Incidentally in the novel *Jekanyika* we read of a chief of similar name and character. In *Ndinofa Ndaedza*, there is again an incident in which the hero Revai chases the villain Chokupamba. This incident resembles the one in the novel *Tambaoga mwanangu* in which the hero Tambaoga chases the villain Zinwamhanga. Many examples abound. Suffice it to say; the folktale influenced novels that were good enough to inspire the writing of other novels. *Ndinofa Ndaedza* is a case in point.

In closing remarks, it should be stressed that folktale influence on the Shona novel has been on the whole good and positive. Most Shona novels have episodic plots. These include those in this study and many consulted. It is worth noting that in *Musango mune nyama* and *Jekanyika* for instance, the necessary coherence and unity of plot is effectively achieved. This is due to the use of transitional details and images as well as single-strandedness, themselves principal folktale devices.

The long line of falling action, characterised by the trying and tidying up of all ruffled ends – itself a device used in folktales – is used effectively in almost all the novels in this study. It is satisfying as it is used to explain and clarify issues.

It is believed that this study has indeed shown that the early Shona novelists were significantly influenced by the folktale genre. It has also revealed that the folktale still influences modern writers as shown by folktale influence on works published between 1985 and 2002. Thus the Shona folktale has a significant place in Shona novel writing. Canonici (1993:267) aptly sums up this important place of the

folktale in the literature of any people. He writes,  
“Folktales, far from being a dying phenomenon permeate all aspects of life and literary expression.”

Thus, the ‘defects’ which the researcher noted in Shona novels in this study are not real defects as such but are an inevitable result of influence from the folktale which formed the bedrock upon which the Shona novel was built. They are just deviations from Western conventions on novel writing.

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## APPENDIX

### 8.0 FOLKTALES

Folktales 1 Hodza, A.C. (1980) *Ngano dzechinyakare* Salisbury Longman (Translated): Pimbirimano

There once was an expecting woman who developed a craving for duiker meat. One day the husband hunted and brought home the wanted duiker meat. On seeing the duiker, the sick wife suddenly become well. She got up, dance and ululated singing her husband's praise names. She is, before you skin the duiker "*Moyondizvo*" please cut off its head first, I will remove the hair, cut it into pieces then stew it. I shall grind and cook rapoko meal sadza and enjoy myself. After this I shall need a weight to be placed on my overfilled belly."

After being scorched, the duiker's head was properly stewed, horns and all. She then prepared the rapoko meal sadza and began eating. She sucked the marrow from the horn, which slipped from her hand and she swallowed it. When the meat was finished, she went into the forest to fetch firewood and just hoped she would catch a duiker. Suddenly, she saw a sleeping hyena with a duiker he had killed. She asked for the animal and was given. She promised to give the hyena the child she was expecting in return. She thought that the hyena would have forgotten by the time she delivers. She was given the duiker and returned home but did not tell her husband the truth about how she got the duiker.

One day, the hyena came to check if the woman had delivered but it was only after the hyena had returned that she delivered. The child was born holding the duiker's horn that his mother had swallowed. He also woke up, sat and talked at the same time. He said, "Mother, don't give me a name. My horn will tell you. The infant blew the horn asking it to give him a name. The horn whispered and said, "You are Pimbirimano" The child said to its mother, "My name is Pimbirimano." When the woman had delivered, the

hyena happily went to collect the child. The woman said, “Be patient, Mr. Hyena. I shall ask my son to set a rat-trap outside our hut this evening (then you will catch him when he comes out to check the set-off trap” During the evening Pimbirimano was asked to set up a trap which he did. The hyena came and set it off. Thinking that the set off trap had not been heard, the hyena set it off the second time. When the mother asked Pimbirimano to check the trap, he refused arguing that no trap set off twice. The hyena departed disappointed.

On another day, Pimbirimano was sent to collect tomatoes from the field. On his way, he blew his horn for advice. “Fe-e! Big horn tell what is lying in waiting for me at the field?” The horn told him of a hyena lying in ambush by the biggest tomato plant. It told him to send a carpenter bee to go and sting the hyena away, after which he could freely collect the tomatoes. This he did, collected the tomatoes freely and returned home. When next Pimbirimano’s mother met the hyena, it threatened to eat her instead.

The following day, Pimbirimano was asked to pick *mazhanje* at the grove. He went and climbed a tree. While shaking the fruits the notorious hyena came. Other children ran away leaving Pimbirimano trapped on the tree. He asked a soldier to help him. He was pulled up into heaven. The hyena then went away really disappointed. It met Pimbirimano’s mother and plucked off her ear in protest.

Once in the strange land, Pimbirimano didn’t know where to go. He blew his Horn and was advised to follow a small path that led him to a very beautiful village. He had entered forbidden land he was told .The chief decided to punish him for trespassing. He was given difficult tasks in return for his freedom. First a whole bag of grain was scattered in the forest. He was asked to pick up all the grains. Alone, he blows his horn and was advised to ask the spinder to seek the assistance of ants in the area. The ants help him pick up all the grain. The chief was surprised and ordered a second task. Five full bags of grain were scattered in the forest. Before sunset the ants had picked up all the grain. Once more the chief was puzzled. He ordered a big feast of *sadza* and meat to be prepared for Pimbirimano. Upon eating all the food he would be released. Throughout

the night, the ants ate all the food and carried some into their holes. By day break all the food was finished and Pimbirirano begged for more.

The chief could not keep such a glutton. He was released and given all he wanted – cattle, goats, sheep, fowls and servants. The spider assisted him to climb down to earth. Before sunset he had built a large village. The horn advised him to send people to look for his parents – a woman with one ear and a man with kinky hair. They were found and reunited with Pimbirirano who was now chief. A feast was thrown in celebration.

This is where the story teller died.

Folktale 2 "Gore Renzara." Hodza, A.C. (1983) *Ngano dzamatambidzanwa*. Gweru Mambo Press (Translated)

Long long ago, there was a man and his wife. The man's name was Hushambiri, the wife was Harugumi. The couple had three children, two were boys and the third a girl.

One year there was a great famine. Hashambiri went into the forest to look for food. He came across a hive and said, "Thanks my father Muratidziri. My ancestors have remembered me. He cut grass, torched the sheaf and inserted it in the opening of the hive. He saw plenty of honey in it. He then took a big dry mupfuti tree bark and filled it with honey. He ate the remaining honey until he had had enough. Then he said, "What can I do? If I take home this honey my wife and children will finish it. He then left the honey on rocks and looked around for a claypot."

He forced his way into a "dumba", found a claypot, took it and returned to his honey. He put the honey into the pot, placed the pot in a hole and covered it with a flat stone. He fitted a drinking straw to the pot. He used it to siphon the honey. When he arrived home, he refused to eat and offered his food portion to his children. His wife asked why he had refused to eat and he said, "I don't want my children to starve." The wife said, "My husband has concern for me and the children."

The next morning the husband visited his claypot. He lied that he was checking his traps. Upon arrival he sang the song he would sing every time he went to eat the honey.

Solo: He who loves the drum follow me

Refrain: To follow is to love the drum.

Solo: He who loves the drum follow.

Refrain: Haa dum dum He haa sip sip.

He returned home and refused his portion of food, giving it to the children. This happened often, and his wife and children became suspicious.

One day, Hushambiri visited the claypot and unknown to him a child followed him, witnessed everything and mastered the song. The child returned home and told his mother. They agreed to visit the pot together. The following morning, the two visited the pot, while Hushambiri was asleep. They ate part of the honey, emptied the pot, filled it with ash, and sand and water then took the rest of the honey home.

When Hushambiri rose from bed and visited the clay pot, he got disappointed. He siphoned ash, sand and water not honey. He returned home and was given sadza. He accepted and ate it. The wife asked why he accepted sadza this time. He replied, "It is many days since I ate." Harugumi dismissed all the lies, showed him the honey from the hidden clay pot and revealed all he did in the forest. Hushambiri is tongue-tied. The wife says, "I no longer love you as you never really loved me." Harugumi packed her belongings and leaves for her home, leaving Hushambiri without a wife.

The end of the folktale

### **Folktale 3 "MUKADZI NEMURUME NYOKA": ROMANA MARUFU**

#### **Folktale recorded during research 2001**

Long, long ago, there was a man called Svovanepasi. He lived with his wife Chenjerai,

their only baby as well as Chenjerai's young sister Maria. Svovanepasi so much loved meat that he could do anything to get it. As he was a lazy man he never hunted and when he rarely did so, he often caught nothing. He decided to find magic. With this magic he could change into a snake and eat rats, mice, rabbits or other small creatures whenever he desired. He got the medicine only after travelling far and wide.

One day, Chenjerai, Maria and the baby went to the field to weed. Chenjerai prepared porridge for the baby, fed it and left some in container on the hearth stone so that it would remain warm. They worked till noon. When the baby cried of hunger, Maria was sent home to collect the porridge. She said, "Maria, please go home and bring the baby's porridge." Maria sped off.

On arrival at home, Maria saw a big snake chasing a rat into the hut. She was so frightened that she didn't know what to do. She began to sing and alas the snake chanted in unison.

Solo-Maria	Refrain-Snake/ audience
Solo	Little Maria, Little Maria, has been sent
Refrain	Ho-o little Maria by whom?
Solo	Ho-o little Maria by sister.
Refrain	Ho-o little Maria, what do you want?
Solo	Ho-o little Maria some porridge.
Refrain	Ho-o little Maria where is it?
Solo	Ho-o little Maria on the hearth
Refrain	Ho-o little Maria take it
Solo	Ho-o little Maria I am afraid
Refrain	Ho-o little Maria of whom?
Solo	Ho-o little Maria of you

Svovanepasi slowly changes into a man allows the girl to take the porridge and warns her, "If you tell you sister what you have seen I will bite you" Maria leaves for the field

at full speed and then tells her sister “ who doesn’t believe” her experience. Maria is threatened, “Next you delay I beat you!”

On another day, the sisters and the baby go work in the field leaving the idle man at home. At noon Maria is sent home to collect the baby’s porridge. She dashes into the hut singing but when about to come out she notices the notorious snake dangling in the door way from above the doorframe eating a rat but with its eyes focused on her. She continues singing while the snake chants in unison dancing. She just manages to escape before the snake falls to the ground and turns to human form again. Maria arrives to the field late and is scolded for it. However, Chenjerai vows to find for herself what was transpiring.

On another day, the sisters go to the field to work. At noon Maria is sent to collect the baby’s porridge. Unknown to Maria Chenjerai follows behind. When Maria arrives, Svovanepasi is already in snake form and eating rats. She sings her song in order to locate Svovanepasi who sings in unison from under the granary foundation stores. From close range Chenjerai watches all. She draws nearer, picks up a stick and charges at the snake. The snake in turn charges at the two sisters who take to their heels screaming. The snake pursues them but on seeing other people approaching disappears into the tall grass. The sisters flee to their parents home.

A week later the sisters bring them their family. The case is brought before the village court and tried. When asked to plead, Svovanepasi pleads not guilty but alas, when Maria starts singing, holding some mice in her hand, Svovanepasi sings along and changes into a snake. The snake is killed.

There ends the tale.

### Questionnaire on folktale influence on Shona Novel Writing

1. How much influence did the Shona folktale have on the writing of Shona novels written between 1956 and 1980? (Tick your responses in the box provided)

**None**

**Little**

**Much**

**A lot**

2. How much influence did the Shona folktale have on the writing of Shona Novels written between 1981- to date?

**None**

**Little**

**Much**

**A lot**

3. In which period did the Shona folktale have more influence on the writing of Shona novels? (Tick your responses)

Before 1980

After 1980