FOLKTALES IN A CULTURAL CONTEXT: THE ROLE OF FOLKTALES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF BAKGALAGARI CHILDREN

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Abstract

Folktales are a type of folk literary genre. They are old and enduring culture-saturated stories which have been passed down from generation to generation by word; and serve as conveyors of these traditions, customs and values of people to future generations. They are typically narrative in form, with songs frequently interspersed in the narrative. Although they are conventionally relayed in a recreational setting, like other folklore genres, folktales have a fascinating combination of both aesthetic pleasure and education. Their richness in cultural content and social importance make them a most interesting and inspiring subject of study. As with many other African societies, in pre-literate periods, education of younger generations of Bakgalagari[1] was largely informal, fluid and unstructured, and was conducted through oral literary genres such as folktales. This study is an in-depth study of three folktales of Bakgalagari people. As with many other aspects of this ethnic group, there appears to be no study conducted on any Shekgalagari folktale to date, and their importance in this culture appears to be on the verge of extinction. The study examines the tales to extract the various lessons and skills derived from them. These are studied in the light of their role in the education and development of Bakgalagari children. The study attempts to drive home the point that from time immemorial, folktales made an important contribution to a child's education among the Bakgalagari people.

Introduction

Folktales as part of folklore

Folktales are classified as a type of folklore. Although variations exist in the definition of folklore, it typically is considered as the knowledge of a (homogeneous) group of people

[1] Bakgalagari are Bantu people of the Sotho-Tswana extraction, and are classified as Western Sotho-Tswana (Chebanne, 2003). They are found in Botswana and Namibia only, and they speak Shekgalagari language (Monaka, 2018).

accumulated over millennia, and passed through generations by word of mouth. Sone (2018 p. 3 citing Brunvand, 1978) defines it thus:

> Folklore is the traditional, unofficial, non-institutional part of culture. It encompasses all knowledge, understanding, values, attitudes, assumptions, feelings, and beliefs transmitted in traditional forms by word of mouth or by customary examples.

Hence folklore is an integral part of culture, and provides a platform for the creative remembrance of a people's folk literature, which is constantly rehearsed and rehashed over the centuries.

It is thus a generic term that characteristically comprises various genres such as folktales, fables, myths, legends, riddles, proverbs, tongue-twisters, lullabies, ditties, rimes, retold firestone reminiscences, folk beliefs or superstitions, plays, songs and dances, customs/traditions, ritualistic ceremonies, magic, witchcraft and many other forms of artistic expressions transmitted by means of the spoken word. These are the product of the collaboration of countless people over generations, and form a basic part of a people's oral culture that defines and binds them together. Because folklore genres are performed routinely by different people and at various times, slight variations from the originals often develop over time. As Ben-Amos (1971, p.4) states that:

> The social context, the cultural attitude, the rhetorical situation, and the individual aptitude are variables that produce distinct differences in the structure, text, and texture of the ultimate verbal, musical, or plastic product. The audience itself, be it children or adults, men or women, a stable society or an accidental grouping, affects the kind of folklore genre and the manner of presentation. Moreover, the categorization of prose narratives into different genres depends largely upon the cultural attitude toward the tales and the indigenous taxonomy of oral tradition.

Other factors that can induce variation in folklore include "the performance situation, the particular talent of the professional or lay artist, his mood at the moment of recitation, and the response of his audience may all affect the text of his tale or song" Ben-Amos (1971, p.5). Sometimes variation is induced by the fact that as they are transmitted to the various (ethnic) groups of the world, either within a geographical location or across continents, they are adapted to the (social) conditions in and to the purpose for which they are performed. Since they are not frozen and fixed in writing, they are heavily dependent on fallible and fading human memory for preservation, a factor which is certain to bring slight variations of the same genres with time (Misch, 2008).

Aim, objectives and data

The aim of this paper is to present an in-depth study of three Shekgalagari folktales, (*rigkano jha Shekgalagari*) to unpack their didactic significance to the education and development of Bakgalagari children. The study attempts to drive home the point that folktales made an important contribution to a children's education. The study is motivated by the fact that, there

has been no study on Shekgalagari folktales to date. Further, the art of storytelling and the importance of these stories in Shekgalagari culture are on the verge of extinction since they have largely been replaced by formal education and by electronic gadgets such as television, the internet, social media, etc.

Folktales: Definition and types

Folktales are, typically, fictitious, imaginative prose narratives with no historical or scientific significance and no author because they are very old. Characters in folktales are usually human and/or non-human (i.e. animals). The stories are often narrated in informal contexts, especially around the fire at dusk, or under the sky in the moonlit night, just before bedtime. Like many other folklore genres, they are a repository of the traditions, values and customs of the cultures that narrate them, and are recounted for the education and entertainment of younger generations, among others. Notwithstanding this, because the setting *in* these narratives may be any place and any time, they transcend spatial and temporal boundaries; and in this sense they also transcend the cultures of the various (ethnic) groups of the world where they are narrated. This makes folktales relevant to any people, any time and anywhere in the world. Vambe (2004, p.3) says that "In the folktale …, human imagination can afford to be liberated from the constraints of time. [in] folktale ..., setting is timeless and arbitrary and the message is larger than one isolated historical experience."

Bascom (1965) says that the term 'prose narrative' rather than 'folktale' is more appropriate because it incorporates myths, legends, *and folktales*. "These three forms are related to each other in that they are narratives in prose, and this fact distinguishes them from proverbs, riddles, ballads, poems, tongue-twisters, and other forms of verbal art on the basis of strictly formal characteristics" (Bascom, 1965, p.3). He classifies reminiscences or anecdotes[2] and jokes under prose narratives. Bascom (1965, p.4) further provides different sub-types of *folktales* which include "human tales, animal tales, trickster tales, tall tales, dilemma tales, formulistic tales, and moral tales or fables." Other authors (Denning, 2004b; Sole & Wilson, 2002; McLellan, 2002; Reamy, 2002) use the term 'stories' which includes myths, legends, *and folktales*. Animal tales are narratives in which anthropomorphized animals are the principal characters. The characters are humanized and can display traits of human behaviour, such as ability to talk (Melson, 2010). The plot of the story revolves around them and the setting of the tale is mainly in the animal world. Animal characters feature in a variety of tales such as trickster tales, *pourquoi*, fables and many others. Tricksters are tales in which the protagonist is characterised by trickery and roguish behaviour. The trickster is usually endowed with exceptional intelligence and wisdom but uses it for trickery. "He is a vagabond, an intruder to proper society, an unpredictable liar who throws doubt on the concept of truth itself" (Vecsey, 1981, 162). He is typically an individualistic, non-

[2] Reminiscences or anecdotes are described as human characters known to the narrator and/or his/her audience. These may be repeated regularly to where they may acquire the style of verbal art/prose narrative and may continue to be narrated even after the characters are no longer known to the (subsequent) narrators and their audiences.

conformist and anti-social fellow who uses his abilities to cause mayhem and disharmony in the society, although occasionally he can use his talents for the common good. *Pourquoi* tales are fictional narratives which explain why some things in nature are the way they are (Keifer, 2010). Fables are didactic stories that feature anthropomorphized animals, mythical creatures, plants, inanimate objects or forces of nature, and whose objective is to teach a lesson (Lukens et al., 2013).

Furthermore, some societies, such as the Marshall and Trobriand Islanders, and among the Fulani and the Yoruba (Bascom, 1965, p.6) distinguish between fictitious and non-fictitious folktales. Fictitious folktales are imaginative stories that most likely never happened; non-fictitious stories are narrative discourse that have truth embedded in them and require that they be believed, at least to a significant extent.

The art of storytelling among Bakgalagari people of Botswana

Just like in many cultures of the world, most events in Shekgalagari folktales were chronologically or logically linear—events are narrated in the time or order in which they happened. The time of the storyline is varied. It could be remote past, expressed by the remote past marker *i ⍱ye* which is sometimes repeated, *i ⍱ye i ⍱ye ⍱*, to emphasise remoteness; it could be fantasy time, *nako engwe ga bo go le …* (once upon a time there lived/there was ...); and the events in the story could be timeless and placeless, where the focus is on the events of the story.

Setting and Participants

As in many African cultures, the tales were narrated at twilight or at night, after the day's chores had been completed. The context was informal and relaxed, and the mood was one of relaxation and entertainment. Participants gathered in a circle or horse-shoe around the hearth or sat under the sky in the moonlit night. They comprised of children and older women—mothers and grandmothers. The children were the majority and constituted the audience. They were spectators-cum-participants—they listened but also interjected by asking or answering questions, requesting for clarification, clapping hands, chanting or singing at certain points during the narration.[3] All these added a dramatic effect and obviated the monotony brought by long narration. Fire provided warmth; its flickering flames in the moonless night, together with the surrounding duskiness, induced a right air of the magical and mysterious. If the narration took place at night, the narrator would be surrounded by children in an open space under the moonlit sky. The silence of the night, the moon, its light, the sky, the shining stars and the occasional barking of dogs and howling of a jackal added an aura of mystique and 'nostalgia' to the 'aged' stories of the netherworld.

The women were the narrators. It was important that narrators be natural experts in folktale recitation, have an infinite repertoire of indigenous tales, have superb mastery and nuances of

[3] As in many other African societies, folktales among Bakgalagari were intended explicitly for children. They were never narrated for senior members of the society. They were only narrated when children were around as they were the ones tutored in their cultural legacy, historical identity and communal knowledge.

the language, be able to use gestures, idiophones and interjection, and induce dramatic effect when needed, be the repository of cultural values and traditions, be conversant with the history of the people, be knowledgeable in many other matters of cultural importance and have immense experience in many issues of life. These qualities were critical for retention of the attention of the children and for transmitting communal information. As they imbibed community values and traditions, younger generations also acquired techniques of and expertise in excellent storytelling.

Narration

A conventional storytelling session could begin with the narrator announcing the title of the tale, for example, *Rigkano jha ga Rimo* (The tales of the Ogre), followed by the opening expression "*ga ruwa"* (It is said), upon which the audience would respond *kamakwe*; the narrator then continued "*iye (iye) ekile/nkile e le Rimo*," (long time ago, there was/lived an Ogre); then the audience again responded *kamakwe*. These utterances introduced the fictitious, netherworld of folktales. The meaningless *kamakwe* response from the audience functions to enhance the netherworld of the tales. The characters in the narrative were then introduced, and the narration then proceeds without further *kamakwe* interruption.

The Plot

Stories were simplistic; straightforward and to the point. Events in the plot were full of vivid action, so that the audience-participants could see, feel, taste, touch and smell experiences as the story unfolded. Once they start, events gradually built towards the climax, at which point resolutions of matters were made. The story finally moved towards the end, which was marked by the typical ending '*Jhabe ri hela*' (That is the end of the story). Spirited discussions followed at the end of the tale, as participants reflected and interpreted lessons derived from the story. It was not uncommon for the interpretation of some folktales to be contentious, an exercise which honed down analytical skills in younger generations, readying them to face and tackle the multifaceted and complex problems of life. In the processes unity and cohesion was also fostered between family members of various ages. Folktale narration and analysis would be repeated many times over the years to cement the lessons learnt and for future narrators to master the narration skills and content of the tales.

Themes: Didactic significance of the tales

The narratives were saturated with cultural lessons that underpinned the people's way of life. The stories aimed at inculcating in the listeners desirable virtues that enabled them to grow into responsible citizens. Themes in folktales were varied. The positives and negatives of human life were presented in the tales. There were warnings, caution, denunciations against the evil and rewards and praise for good behaviour. Lessons included humility versus pride and arrogance, respect versus dishonour for the elders and constituted authority, love versus hatred and cruelty, hard work versus slothfulness, self-sacrifice versus selfishness and greed, truthfulness versus falsehood and dishonesty, and myriad more lessons. In addition, folktales explained the origin of things such as human beings, animals, plants, the sky, the moon and stars and many other things.

Characters

Typical characters in *rigkano jha Shekgalagari* (Shekgalagari folktales) included human beings, animals and birds. Such animals and birds were imbued with human qualities so that they could talk and behave like human beings. The Ogre, *Rimo*, also appeared frequently in the tales. The roles of the animals and the lessons they taught are discussed in the remaining sections of the study.

Thogye (Hare): In many Shekgalagari folktales, Hare featured as a trickster. These are tales that sought to teach children that deception exists and that it is an intentional behaviour. The tales helped young audience to understand the nature of trickery by observing both the words of the trickster *and* his actions, because most often there is a disconnection between the two, and this disconnection is the making of deception. Therefore in interacting with other people, they needed to decipher underlying intention(s) and by scrutinizing behaviour and other tell-tale cues, both vocal and visual, to detect deceit. By his smallness and vulnerability, the Hare further demonstrated that the solution to seemingly insurmountable problems of life lies not in stature but in the use of mental powers.

One trickster tale about Hare and Lion, (*Thogye le Tyau*) begins with a starving Lion hunting for food when he stumbles upon and catches the Hare. When the Lion is about to eat the Hare, he is rather amused by this behaviour and asks the Lion what he was doing. The Lion tells Hare that he is very famished and must eat it to satisfy his hunger. But the Hare calmly tells the Lion that he was so tiny that eating him would not remove the pangs of hunger from him. The Hare rather comes up with a witty trick—they should go hunting for bigger, truly satisfying game, and the lion likes the idea of bigger, filling game. The plan, according to Hare, is that the Lion would need to lie down and play dead as the Hare summons big antelopes and many other animals to celebrate the death of the Lion. The Lion agrees and lies down on the ground and feigns dead. Big game arrives and starts dancing and celebrating the death of the Lion. While the animals are still dancing and celebrating, the Lion pounces on one of the large antelopes and kills it. He then feasts on the animals until his hunger is satisfied. After this the Lion commends the Hare for his wisdom.

With the Lion now in his confidence, the Hare persuades him that they needed to construct a hut to store the rest of the meat. He tells the Lion that hard work was not needed as the structure could be magically constructed by word of his mouth. And the Hare said, "*itu itjoge*" ("hut, construct yourself"), and the hut was instantly constructed. However the hut needed to be thatched, and Hare feigned inability to instantly thatch it by word of his mouth. So he tried climbing the hut to thatch it. But each time he climbed to the roof of the structure he constantly made himself fall through the rafters. However, every time he fell, he landed upright and safely, with his feet balancing on the ground. Then he proclaimed to the Lion, "See! I cannot do it. I cannot thatch the hut." So the Lion was tricked into thinking that Hare was incapable of thatching the hut; and the Lion finally climbed to the top of the hut to thatch it. The Hare remained below twisting thatch sinews together. Then the Hare convinced the Lion that there was need to cook some of the meat to eat when they finished thatching, and the Lion gladly agreed.

After a while the Hare told the Lion that there were numerous lice and ticks in his tail, which was hanging down through the rafters. Horrified, the Lion requested the Hare to remove the despicable parasites. The Hare began to split the fur on the Lion's tail and meticulously removed the parasites, to the Lion's enjoyment. However, using an awl and a tendon from the dead animal, Hare began to surreptitiously stitch the Lion's tail tightly to the strut pole in the middle of the hut. And, each time the Lion twitched to the pain of the piercing awl, the Hare would explain that he was removing the biggest tick which was tightly lodged in the flesh of the tail.

After a while the meat was cooked and ready for consumption. The Hare then placed a big fatty piece of meat on the end of a stick and said to the Lion, "*Ke gyee gyee ye*?" (Can I eat, eat this one?). But the Lion greedily objected. When Hare replaced the big fat piece with a small lean one, the Lion acceded that the Hare could eat it. However, the Hare dropped the lean piece of meat back into the pot, picked the big fat one and brazenly ate it. The Lion was infuriated at this behaviour from the Hare. But when the enraged Lion tried to come down from the roof, he discovered that his tail was permanently secured to the strut pole in the middle of the hut. And no matter how much he tried to dislodge himself, he couldn't succeed. And, with the Lion watching helpless from the roof, the Hare then called other animals and they all feasted on the meat in the pot. So the Lion remained stranded on the roof until he eventually died. Then the Hare went on his way, his wisdom having saved him from being eaten by the Lion.

Regarding deception, a number of things stand out that the children should take notice of. There is the Lion's failure to take cognizance of the trickery that the Hare had played on the other animals, and considered that he too, as an animal, could fall prey to it. There is a mismatch between the Hare's claim that he could not magically do a relatively smaller job of thatching the hut immediately after mysteriously constructing a hut by word of his mouth. The Hare's claimed 'fall', was in effect a perfectly balanced landing. This should have been a big red flag for the Lion. Next, the Lion should have known about the presence of numerous lice and ticks and other parasites on his tail since it was on him; they would also have been an irritation. This should have hinted to the Lion that the Hare had something up his sleeves. Further, the Lion should surely have been able to make a distinction between the pain inflicted by a stitching awl and that of a latched tick. Because the Lion ignored these tell-tale cues, he fell flat for the Hare's deception.

The folktale further challenges not only the roles traditionally given to the animals—Lion as the mighty king of the jungle symbolizing authority, power and strength; it also challenges people in authority, especially royalty, who are symbolised by the Lion. The inference is that the mighty and lofty depend on their physical strength, power and elevated status, but the weak and vulnerable can be delivered by their wisdom. As life would have it, it can be the vulnerable, not the mighty, who turn out to be the hero. In this tale, Hare, typically, is smaller and weaker but extremely smart and shrewd (see Makgamatha (1990c), and he outwits, even humiliates the stronger but naive foe. The lesson taught is that wisdom prevails over physical

strength. Furthermore, the smallness and weakness of Hare is very appealing— especially to children (Franz, 1996), who are also small and vulnerable— since people generally identify with the underdog and his predicament.

The tale also teachers that bad and dishonest behaviour can win, and even seemingly go unpunished. Although the Hare is deceptive and cunning, he actually 'wins' against the Lion; and the children need to be aware that this unfairness happens in life, sometimes with catastrophic consequences for the victim.

However, when Hare is cast in other roles such as that of a rogue in *Thogye le Tyaushari*, (Hare and the Lioness) there is need to compare the characters of Hare in these various tales. In *Thogye le Tyaushari*, as the Hare was going about his way he found a famished Lioness with six cubs, and informed her of the need to go hunting to avoid starving to death. He proposed that the Lioness hire him as a babysitter, and she agreed. But Hare killed the cubs and cooked them as dinner for the mother. When the Lioness asked in amazement where the dinner came from, the Hare claimed that he had gone out hunting for deer. The Lioness ate the dinner and requested that the cubs be brought to suckle. And each time the Hare brought the cubs to suckle, he would bring some of them more than once to make the count of six. This behaviour repeated until all the cubs were killed. On the sixth day, the Lioness is flabbergasted that there was no dinner; and is further distraught to learn through the 'hysterical' Hare that the cubs were ran over by the wildebeests when the Hare was out hunting. The Lioness then went after the wildebeests and killed them for overrunning her cubs.

That one and the same Hare can be both endearing in one tale and a rogue in another is intriguing and truly remarkable. Woven into the tapestry of the tales is that both good and vice inhabit individual human beings, and the capacity for individuals to exhibit both is undeniable. Furthermore, characters on folktales should be considered holistically after a detailed examination of them in various stories. This would, by application, provide a rounded picture of the true nature of people in a culture, community, and indeed on earth.

It is worth noting, rather rhetorically, that the Lion is featured in both tales, with the (male) Lion typically considered the emblem of authority, strength, sovereignty, conquest, courage and protection, both in the jungle and in African society generally, and the Lioness representing femininity and fierce motherhood. By virtue of these, these animals ought to be dreaded, revered and esteemed (cf. Kriel, 1971). But despite the noble adornments, the tales reveal that these 'superior' animals can be duped—even by a small and weak animal. That the disrespect is never obvert and abrasive does not nullify that it does happen, it rather is testimony to the shadiness of the character perpetrating this behaviour, and by application, the shadiness of deceitful human beings when they too perpetrate such behaviour.

In an interesting twist, it is possible to interpret the tale in relation to children's ability to be disingenuous with their elders, especially in the family. In this case the children would be the small and vulnerable, just like the Hare, and the parents the big and authoritative, just like the

Lion. Despite their 'smallness', children can exercise exceptional intelligence. This applies in situations where they have committed or plan to commit a wrong and are fearful of the consequences. Just like the Hare, they can evaluate the weaknesses of the authority and assess the precise ways in which they can evade punishment. They are also expert manipulators—through careful assessment they know precisely the buttons to push in order to get what they want from their parents.

Rimo the ogre: Rimo was a frequent character in Shekgalagari folktales, portrayed as a deformed, fearful and dull giant who was a danger to wayward members of the community. Some of the lessons derived from one fable about Rimo and Siwele, include the danger of gullibly interacting with strangers, and the deceitful behaviour from other people to dupe the young and naive. In the story, Siwele and her parents live happily in a lone hut in the thick forests near a big village. But Siwele's father dies, and the family fell on hard times. So Siwele's mother wanted to relocate to the village to start a new life. She was also fearful of the surrounding caves which teemed with giant ogres known to little children. But Siwele loved the old place and did not want to leave; and cried very hard until her mother relented. The mother promised to bring her food every day, and said she would call to her in a song to let Siwele know that it was her. They agreed that Siwele would open the door only when she heard her mother sing. Then the mother locked her young daughter up, warned her again not to open for anyone until she came back, and left for the village. She returned with food the next day and sang as agreed. The young girl recognised her mother's sweet voice and opened the door. And so it was that the mother brought food every morning and every evening. And every time she left for the village, she locked her daughter up and, without fail, warned her not to open the door for anyone because it was dangerous for her. This pattern repeated several times.

However, unbeknown to them, Rimo the giant ogre used to hide in the nearby bushes and listened to them regularly. He wished so much to eat Siwele because she looked like a young, tender delicious meal. One day after the mother was gone, Rimo shrewdly came to the hut and sang the mother's song, trying to mimic her voice. But Siwele refused to open, recognizing that the rough, off tune voice did not belong to her mother. Rimo went back to his cave disappointed. But every morning and every evening Siwele's mother brought her food, and every time the mother left, Rimo also came, and every time he came, Siwele refused to open the door. No matter how many times Rimo tried to beguile Siwele into opening the door for him, he just couldn't succeed.

One day Rimo came up with an idea to mask his voice so that it sounded like that of Siwele's mother. He went to see a traditional doctor who made him swallow a red hot, smooth stone. This feat magically altered Rimo's voice so that it sounded sweet and beautiful just like that of Siwele's mother. The following day Rimo went back to the hut as usual and sang the song. Siwele was excited to hear her mother's sweet voice and opened the door, but to her horror it was the giant ogre at the door. As quick as lightening he snatched her and shoved her into his sack and went his way, very elated about his dinner catch. On the way he stopped at a party to quench his thirst with beer, and placed his sack down because he was exhausted. While

Rimo was drinking and revelling, the host heard the little girl singing with a sad voice from the sack and realised what had happened. But she decided to wait until Rimo was very drunk. Then she removed the girl from the sack and, together with her children, replaced it with one full of serpents and scorpions and bees and all types of poisonous reptiles.

After a while, Rimo's thirst was quenched and he decided to leave for his cave, taking his sack with him. When he arrived at his place he made a huge fire, placed a big pot on it and asked his children, one by one, to bring the sack so that they could cook the contents for dinner. But each time a child tried to take hold of the sack, he got stung and, shrieking with pain, rang out of the cave. This repeated until the last son. At last Rimo sent his wife, who also got bitten and ran out of the cave, shrieking with pain. Finally, a fuming and enraged Rimo went to collect the sack himself. But when he opened the sack *all* the serpents and the scorpions and all types of poisonous reptiles and bees which were in the sack stung him all over his body. He screamed and screamed, and finally managed to burst out of the cave and ran and ran! He finally came to the river and threw himself in the water. Unfortunately, the river water was only mud. So Rimo got stuck in the mud and was unable to dislodge himself from the mud and eventually died.

Meanwhile, a little later the same morning, Siwele's mother went as usual to the hut and sang to her daughter, but this time Siwele failed to open the hut. The mother instantly knew that her daughter had been snatched by the giant ogre. She started searching and searching for her daughter, wailing as she went. She finally came across the people who had rescued her from the ogre, who were also on their way taking Siwele to her mother. And Siwele went with her mother to the village, and they lived happily ever after.

The tale teaches about the importance of heeding parental warnings, the danger of strangers and their ability to disguise their true identity and intentions in order to deceive the gullible and naïve. The tale further teaches about the persistence of those who are bent on deceiving others, and that their persistence can sometimes succeed. While it may not be evident on the surface, the evil intentions of deceivers should not be taken lightly since they are, in truth, ravenous, as signified by the ogre wanting to 'eat' the child. The serpents and the scorpions and all types of poisonous reptiles and bees represent the consequences of evil; they are the portion of those are bent on being evil, those who want to hurt other people. Even the appearance of Rimo the giant ogre is representative of what is fearful and harmful; confirmed also in Rimo living in caves and shunned by society (see Makgamatha, 1993). However, while the strange ogre might be dangerous, not every stranger in the community is dangerous as demonstrated by the family that saved Siwele; they too are strangers, but they are good strangers since they took her out of the sack, (cleaned her) and returned her to her mother.

In the kind hosts who rescued Siwele, the young audience are also taught the value of communal responsibility—they should not grow to be selfish and individualistic, but should be concerned about the wellbeing of the other members of the community. Learning that Siwele's mother did not abandon her daughter although she was wayward in insisting to remain in a lone hut in the bush, the children were taught not to give up on their own children

in the future, because children can learn from their mistakes and can turn from their wayward ways. Another lesson is that resilience is a virtue that can overcome formidable giants. This is embodied in Siwele, who refused to migrate but chose to stick with what she liked however dangerous. That, in the end, led to the elimination of a terrorising demagogue.

Khakha (Tortoise): The Tortoise has been featured in *pourquoi* tales to explain why some things in nature are the way they are. The tale *Khakha le Rinnyane* (The Tortoise and Birds), is the story of how all the animals were informed of and invited to a big feast in heaven; the gate pass was that the invited guests should be able to fly. The featherless Tortoise, who wanted to attend, devised a plan to request his buddies the Birds to lend him feathers. The elated invitees came to the assistance of their friend. The guests further gave themselves party names at the advice of the experienced Tortoise, who named himself 'All of You.' The guests were heartily welcomed on arrival and requested to sit at the table and accordingly served with food, which was indicated to belong to "all of you." But the ungrateful and greedy Tortoise ate all the food alone. On inquiry, the Birds discovered that there was no such thing as a party name in heaven, and that they had been expected to share the food. They became extremely angry with Tortoise, and devised a plan to unplug their feathers from the deceitful 'friend', and decided to leave him in heaven. The stranded Tortoise then made a request that his wife be told to spread out all the soft and spongy things so that he could jump from heaven onto them and avoid breaking apart. However, the Birds told Mrs Tortoise to bring all the hard and wooden things, because Mr. Tortoise wanted to do an impressive stunt by jumping from heaven down to earth. And so it was that when Mr. Tortoise jumped from heaven, he landed on hard and wooden things and broke his shell into several pieces. This is the reason why the Tortoise has a cracked shell.

There are moral lessons and an explanatory message to be learnt from the Tortoise tale. The explanatory message explains why the Tortoise has a cracked shell. Moral lessons are that it is important not to place blind trust on others because trust can be betrayed. Another lesson is a twist about fraudulent behaviour—roguery does not always win. Although Hare managed to escape with his trickery in *Thogye le Tyua* and *Thogye le Tyuashari*, the Tortoise, just as deceptive as Hare, suffered painful consequences for his roguery.

Conclusion

This paper provided an in-depth study of a trickster tale, a fable and a *pourquoi* tale. Trickster tales were used to teach children to decode underlying meanings of people's words and behaviours in order to detect deceit, because trickery exists in life. The tales further showed life's problems can be solved, not necessarily by power and strength, but by the use of mental powers. By studying the various roles of Hare in different trickster tales, the lesson taught was that good and bad are resident in human beings, and can both be exercised. A twist is observed when the small and little, such as children, become devious with the elders just like the small Hare was with the Lion. Little may not always be innocent. In the Rimo fable, parental instructions and the consequences of not heeding these were drilled home. Caution against bad strangers however needed to be wisely balanced with good strangers. The fable also taught neighbourliness and resilience. The *pourquoi* tale about *Khakha le Rinnyane*

explained how the Tortoise got a cracked shell; and that roguery does not always win. The exercise of the mind in analysing such tales was useful in developing critical thinking. The study demonstrated that folktales contributed significantly towards the education of younger generations of Bakgalagari in preliterate times, and that the lessons taught were and are still significant in this era.

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