

**RADIO DRAMA : A CRITICAL STUDY OF SOME**

**RADIO VENDA BROADCASTS**

by

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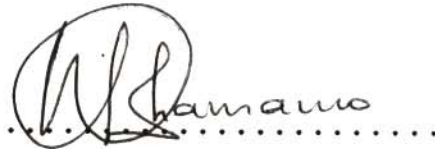
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**DECLARATION**

I declare that **RADIO DRAMA: A CRITICAL STUDY OF SOME RADIO VENDA BROADCASTS** is my work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

.....

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## **SUMMARY**

Chapter one is an introductory chapter in which the aim, scope, and the approach of this study are discussed. As an orientation, this chapter also discusses the nature, characteristics and relationship between radio drama and other dramatic sub-genres. The three production stages of radio dramas are identified and discussed.

Chapter two assesses the use of microphone, sound effects and music in radio drama. The three are referred to as 'Technical tools available to the script-writer.' This chapter argues that inappropriate use of these three tools affects the quality of the radio drama negatively.

Chapter three looks at the use and importance of scenes, episode, conflict, suspense, surprise, dramatic irony, believability, and the plot structure. The term 'structural elements' is used to refer to these aspects. The contribution of each of these aspects towards enhancing the overall production is also examined.

Chapter four deals with characterisation. The various kinds of characters as well as ways of revealing them are discussed. The chapter also looks at themes treated by the four radio script-writers.

In the concluding chapter, the main observations of the study as well as recommendations for the future are presented.

**CHAPTER 1****INTRODUCTION****1.0 Aim of this study**

The aim of this study is to consider critically the success and shortcomings of selected radio dramas - radio drama being seen as a sub-genre of drama - with reference to standard radio dramatic features. The choice of this topic, with its relevance to African literary studies, was determined by the following :

- (a) Radio drama attracts a larger audience than published drama which is restricted to the classroom. Stage and television dramas do not exist in Tshivenda at present.
- (b) Radio drama, from an African perspective, functions not only as a medium of entertainment but also as a means by which African cultural and artistic values are disseminated.

In view of the two key points above one would have expected

considerable in-depth research to have been undertaken into this sub-genre of drama by scholars of the various African language groups. My research has uncovered only three M.A studies - by Lubbe (1968), Van Heerden (1971) and Makosana (1991); and an Honours article by Moeketsi (1988).

Lubbe's work is a pioneering study of radio drama in an African language in South Africa. This work evaluates listeners reactions to some South-Sotho radio drama broadcasts from Radio Sesotho. Van Heerden's study focuses on the nature of certain North-Sotho radio drama broadcasts from Radio Lebowa, while Makosana's study compares six Xhosa radio dramas during 1987 and 1988. Moeketsi's article, focusing on the nature of Radio Sesotho drama broadcasts, places strong emphasis on some important characteristics of the sub-genre.

It is the purpose of this study to reveal to some extent the contribution that has been made by radio drama to the field of African aesthetics, in general, and Tshivenda in particular.

### 1.1 Scope

This study is confined to the analysis of four radio dramas, namely *Tshenzhelani* by S Rambau, *I shavha i tshi sia muinga*

i ya'fhi by W.T Rambau, Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi by U.M Ramaite and A Thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha by N.G Magwabeni. The choice of these four radio dramas was influenced by the availability of the scripts from Radio Venda and the fact that the scripts chosen represent the work of some of the most prominent script-writers in Tshivenda.

Radio drama is a sub-genre of drama and for this reason the text must form a point of departure in assessing the success or failure of the script-writer. The radio dramas will therefore be analysed according to some basic criteria which are associated with the sub-genre, namely the technical tools available to the script-writer (chapter 2), the structural elements of radio drama (chapter 3) , and characterisation and theme (chapter 4). Chapter 1 is an introductory chapter which, apart from discussing the aim, scope and approach of this study, also defines the sub-genre 'radio drama' and clarifies certain terms which are associated with it. Chapter 5, the concluding chapter, summarises the main observations, thus highlighting important points discussed in this study.

## 1.2 Approach

In a study of this nature, which does not confine itself to one

or two aspects of a work of art, it is difficult to use a single theoretical approach in assessing the success or failure of the script-writers. It is for this reason that a combination of different approaches will be used.

The New Criticism will form the basis of the critical approach in this study. With regard to this theoretical approach Swanepoel (1990:13) says :

The New Critics believe in the organic theory of literature, according to which the work has a total significance where content and form are inseparable.

The advocates of this approach argue that a critical interpretation of a work of art is most successful if it is based on a close reading of the text and an analysis of the components used to convey a central theme or themes, language being the most important element. They further argue that emphasis must be placed on the organic unity of form and meaning, and that precise and detailed comments on the literary work, rather than vague generalisations, must be made.

Amid criticism that such an approach is applicable only to short

texts, such as poems and short stories, Swanepoel, quoting Guerin et al. (1966) in defence of the New Critics, maintains that it is also applicable to long and complex texts such as those of novels and dramas if emphasis is placed on '... certain touchstones which will serve as a key to (their) form.' (Swanepoel, 1990:13)

Structuralism will be used to supplement the New Criticism in analysing some of the structural elements of radio drama. Structuralists emphasise the fact that a text is made up of various elements. The function of the critic, argue the structuralists, is to investigate those elements, both separately and together, in order to understand how they combine to form one meaningful entity, namely a text. Swanepoel (1990:16) sums up this approach as follows:

The concept structure refers to the total of relations between the elements of a text. Structuralism is therefore the theory and method of investigating these relations with special interest in the relationship between the parts of the whole, and then, between the part and the whole.



The problem with this approach is that it supports the idea that there is no truth in literature, and that the text does not in any way express the author's essential self. Selden(1985:52) sums up the views of the structuralists in this regard with the following words:

It would not be misleading to use the term 'anti-humanist' to describe the spirit of structuralists. Indeed the word has been used by structuralists themselves to emphasise their opposition to all forms of literary criticism in which the human subject is the source and origin of literary meaning.

This notion has been challenged by many scholars as not being applicable to African literature - whether written in English, French, German, or African languages - which cannot afford the 'art for arts sake' idea which is a hallmark of other literatures.

The Marxist approach, which has raised many heated arguments amongst scholars as to whether it can be applied to the study of literature in African languages, will also be used to a certain extent in thematic analysis, in an attempt to clarify certain

misconceptions that are associated with African literature by scholars who either lack an understanding of, or who choose to ignore, the conditions from which it originates.

Ryan argues that Marxism is based on the recognition by critics of the fact that '...literature is a social product, directly traceable to the social and economic conditions which allow the particular work of art to exist.' (Ryan, 1982:193)

Critics of the Marxist approach argue that it places undue emphasis on social and economic conditions and that Marxists use this approach to further their own ideological convictions at the expense of the 'literariness' of a work of art. In defence of this approach, its advocates argue that such statements are unfortunate as Marxism does not allow facts not explicitly or implicitly expressed in the work of art to strengthen a critic's extra-literary preoccupations. Marxism, its advocates further argue, does not operate strictly in isolation but has, to quote Ryan, '...joined forces with the dominant Formalist, New Critical and semio-structural literary theoretical trends... by assisting in the extrication of literature and its study from the vague, 'woolly' and unrealistic conceptual framework of Romanticism.' (Ryan, 1982:196)

The comparative approach will also be used to assist in establishing and maintaining a critical platform since this study entails an assessment of the works of various script-writers. Makhambeni (1991:16), quoting Daiches (1981), makes the following observations concerning the relevance of this approach to the study of the works of various artists:

Evaluative criticism tends to use the comparative method as a device for establishing a degree of excellence and indeed it can be maintained that a purely normative criticism, which aims at giving so many marks to each work and placing it in a scale, cannot go very far without having brought together the work in question with other works, showing the same sort of thing better or worse done elsewhere and by showing this helping the reader to see how excellence is attained.

It can therefore be seen that this study is not restricted to one approach. In my opinion these different approaches complement each other.

### 1.3 The concept 'radio drama' and related terms

### 1.3.1 Radio

Radio owes its origin in 1864 to the Scottish physicist James Clark Maxwell who, to quote Straczynski '...theorized on the existence of certain frequencies waves, whose modulation could be controlled and varied for communication purposes.' (Straczynski, 1982:81) Although Maxwell's theory was much disputed, it was later to be confirmed by Guglielmo Marconi who succeeded in transmitting what is believed to be the first radio message. Since this message was transmitted from one location to another without the use of any wire or connecting cable the term 'wireless' was coined. Maxwell's and Marconi's findings were modified and improved, culminating in the modern radio.

This medium, because of its relative cheapness and its ability to transcend man-made boundaries and literacy levels, has spread all over the world. Its importance, even in modern times where it faces competition from other mass communication media like the newspaper and television, cannot be over-estimated. In support of this statement Lee (1986:iv), approaching the argument from the 'user' point of view, writes :

The electronic media should not be assessed for

its new technologied devices. But from the criteria of who the 'user' is. For instance, a daily newspaper is of no use if some parts of a country can receive it only a week later. ...What power then has TV when it can only be received in areas with electricity? And by those users who can afford to pay a monthly electricity bill. Whereas the Transistor Radio can receive entertainment, news and information wherever torch battery cells are freely and cheaply availabe. Therefore, the electronic media should not be looked at for technological superiority but for 'whom' it can be used.

Lee gained his knowledge and understanding of African life and the problems that beset the continent during his many years of training Central Africa radio producers. His argument is also valid for South Africa, the majority of whose inhabitants are living far below the poverty line.

Lee differentiates three levels at which radio functions. The first level is what he refers to as simple communication. Here he includes news and other such progammes dealing with information instructive to the listener. The second level

is what he calls substitution. Here radio causes a listener to '...participate in an event he cannot attend in the flesh, a football match, a ceremonial occasion, or perhaps a music concert.' (Lee 1986:2) The third level Lee terms 'artistic experience'. Here the focus falls on the way an artist shares his creative imagination with the listener through drama and poetry. This third level, which involves creativeness on the part of the radio artist, is the focus of this study.

### 1.3.2 Radio drama : how it all started

Radio drama has been in existence since the early 1920s. There is uncertainty as to what was the first radio drama to go on the air and the exact date of such a broadcast. Gielgud, who was involved in the drama section of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in the early 1930s, maintains that it started in February 1923 with the broadcast of some scenes from 'Julius Caesar', 'King Henry VIII' and 'Much Ado about Nothing'. Most scholars in Britain, America, and South Africa dispute Gielgud's view, and maintain that the radio drama 'Danger', created by Richard Hughes and broadcast in 1924 by the BBC, was the first radio drama to go on the air. Whatever the first broadcast was, there is general agreement that it was a BBC production which

started it all.

In South Africa Moeketsi quotes Lubbe (1987), who maintains that 'broadcast for Africans were started by the SABC in 1960. Since then 3 000 radio dramas have been broadcast on the seven services of the SABC...At present, over 3 000 000 listeners tune in to these broadcasts.' (Moeketsi, 1988:2)

### 1.3.3 Radio drama : towards a working definition

Radio drama has been defined in many ways by various scholars. The definitions indicate its unique nature as compared to other mass entertainment media such as stage drama, television drama and film.

Garvey and Rivers (1982) and Hilliard (1984) define radio drama as 'the theatre of imagination'. Horstmann (1988) calls it 'the theatre of the mind'. Berger (1990:44), on the other hand, suggests an all-embracing definition:

(Radio drama may be)... described as the theatre of the mind or the theatre of the imagination. ... This is so because (it) ...unleashes our power of imagination so easily.

Although defining their subject in different ways, the above scholars seem to agree that whatever happens in the radio dramatic world must be reconstructed by the listener in his or her own mind. This characteristic of radio drama led Willis and D'Arienzo (1981) to conclude that the listener's imagination is, in fact, radio drama's stage.

In this study the word 'radio drama', as against 'radio play', is preferred because of the ambiguity and controversy that surrounds the latter term. In support of this view Gielgud (1957:85) convincingly argues :

... we are all accustomed, in everyday phraseology, to going 'to see' plays, as opposed to going 'to hear' them. In consequence the mere juxtaposition of the words 'radio' and 'play' must imply for many people a contradiction in terms. To go on with the word 'play' implies a number of conventions - of length, of construction, and so forth - which, if accepted by the radio dramatist, serve only to hamper his freedom and cramp his style.

Strictly speaking, there are various types of radio dramas. There



are the so-called 'radio plays', which are dramatic forms running for one day only; radio serials, consisting of several episodes running daily for several weeks; and the soap opera, a joint effort by several writers with one picking up the story from where another had left it and continuing it for several episodes.

However, in this study the term 'radio drama' will be used in a broader sense to refer to what, strictly speaking, should be called 'radio serial'. The term radio drama is however preferred because it encompasses all dramatic material on radio. Moreover, the various dramatic forms have so much in common that there are very few characteristics which differentiate them.

#### **1.3.4 Radio drama : its nature, characteristics and relationship with other dramatic sub-genres**

Radio drama, as pointed out earlier in 1.2, is a sub-genre of drama. Like other forms, such as the closet, stage and television dramas, radio drama must conform to the basic requirements of the genre in order to have value. The basic requirements that it shares with the other sub-genres include theme, plot structure, dialogue, conflict and characterisation. These elements must form a unity of purpose, that is, they must interact to bring out the

central idea behind the story as a whole.

The basic characteristic of radio drama that makes it unique is the invisibility of the actors and the setting. Dancyger (1990:ix) comments:

... (as radio is only heard) the writer has to capture the listener by the most imaginative means possible. Using only language, sound effects, and music, the writer and producer create a world. The television writer of course has the additional visual opportunity. But as creative as television is, writers too often ignore the richness of language that made radio so important in our culture. It is the difference between watching a pratfall on television and anticipating the pratfall and its aftermath on radio; the first is straightforward, the second is fraught with opportunity for the writer.

The auditory nature of radio drama led Swanepoel et al. to conclude that a successful radio script-writer must have '... a sensitive ear, enabling him/her to 'visualize' situations through

hearing. Writing is done for the ear but in such a manner that action can be visualised in the mind's eye.' (Swanwpoel et al., 1987:133)

The visual limitation imposed by the medium has both advantages and disadvantages. It is an advantage in that, notwithstanding the contributions which are made by the actors and the producer and his team, it is mainly the creative vitality of the writer that determines the quality of the end product. Another noted advantage that radio drama enjoys over other sub-genres is the fact that its scope is not restricted by the limitation of time and setting. By exploiting the listener's imagination, radio drama can, for example, switch from one century to another, and can also vividly evoke scenes no other medium can.

Producing a radio drama is relatively cheap as compared to the costs of stage and TV dramas. The equipment a radio station uses for producing its other programmes may also be used to produce drama. About three people are required to produce a radio drama as compared to sixteen for a television drama. The dress and, indeed, other stage properties which may have to be destroyed in stage and television dramas should the dramatic action so demand are of no concern in the radio drama situation because a skilful script-writer uses words,

coupled with the right sound effects, to achieve his/her purpose.

The accessibility of the medium and its power to reach millions of people prompted Gielgud to argue that radio drama is the only medium that truly satisfies the requirements of a national theatre. He writes :

...for the author who believes that he has anything worth saying, there must be the consoling reflection that his words are reaching the largest possible number of people ...Indeed, Radio Theatre is the only organization which can fulfil the first function of any form of National Theatre - that of making its productions available to the nation as a whole.

(Gielgud, 1957:87)

Although Gielgud expressed this view with the British situation in mind, its relevance to the present South African situation is confirmed by Swanepoel et al. (1987) and Moeketsi (1988).

Radio drama does, however, have certain disadvantages. The invisibility of the medium presents the radio dramatist with a problem of how convincingly to evoke actions and scenes in the

listener's imagination through the use of words, music and sound effects. This demands not only skill but also an unprecedented imagination in the writer, which is less essential in the other sub-genres. Coupled to this is the fact that radio does not demand the undivided attention of the listener. A listener may continue with other activities while still enjoying the radio drama. However, this means that the radio script-writer and the production team must generate and sustain interest in a way not demanded by other sub-genres.

#### **1.4. Radio drama preparation, recording and editing**

The production of a radio drama differs from country to country and sometimes even among radio stations within the same country. However, generally speaking, the production of a radio drama may be divided into three main stages, namely the preparation, the recording and the editing.

The first stage involves the drawing up of a contract between the script-writer and the radio station. The script is edited to remove words, sentence constructions and anything else which is not in line with the overall work and the policy of the radio station. After the producer has studied the whole script he/she decides on the interpretation that must be followed and selects

suitable actors to play the various roles that the script demands. The producer then assembles the whole cast and gives them an overall idea of the drama and the expected emotional requirements of the script. Arrangements are made concerning rehearsals.

Once the producer is satisfied that the actors have grasped what is expected of them he/she may proceed to the second stage, namely, the recording. The producer books the studio and arranges recording dates. During recording sessions the producer listens critically to the production and guides the cast and members of the production team. Modern technology makes it possible for the producer to have actors recorded while the sound operator assembles the required sound effects independently and later 'welds' them to the radio drama. Rodger argues strongly against this method on the grounds that it '...could be more efficient than the previous system (viz. that of recording everything at once) but it could also create the kind of production which no longer had the same tension and sense of presence that had characterised radio plays when they were put together by the group of actors and technicians working together.' (Rodger, 1982:142)

The view of this study is that whatever method the producer

chooses, it must bring out the best in the script.

The third and last stage involves the editing of the radio script by the producer and sound operator to remove any unwanted sounds and to check the duration of the episodes. Should the episodes be too long, the music and certain sound effects may be cut; and if they are too short, their duration may be extended.

### 1.5 Recapitulation

The chapter outlined the aim, scope and approach of this study. It is important that one must understand the nature and characteristics of radio drama. Therefore this chapter looks at radio drama as a sub-genre of drama which has its own characteristics. The blind nature of the medium goes with the advantages and disadvantages which the radio script-writer should understand.

## CHAPTER 2

**THE TECHNICAL TOOLS AVAILABLE TO THE  
SCRIPT-WRITER**

## 2.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the technical tools which are used by the script-writer in radio drama. The concept 'technical tools' in this study is used to refer to the microphone, sound effects, and music.

The script-writer must always remember to indicate where these technical tools must be used by the producer in the actual performance. This does not only helps to make the work of the producer much easier (that is, in terms of saving him from filling in directive notes which could have been easily inserted by the script-writer), but also improves the quality of the production at a stage before more life is 'breathed in' by the production desk.

## 2.1 The Microphone



The microphone, abbreviated 'MIC' or 'MIKE' in the radio drama script, is the first and the most important of the technical tools the use of which the script-writer must understand. Everything created or said in radio drama is communicated to the listening audience through the microphone. To emphasize its importance above that of the other technical tools Granville-Barker refers to radio drama as 'the theatre of the microphone.' (Granville-Barker 1956:21)

The script-writer must understand what the microphone is capable of doing and also, of course, its limitations. Furthermore, the script-writer has the responsibility of indicating the physical relationship (the distance) between the actor and the microphone. This physical relationship or distance is responsible for creating the desired orientation in the audience's imagination.

Hilliard (1984), Lee (1986), Moeketsi (1988), and Makosana (1991) agree that there are basically five microphone positions: 'on mike', 'off mike', 'coming on mike', 'going off mike' and 'behind obstruction'. Hilliard further maintains that the script-writer must clearly indicate all the positions except that of the 'on mike' position. It is taken for granted that the actor is speaking from this position if no position is indicated next to the line of the dialogue. (The only exception here being when the

actor has been in one of the 'off mike', 'coming on mike', 'going off mike' or 'behind obstruction' positions, and suddenly speaks from the 'on mike' position.)

### 2.1.1 The 'on mike' position

Usually in this position the actor is placed about a meter (depending on the sensitivity of the microphone) away from the microphone, and talks directly into it. Lee (1986) calls this position the 'close focus' position because of the proximity of the actor to the microphone. When the actor is speaking from this position the impression created in the audience's imagination is that the actor is in what Hilliard (1984) calls 'the focal point of the audience's orientation'.

### 2.1.2 The 'off mike' position

The actor is said to be speaking from the 'off mike' position if placed at a distance of two to three metres away from either the 'dead' or 'live' area of the microphone (depending on the microphone and on whether the impression to be created must be what Lee (1986) calls 'middle focus' or 'far distance focus'). The impression conveyed to the audience is that the actor is speaking from some distance away from the centre of the focal

point. The script-writer may sometimes alter these listening audience's orientation, as Hilliard points out, 'by removing the performer's voice but indicating through the dialogue that the actor has remained in the same physical place...' (Hilliard, 1984:19).

The effect created by this alteration is that the audience's imagination is moved from one focal point to another, leaving the actor behind.

### 2.1.3 The 'coming on mike' position

The actor is said to be 'coming on mike' or 'fading on' when moving slowly from around two to three metres (again depending on the microphone and the type of focus the script-writer has in mind) towards the 'live' area of the microphone. The impression created in the listening audience is that the actor is at, to borrow from Hilliard (1984), approaching 'the physical centre of the action.'

### 2.1.4 The 'going off mike' position

The actor is said to be 'going off mike' or 'fading off' when while speaking, slowly moves away from the 'on mike' position

until he passes the three metres mark from the microphone. The impression created in the listening audience's imagination is that the actor is moving away from the centre of the action, that is leaving a place where the dramatic action is taking place, and leaving other 'people' behind, for example inside a house, at a veranda, at a party, etc.

#### 2.1.5 The 'Behind obstruction' position

The actor is 'behind obstruction' when he sounds as if there is a barrier between him and the centre of the action. Lee suggests two methods which may be used in creating this effect:

- (a) The actor may speak from the 'dead' side of the microphone, or
- (b) The actor, on the 'live' side of the microphone, may hold his script directly in front of his face and read his lines from behind it. (Lee, 1986:49)

'Behind obstruction' is used to create an impression in the audience's imagination of a person or people who is (are) speaking behind a door, outside a window, over a telephone, etc, to a person or people who is (are) at the centre of the action.

In assessing the success or failure of the script-writer in indicating the various microphone positions in order to create required effects, the approach suggested by Hilliard (1984) will be followed.

Of the four script-writers I have selected for discussion Rambau is the most successful in indicating the various microphone positions in his radio drama. This is well illustrated by the examples that follow:

**COMMENTARY**

Although there is no mention of the microphone position, which normally suggests that the actor is speaking from the **ON MIKE** position, the fact that the voice described is coming from outside (with the listening audience's

**TEXT** (Tshenzhelani;

episode 25 pages 2 to 3)

(HU PFALA IPFI NNDA)

(A VOICE IS HEARD FROM  
OUTSIDE)

6.IPFI:Aa mudini!

(VOICE: Greetings at home!)

attention focused on the inside of the house) implies that the voice (which later turns out to be that of Muofhe) is speaking from the **OFF MIKE** position. The effect of this orientation is that the audience 'sees' Muofhe as approaching the centre of the action from a distance.

Since there is no mention of the microphone position and the audience's attention is inside the house (where Ndivhudza is), Ndivhudza may be safely assumed to be speaking from the **ON MIKE** position.

The position **FADE IN** is clearly denoted in the text, next to Muofhe. The impression created is that

7.NDIVHUDZA: Aa, dzhenani ngeno Muofhe.

(NDIVHUDZA: Greetings. Come in here, Muofhe.)

8.MUOFHE: (FADE IN) Ai, who vha vho no mmbone mathina?  
(MUOFHE: (FADE IN) Did you see me already?)

Muofhe, who was speaking from outside the house (in the OFF MIKE position), is slowly moving in to the centre of the dramatic action.

From position no.9 to no.1 on the other page of the script, microphone position is not indicated. However, from the previous orientation of the audience and the flow of the dialogue, it may be safely assumed that Ndivhudza, Muofhe and Thabelo are speaking from the ON MIKE position. The impression created by this orientation is that both actors are speaking from the focal point of the audience's imagination, namely inside the house where they are seated on the sofas.

9.NDIVHUDZA: Ii, ndo ni vhona ni tshi khou dzhena nga khoro, dzulani henefha kha sofa.

(NDIVHUDZA: Yes, I saw you entering the gate. Sit down there on the sofa.)

10. MUOFHE: Aa! Ai! Na vha Pitori namusi vho ri kanda naa?

(MUOFHE: Greetings! Are the people from Pretoria also around?)

11.THABELO: Ja, ndi magaraba, o vhuya.

(THABELO: Yes, it is us, the migrant workers. We are

back.

12.Muofhe: Ii, magaraba ri toda one,ri toda malegere.

(MUOFHE: Yes, we like migrant workers. We want sweets.)

13.THABELO: Ee, nazwino

malegere ngea, sesi nga vha fhe Muofhe bodelo lila u do ri dela nayo colddrink, hone zwila vha nwa ifhio?

(THABELO: Yes, here are the sweets. (Elder) sister please give Muofhe an empty bottle so that she can get us some cold drink. By the way, which one do you take?)

14.NDIVHUDZA: Nne inwe na inwe na inwe ndi a nwa.

(NDIVHUDZA: I drink any kind.)

15.THABELO: Izwo vhone avha



dini, Muofhe-vho ni nwa ifhio?

(THABELO: Then you are not a problem. Muofhe, what do you prefer?)

MUOFHE: (SETSHELELA) Nne ndi toda coke.

(MUOFHE: (SMILING) I like coke.)

THABELO: Ahaa, ni do renga yone coke, ndi a fulufhela na sesi vha do i takalela, nne ni ntodele Smokin'Joe.

(THABELO: Okay, you will buy coke. I think even my sister will like it. As for me, buy Smoking'Joe.)

18. MUOFHE: Hee, ndi dza magaraba naa... (SEA) Heyo ndi nga a thi athu u i vhona hafhano vhengeleni la fhando, khamusi a i ho.

(MUOFHE: Gee, is that the migrant workers' stuff...

(LAUGHING) I have never seen that one here at our local store. Maybe they don't have it.

1.THABELO: Hai ni do i wana, i hone ndo i vhona.

(THABELO: You will find it. I saw it there.)

For the line before **FADE OUT** Muofhe is still speaking **ON MIKE**. The impression created is that she is still with Ndivhuwo and Thabelo, but on the verge of leaving the room. For the line after **FADE OUT** Muofhe is 'seen' by the listening audience as leaving the room because of the gradual fading away of her voice.

2.MUOFHE: Okay, ndi kha di gidimela hone (FADE OUT).

ndi do vhuya hu si kale.

(MUOFHE: Okay, I am rushing off there. (FADE OUT) I shall come back very soon.

As there is no microphone position indicated next to no. 3 and no. 4, both

3.NDIVHUDZA: Ni a divha Muofhe o vha o ntodela mushumo wavhudi nga maanda

Ndivhudza and Thabelo are wa henefha kiliniki, speaking from the ON MIKE henefha tsini na hayani. position. The impression (NDIVHUDZA: Do you know created is that whereas in that Muofhe got me a nice no. 2 Muofhe is 'seen' as job at the clinic, just leaving the room where here next to home?) Ndivhudza and Thabelo are, 4.THABELO: Zwino vha khou the orientation in no. 3 and shuma wone? no. 4 compels the listening (THABELO:So are you working audience's focus to remain there?) with Ndivhuwo and Thabelo who remain in the house.

Although the section of radio script analysed above seems to be the most successful of the four radio scripts under discussion as far as indicating the various microphone positions is concerned, there are other sections of it which still fall short of what one expects from a good script. For example, the 'off mike' position should have been indicated in episode 7, page 8, since 'Ipfi' (The Voice), which later turns out to be Tshililo, is speaking to those at the centre of the listening audience's imagination from a long way away. This is also the case in episode 20, page 3.

Among the other three script-writers there is a general tendency not to indicate these microphone positions in many cases where one would expect such indications. The frequent occurrence of such instances may lead one to conclude that this is the result of either ignorance or that those script-writers simply consider such indications to be the responsibility of the producer and his team.

In *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i yafhi* Mashamba's indication of the microphone positions falls far short of reasonable expectations. With the exception of 'fade out' and the 'on mike' position, which is always implied where no position is indicated next to the actors' dialogue, none of the positions, 'off mike', 'fading on' and 'behind obstruction' are ever indicated. However 'fading on' is implied in many instances, judging from the flow of the dramatic dialogue and action. One concludes that the situation was corrected in the actual performance.

Ramaite and Magwabeni in *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi* and *Thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha*, respectively, show a total disregard of the importance of indicating microphone positions in their scripts. Unlike Rambau and, to a limited extent, Mashamba, Ramaite and Magwabeni make no attempt to indicate microphone

positions. The following is just one of those situations where one would have expected Ramaite to have indicated the 'off mike' and the 'on mike' positions:

**COMMENTARY**

There is no mention of the microphone position in no. 4 and 5. Therefore Mukatshelwa and Mudzula are assumed to be speaking from the ON MIKE position. The impression created by this orientation is that they are at the centre of the dramatic action.

**TEXT** (Vhutshilo a vhu  
renqwi; episode 7 page 4)

4. MUKATSHELWA: Mmawe vha sokou amba. Hufha vhuada hu tshi khou di itiwa na nga vhasidzana vho tshinaho domba.

(MUKATSHELWA: You are just complaining, mother. Even those girls who attended domba traditional school do misbehave.)

5. VHO-MUDZULA: Ni khou amba ngauri na uyu Avhurengwi o ya dombani?

(MUDZULA: Are you saying so because Avhurengwi attended the domba traditional school too?)

The position **OFF MIKE** should have been indicated before Thomani speaks to show that he is speaking from a distance, because, as the Vhavenda custom demands, Thomani is expected to announce his arrival from a distance to make people aware of his presence.

Mudzula is still speaking from the **ON MIKE** position. The listening audience is oriented to focus on Mudzula, who is still at the centre of the dramatic action, but is at the same time waiting for Thomani to arrive where Mudzula and Mukatshelwa are.

The position **ON MIKE** should have been indicated because Thomani, who was speaking from another position (**OFF**

6.VHO-THOMANI: Ndaa mudini.  
(THOMANI: Greetings at home.)

7.VHO-MUDZULA: Ndi khou losha khaladzi.  
(MUDZULA: Greetings, brother.)

8.VHO-THOMANI: Iwe Mukatshelwa a u loshi nga mini?  
(THOMANI: You Mukatshelwa,

MIKE), now moves to the ON why don't you greet me  
 MIKE position. The impression back?)  
 created is that the listening  
 audience 'sees' Thomani, who  
 was not in the centre of the  
 dramatic action, reaching it.

The situation in the above radio drama bears a remarkable  
 resemblance to the one in *Thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha*, and  
 for that reason it is not thought necessary to provide another  
 text to illustrate this point. For example, the 'OFF MIKE'  
 position which begs for recognition in episode 2 page 6, episode  
 8 page 5, episode 13 page 2 and episode 20 pages 3, is not  
 indicated.

The microphone position 'behind obstruction', which is required  
 when actors are separated by a door, or when one actor speaks to  
 another 'over' a telephone, has been either wrongly indicated or  
 not indicated at all in the radio dramas under consideration.  
 Whereas Ramaite and Magwabeni successfully imply this microphone  
 position in their guiding notes, Rambau and Mashamba incorrectly  
 indicate them as 'fade out'. The following is an example of how  
 Magwabeni successfully implied the 'behind obstruction' position  
 by making use of guiding notes:

## COMMENTARY

In nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5, the characters (Tsimbe and Marengwa) are speaking from the ON MIKE position and the listening audience focuses on them. The impression created by this orientation is that the two actors are at the centre of the dramatic action.

From the orientation of the listening audience in nos. 2,

TEXT (Thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha; episode 12 pages 2 and 3)

(NDI HAYANI HA MARENGWA ZWENEZWO VHUSIKU)...

(MARENGWA'S PLACE THE VERY SAME NIGHT)...

2.TSIMBE: (FEMELEKA) baba...

(TSIMBE:(BREATHING HEAVILY) Dad...)

3.MARENGWA: Baba who ita mini?

(MARENGWA: What did he do?)

TSIMBE: Baba...

(TSIMBE:Dad...)

MARENGWA: Ndi ri baba who ita hani? Hi? Vho ita mini baba vha hone?

(MARENGWA: I say what did Dad do? What did he do?)

6.KATI: (VHA KHA INWE NNDU) Marengwa! Marengwa! Ndi amba



3, 4, and 5, and the guiding note '(VHA KHA INWE NNDU)' (IN THE OTHER HOUSE) in no.6, Magwabeni successfully implies that Kati is speaking from the **BEHIND OBSTRUCTION** position, with presumably a door in her house and also that of the house in which Tsimbe and Marengwa are, acting as barriers. Kati's voice will sounds **OFF MIKE** to create an impression of a person who is not at a centre of the dramatic action.

Marengwa!

(KATI: (IN THE OTHER HOUSE)

Marengwa! Marengwa! I am calling you, Marengwa!)

Ramaite's script, like Magwabeni's , provides a good example of how a script-writer can successfully imply the position 'behind obstruction' without actually clearly indicating it as such in the script. Of special interest in the following example from Ramaite's radio drama is how , using this technique, the audience's imagination is moved from one focal point to another in the same scene :

**COMMENTARY**

Since no microphone position has been indicated next to no. 1 it is assumed that Mudzula is speaking from the **ON MIKE** position. The listening audience's attention focuses on Mudzula who is knocking at the door. Where she is, establishes the physical centre of the dramatic action.

The position **BEHIND OBSTRUCTION** is not indicated in no. 2, but is implied by the guiding note '(NGOMU NDUNI)' (INSIDE THE HOUSE). The impression created is that of Thomas speaking as if there is a barrier (door) between him and the focal

**TEXT** (Vhutshilo a vhu  
rengwi episode 2 page 1)

1.VHO-MUDZULA: (KHOKHONYA  
VOTHI) Khaladzi! khaladzi!  
Ndi nne vulani!

(MUDZULA:(KNOCK AT THE DOOR)  
Brother! Brother! It is me.  
Open the door!)

2.VHO-THOMANI: (NGOMU NDUNI)  
Vha toda mini nga  
matsheloni mangafha!  
(THOMANI: (INSIDE THE HOUSE)  
What do you want at this  
early hour of the morning?)

point of the audience's imagination, that is, he is outside the house where Mudzula is.

As no microphone position has been indicated next to no. 3 Mudzula is still speaking from the **ON MIKE** position. The impression created is that she is at the centre of the dramatic action.

Here the script-writer omitted to indicate that the actor is speaking from the **BEHIND OBSTRUCTION** position. However, the fact that the listening audience has been oriented to 'see' Thomani inside the house, but outside the centre of the

3.VHO-MUDZULA: Vulani ndi do ni vhudza uri ndi toda mini. Naa hu tshi aravha inwi mufumakadzi wanu u ngafhi?

(MUDZULA: Open the door. I will tell you what I want. But why is it you who answer my greetings? Where is your wife?)

4.VHO-THOMANI: Izwo ho ngo edela masosani! Vhathu vha halwa vha nga vha kona khaladzi? Kha vha ime, ndi khou da. Hoyu musadzi na nwana a si vhathu. Vhone vha ri zwi do konwa nga nnyi zwenezwo? (VHA AMBA VHA TSHI VULA VOTHI VHA

dramatic action, still justifies the claim that position has been well implied up to this stage. The position **FADE IN** should have been indicated after Thomani 'opens' the door and 'closes' it, because the audience 'sees' Thomani moving to the centre of the dramatic action. Of particular interest here is how Ramaite successfully brings a complete shift of the audience's focal point. That is, before Thomani 'opens' the door to let Mudzula into the house, the audience focuses on and stayed with Mudzula, and hears Thomani on the other side of the door. But, as soon as he opens the door, Mudzula and the centre of the dramatic action move to where Thomani

DOVHA VHA VALA) Ndaa khaladzi, vho vuwa hani? (THOMANI: Did she not sleep at the traditional shebeen? What can you do with people who drink, sister? Wait, I am coming. This woman and her daughter are very bad. Who would stand for this nonsense? (HE SAYS THIS AS HE OPENS THE DOOR AND CLOSES IT AGAIN) Come in sister. How are you?)

is, which becomes the (new) centre of the dramatic action.

Turning to *Tshenzhelani* and *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi*, one sees that both Rambau and Mashamba incorrectly indicate (as mentioned before) 'behind obstruction' as 'fade out'. The following is but one example of how Rambau handles this microphone position in his script:

**COMMENTARY**

**TEXT** (*Tshenzhelani*; episode

6 page 8 )

SOUND EFFECTS:(U KHOKHONYWA

HA VOTHI)

(SOUND EFFECTS:(KNOCKING ON

THE DOOR))

As no microphone position has been indicated, the actor (*Thabelo*) in no. 7 may be assumed to be speaking from the ON MIKE position.

The impression is that he is speaking from the focal point of the listening audience's

7.THABELO:E ! Ndi nnyi uyu a no khou khokhonya zwino?

(THABELO: Who is knocking at the door?)

attention.

Here, also, since no microphone position has been indicated, Alilali is assumed to be speaking from the ON MIKE position. First, when she speaks softly, the impression is that she is speaking to Thabelo, whereas, secondly, when she speaks loudly, she is speaking to the Voice.

The microphone position BEHIND OBSTRUCTION has been been incorrectly indicated as FADE OUT. It is so assumed because the voice and Thabelo and Alilali are separated by a door, with the voice speaking from the outside.

8.VHO-ALILALI: (AMBELA FHASI) A thi divhi, (NTHA) Ndi nnyi?

(ALILALI: (SPEAKING SOFTLY) I don't know, (LOUDLY) Who is there?)

9.IPFI: (FADE OUT) Ndi nne Muofhe nga vha vula. (VOICE : (FADE OUT) It is I, Muofhe. Open the door.)

In no. 1 and no. 2 Thabelo and Alilali are speaking from the ON MIKE position, but as soon as Alilali says 'Litshani ndi ye u vula vothi' (Let me go and open the door) the attention of the audience focuses on Alilali going to the door, thereby also shifting the centre of focus.

1.THABELO: Muofhe u toda'ni vhusiku vhungafha?

(THABELO: What does Muofhe want at this hour of the night?)

2.VHO-ALILALI: Hu divha nnyi? Litshani ndi ye u vula.

(ALILALI: Who knows? Let me go and open the door.)

The situation in *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi*, as mentioned before, bears a close similarity to that in *Tshenzhelani*. The only notable difference is that Mashamba successfully moves the focus of the listening audience from one point to another in the same scene without actually moving the actors. The following is an example from Mashamba's radio drama which illustrates this point:

COMMENTARY

TEXT (*I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi*; episode 18 page 4.)

SOUND EFFECTS: (U KHOKHONYWA

HA VOTHI)

( SOUND EFFECTS:(A KNOCK AT  
THE DOOR))

As there is no microphone position indicated next to no. 2 (Tshililo) and no. 3 (Tshedza), the actors are assumed to be speaking from ON MIKE position. The impression created is that both these actors are at the focal point of the listening audience's attention, namely, inside the house. A knock at the door shifts the attention of the listening audience from the two actors to the direction of the (imaginary) door.

2.TSHILILO: U nga ri hu na muthu a no khou khokhonya hangei vothini, izwi a si Mashudu?

(TSHILILO: It seems as if there is somebody knocking at the door. Is it not Mashudu?)

3.TSHEDZA: Hai, a thi kholwi e ene lini , namusi o tou tuwa o amba uri zwi nga di itea uri a si vhuye . (U KHOKHONYA ) Ndi nnyi?  
(TSHEDZA: No, I don't think it is him. He told me today when he left that he might not be coming home today. (A KNOCK) Who is there?)

The position FADE OUT

4.IPFI: Ndi nne Julie, open



indicated on the text should be **BEHIND OBSTRUCTION** because there is a barrier (door) between 'IPFI' (THE VOICE), which is speaking from outside the house, and Tshililo and Tshedza. The audience's attention, though focusing on the door, remains inside the house where Tshililo and Tshedza are.

Tshedza is speaking from the **ON MIKE** position. The effect of this position in this situation is that the listening audience's attention which has been directed to the door is at this point redirected back to the physical centre of the action, namely, where Tshililo and Tshedza are.

the door please. (FADE OUT)

(VOICE: It is me, Julie.

Open the door please.)

(FADE OUT)

5.TSHEDZA:(AMBELA FHASI) E!

Ndi khotsimuhulu,ri tou zwi

ita hani zwino?

(TSHEDZA: (SPEAKING SOFTLY)

It is the uncle. What do we

do now? )

After evaluating the indications of the microphone positions in the above radio dramas, one concludes that the four script-writers have failed to improve the quality of their scripts by exploiting the advantages of correctly indicating this essential tool. One must agree, however, that such deficiencies on the part of the script-writers are, in many instances, redressed by the producer. However, the fact that the script-writer fails to take advantage of this factor's contribution to the overall quality of the radio drama leads one to conclude that the final product could have been very much better had the script-writers done their work properly.

## 2.2 Sound Effects

Sound effects, abbreviated 'SFX' or 'SX' in the radio drama script, are the second most important technical tool that the script-writer should understand and use properly. O'Donnell et al. (1986:251) define sound effects as:

...any sound other than music or speech that is used to create an image, evoke an emotion, compress time, clarify or reinforce a message.

Fourie et al. (1987:59) draw a distinction between sound effects

and noise as follows:

Sound effects differ from noise in that they are intentional and are used with a communicative purpose in mind, whereas noise may be defined as unwanted sounds.

From these two statements it becomes clear that sound effects are the kind of sounds that are intentionally 'brought in' in a radio drama with a purpose of creating certain effects which are of communicative value to the audience. Therefore, as Fourie et al. also maintain, what may be defined as noise in certain instances, if recorded and intentionally introduced into a radio drama with a purpose of achieving a certain effect at a precise moment, will no doubt acquire the status of a good sound effect.

The basic requirement of a good sound effect in a radio drama is that it must be relevant to the dramatic action at the time of its insertion, and appropriate to support the delivery of the dramatic theme. Also, it must not be ambiguous or confusing. Fourie et al. (1989:60) differentiate between six sources from which sound effects may emanate. They list the six sources together with backing examples as in the following modified

table.

Sound effect source	Examples
Human beings(individual)	Coughing, snoring, laughing, sneezing.
Human beings(group)	Crowd at sports stadium, audience applauding or laughing
Nature	thunderstorm, rain, surf crashing against rock, wind
Animals	Sheep, hyenas, pigs, birds, crickets
Man-made objects	A clock ticking, a door slamming, an engine running, a car crashing
Special effects	Echo effects, the 'boink' sound of a harp.

The table above may be improved by adding what any of the sound effects signifies. For example, a sound from a human being (individual), such as coughing, may signify that the individual concerned is suffering from an illness, such as TB or Aids, while a sound effect from a man-made object, such as a door slamming, may indicate an entrance or exit, etc.

Hilliard (1984) and Mcleish (1988) differentiate between pre-recorded sounds and those that are recorded on the spot. Pre-recorded sounds are defined as those sounds that are recorded some time before the production and later 'welded' to it at appropriate points. Pre-recorded sounds include rain, a crowd at a stadium, people at a party or shebeen, traffic sound, etc.

The bulk of pre-recorded sounds run throughout a scene, as distinct from intermittent sounds, such as the dialling of a telephone, the pouring of a drink, the closing of a door, the sound of kissing, the sounds of blows in a fight, the clapping of hands, the firing of a gun, the lighting of a cigarette, and the clinking of glasses in a toast. Mcleish calls these types of sound 'incidental furniture' and 'props' because they are made in the studio '... at the time of the appropriate dialogue, if possible by someone else, if the hands (of the actors) are not free due to their holding of the script.' (Mcleish, 1988:205)

Mcleish suggests the following ways of creating various sound effects on the spot:

- (1) Walking through undergrowth or jungle: rustle a bundle of recorded tape in the hands.
- (2) Walking through snow: squeeze and twist a roll of cotton wool in the hands, rub two blocks of salt together.
- (3) Horses hooves: use halved coconut shells, from pawing the ground to a full gallop. A bunch of keys will produce the jingle of harness.
- (4) Pouring a drink: put a little water into the glass first so that the sound starts immediately the pouring begins.
- (5) Opening champagne: make a 'pop' sound with the mouth. Otherwise blow a cork from a sawn-off bicycle pump. A little water poured on to Alka-Seltzer tablets or fruit salts close on-mic should do the rest.
- (6) A building on fire: rustle cellophane from a cigarette packet on-mic, and break some small sticks.
- (7) Marching troops: use a matches box of approximately 20 x 10 x 15 cm, containing some small gravel. Held between the hands and shaken with precision it can

execute drill movements to order.

- (8) Creaks: use rusty bolts, chains, or other hardware. A little resin put on a cloth and pulled tightly along a piece of string fastened to a resonator is worth trying. (Mcleish, 1988:205)

It should be noted that certain sounds may be supplemented with associated sounds to improve their recognisability. Hence Evans (1977) speaks of a base sound and a supplement sound. According to him, a base sound is one the script-writer expects the listening audience will easily associate with a certain locale or event. A base sound normally runs for a few seconds or for the duration of the whole scene, as distinct from the supplementary sound which 'pops in' now and then while the base sound runs. For example, to establish a bush locale, birds may be used to create a base sound, supplemented by baboons calling now and then (supplement sound), and, in the case of a scene along a river bank, flowing water (base sound), together with frogs now and then, should do the trick.

### 2.2.1 The functions of sound effects

Evans (1977), Hilliard (1984), Lee (1986), O'Donnell et al. (1986), and Fourie et al. (1989) agree, with variations as to

where primary emphasis should fall, that any good sound effect in a radio drama should fulfil one or more of the functions mentioned in the following headings.

#### **2.2.1.1 Establishing setting or locale**

Sound effects, where they are well blended with dialogue, are effective in creating setting and its various features. The singing of birds in a quiet place, coupled with sounds emanating from wild animals such as baboons, will establish a bush locale, while the clinking of glasses, the pouring of drinks, the sound of disco-type music and drunken voices will suggest, in an African context, a shebeen or any drinking place.

Once the setting of a forest is established one may logically ask, how does one place the forest specifically at, say, Maguduni, or Tshilata, or Lukwalangwanda? To solve such problems the script-writer must 'plant' the necessary dialogue at an appropriate point. Whereas a base sound and its supplement (discussed earlier) must occur simultaneously in order to create the desired effect, in the case of sound effects backed by (explanatory) dialogue it is not necessary that the base sound and its supplement occur simultaneously, or even close to each other. The best way, as Evans maintains, 'is to "plant" the



necessary information beforehand.' (Evans, 1977:116)

#### 2.2.1.2 Directing the attention and emotions of the listening audience.

A carefully selected sound effect may be used as an effective tool in directing the attention and emotions of the audience. Hilliard provides the following example: 'In a sequence in which the audience is aware that a person alone at home is an intended murder victim, the sound of steps on a walk and the sound of knocking on a door, or the more subtle sound of the turning of a doorknob, will direct the audience attention toward the suspenseful terror of inevitable and perhaps immediate violence.'

(Hilliard, 1984:21)

#### 2.2.1.3 Establishing time

Sound effects may also be used to establish the time. The crowing of a cock is an effective means of suggesting the dawn of a new day. The sound of a siren or a bell may suggest 'clocking in' or 'knocking off' time at a factory. The same sounds may also suggest a school environment. However, the script-writer must take care in deciding which particular sound to use to bring about a desired effect because, if the situation created is not

sufficiently supportive, there is the chance of misleading the audience into some erroneous and undesired conclusions.

#### **2.2.1.4 Establishing mood**

Here the emphasis is on the emotions, such as happiness, sadness, tension, shock, etc., simulated by the actors. A combination of various sounds may be required to establish the effect needed to match the dramatic situation at some particular point of the action. For example, howling wind, rain together with sounds of animals, such as lions and tigers, known to be dangerous, may help to establish and /or heighten the illusion of convincing fear being experienced by the character.

#### **2.2.1.5 Signifying entrances and exists**

Sound may also be used as an effective way of signifying entrances and exists in a radio drama. To illustrate this point Hilliard (1984:21) gives the following example:

The sound of footsteps off mike and the opening of a door, or the reverse - the opening and closing of a door and the sound of footsteps coming on - are unmistakable in indicating an

exit or entrance.

#### 2.2.1.6 Serving as a transition between changes of place and time

Sound may also serve as a transition between changes of place and time in a radio drama. In a journey of a migrant worker leaving his homestead to seek work in the urban areas, as Hillard also maintains, sound may play a significant role in indicating the required changes. The first sound may be that of a cock announcing a new day, then that of a young man bidding farewell to relatives, followed by the sound of a bus, crossfading into that of a train with appropriate whistles, crossfading into voices of many people in the big city. Adding a factory siren, crossingfading into voices of people, crossfading into whistles, voices and the sound of a moving train may create the impression of a person arriving in a big city at the particular time when people are knocking off work and travelling to their places of residence.

However, it should also be noted that in some cases one sound effect may be capable of performing many of the above functions simultaneously. For example, animal sounds may inform the listening audience that the radio drama is taking place in a forest (locale), at the same time as supporting the pace of the

radio drama, while also conveying the illusion of the actor's fear.

Insertion of sound effects into a radio drama must be done extremely carefully. The script-writer must understand, and also acknowledge, the fact that radio deals not only with what is real but also, more importantly, with what is capable of being correctly interpreted and understood by the audience. It is therefore understandable that some sounds which may be correctly interpreted and understood by an audience with visual advantage, for example, in stage drama, television and film, may on their own convey nothing to the radio listener. In such instances the use of the spoken word to supplement such deficiencies is of paramount importance.

This, then, brings us to the question whether sound effects should be accorded the same status as the spoken word. There are various opinions in this regard. However, the view taken in this study is that sound effects should be, to borrow from Rodger, 'an obedient servant' of the spoken word. This view is supported by the fact that both those who are for and those who are against sound effects being accorded the same status as the spoken word agree that basically all the information in radio drama must be created and communicated to the audience through the spoken word,

and that sound must be introduced in a radio drama only where and when there is a definite need and purpose for it, that is, only where the situation cannot be made acceptable to the audience without the sound effect.

Sound effects in the four radio dramas under consideration are used to help make the dramatic action believable. However, one notes with special interest that in all four radio dramas the abbreviation 'SFX', or 'SX', or any other abbreviation, is not used to indicate sound effects in the scripts. Rambau and Mashamba in *Tshenzhelani* and *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi*, respectively, clearly indicate sound effects as 'SOUND EFFECTS' in their scripts.

However, Rambau uses sound effects more successfully because on almost all occasions they are indicated clearly and independently (independent, that is, from the emotions indicated for actors, and other indications in the radio drama script). The following is an example from episode 1 page 5 of *Tshenzhelani* to illustrate this point:

(NGA MATSHELONI, THABELO U AMBA NA MME AWE)

SOUND EFFECTS: (U LILA HA KHUHU)

9.THABELO: Mmawe, hafhu namusi hu pfi ra sa ...

((IT IS IN THE MORNING, THABELO IS WITH HIS MOTHER)

SOUND EFFECTS: (SOUND FROM CHICKENS)

9.THABELO: Mother, it was said that today if we don't...)

Mashamba, on the other hand, has a tendency to mix sound effects with other aspects of the radio drama, such as the emotional displays expected from the actors, and setting. The following is just one example from episode 1 page 1 to illustrate this point:

SOUND EFFECTS : (U LILA HA ZWIFUWO NGA MATHABAMA MUSI TSHILILO A TSHI VHUYA MADALONI NA NWANA WAVE FULUFHELO)'

(SOUND EFFECTS : (SOUND FROM DOMESTIC ANIMALS IN THE AFTERNOON WHEN TSHILILO AND HER DAUGHTER ARRIVE HOME FROM A VISIT))

In the above example, 'U LILA HA ZWIFUWO ...' (SOUND FROM DOMESTIC ANIMALS) is a unit that indicates the sound effects needed in this radio drama. The rest of the sentence, strictly speaking, has nothing to do with sound effects.

Ramaite and Magwabeni, on the other hand, indicate sound effects as 'BYKLANK' in *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi* and *Thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha*, respectively. In *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi* whereas 'byklanke' are clearly marked in some instances, in others they are implied in the guiding notes. However in *Thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha*, although they are also clearly marked in most instances, there are many others where the dividing line between them and other indications is almost non-existent. The following example from episode 8 page 4 is just one of those instances where a producer may mistake sound effects for actors:

2.MASHANGO: (O TSHUWESA) Na nne ndi khou da  
Vho-Matambila. Na nne ndi khou da.

3.ZWIKHOKHONONO : Zwa sokou TSHEMEDZANA ZWO  
VUSA BONYONGO. (sic)

4.MATAMBILA: Mashango, mafhungo o ima nga  
milanzhe. Mafhungo o ima nga inwe ndila.

5.MASHANGO: Hu khou pfi mini Vho-Matambila? Hu  
khou pfi mini...? "

(2.MASHANGO: (VERY SCARED) I am coming, too,  
Matambila. I am coming.

3. INSECTS AND WILD ANIMALS: Making A LOT OF NOISE. (sic)

4. MATAMBILA: Mashango, things are bad. Things are really bad.

5. MASHANGO: What is it Matambila? What is it...?)

The allocation of the number 3 to sound effects, 'ZWIKHOKHONONO' (INSECTS AND WILD ANIMALS), in the above example, could cause a producer erroneously to conclude that they are actors too, and not sound effects as such.

With the exception of *Thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha* the opening and closing of doors is used successfully to signify entrances and exits in the other three radio dramas. In *Tshenzhelani*, in episode 2 page 1, Salume is first heard talking alone, then comes the sound of a door opening and closing, then she is heard talking to Zwiapenga. This effectively signifies that she has moved from a room where she was alone to that where Zwiapenga is. In *I shavha i tshi sia imuinga i ya' fhi*, in episode 9 page 2, the sound of a door opening is heard, followed by Tshililo entering Banzhi's house; this is then followed by another sound of a door opening, which signifies that the two



actors are leaving Banzhi's house. In *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi*, in episode 2 page 4, Mudzula says:

...A hu na muta u si na phambano. Nne ndi a  
tuwa! (VHA VULA VOTHI VHA DOVHA VHA VALA)

(...There is no family without differences. I  
am going! (SHE OPENS THE DOOR AND THEN CLOSES  
IT))

In the above example the script-writer successfully uses dialogue to support a sound effect. The words 'Nne ndi a tuwa' (I am going) are followed by the opening and closing of a door.

Domestic animals, such as cattle, goats and pigs, are successfully used in all four radio dramas to establish that the dramatic action is taking place in a rural setting. In *Tshenzhelani* and *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi* the script-writers used 'ZWIFUWO ZWA HAYANI ZWI NO KHOU LILA' (SOUND FROM DOMESTIC ANIMALS ) and 'U LILA HA ZWIFUWO ' (SOUND FROM DOMESTIC ANIMALS), respectively, to establish rural Venda homesteads. The same is the case in *Vhutshilo avhu rengwi*, where Ramaite even goes on to specify the type of domestic animals he has in mind. The following is an example, from episode 2 page 2, illustrating

this point. Here Ramaite clearly specifies that the sounds of domestic animals to be used to create the rural atmosphere are those made by cattle and goats:

BYKLANK : HU PFALA U LILA HA KHOLOMO NA  
MBUDZI.

(SOUND EFFECT : THE SOUND OF CATTLE AND GOATS  
IS HEARD)

In *Thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha* Magwabeni, in episode 1 and 6, successfully blends the sound of a pig into supporting dialogue to achieve more than one effect:

MASHANGO: ...Vho-Marandela! Vho-Marandela! Danu  
ima ndi tou dzhena mutani, khamusi vho edela  
gudani la muta. (HU PFALA U HONA HA NGULUVHE)  
Vho-Marandela!...(NGULUVHE YA HONE) ... (U A  
I RAHA) Yone kha i do bvela kule hangei mani!  
(NGULUVHE YA TZHEMA)

(MASHANGO: ... Marandela ! Marandela ! Let me  
get into the courtyard. Maybe she is sleeping  
there. (A SOUND FROM A PIG) Marandela! ... (THE

SOUND OF A PIG AGAIN) ... (HE KICKS IT) ...Go  
away, you damned thing! (THE SOUND OF A  
SQUEALING PIG))

In the above example the sound of a pig establishes that the dramatic action is taking place in a traditional Venda homestead where animals such as pigs roam around freely. Coupled with the above speech it is capable of directing the attention and the emotions of the audience, because it focuses on Mashango entering his homestead in the hope of finding his mother whom he hopes will console him. On realising that she is not at home the audience becomes emotionally involved because of its likely sympathy with Mashango, who desperately needs a shoulder to lean on after his unsuccessful attempt at suicide. At the same time Mashango's frustration and fear are reinforced because the sound of a pig, the only sound effect at this point, effectively depicts the emptiness of the place and the life that faces him.

Also used in establishing setting is the sound made by fowls. This sound is used successfully by all four script-writers when they want to establish that the dramatic action is taking place during the day (and mostly in the morning). The use of the sound of cars together with domestic animals and fowls helps to make it clear to the audience that the Venda represented by the

script-writers is not only rural, but also has some modern facets.

Rambau and Magwabeni, unlike Mashamba and Ramaite, successfully use sounds which are effectively supplemented by other sounds to create desired effects. The following is an example from episode 18 page 1 of Tshenzhelani, which illustrates how Rambau uses 'ZWIPUKA' (WILD ANIMALS) as a base sound. Upon hearing this sound the audience will assume that the setting is somewhere where there are various wild animals, and 'VHATHU' (PEOPLE) as a supplementary sound, which suggests that those animals are in a place where there are also people, in this case a zoo:

SOUND EFFECTS: (VHATHU NA ZWIPUKA ZWI NO KHOU  
LILA HENEFHO)  
(SOUND EFFECTS: (PEOPLE AND THE SOUND OF WILD  
ANIMALS) )

The same tactic is also often effectively used by Magwabeni. The following is an example of how he, in episode 1 page 1, successfully uses the sound of birds as a base sound with the sound of wild animals to supplement them to create the impression that the dramatic action is taking place in some thick forest where one would expect to find many different birds and dangerous

animals:

BYKLANK : (FHETHUVHUPO NDI HA DAKANI. HU PFALA  
U LILA HA ZWINONI NA ZWINWE ZWIPUKA ZWA DAKA)

(SOUND EFFECTS : (THE SETTING IS THAT OF A  
FOREST. SOUNDS OF BIRDS SINGING AND THAT OF  
OTHER WILD ANIMALS ARE HEARD))

The contention that there are some sounds which cannot be correctly interpreted by the listening audience unless they are given explanatory or supporting dialogue to remedy their visual disadvantage holds good when one looks at the following example from episode 4 page 1 of I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi:

SOUND EFFECTS : (MAIPFI A VHATHU VHA RE HOLONI)  
TAKALANI NA MAVIS HOLONI YA U LELA SIBADELA  
TSHA SHONDONI

(SOUND EFFECTS : (VOICES FROM PEOPLE IN THE  
HALL)  
TAKALANI AND MAVIS INSIDE A DINING HALL AT  
SHONDONI HOSPITAL))

These instructions are followed by Takalani and Mavis discussing the problems Mavis is having in her attempts to seduce Tshengelo away from his wife, Tshililo. As there is nothing in the dialogue indicating that the dramatic action is taking place in a dining hall, all the audience can deduce from the prescribed sound effects is that the dramatic action is taking place somewhere where there are many people. Therefore in this case the sound effects are ambiguous and confusing.

Unlike the case with the above example, 'U FHENDWA HA MABAMBIRI' (THE RUFFLING OF PAPERS) in episode 22 page 4 in Tshenzhelani, and 'A PFALA A TSHI KHERULA BAMBIRI LO PUTELAHO' (HE IS HEARD TEARING THE COVERING PAPER ) in episode 30 page 2 of Thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha are followed by supporting dialogues which clarify that, in the first case, the ruffling of papers is in fact the turning of the pages of a photograph album, and that in the second case the sound is from the tearing of the paper that was used to wrap money.

From the discussion above one may conclude that Magwabeni has been more successful than Rambau, Mashamba, and Ramaite in using sound effects sparingly, but with the maximum possible desired effect, in practically all instances.

### 2.3 Music

Music, like the microphone and sounds effects, is also an essential tool which is used by the script-writer for creating desired effects in a radio drama. As an ingredient of African cultures, the importance of the role it plays is evident in almost all of their activities, whether they be cultural, religious, social or economic. Its influence, under all circumstances, on people and the courses events take, cannot be under-estimated. In radio drama the importance of music is well summed-up by Gielgud (1957:91):

...there is nothing that can aid radio drama quite so powerfully as music - always assuming that the music is suitably chosen or composed, properly balanced, and competently played.

Evans (1977) distinguishes between what he calls 'objective' and 'subjective' music. By 'objective' music he refers to music which is an integral part of a particular scene or event. Here, in the African context, one may be reminded of the special kinds of music that are associated with ritual, wedding, or burial ceremonies. By 'subjective' music he means music which creates

or heightens an atmosphere. Subjective music includes background music (that is, music played softly during dialogue), incidental music (that is, music inserted, in 'bits' only, in certain situations to fulfil a specific purpose) and mood music (that is, music which is meant to create and/or heighten a mood).

Evans mentions the following salient points which must be remembered when introducing music into a radio drama:

- (a) It must be introduced at the beginning of a musical phrase and must end when the music itself end, either momentarily or final. If this is impossible then it must be slowly faded out behind the next bout of speech.
- (b) Music behind speech must be handled with extreme care. Here only instrumental music must enjoy preference because, as he puts it, 'To have a voice speaking one set of words while another sings a different set is on the whole a rotten idea.'

(Evans, 1977:151)

Under 'music behind speech' the following sub-points also need to be considered:



- (i) The rhythms of the music must correspond with the rhythms of the words being spoken at the time.
- (ii) The level of music must not drown out the words, because this may distract the audience from the prime dramatic force, namely, the spoken word. On the other hand, the script-writer and his producer must avoid using music which is too faint because this would contribute nothing to the radio drama.

### 2.3.1 The functions of music in radio drama

Music, if well chosen, must be able to achieve one or more of the following functions:

#### 2.3.1.1 A theme for the radio drama.

The first and the most important function of music in radio drama is to mark the beginning and end of an episode. The playing of the same composition at the beginning of every episode is a useful tactic for 'catching up' the audience because, as soon as the particular composition is heard, the audience immediately associates it with a particular radio drama, and makes the necessary mental and physical preparations conducive to listening to it. A similar adjustment occurs with its repetition at the end

of an episode. Lee refers to this type of music usage as the 'signature tune'.

Where possible the script-writer, together with his producer, should commission the composition of original music to be linked to the title of the radio drama. This should not be viewed as too ambitious an endeavour, because, where the music is appropriate, the likelihood is that it will add flavour to the radio drama, and will be an irresistible summons for the listeners to listen to the current episode of their favourite radio drama, and an invitation to make an appointment for the next one.

#### 2.3.1.2 A bridge or medium of transition from one scene to another.

Theme music, as discussed above (that is for introducing or concluding an episode), may also help in changing the scenes within the radio drama. The difference between the two uses is that whereas in the former case long passages, mostly occurring at the start of the composition, are used, in the latter case short passages, selected from the body of the same work, should be used so that audience confusion as to whether the music fulfils a thematic or a transitional function may be avoided.

The use of the same composition both as a theme and as a bridge or medium of transition also helps to establish and to reinforce thematic continuity in a radio drama.

#### **2.3.1.3 To create mood and atmosphere in a scene**

A happy or a sad mood in a scene may be easily created by the selection and use of the right type of music. O'Donnell et al. (1986:142) aptly sum up the situation:

...music reaches deep into the human psyche ...  
Music has moved men to war and waltzed couples  
to matrimony.

#### **2.3.1.4 To create a background**

When music is used in the background of a scene it must assume the status of a subtle aid, that is, it must not be too obvious and, in some instances, its presence must be barely evident. Similarly, the use of well-known music passages should be avoided. Such passages tend to attract the audience's attention and therefore distract them from the spoken word, which is the driving force behind the production.

Different types of music that may be used to serve the above-mentioned functions are readily available at most radio stations, but the choice lies with the script-writer, and indeed the producer, to select the right type of music for creating the desired effects for the particular situation in question.

With varying degrees of success music has been used to serve various functions in the four radio dramas under discussion.

One feature that is obvious when one considers these radio dramas is that the choice of the type of theme music to be used in signalling the beginning and the ending of these productions has been left largely in the hands of the producer. Knowing the trend that has for years been the hallmark of theme music in Radio Venda, it is safe to assume that such a choice is made from the less commonly-known jazz, fusion, and classical compositions.

The script-writers successfully use music to bridge from one scene to the next. Rambau, Mashamba and Ramaite use music very convincingly in their productions. In *Thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha*, however, Magwabeni displays a tendency to use the term 'INTERVALS' as an alternative to the term 'BRIDGE MUSIC'. This tendency is only acceptable in cases where the scenes separated takes place in the same setting. Where the music is expected to

'carry' the audience from one setting to another, and a set of 'new' characters, the use of the term 'INTERVALS' is totally unacceptable. For example, in episode 24 page 3, the audience first, in the setting, 'sees' Marengwa and her friend Masana consoling her on their way home after Marengwa has lost a witchcraft case against Mashango, and after the 'INTERVAL' as designated in the script, most probably after some music, it then 'sees' Mashango and Matambila at Matambila's home, which is quite a different setting.

Mashamba uses music very effectively to create a serious mood and atmosphere in episode 12 page 5 :

(BRIDGE MUSIC)

SOUND EFFECTS: (NYIMBO DZI NO KHOU IMBIWA  
HENEFO)

(NGA DUVHA LA MBULUNGO, TAKALANI NA MAVIS  
VHA VHOTHE)

((BRIDGE MUSIC))

SOUND EFFECTS: (PEOPLE SINGING)

((IT IS THE BURIAL DAY, TAKALANI IS WITH MAVIS))

The guiding notes in the above example clearly suggest that the

producer should use objective music which the listening audience will easily associate with burial ceremonies. The intention is to create the sorrowful mood which marks these occasions in traditional African communities. At the same time the music should also assume the status of a subtle aid, since it is expected to run unobtrusively through the whole scene.

Subjective music is also frequently used successfully by Rambau and Mashamba to create various moods and atmospheres. However, there are certain instances where these two script-writers, because they prescribe the subjective music, fail to use this essential tool to achieve the desired effects without sacrificing the general quality of their productions as such. The following is an example from Tshenzhelani to illustrate this point :

SOUND EFFECTS: (MUZIKA WA 'STIMELA' U NO KHOU  
LILELA FHASI)

(SOUND EFFECTS: (MUSIC FROM 'STIMELA' ON THE  
BACKGROUND))

The first point to notice in the above example is that music is indicated as part of the sound effects. This approach is also used in I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi. What should also be

noted in the above extract is the use of music from the popular group 'Stimela', whose music is always played on radio and television and at music festivals. Use of such music tends to distract the audience from the dramatic dialogue and, since the music of this group is always accompanied by words, its used in the background is, to borrow again from Evans, on the whole a rotten idea.

Similar use of music to create a romantic atmosphere is also found in episode 17 page 4 of I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya' fhi:

SOUND EFFECTS: (REKHODO YA TRACY CHAPMAN I NO  
KHOU LILA)

(SOUND EFFECTS: (TRACY CHAPMAN'S RECORD  
PLAYING))

The use of music in this way also tends to tie a radio drama to a specific time, as compared to the generalised direction, 'MUZIKA WO FHOLAHO' (SOFT MUSIC), which the two script-writers so successfully use elsewhere, and allows music that is not dated to be used.

In comparison, the choice of theme music has been left in the hand of the producers in each of the radio dramas under discussion. Music is also successfully used to bridge scenes by the four script-writers. Whereas Mashamba, Rambau and Ramaite clearly mark where music must be inserted, Magwabeni does not mark his script properly. The use of music by popular artists such as Stimela in *Tshenzhelani*, and Tracy Chapman in *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi* lowers the effectiveness of the use of subject music in these two radio dramas. The fact that the music of these artists is always accompanied by words makes it more unsuitable for radio drama.

#### 2.4 Recapitulation

This chapter dealt with the use of the microphone, sound effects, and music in radio drama. The three are referred to as technical tools. This study concludes that it is important for the script-writer to understand where and how these aspects are used. The study further concludes that failure to use these aspects properly affects the quality of the script negatively.

All microphone positions, sound effects, and music directions should be, to quote McLeish, '... bracketed, underlined, or in capitals so that they stand out clearly from the dialogue.'



(McLeish, 1988:199)

A point worth noting is that sound effects and music must only be used where absolutely necessary to create what O'Donnell et al. (1986) call 'a fabric of believability' which assists the script-writer to put his dramatic theme across. Therefore, in attempting to manipulate the audience's imagination by means of the various technical tools, the script-writer must guard against the temptation to camouflage lack of artistic vitality behind a barrage of these tools. Sound effects and music, as is maintained in this study, are merely essential accessories, and the spoken word remains primary in establishing and directing the dramatic flow of action.



**CHAPTER 3****THE STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS OF RADIO DRAMA****3.0 Introduction**

This chapter looks at the structural elements of radio drama. The concept 'structural elements' in this chapter will be used to refer to scene, episode, conflict, suspense, surprise, dramatic irony, believability, and plot. The main focus falls on the plot structure of the four selected Radio Venda broadcasts.

**3.1 Scene**

Levitt (1971:09) defines a scene as:

...the basic unit of play construction.

He further argues that play construction, in his opinion, should be defined as the place, relation, and function of scenes and episodes within the whole dramatic work of art.

Downer (1955:169) maintains that:

...the constituent parts in the dramatic structure are properly called the scenes.

Therefore the concept 'scene' should be taken to refer to the most basic structural element of a radio drama, the element on which other elements are built.

Indicating the difference between scenes in a stage drama and those in radio drama Ash (1985:54) argues:

The very word 'scene', coming from the word for the tent which served the ancient Greeks as a stage, has to mean for radio drama, not something seen, but something imagined.

There are two opinions as to when a scene comes into being. According to Tennyson 'Stricter theory requires that a scene be any unit of an act with the same characters and place; but the principle of place alone is more frequently invoked, since a scene will be considered the same even though another character enters during the course of it. Once the place changes, however, the scene is thought to change.' (Tennyson, 1967:29)

On the other hand, Levitt argues that a scene comes into being when the focal point of the audience's attention (the stage, in the case of stage drama) is '...occupied by an unchanging group of players. If anything happens to change the construction of the

group (that is, the entrance or exit of a player) a new scene commences.' (Levitt, 1971:15)

Swanepoel et al. (1987:12) call the former type of scenes conventional or formal scenes, whereas the latter they call functional scenes. In terms of radio drama, a conventional scene will introduce a new set of characters and most probably a new imaginary setting. Two conventional scenes will be separated by bridge music. A functional scene, on the other hand, will be marked by the imaginary entrance and departure of actors.

The view in this study is that the script-writer must be at liberty to use either or both types to create his scenes according to the end result he/she wants to achieve.

Mashamba's script is well divided into a number of conventional and functional scenes. Conventional scenes are separated by 'BRIDGE MUSIC', 'PAUSE' and/or 'SOUND EFFECTS'. Most of those scenes end in suspense to stimulate interest on the part of the audience. The following is an example of how Mashamba arranges the second, the third, and the fourth conventional scenes in episode 17:

- 9.TSHEDZA :Zwi a pfala, fhedzi arali vha na  
 thanziela ya murole wa malo ndi  
 vhona hu na pulane nyana ( sic.)  
 hafha ine ra nga vha itela yone.
- 10.MASHUDU :Ndi ifhio pulane ya hone? Idani

nayo.

(BRIDGE MUSIC)

SOUND EFFECTS : (MUZIKA WO FHOLAHO)

(NGA MADEKWANA, TSHENGELO U NA  
MAVIS)

1.TSHENGELO :Sweetheart, mafhungo a khou tou  
konda tshothe, mme anga a vha todi  
na u pfa tshithu nga ha nne na inwi.

2.MAVIS :Vhathu vha hashu, zwine zwa amba  
uri nne na inwi ri nga si tsha  
saina?

3.TSHENGELO :A zwo ngo ralo, humbulani zwe nda ni  
vhudza ndi tshi ri nne na inwi ri do  
saina naho zwa tou ita hani. Nazwino  
ndi khou ni vhudza uri dilugiseni,  
vhege yenei ri yo u saina. Ndo no  
wana muthu ane a do vha thanzi.

4.MAVIS :Ndi a livhuwa Papa, (sic.) (VHA A  
MAMANA)

(BRIDGE MUSIC)

SOUND EFFECTS : (REKHODO YA TRACY CHAPMAN I NO KHOU

LILA)

(NGA MATHABAMA, TSHENGELO U NA  
TAKALANI NDUNI)

- 5.TSHENGELO :Rekhodo ya hoyu musidzana ndi i funa nga maanda... (Mashamba, pages 3 and 4)
- (9.TSHEDZA :It is understandable. If she has a standard eight certificate, there is a plan that we can make for her.
- 10.MASHUDU :What is the plan? Out with it.

(BRIDGE MUSIC)

SOUND EFFECTS :(SOFT MUSIC)

(IT IS IN THE EVENING. TSHENGELO IS WITH MAVIS)

- 1.TSHENGELO :Sweetheart, things are very bad. My mother does not want to hear anything about you and me.
- 2.MAVIS :My people! Does that mean that we are no longer going to sign? (Lit. meaning to have the marriage endorsed by a marriage officer)
- 3.TSHENGELO :That is not so. Remember what I told you when I said we are going to sign even if there are problems. You must be ready. I found someone who is going to be a witness.
- 4.MAVIS :Thank you, Daddy. (They kiss)

## (BRIDGE MUSIC)

SOUND EFFECTS : (TRACY CHAPMAN'S RECORD PLAYING)

(IT IS IN THE AFTERNOON. TSHENGELO  
IS WITH TAKALANI IN THE HOUSE)

5. TSHENGELO : I like this girl's record very  
much... (Mashamba, pages 3 and 4)

The first conventional scene, that is, on page 3 where the audience hears Mashudu and Tshedza, ends in suspense as Tshedza does not reveal how she will help Tshililo who has only reached standard eight. The audience, because of its sympathy with Tshililo who is a victim of circumstances, will be eager to know whether Tshedza has a good idea that will help the poor lady. This causes the audience to stay tuned in for the next scene. Scene three on page 4 also ends in suspense because, knowing how Tshengelo has isolated himself from his relatives, one wonders who is going to agree to act as a witness during the solemnization of his marriage to Mavis.

The three scenes are separated by '(BRIDGE MUSIC)', which is followed by 'SOUND EFFECTS', and time, and the characters to appear in the next scenes. In these three scenes Mashamba introduces combinations of characters and a shift of setting from one scene to the next. In the first scene (page 3) Tshedza and Mashudu are at the old man's homestead where all characters, except Mavis at this stage, live. In the second scene (page 4) Tshengelo and Mavis are at Mavis' place. In the fourth scene



(page 4) Tshengelo and Takalani are at the old man's homestead.

Mashamba also makes use of functional scenes which are marked by the entrance and departure of actors within the same setting. The following extract from episode 24, pages 3 and 4, provides an excellent example of how the script-writer successfully introduces functional scenes into his script:

(BRIDGE MUSIC)

(FULUFHELO NA MAKHULU)

1. FULUFHELO :Gugu, nga vha vhone rokho ye mmane  
vha nnyambadza yone, ndi yavhudi,  
ri khou ya doroboni zwino.
2. VHO-NDIITWANI :Ndi zwavhudi muduhulu wanga. Hone  
u do mmbuela na mini.
3. FULUFHELO :Vhone nga vha tou amba uri vha  
toda'ni, ndi do vha rengela. (VHA  
A SEA, HU SWIKA TSHEDZA)
4. TSHEDZA :U khou vha talutshedza afhio  
muduhulu wavho namusi?
5. VHO-NDIITWANI :Hai, muduhulu wanga u a mpfuna  
vhone, uri ndi ambe zwine nda toda  
u do nthengela doroboni. (SEA  
VHOTHE)
6. TSHEDZA :A nga di vha a tshi khou amba  
zwone, a tshi swika hangei

doroboni u do lwisa nga maanda uri  
khotsi awe vha mu rengele hezwo  
zwe a laedzwa nga makhulu wawe.  
(HU SWIKA MAVIS)

7.MAVIS :Aa! Nne ndi hone ndo bva mazwale,  
ndi kha di ya doroboni.

8.VHO-NDIITWANI :Ndi zwone, ni tshimbile zwavhudi.

( (BRIDGE MUSIC)

(FULUFHELO AND HER GRANDMOTHER)

1.FULUFHELO :Grandmother, look how my  
stepmother dressed me. This  
dress is nice. We are going to  
town.

2.NDIITWANI :It is nice, my granddaughter. What  
will you give me when you come  
back?

3.FULUFHELO :Just say what you want, then I  
will buy it for you. (THEY LAUGH.  
TSHEDZA ARRIVES)

4.TSHEDZA :What is your granddaughter  
telling you today?

5.NDIITWANI :My granddaughter loves me. She  
says I must tell her what I want  
so that she can buy it in town.

6.TSHEDZA :She may be right, hoping that when

she gets to town she will be able to force her father to buy the articles needed by her grandmother.

(MAVIS ARRIVES)

7.MAVIS :Greetings! I am now on my way, mother-in-law. I am going to town.  
8.NDIITWANI :It's all right. Go well.)

The above text consists of three functional scenes which are marked by the entrance of additional characters into the same setting. Nos. 1, 2, and 3 constitute the first functional scene with two characters, namely Fulufhelo and Ndiitwani. After Tshedza enters at the end of no.3 a new functional scene starts from no.4 until the end of no.6, as the number of characters increases to three. Nos. 7 and 8 form another functional scene because of the entry of Mavis into the centre of dramatic action, which leaves it with four characters.

Magwabeni uses the terms 'INTERVALS' and 'BRIDGE MUSIC' to separate conventional scenes in his script. However, there are many instances where the scenes are not marked or supported by the required sound effects. For example, in episode 17 page 4, Magwabeni arranges his script as follows:

1.KAPTENI :Tshimbilani zwino! Ni songo tsha fedza  
(sic) tshifhinga... (sic)  
2.MUTANDA :Ri ndilani zwino... (sic)

## INTERVAL

6.MUTANDA :Binyuka, ro swika khezwi! Ri fanela u mbo di dzhena ra dzhia hedzo thevhele dzawe, ri tavyhanye u huma.

7.BINYUKA :Mutanda, ngoho ndi khou pfa ndo tshuwa nga maanda...(sic)

8.MUTANDA :Hafhu Binyuka ni dinwa nga nyofho...

13.MUTANDA :Maweee! Mawe...!

14.BINYUKA :Ndi mini na Mutanda? Ndi mini na? Ndo fariwa mulenzhe, a thi tsha kona u tshimbila...(sic)

15.MUTANDA :Vho Kapteni (sic), ngoho nne a thi tsha vhuzelela; (sic) A thi tsha vhuzelela na luthihi...(sic)

16.KAPTENI :Hi? Ni ri mini Mutanda? Ho bvelela mini...? (sic)

17.MUTANDA :Vho kapteni (sic), ngoho arali u mushumo u nga dzula zwawo.

18.BINYUKA :Vho Kapteni (sic), arali na vhone vho vha vha hone vho...

(1.CAPTAIN :Go now. Do not waste time.

2.MUTANDA :We are on the way.

## INTERVAL

- 6.MUTANDA :Binyuka, we have arrived. We must fetch his divining stuff and quickly go back.
- 7.BINYUKA :Mutanda, I feel very scared.
- 8.MUTANDA :The problem with you Binyuka is fear...
- 13.MUTANDA :Mother! Mo...ther!
- 14.BINYUKA :What is it, Mutanda? What is it? My foot is held. I can't move.
- 15.MUTANDA :Captain, I am not going back. I am not going back again.
- 16.CAPTAIN :Yes! What do you say, Mutanda? What happened?
- 17.MUTANDA :Captain, if this is work, I rather do without it.
- 18.BINYUKA :Captain, if you were there you...)

The above text consists of three conventional scenes. The first scene, which is nos. 1 and 2, is taking place at the police station (not indicated in the script) where the Captain and Mutanda are. The second one takes place at Matambile's place. As seen from the above script again the setting is not marked. However, the use of 'INTERVAL' shows that a new conventional scene is about to occur. The third scene, which begins at no. 15 with the arrival of Mutanda and Binyuka at the police station, is totally unmarked in terms of setting and 'INTERVALS' OR 'BRIDGE MUSIC' indications. The script is also flooded with mistakes as indicated in the above quoted text.

The use of functional scenes in Magwabeni's script is very

limited. Where they are used they are not marked at all. The following is an example from episode 13 page 2:

- 1.MARENGWA :Ngoho hoyu nwananga Tsimbe u khou mpha  
thaidzo. Tshifhinga tshothe u...
- 2.MASANA :Aa! Aa mudini wee... (sic.)
- 3.MARENGWA :Aa! Ndi midana (sic.) ...? (sic.)
- 4.MASANA :Hai, ndi nne...(sic.)

- (1.MARENGWA: My child Tsimbe is giving me a  
problem. Every time he...
- 2.MASANA : Greetings! Greetings at this place!
- 3.MARENGWA: Greetings! Is it Midana?
- 4.MASALA : No, it is I.)

No.1, where Marengwa is alone, constitutes the first functional scene in the above text. Masana's entrance changes the number of the characters to two, therefore forming the second functional scene.

The use of conventional scenes in Ramaite's radio drama is limited to a few instances within some episodes. Like that of Magwabeni Ramaite's script is so badly prepared that most conventional scenes are not marked. Because of the obvious similarities that exist between Ramaite's script and Magwabeni's it is felt that it is not necessary to provide a text to prove a point which was dealt with thoroughly in my discussion of Magwabeni's radio drama. It is sufficient to say that where

conventional scenes are used they are marked by 'BRUG MUSIEK' (BRIDGE MUSIC) and 'BYKLANK' (SOUND EFFECTS).

Functional scenes, where indicated, are marked by '(DEUR OOP EN TOE)' (DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES). This is only the case when characters are departing from the centre of the dramatic action. The arrival of characters into the focal point is totally unmarked. However, in some instances neither the entrance nor the exit of characters are indicated. The following example shows how Ramaite organises his script in episode 12, pages 4 and 5:

- 7.VHO-THOMANI :Nne a tho ngo nwa halwa. Ni songo mphunga.
- 8.VHO-MUDZUNGA :Vhone khotsi a Avhurengwi! Vha nnyita-hii (sic.) Nne a thi mudzhulumba! Hezwi vha tshi toda mafhungo vha tou rali. Imani ndi humele halwani nne nwana!
- 1.AVHURENGWI :Mme anga vha ngafhi?
- 2.VHO-THOMANI :Naa a no ngo vha sia afho mudini wa tsini!...
- 11.AVHURENGWI :Mme anga vha ngafhi? Mme anga vha ngafhi? Imani ndi ye u sedza mudini wa tsini. Ndi a vhu nwa ngauri rothe ri a vhu nwa halwa hafhano mudini.
- 12.VHO-THOMANI :Kha i ye! A u konyololi nne! Vhutshilo ndi ha iwe mune! Na zwino

zwi a tula.

- 13.VHO-MUDZUNGA :Vhone vho-Thomani, naa nwana namusi  
ha athu vhuya?
- 14.VHO-THOMANI :Nwana ni amba nnyi? Halwa hovhu vhu  
do ni dzhenisa daka.
- (7.THOMANI :I did not drink beer. Do not make  
noise for me.
- 8.MUDZUNGA :You, Avhurengwi's father, what are  
you doing to me. I am not a useless  
woman. That is what you do if you  
want to start trouble. Let me go  
back to the drinking place.
- 1.AVHURENGWI :Where is my mother?
- 2.THOMANI :Did you not leave her at our  
neighbour's place?
- 11.AVHURENGWI :Where is my mother? Where is my  
mother? Let me go and check whether she  
is at our neighbour's place. I drink it  
(beer) because we all drink in this  
home.
- 12.THOMANI :Go! You are not doing it for me. It  
is your life. This is a bad omen.
- 13.MUDZULA :Hey you, Thomani, is the child not  
yet back today?
- 14.THOMANI :Who is a child? This liquor is  
going to make you crazy.)



The above cited text may be divided into three distinct functional scenes, each marked by the entrance into, and departure of the characters from, the focus or centre of the dramatic action. The three scenes are taking place the same setting, namely at Thomani's place.

Nos. 7 and 8, on page 4, form the first functional scene where the dramatic centre is occupied by Thomani and his wife Mudzunga. Without any indication on page 5 another functional scene starts at no 1, as the centre is occupied by Thomani and his daughter Avhurengwi. This scene runs up to no. 12. Again without any indication, another functional scene starts at no. 13, with the return of Mudzunga to the centre of the dramatic action.

Conventional scenes in Rambau's radio drama are separated by '(BRIDGE MUSIC)', setting and 'SOUND EFFECTS'. The following example, in episode 8, page 2, illustrates this point:

- 4.MUOFHE :Ndi zwone, vhone nga vha tshimbile,  
 nne ndi do sala ndi tshi renga, ndi  
 do zwi tevhedza henengei hayani.
- 5.NDIVHUDZA :Ndi zwone, ni tavhanye ni sa do wana  
 ndo no vha panini ndi tshi khou  
 kadzingwa.

(BRIDGE MUSIC)

(NDIAFHUFHA U NA TSHILIDZI NDUNI)

SOUND EFFECTS : (MUZIKA WO FHO LAHO U NO KHOU LILA)

6.TSHILIDZI :Ndiafhufha mufunwa wanga, ndo takala  
nga maanda no kona u tshatshiwa  
sibadela nga u tavhanya, zwino ndi  
do humela murahu mbilu i vhudzuloni.

7.NDIAFHUFHA :Izwo kha ri zwi litshe...

(4.MUOFHE :Okay, you go. I will remain behind  
shopping. I will bring them at home.

5.NDIVHUDZA :Okay, you must be fast so that you  
don't find me fried in a pan.

(BRIDGE MUSIC)

(NDIAFHUFHA IS WITH TSHILIDZI INSIDE  
THE HOUSE)

SOUND EFFECTS : (SOFT MUSIC PLAYING)

6.TSHILIDZI :Ndiafhufha my sweetheart, I am very  
happy that you were discharged from the  
hospital, discharged so soon. I am  
going to go back happy.

7.NDIAFHUFHA :Let us leave that...)

There are two conventional scenes in the above cited text. Nos.  
4 and 5, and nos. 6 and 7 form the first and second conventional

scenes, respectively. The two scenes are separated by bridge music, directive notes indicating that the dramatic action is taking place inside the house, and soft music, respectively.

Functional scenes on the other hand are marked by '(FADE IN)', to indicate entrance into, and '(FADE OUT)', to indicate exit from, the dramatic action. The following example in episode 3, page 5 illustrates this point:

- 3.VHO-NYAMATZHAKU :Ngoyo o swika, vhudzani ene, ni  
litshe u twa ni tshi khou ri  
fhunga.
- 4.NDIAFHUFHA :Ii, ndi tou mu vhudza uri na  
matshelo a si tsha zwi ita.
- 5.ZWIAPENGA :(FADE IN) Nndaa mudini!
- 6.VHO-NYAMATZHAKU :Aa! Ndi hone ni tshi vhuya?
- 7.ZWIAPENGA :Ee, ndi hone ri tshi vhuya  
mmane, maneto fhedzi.
- 8.NDIAFHUFHA :(NGA IPFI LO FHOLAHO) Hee  
muhalivho ... ri a tangedza,  
nga vha ri ndi vha thuse.
- 9.NDIVHUDZA :Thusani muhalivho, hafhu nne  
ndi hafha ndo zwi pfa, zwithu  
hezwi zwi a lemela.
- 10.NDIAFHUFHA :(TAKUWA) (sic) Iyo! Mathina  
zwi tou lemela ngaurali?
- 11.NDIVHUDZA :Zwo tou ralo muhalivho, nne  
ndi hafha ndo vhibva.

- 12.ZWIAPENGA :Ja, thusanani na muhalivho wanu ni hwale hezwi zwithu ni dovhe ni vhuya (sic) hafhu ni tshi dzhia hezwi zwo salaho.
- 13.NDIAFHUFHA :(FADE OUT) A huna mathada, ri do zwi hwala.
- 14.ZWIAPENGA :Ndi masiari mmawe!
- 15.VHO-NYAMATZHAKU :(TUNGAFHALA ZWITUKU) Nwananga...
- (3.VHO-NYAMATZHAKU :Here he comes. Tell him, and leave making noise to me.
- 4.NDIAFHUFHA :Yes, I need to tell him so that he does not do it again.
- 5.ZWIAPENGA :(FADE IN) Greetings at home!
- 6.VHO-NYAMATZHAKU :Greetings! Have you just come?
- 7.ZWIAPENGA :Yes, I have just come. I am very tired.
- 8.NDIAFHUFHA :(IN A COOL VOICE) My sister-in-law, let me help you.
- 9.NDIVHUDZA :Help me, my sister-in-law, I am very tired. These things are very heavy.
- 10.NDIAFHUFHA :(LIFTING) Gee! Are they this heavy!
- 11.NDIVHUDZA :It is so, my sister-in-law. I am now very tired.
- 12.ZWIAPENGA :Yes, help your sister-in-law to

carry these things and come back  
and collect those left.

- 13.NDIAFHUFHA : (FADE OUT) There is no problem.  
We will carry them.
- 14.ZWIAPENGA : Afternoon, mother!
- 15.VHO-NYAMATZHAKU : (A BIT UNHAPPY) My son...)

The above text may be divided into three functional scenes. Nos. 3 and 4 form the first functional scene, whereas nos. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 represent the second one. The third one is represented by 14 and 15. Where the first scene ends, which is also where the second one begins, is indicated by '(FADE IN)'. The number of characters grows from two in the first scene to four in the second scene with the entry of Zwiapenga and his wife into the centre of the dramatic action, which had been occupied by Ndiafhufha and her mother Nyamatzhaku. The end of the second scene, which is also the beginning of the third scene, is indicated by '(FADE OUT)'. With the departure of Ndiafhufha and Ndivhudza the number of characters is reduced to two.

Mashamba and Rambau use bridge music, sound effects, and guiding notes relating to setting to separate conventional scenes in *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi* and *Tshenzhelani*, respectively. Mashamba goes a step further and provides suspense at the end of most of his conventional scenes in order to sustain the interest of the audience. Whereas Ramaite uses bridge music and sound effects to separate conventional scenes in *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi*, Magwabeni uses bridge music, interval and sound effects

in A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha. However, the last two radio dramas share some similarities since there are very few instances where such indications are made.

Mashamba and Rambau also excel in indicating functional scenes in their scripts. Whereas Mashamba uses words like 'HU SWIKA...' (...ARRIVES) and '...U A BVA' (...GOES OUT) to indicate entrance and exit within the same setting, Rambau uses the technical, and more suitable, way for such indications in radio drama. The terms 'FADE IN' and 'FADE OUT' are used to indicate entrance and exit respectively. On the other hand, Ramaite and Magwabeni fail to show such indications as are required by the dramatic flow of events in their scripts. Taking this failure together with the mistakes one wonders how much work had to be done before their scripts were ready for production.

### 3.2 Episode

An episode may be viewed as the second smallest structural element of a radio drama. In a radio serial the script-writer divides his script into a number of episodes that may amount to as many as fifty. Depending on the time allocated to radio drama by the broadcasting station concerned radio drama serials usually run for between fifteen to thirty minutes.

In constructing an episode the script-writer may use a single scene or a number of scenes. Episodes, unlike scenes which are divided by bridge music, are divided by theme music. The theme

music of a particular radio drama signals its beginning and ending.

Mashamba's script is divided into thirty-six episodes with an average of seven pages each. Each episode is sub-divided into conventional and functional scenes. Episodes are so arranged that a dramatic movement is felt from one scene to the other. Most of the episodes also end in suspense. The element of anticipation therefore features prominently in this radio drama. All the episodes contribute well to the dramatic flow of events. They also have a unity of purpose, which the dramatic action in a forward-moving direction.

Ramaite's script is also divided into thirty-six episodes. Each episode has an average of six pages. Conventional and functional scenes are not well marked. In a number of episodes in this radio drama there are scenes which do not contribute anything of substance to its central issues. Suspense is also lacking at the end of every episode of this radio drama.

Magwabeni's script is divided into thirty-one episodes. Each episode has an average of five and a half a pages. Conventional and functional scenes are badly marked in this radio drama. Although all episodes contribute to the central issues of the radio drama there is unnecessary digression in some. With the exception of episode twenty-one and twenty-two, the element of suspense has been neglected at the end of all the episodes.

Rambau's script is divided into thirty-one episodes. The first nine episodes have an average of nine pages each, while the rest average seven. Conventional and functional scenes are well marked. Basically, most of the episodes contribute to the central issues at stake. There is almost no use of suspense at the end of episodes in this radio drama.

In comparison Rambau's episodes are longer than those of the other three script-writers. However, notwithstanding the fact that Rambau's division of scenes is superior to that of the other three script-writers, lack of suspense and unity of purpose make his radio drama inferior to the dramas of Ramaite and Magwabeni. On the average Mashamba's radio drama is superior in terms of craftsmanship.

### 3.3 Conflict

Scholars of literature agree that conflict is the quality that determines the success or failure of a drama. Radio drama, as a sub-genre of drama, is no exception to this rule. Scott and Modden (1976:6) maintain that :

...the term conflict simply means that a story brings together two opposing forces, which we call a protagonist (that is, one who is for) and an antagonist (that is, one who struggles against), and then develops and resolves the struggle between these two forces.



The importance of conflict in radio drama is well summed up by Dancyger (1990:04) in the following words :

Drama means, in brief, conflict.

Dancyger (1990:04) explains how conflict occurs in a radio drama and its effects on the listening audience:

A person (may be) in conflict with another person or with a community or with himself. Conflict and a conflicted character raise the inevitable question. Will the person get out of trouble? Our desire to see the person get out of trouble as well as our identification with that person or with their (sic) situation are necessary ingredients to get us involved with the story.

Conflict presupposes two or more opposing forces. The forces in opposition may be two individuals, an individual and a group, an individual and society, an individual and supernatural powers or beings, or an individual and his/her innerself. The latter usually involves a choice between values which seem to carry equal importance to the main character.

In order to be effective and contribute to the dramatic movement of the radio drama conflict must revolve around the main characters. When the script-writer adds a character in the radio

drama his/her presence must have an effect. He/she must change, or at least accelerate the pace of the dramatic movement, and, of course, of conflict.

In intensifying conflict the script-writer may involve the main character in a choice between two opposing values which seem equally necessary to his/her survival. Another option is to make him/her pursue after what seems to be an important goal. In the second case the achievement of such a goal must run directly counter to the wishes of the character(s) who will then wage fierce battles to prevent such an achievement. In both instances a move followed by a counter-move from the opposite direction produces a series of moves and countermoves which intensify the conflict until it reaches a climax.

Conflict in Mashamba's *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi* revolves around the status-seeker Tshengelo. His desire to marry Mavis, a nurse at the local hospital, is the main source of conflict in this radio drama. All the members of his family, except Fulufhelo (the wife of one of his young brothers), who happens to be Mavis's colleague, are against such a marriage. Tshengelo's persistent efforts to achieve it and his wife Tshililo's determination to preserve her marriage at all costs are the driving forces of the dramatic conflict. Conflict is also intensified by the presence of the wives of Khathakhatha and Mashudu. Whereas Khathakhatha, a mechanic who has only passed standard ten with very poor symbols, is married to a qualified nurse, and Mashudu, a teacher with standard ten and a teaching

diploma, is also married to a qualified teacher, he, Tshengelo, the eldest brother, who boasts B.A, B.A.Honours, and M.A. degrees, is only married to an ordinary housewife with standard eight. Tshengelo feels that his status has been lowered, hence his efforts to marry somebody who will inflate his image and match up with his new lifestyle. The conflict is resolved by the expulsion of Tshengelo from the teaching profession. Realising that he is no better or worse than his two brothers he goes back to Tshililo and asks for forgiveness.

In Ramaite's *Vhutshilo* a *vhu rengwi* conflict has been poorly developed because of poor plot construction. The conflict that seems to be the main conflict in this radio drama is that of Thomani and his wife, Mudzunga, against their daughter, Avhurengwi. Her parents want Avhurengwi to go to school so that she can be educated like her cousin Mukatshelwa, who is in the nursing profession. Avhurengwi does not like school. Instead she enjoys drinking liquor and fooling around with men, making money from her many affairs. Her parents' insistence on her going to school, especially the insistence of her father backed up by her aunt and cousin, and her arrogance intensify the conflict in this radio drama. The conflict is resolved after her mother's disappearance and her father's death in the burning house. She is admitted as an AIDS patient to the local hospital, where she has to face life alone.

In this radio drama there is another poorly-developed conflict between Mudzunga and her husband Musuki. The conflict arises as

a result of Musuki's abandoning the family when he was still a migrant worker. It is developed alongside the main conflict. The way Ramaite handles it, and its contribution to the overall dramatic action, is questionable.

In Magwabeni's *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha* the main conflict is between Mashango and his former wife Marengwa. Mashango puts *gabutshete* (a love potion) in Marengwa's food, which causes her to go insane because he puts in more than the traditional doctor prescribed. Marengwa's struggle to get Mashango arrested to compensate her for her pain and suffering forms the core of conflict in this radio drama. The court's decision to find Mashango innocent on the grounds that the law does not recognise witchcraft, despite the fact that Mashango also admits under cross examination that he did use the potion, intensifies the conflict between the two. Their son Tsimbe is also used to intensify conflict between his parents, as Marengwa believes that his love for Mashango is the result of the traditional herbs that he administered to the boy. The conflict ends with Tsimbe in hospital, where the two parents are forced by circumstances to forget their differences and concentrate on the solution to the dilemma that they both face as parents.

The conflict in Rambau's *Tshenzhelani* is not well developed. The main conflict seems to be produced by Ndiafhufha's obsession with material acquisition. She goes out with so many men that she ends up with the wrong man, Vusi. It is the presence of Vusi at Ndiafhufha's place and his refusal to leave that create conflict.

His involvement with the wife of Ndiafhufha's brother intensifies a conflict that is not very well grounded and developed. There is also another poorly developed conflict between Ndiafhufha's brother, Zwiapenga, and his wife Ndivhudza. This conflict is brought about by Zwiapenga's refusal to give Ndivhudza money on the grounds that she uses it to maintain her poverty-stricken mother and younger brother. The reason for creating this conflict seems to be an attempt to justify Zwiapenga's decision to marry an urban woman, who is used to intensify the conflict by falling in love with Vusi, Ndiafhufha's live-in lover.

Mashamba, however, as compared with Magwabeni, Ramaite and Rambau, succeeds in introducing and developing conflict in *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi*. His success stems from the fact that he manages to draw boundaries within which the main dramatic conflict is restricted. In this radio drama the addition or removal of a character directly contributes to the direction of the conflict. For example, Tshedza's marriage to Tshengelo's brother creates a sense of urgency in Tshengelo's plans to marry an educated woman, since all his younger and less-educated brothers are now married to professionals. The death of Tshengelo's father reduces the resistance to Tshengelo's plans as there is now nobody left who could stop him from doing what he wants.

Of the other three script-writers Magwabeni in *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha* fares better in creating and developing a credible conflict than do Ramaite and Rambau in *Vhutshilo a vhu*

rengwi and Tshenzhelani, respectively. Magwabeni's conflict, although hampered by the fact that the radio drama is a sequel to the first well-received part, is well restricted to Marengwa and her former husband Mashango. However, in the radio dramas of Ramaite and Rambau there is confusion as the script-writers try to introduce a complex of problems that they fail to handle convincingly. For example, in *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi*, a conflict created and developed around Avhurengi alone would have been sufficiently interesting to deliver the dramatic theme. The same applies to Zwiapenga or Ndiafhufha in *Tshenzhelani*.

### 3.4 Suspense

Suspense is one of the most important structural elements that a script-writer may use in generating and sustaining the audience's interest.

Abrams (1981:138) defines suspense as :

An anxious uncertainty about what is going to happen, especially to those characters whose qualities are such that we have established a bond of sympathy with them...

O'Donnel et al. (1986) maintain that for a script-writer to achieve suspense effectively he/she must refrain from providing conflict and its resolution immediately. The gap that is left between a situation of conflict and its resolution creates an

element of expectancy which produces suspense.

Makosana (1991:19) identifies three factors which determine the intensity of suspense in radio drama. She argues that:

...in the first instance, there is the identification of the audience with the protagonist or with the events of the story. The stronger the identification, the more the audience becomes committed to follow the plans and decisions made and the risks; thus looking forward with anticipation.

In the second instance, Makosana (1991) argues that suspense may further be intensified by risks associated with the actions of the main characters. Such risks may involve serious harm or even loss of life.

In the third instance, suspense may be intensified by anticipating a delayed action. As far as this is concerned Makosana argues that the intensification of suspense is based on the quality and clarity of future-oriented information which can be used by both the audience and the characters to develop their anticipatory hypothesis (Makosana, 1991:19).

The importance of suspense in radio drama cannot be underestimated. However, one must also understand that suspense must be carefully handled since the majority of the present

listenership is not theoretically equipped to fill in the necessary information left out by the script-writer. In support of this argument most participants in a phone-in programme after the broadcast of the radio drama *No shuma nwananga* agreed with the listener who maintained that the script-writer should have told it all, that is the script-writer should have shown what happened to the people who had had sexual relations with Mashudu, who later tested HIV positive. One listener took it further and argued that the script-writer should have even indicated what happened to their other partners, since most of them were married men, and some had more than one sexual partner.

Suspense is well handled in Mashamba's *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi*. Most of the scenes and episodes end in suspense. For example, in episode 20, Khathakhatha arrives from work earlier than expected. He finds his wife, his older brother, and Mavis (the woman the family accuses of destroying peace at their home) dancing in his house. Knowing the hatred Khathakhatha has for this other woman, the contempt he has for his brother because of his lack of respect for those who are not educated, and his habit of solving problems through the use of force, the audience expects a fierce fight. However, Mashamba tactfully digresses to leave the audience wondering what could have happened.

There are very few noteworthy instances where one can say that Magwabeni uses suspense in *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha*. Basically suspense is provided by the principal dramatic problem



of the radio drama, namely, whether the police are going to find Mashango and secure a conviction so that he is punished for what he has done to Marengwa. The script-writer provides no other suspenseful events worth mentioning to generate interest on the part of the audience.

Ramaite's *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi* is also an example of a script with poorly-developed suspense. The scenes and episodes are structured in such a way that each one stands as a separate entity. To miss some of them does not create any serious confusion because as the direction of events is predictable.

The element of suspense is not well exploited in Rambau's *Tshetzhelani*. It only appears towards the end of this radio drama as the tension increases. Noteworthy and well-developed suspense is created when Vusi is followed by a car with four occupants trying to force him off the road in an isolated area. He tries to get away, but unfortunately the other car is faster than his. The script-writer digresses without telling the audience who are in the other car, and whether they manage to harm or kill Vusi, as presumably they are trying to do.

Mashamba succeeds in using the element of suspense in many more instances than do Magwabeni, Ramaite and Rambau. To avoid monotony Mashamba uses dramatic suspense which develops from unanswered questions, and also from actions of the main characters which leave the audience wondering what the next scenes or episodes have in store.

### 3.5 Surprise

Surprise is another important structural element of radio drama. Whereas suspense involves an anxious uncertainty about what is going to happen, surprise, on the other hand, occurs if what happens violates the listener's expectation.

Abrams argues that the most effective surprise is one which turns out, in retrospective, to have been grounded in what has gone before, even though we have hitherto made the wrong inferences from the given facts of circumstance and character. As E.M. Forster put it, the shock of the unexpected, 'followed by the feeling, "oh, that's all right," is a sign that all is well with the plot'. (Abrams, 1981:138)

Three forms of surprise may be differentiated in a radio drama. The first one is where the audience is led to expect one thing and then suddenly the script-writer produces something different. The second one is where the script-writer leads the audience to assume that something is to happen to a certain extent, but stretches it further than it is expected to go. The third form, which is somewhat related to the first one, is normally used at the ending of a work of art. This form, argues Abrams '...is one in which the author resolves the plot without adequate earlier grounds in characterization or events, often by the use of coincidence' (Abrams, 1981:138)

Such use of coincidence, which is introduced by hard-pressed

script-writers to resolve their plots, is basically a poor idea. However, in the African context, where the powers of the gods still form an integral part of daily activities, such coincidences are sometimes tolerable if well grounded in the reality of the radio drama under consideration.

Mashamba produces surprise through coincidence in *I shavha i tshisia muinga i ya fhi*. In episode 20, page 5, the audience expects that Tshililo is going to attack the unsuspecting and defenceless Mavis for daring to come to their place where she, Mavis, is having an affair with Tshililo's husband. Tshililo's determination to face the consequences of her action, and the fact that Mavis is alone in the house, cause the audience to expect that the attack will go as planned. On her way to where Mavis is Tshililo coincidentally meets Tshedza and Mashudu who successfully discourage her from carrying out her plans.

There is another noteworthy kind of surprise that Mashamba produces. It is formed by a series of coincidences which are neatly interwoven from episodes 30 to 36. Tshengelo is found by the inspectors from the Department of Education as he is about to drink the liquor that he had brought to the school where he is the principal. Many weeks pass without the Department taking any action against him, which creates the impression that the matter is not viewed very seriously. It comes as a surprise when he is later given fourteen days leave without pay. A few days later he is arrested for a hit-and-run accident, and cannot be traced for many weeks. In view of the circumstances leading up

to the accident the audience expects the Department to be sympathetic to him when taking any action. However, he is demoted from the rank of high school principal to that of an ordinary junior primary teacher. This comes as a surprise as one would have expected the Department, because of his academic qualification, to transfer him to another school, to demote him to deputy principal, or even to a high school teacher.

Ramaite, with varying degrees of success, makes use of the element of surprise in *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi*. The introduction of fire at Thomani's home is an element of surprise. This introduction is unsuccessful because the cause of the fire is so mysterious that it is difficult to guess its possible origin. Thomani's burning to death as he tries to save his meagre belongings is simply not well grounded, since there were many people who could have saved his life. However, on the other hand, Avhurengwi's coming back home infected with Aids constitutes a well thought out surprise. Whereas one would have expected Avhurengwi to face a tough future because of her refusal to go to school, the script-writer extends the situation, since Aids is incurable, from ordinary hardship to unavoidable death.

Although the handling of the element of surprise in Magwabeni's *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha* is not impressive there are some places in which he succeeds. An excellent example is the court scene where Mashango is charged with administering the love potion to Marengwa. The presiding officer refers to the case of *Dimani versus Dimani* (1910), in which a man who killed his wife

in a similar situation was sentenced to death. The audience is led to believe that Mashango is going to receive a heavy sentence. However, the script-writer causes a successful surprise, since Mashango is acquitted on the grounds that the law does not recognise witchcraft, and that the love potion was not intended to bring any harm, but merely to strengthen the love between Mashango and his former wife Marengwa.

The element of surprise is also used in Rambau's *Tshenzhelani*. Muofhe's concern over how Tshilidzi is treated by a trashy girl like Ndiafhufha leaves one with the impression that she loves him. Her constant questions concerning his progress at the Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA) confuses not only the audience about her intentions, but also Tshilidzi, who declares his love for her. Her firm refusal of Tshilidzi's love on the grounds that her feelings do not include more than mere friendship surprises both Tshilidzi and the audience. Her later involvement with Thambelo is unexpected, because she is very close to his family, even being referred to as 'my younger sister' by Thambelo's older sister.

The element of surprise is, to a certain extent, well handled by the four script-writers. However, Mashamba and Rambau succeed better than Ramaite and Magwabeni in creating situations which produce surprises which are well interwoven into the main dramatic events. The effect with the first two script-writers is that they succeed in creating certain expectations, but with the end results being something entirely different.

### 3.6 Dramatic irony

According to Peck and Coyle in dramatic irony we know more than the characters know. We see that they are going to encounter problems because their perception of the facts is inadequate.

(Peck and Coyle, 1984:137)

Supporting this idea, Abrams (1981:90) writes:

Dramatic irony involves a situation in a play ... in which the audience shares with the author knowledge of which a character is ignorant: the character acts in a way grossly inappropriate to the actual circumstances, or expects the opposite of what fate holds in store, or says something that anticipates the actual outcome, but not at all in a way that he means it.

Dramatic irony helps in evoking emotional response from the audience. The audience, because of the knowledge that it shares with the script-writer, tends to be sympathetic to characters with whom it has developed a positive bond. On the other hand, the audience will marvel at instances where characters it believes in are wrong, or act in a way that place them at a disadvantage, because of lack of relevant information.

Dramatic irony has been well handled in a number of instances in

I shavha i tshi si muinag i yafhi. An excellent example, which also helps in the shaping of the climactic situation, is were Mavis, because of Tshengelo's failure to go and see her in hospital where she is suffering from cancer, concludes that he is using her absence to resume his relationship with Tshililo. The audience, on the other hand, knows that Tshengelo was arrested for a hit-and-run accident immediately after dropping Mavis. Unfortunately, upon her release, Mavis does not want to give Tshengelo a chance to put the true side of the matter, but goes on to institute a divorce case against him. Although Tshengelo deserves a chance to explain what had happened the audience is unlikely to sympathize with him because of the way he treated his first wife.

In *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha* Magwabeni also uses dramatic irony in a number of situations. A noteworthy instance, which also has a bearing on the outcome of the dramatic situation, is where Tsimbe is sent to give Mashango a parcel whose contents have been treated with the dreadful *tshipfula* poison. Tsimbe, because of ignorance of the danger that lies in the parcel, opens it to satisfy his curiosity. The mere fact of hearing Tsimbe deciding to open it, and the noise that comes from the paper as he unrolls it, is enough to send shivers down the audience's backs spines. Tsimbe's lack of the necessary knowledge and the inability of the audience to help the innocent child are dramatically ironic.

Rambau, in *Tshengelani*, also uses dramatic irony a number of

times. An example, which can also be linked to the climax, is where Zwiapenga organises people to kill Vusi because he is having an affair with Zwiapenga's wife Salume. The killers steal and use the car of Ndiafhufha's former boyfriend. Vusi concludes that it is Ndiafhufha and her boyfriend who are behind the plan so that they can resume their affair without his interference. Vusi's attempt to kill Ndiafhufha is therefore motivated by the lack of correct information. At the same time this also exposes him to danger because he attacks a wrong target.

In Ramaite's *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi* there is no noteworthy situation where the script-writer uses dramatic irony to further the dramatic situation.

Mashamba, Magwabeni, and Rambau succeed reasonably well in exploiting dramatic irony. Ramaite, on the other hand, fails to produce a convincing instance of using the element of dramatic irony to promote the dramatic action.

### 3.7 Believability

The term 'believability' as used by Willis and D'Arienzo (1981) means that the various structural elements must fit together naturally. Preceding information must form the basis of what follows.

Willis and D'Arienzo (1981) argue that the use of coincidence or any acts of a fortuitous nature to solve plotting dilemmas is a



sign of weakness on the part of the script-writer. They maintain that such usage must be confined to creating problems, not to solving them.

Believability in its broadest sense may also be taken to mean that the actions of the characters must not completely lose touch with what is probable in real life. Concerning the characters' actions Straczynski (1982:15) makes a cautionary and useful suggestion:

Whenever you develop or introduce a plot, always remember this simple rule: No one does anything without a reason. That reason may not always be a valid one in terms of our own world-views, ...but there must always be a reason intelligible to the character involved.

The element of believability forms an important link between the story and real life. Although there is disagreement as to whether violation of this element constitutes a failure on the part of the script-writer, the view in this study is that believability should be viewed as an integral part of a good plot, and that the dramatic action must be as believable as possible in order to retain credibility.

In Mashamba's *I shavha i sia muinga i ya'fhi* actions are well grounded in the realities facing the characters in this radio drama, and modern African people in general. Tshengelo's desire

to divorce the uneducated Tshililo and marry the educated Mavis is understandable given the fact that Tshengelo is very proud of his academic achievements. He is ashamed of a woman who will not fit in well with his acquired status and life style. Mavis desires to marry a man who is well-to-do. Unfortunately that man happens to be a married man, Tshengelo. Tshililo, too, does not behave unexpectedly. Like any married woman she tries her best to hold her marriage together despite the insults she faces from Tshengelo.

On the other hand, Tshengelo's demotion from high school principal to mere junior primary teacher can only be understood in terms of the situation the script-writer is trying to create in this radio drama. In real life one would expect Tshengelo, because of his academic qualifications, to be demoted to a lower rank, but still within the high school framework.

The element of believability is handled with varying degrees of success in Magwabeni's *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha*. The following example from episode 12, page 2, illustrates how Magwabeni succeeds in creating a believable dramatic situation:

MASHANGO :...(MVULA YA BVUMA) nga vhanna, khezwi namusi ndi tshi nga ndo tangana nazwo. A si mvula iyo ine ya khou bvuma? Ndi yone! Na makole khea a tshi khou swifhadza lukole lwothe... kheyo yo thoma u na...

(MASHANGO :...(THE SOUND OF RAIN) Men, it seems as if today I am going to be in big trouble. Isn't it going to rain? It is! Even the clouds are beginning to go dark.... there, it has started to rain.)

The speed at which the events takes place in the above text is not like that of real life. It can only be understood and believed in a work of art. The severity of the problem Mashango faces is likely to appeal to the audience's sympathy, thereby leaving very little room for artistic criticism. Interestingly, within the dramatic world created by the script-writer, it may even be impossible for the audience to realise that they are being presented with a too-fictionalised world.

However, the handling of the court proceedings clearly shows that Magwabeni is not conversant with legal matters. The fact that the police who arrested Mashango do not know how the case is proceeding, let alone that they are not being called to testify, is not credible. The use of a policeman as a prosecutor, and the magistrate who also doubles as a prosecutor, is not in accord with our present judicial system, nor is it so when the magistrate identifies the murder case as **Madima versus Madima** (1910). A murder case is a matter of public concern. It is a matter between the state and the accused. The case would therefore be identified as **State versus Madima** (1910), together with the name of the division of the supreme court where it was held.

The element of believability is grossly violated in Ramaite's *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi*. Without any sound reason all the characters who are old suffer from high blood pressure and depend for survival on tablets from the local clinic. The introduction of the fire which killed Thomani is not well grounded in the dramatic action before its occurrence. Even the way Thomani dies, given the circumstances prevailing at the time, is not convincing at all. One concludes that the script-writer resorted to killing Thomani in an effort to solve the problems of a badly-planned plot structure.

The actions of the characters in *Tshenzhelani* are believable in terms of the world that Rambau creates. Ndiafhufha's behaviour in having many boyfriends is well rooted in her desire to acquire material things. Zwiapenga's decision to neglect his first wife, Ndivhudza, may be interpreted as an unfortunate decision based on the lack of proper information and the indirect influence of his second wife. However, Vusi's refusal to leave Ndiafhufha's place and his affair with Salume are only credible if one accepts the chaotic situation that the script-writer is trying to depict.

With the exception of Ramaite's *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi* the element of believability is well handled in the radio dramas under discussion. In Magwabeni's *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha* one is only disturbed by the lack of relevant information concerning the working of the law. This suggests that the script-writer should research his chosen material thoroughly that so the script has a firm foundation.

### 3.8 The plot structure

The concept 'plot' may be defined as the arrangement of events or incidents in a work of art in a sequential form. Scholars like Forster add the causal element as an important ingredient of a good plot.

Willis and D'Arienzo (1981:190) define plot as:

...the basic pattern of events that constitutes the essential action of the play. It is the fundamental development through which the rise, progress, and resolution of the conflict are revealed to the audience. The plot reveals how one event influences another and why people act as they do.

Grote (1985:26) on the other hand defines it as:

...the complete, unified dramatic action described in the script.

Grote further argues that script-writers must accord serious attention to the organisation of plot in a work of art because plot is that by which everything else must be seen and interpreted. (Grote, 1985:26)

Altenbernd and Lewis, quoting Aristotle, are of the opinion that

'The plot, being an imitation of an action must imitate one action and thus a whole, the structural union of the parts being such that, if any of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be disjointed and disturbed.' (Altenbernd and Lewis, 1966:14)

Willis and D'Arienzo (1981) are of the opinion that there are no hard and fast rules that can be laid down regarding the principles that govern the plot of every drama. However, they maintain that there are general guidelines that can direct script-writers as they start down the road of invention, namely, the decisions of the main character as he/she faces a problem, and a character's struggle to reach a certain goal.

These two elements are responsible for the formation of what Willis and D'Areinzo (1981) call the 'Two types of Plays'. They argue that a radio drama plotted around the choices made by the leading character is decision centred. A radio drama focusing mainly on a struggle by the leading character to achieve a goal is goal centred. (Willis and D'Areinzo, 1981:191)

For purposes of this study, the four radio dramas will be classified as follows: *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi* will be treated as a goal-centred radio drama, whereas *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do to lovha*, *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi* and *Tshenzhelani* will be viewed as decision-centred radio dramas.

*I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi*, written by W.T. Rambau, provides an excellent example of a goal-centred radio drama. The

story focuses on Tshengelo, who has a well-defined goal, namely to get rid of his first and uneducated wife and marry somebody who is educated and who will fit in with his life style as an M.A graduate. His efforts to realise his goal and the refusal of his first wife and his relatives to recognise his second marriage form the backbone of this drama. It is towards the end of this radio drama that the situation alters so dramatically that Tshengelo finds himself unemployed, and with no choice but to go and beg for forgiveness from his first wife.

*A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha*, written by N.G Magwabeni, is an example of a decision-centred radio drama. In this radio drama, events in the first episodes are influenced by Mashango's decision on whether to run away forever or to face arrest and stand trial for administering *gabutshete* (a love potion) to his former wife Marengwa. His efforts are defeated when he is arrested. Upon his release the focus shifts to Marengwa who sets out to avenge herself since the law failed to redress what she views as an infringement on her right to good health.

*Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi*, written by U.M. Ramaite, is another example of a decision-centred radio drama. It is Avhurengwi's decision to leave school and spend her time fooling around with men in motels and other drinking places that forms the germ of the story. Ramaite makes a comparison between Avhurengwi's unfortunate actions and that of her school-loving and prosperous cousin. It is only after she tests HIV positive that she realises how wrong her decisions have been, and unfortunately it is too

late to redress the situation.

Tshenzhelani is also a decision-centred radio drama. The radio drama, written by S Rambau, revolves around the decisions of Zwiapenga and his sister Ndiafhufha. Zwiapenga's decision to marry a second wife causes problems in the otherwise reasonably stable family situation. Rambau uses Ndiafhufha to increase conflict in this radio drama, since her appetite for men and money is responsible for bringing Vusi into the family. Vusi is used by the script-writer to create a situation that proves Zwiapenga's decision to marry a second wife from the urban areas to be a blunder, as she later falls in love with Vusi and becomes uncontrollable.

### 3.8.1 The basic plotting design of decision-centred and goal-centred radio dramas

The following is a general plotting pattern postulated by Willis and D'Arienzo which fits most radio dramas irrespective of the category into which they fall:

#### 3.8.1.1 The opening situation

The concept 'opening situation' as postulated by Willis and D'Arienzo (1981) must be seen as referring to an expository element of plot in a radio drama. The opening situation must provide the audience with the necessary background material which is needed at the very beginning of the radio drama.



The main characters and their circumstances are introduced. The main characters must be introduced in such a way that they are imprinted in the listener's imagination. However, the time limitation placed on radio drama makes the script-writer concentrate on important aspects of the life of the main characters. In developing the opening situation in a forward-moving direction the script-writer must skilfully extend the background(s) of the characters and their situations, sometimes without the listeners being conscious of his so doing.

A situation that is necessary for the building up of the tension which will ultimately lead to conflict is communicated. The radio script-writer, deprived of the visual advantage that is associated with stage and television dramas, must make effective use of the spoken word, sound effects and music to establish all aspects which are part and parcel of a good opening situation.

Depending on how a script-writer wishes to deliver his dramatic action, the opening situation may be confined to a number of scenes in the first episode or may be spread out to cover some of the first episodes. However the best option, where possible, seems to be that of restricting the opening situation to the first scenes of the first episode.

Willis and D'Arienzo maintain that an opening situation in both decision-centred and goal-centred radio drama must meet two requirements:

### 3.6.1.1.1 It must be clear

The first requirement of an opening situation in any good radio drama is that whatever information is communicated to the listeners at this stage must be handled in such a way that they quickly understand what is happening. The script-writer must avoid including any information or incident that might confuse the listener. Supporting this opinion, Willis and D'Arienzo (1981:192) argue:

If...(listeners) become confused about who is who or what is going on, if facts and reasons get mixed up in their minds and the complications start before they get matters unravelled, the play is lost.

Without necessarily disagreeing with Willis and D'Arienzo on the question of clarity, one must quickly add that the desire for such clarity should not mean that every small detail at the beginning of a radio drama has to be accounted for, but detail should be restricted primarily to providing information that is necessary for grasping the gist of the radio drama in question.

### 3.8.1.1.2 It must seize the attention of the listening audience immediately

The second requirement of Willis and D'Arienzo (1981) emphasizes that the opening situation must be presented in such a way that

it seizes the audience's attention in the very first scene of a radio drama. They point out that sometimes script-writers are faced with a problem in trying to satisfy this requirement. This is because whereas, on the one hand, a script-writer is expected to introduce conflict as soon as possible without going too deep into its history, on the other hand the requirement of clarity also demands that all information at this stage must be clear and not confusing.

To overcome this problem Willis and D'Erienza advise script-writers to present an already-developed conflict. They argue that a script-writer should skilfully insert an explanation of the possible origin of the conflict in such a way that listeners may not even be aware that they are being so informed.

In *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i yafhi* the main characters, namely Tshengelo, Tshililo and Mavis, are introduced well into the two episodes. The audience is also made aware of their situations, namely, that Tshengelo no longer loves his wife Tshililo because she is not educated, Mavis is determined to get married to Tshengelo regardless of his marital situation, and that Tshililo is prepared to do everything she can to save her marriage. The commitment of each of the three characters to the realisation of their different goals helps to create tension, which is the source of conflict. The conflict is also established well, since its origin is skilfully communicated to the audience as the dramatic action proceeds.

In *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha* Mashango may be viewed as the main character in the opening situation. He faces a gaol sentence for giving his former wife food mixed with *gabutshete* (love potion) from a traditional doctor. The forces that oppose his living a normal life are made known to the audience, namely, that his former wife is putting pressure on the police to arrest him as soon as possible, and that the police are also anxious to make an early arrest and secure a conviction to restore their credibility. However, for a person who did not listen to the first broadcast of this radio drama it may be difficult to understand why all the characters are attaching so much weight to a situation which seems to be motivated by superstitious beliefs.

The opening situation in *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi* introduces the main characters, namely, Avhurengwi and her father Thomani and mother Mudzunga. Avhurengwi's refusal to go on with her schooling and her parents insistence that she must go to school provides a rather weak conflict at this stage. The significance of the situation is also confused by the introduction of, and undue concentration on, the equally poorly-established conflict in Mudzuli's family.

The first episode of *Tshenzhelani* introduces all the main characters, namely Zwiapenga, Ndiafhufha, Ndivhudza, and Salume. It is also clear at this stage that the attitude of Zwiapenga and his family towards the poverty that Ndivhudza's family are facing is a recipe for conflict. However, since the action is focused

on a number of characters, the conflict that later dominates the radio drama is not established well in the opening situation.

Mashamba succeeds more than the other three script-writers in creating a good opening situation in *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi*. He successfully concentrates on Tshengelo, only introducing the other characters as either making his goal impossible or helping him towards its realisation. He also succeeds in incorporating the information needed to understand the background of the various characters in the dramatic action about to unfold.

The success of Magwabeni in *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha* is reduced basically by lack of the necessary background in the first episode. Despite the fact that this radio drama is a sequel to a well-received first part, the highlighting of some crucial information, that would revive the memory of the audience who had heard the first part and provide a solid introduction for a new audience, should have been considered essential in the first episodes.

The opening situation in *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi* and *Tshenzhelani* suffers from lack of proper concentration on the main characters and the problems that face them. This deficiency seems to derive from too much moralising on the part of the script-writers, who seem to feel good must always be paired with evil to prove that good always triumphs. This leads to a situation where Ramaite and Rambau supply information which does not, strictly speaking,

contribute anything of substance to the flow of the main dramatic action. This is supported by the fact that if one were to go through these scripts excising some scenes the main action would be not derailed.

#### 3.8.1.2 Complications

According to Willis and D'Arienzo (1981) complications are developments that intensify the conflict and make it more critical.

Willis and D'Arienzo further argue that complications in a decision-centred radio drama occur when the main character is catapulted into a succession of circumstances, all of which force him/her to make a choice involving the same values. (Willis and D'Arienzo, 1981:192)

A series of tricky challenges that the main character faces in most cases forces him/her to take decisions. Due to the nature of these challenges the decisions taken often lead to other challenges. As the series of challenges intensifies so does the conflict. The decisions become more difficult to make. Instead of solving his or her problems the main character ends up deeply involved in many more serious ones.

Willis and D'Arienzo (1981) maintain that there is no marked difference in structure between decision-centred and goal-centred dramas. However, looking at how complications influence

events in a goal-centred drama, Willis and D'arienzo (1981:192) conclude that:

Instead of designing a series of developments requiring decisions, the writer must invent a series of situations in which there is a change in the balance of power involving the character and the threatening force. The best design presents situations in which the character first loses ground against the adversary and then gains it, and the maximum tension is likely to develop if, in balance, the hostile force constantly becomes more powerful and threatening.

In *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi* this is the stage at which Tshengelo tries hard to convince his parents and brothers that his love for Tshililo cannot be revived. However, since he cannot give any good explanation of why Tshililo must be sent back to her parents, except to say that he is deeply in love with Mavis, they rally around Tshililo. The death of Tshengelo's father, the most influential and uncompromising member of the opposition, changes the balance of power between the struggling forces. Tshengelo feels that there is nobody left who can force him to stay with Tshililo against his will. Tshililo, on the other hand, is left with poor support. It is also because of this incident that Tshengelo's brothers agree that Tshililo must be sent to a dressmaking school, to escape the daily beatings and also to

learn something that will make her self-reliant. With the departure of Tshililo the dramatic action focuses on the conflict between Tshengelo and his brothers. This conflict arises as a result of Tshengelo's refusal to pay his younger brother the money he owes him for a new house built at Makhado location. This situation, together with the already-existing misunderstandings caused by Tshengelo's attitude of despising his brothers, makes it difficult for him to make contact with his brothers when he is in trouble, for example, when he is arrested for a hit-and-run accident, and when he cannot pay all his debts.

In *A thi nga do tou u fa ndi do tou lovha* this stage starts with Mashango's decision to go and stay with Matambila, the traditional doctor. Matambile uses his magical powers to keep the police from arresting Mashango. Meanwhile Marengwa, with her decision to proceed with the case against Mashango, is bothered by her son's insistence that they be reunited with his father. The dramatic action is interrupted from time to time by the police carrying out their investigations. The introduction of the women found at the shebeen does not deserve the whole episode it occupies because it does not contribute anything of substance to the main dramatic action. In a desperate act to avoid the police who are closing in on him Mashango decides to pretend to be a priest. Matambile is arrested and, after some days of being beaten up, he decides to tell the police where Mashango is. Mashango is arrested, but the court frees him on the grounds that (European) law does not recognise witchcraft. It is after the court decision that the focus moves from Mashango to Marengwa.



Her first and critical decision is how to gain her revenge since the court has acted in favour of Mashango. Her situation is further complicated by Tsimbe who spends much time with his father. Marengwa's mother suggests they seek help from their traditional doctor, Tshipoipoi. Here Marengwa faces a dilemma that needs a carefully thought-out decision because she is torn between hatred and her concern over her son's needs.

In Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi Ramaite uses the disappearance of Avhurengwi and her reappearing pregnant, to guide the dramatic action at this stage. When asked who is responsible for her pregnancy Avhurengwi is not sure because she has so many lovers. This situation makes her father very angry, resulting in her expulsion from her home. This move is successfully resisted when Avhurengwi's mother and her influential aunt plead with her father to forgive her. Her decision to continue with her wicked life after the birth of the child stirs up a rather more subdued conflict with her father. Meanwhile the dramatic action digresses and concentrates on the conflict between her aunt Mudzula and her husband. This rather poorly established and developed conflict is based on the accusation that her husband once neglected her and their daughter when he was still working in town.

In Tshenzhelani this is the stage when Zwiapenga discovers that part of the money he sends from his work place in Johannesburg to his wife Ndivhudza for the support of the family is used to help Ndivhudza's brother at the university. Zwiapenga finds this situation, presented in a somewhat exaggerated way by his mother,

unacceptable since it has deprived his family of certain basic needs. Because of his wife's behaviour he decides to send the money through his mother. Taking advantage of the rift between Zwiapenga and his wife his mother and sister share the money between them. It is after the birth of Ndivhudza's son that the real conflict emerges because Zwiapenga does not believe Ndivhudza when she says she and the baby are not receiving anything from Zwiapenga's mother. As the conflict between Zwiapenga and Ndivhudza intensifies, Salume, a colleague of Zwiapenga at a motor garage in Johannesburg, takes advantage of Zwiapenga's vulnerability by offering herself as an alternative to Ndivhudza. His decision to marry her makes the situation intolerable to Ndivhudza, who decides to go back to her parents. Meanwhile the script-writer has introduced Vusi, who falls in love with Zwiapenga's kid-sister Ndiafhufha. Vusi is later made to fall in love with Salume to further complicate the situation. Upon discovering this affair, and after making efforts to chase Vusi from his place in Venda where Salume is by then also staying, Zwiapenga decides to hire people to kill Vusi. The failure of this plan creates a hostile atmosphere between Vusi and Ndiafhufha because Vusi thinks that it is Ndiafhufha and her former boyfriend who are after his blood.

Mashamba succeeds in introducing better complications than Ramaite, Marengwa, and Rambau. His ability to concentrate on events directly affecting the main character sets him apart from the other three script-writers. Added to this is his ability to develop the dramatic action successfully without going into the

petty details an average listener could work out for himself/herself. For example, Mashamba successfully omits the wedding ceremony between Tshengelo and Mavis and the court proceedings in which Tshengelo is charged for a hit-and-run accident without confusing the flow of the dramatic action, whereas the court proceedings which take almost three episodes in Magwabeni's radio drama show lack of artistic vision because the dramatic action is stalled for almost three days by one incident. In Ramaite's and Rambau's radio dramas the scope of each is too wide. A concentration on Zwiapenga's situation alone, or Ndiafhufha's in Rambau's radio drama, and that of Avhurengwi or Mukatshelwa in Ramaite's radio drama, would have channelled the dramatic action to create moving situations rather than barren and predictable situations as is now the case with these two.

### 3.8.1.3 The final crisis or the climax

Willis and D'Arienzo defines climax as the point in the story where the conflict reaches its greatest height. (Willis and D'Arienzo, 1981:192)

Answering the question as to when the dramatic action should be considered to have reached this stage, Hilliard (1984:304) maintains that:

The play reaches the climax through a series of complications. Each complication is, in itself,

a small conflict and climax. Each succeeding complication complicates the situation to a greater and greater degree until the final complication makes it impossible for the struggle to be heightened any long. ...The climax must occur.

Hilliard's view is to a certain extent supported by Longworth, who sees the climax as a stage in the drama when the central conflict is no longer intensifying, but has become firmly and decisively established. (Longworth, 1971:50)

Willis and D'Arienzo (1981) differentiate between the climaxes of decision-centred and goal-centred dramas. They argue that in a decision-centred drama the climax is the stage when the main character finally attaches supremacy to one value instead of the other. In a goal-centred drama, however, the climax must be viewed as the moment in the final struggle when the main character achieves his objective, or is defeated.

Concurring with Willis and D'Arienzo (1981) on the main characteristic of the climax of a goal-centered drama, Mabley (1972:14) says:

A characteristic of the climax is the disappearance of the will to struggle. Perhaps the protagonist acknowledges defeat and gives up the struggle or he may achieve his objective

and have no further need to struggle.

Mabley (1972) also supports the opinion that a climax must occur near or at the end of a drama.

In *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi* the dramatic action reaches the final crisis with the demotion of Tshengelo from the post of high school principal to that of a lower primary school teacher. His failure to adapt to his new situation forces the Department of Education to fire him from the teaching profession. The fact that Mavis does not understand his reasons for failing to visit her when she is hospitalised, and suspects him of secretly trying to revive his relationship with Tshililo, brings about his final downfall when Mavis sues for divorce and claims everything they possess.

In *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha* Marengwa's decision to use the *tshipfula* poison to kill Mashango marks the beginning of the climax. The situation develops unexpectedly, as Tsimbe disobeys the instruction he was given not to open the parcel he was to give to Mashango. Tsimbe's situation in hospital, which requires the joint decision of his mother and father as to whether to amputate his hand to prevent the effect of the *tshipfula* poison from spreading all over his body, or to leave him to die, forces Marengwa finally to realise that her fight with Mashango benefits no one.

The opening climactic situation in *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi* is

marked by the disappearance of Avhurengwi's mother and son, and the death of her father in a burning hut. The radio drama reaches its highest point with the return of Avhurengwi to a broken family. Facing an unavoidable death from the fatal AIDS, Avhurengwi ultimately realises that she should have listened to her parents and her cousin Mukatshelwa. Unfortunately this realisation comes too late for her to reconstruct a new and bright future like that of her cousin Mukatshelwa.

The dramatic situation reaches the final crisis in Tshenzhelani with the arrest of Zwiapenga for trying to shoot Vusi with an unlicensed fire arm. It is at this stage that Zwiapenga finally realises that he is wasting his time by trying to build a future with a woman who is deeply in love with another man. He accepts the fact that his marriage to Salume must come to an end.

Mashamba, Magwabeni, Ramaite, and Rambau all succeed fairly well in propelling their dramatic situations towards climactic situations. However, one must say that the careful organisation of events in Mashamba's radio drama stands out above that of the other three script-writers.

#### 3.8.1.4 The resolution

The last stage of the plot structure is known as the resolution. Shaw defines it as the final outcome or unravelling of the main dramatic complications in a play. (Shaw, 1976:77)

Willis and D'Arienzo (1981:192) define it as:

The part of the play in which the writer describes what happens as a result of the character's final climactic decision or struggle...

Concurring with the views of Willis and D'Arienzo's (1981), Hilliard (1984:305) writes:

There may, however, be a final clarification of what happens as a result of the climax, to the characters or forces involved. This remaining plot structure is the resolution.

Willis and D'Arienzo (1981) further point out that in certain instances no explanation is necessary since the nature of the climax may be sufficient to indicate the possible consequences.

Longworth uses the French word 'denouement' which means the untying of a knot. Supporting the relevance of using this word he argues that metaphorically the climax is the tying of a knot that the resolution of the play unties. (Longworth, 1971:48)

Both decision-centred and goal-centred dramas have the same characteristics at this stage, whose primary purpose, to borrow from Mabley (1972:16), is:

...(to serve) as a transition for the audience from the high emotional peak of the climax back to the reality of their own lives...

In *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i yafhi* Mashamba uses this stage to reconcile Tshengelo with reality, and indeed with his first wife Tshililo. The court decision to award Mavis the house and all its contents forces Tshengelo to go back to his brothers. It is here that he acknowledges that he should respect all people, irrespective of whether they are educated or not. The radio drama ends with his efforts to beg for love back from the now prosperous first wife.

In *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha* Magwabeni successfully uses suspense to resolve the problems that the main characters face. The audience is not informed about what happens to Tsimbe, who is critically ill in hospital, and whether Marengwa agrees to Mashango and Tsimbe's wish for a family reunion.

The resolution of *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi* concerns the isolation of Avhurengwi in the local hospital, which situation is contrasted with that of Mukatshelwa, with the birth of her bouncing twins and her pride in her husband who is a doctor in the same hospital.

In *Tshenzhelani* the dramatic situation reaches the resolution with Zwiapenga making efforts to get Ndivhudza back. Although



Ndivhudza is already in love with an unnamed married man she is persuaded by her sister-in-law to forgive and forget what Zwiapenga did to her. Vusi is arrested for trying to kill Ndiafhufha. Salume leaves Zwiapenga's homestead for Johannesburg, creating a good atmosphere for Zwiapenga and Ndivhudza in which to solve their differences.

Mashamba, Magwabeni, Ramaite, and Rambau all perform reasonably well in this stage. There is good use of suspense by Mashamba, Magwabeni and Rambau. In Mashamba's radio drama the audience is left with a question whether Tshililo will readily accept Tshengelo's plea and move in with him immediately. The same kind of question applies to Magwabeni's and Rambau's radio dramas, where, respectively, one wonders whether Tsimbe will be able permanently to reconcile his parents, and whether Ndivhudza will honestly forgive Zwiapenga. However, in Rambau's radio drama the situation seems to be fairly straightforward, as Avhurengwi is going to die of AIDS.

### 3.9 Recapitulation

This chapter dealt with the various structural elements of radio drama. For purposes of this study the concept 'structural elements' was used to refer to scene, episode, conflict, dramatic irony, believability, suspense, surprise, and the plot structure. This study concludes that, in the radio dramas studied, there is a general lack of the proper use of these elements, which may be traced to ignorance on the part of the script-writers. One notes

that where the script-writers do make proper use of structural elements the script is always of superior quality.

## CHAPTER 4

**CHARACTERISATION AND THEME****4.0 Introduction**

This chapter discusses characterisation and theme in the four selected radio dramas. It is argued that there is a closer relationship between characterisation and theme than there is between other dramatic elements. Such relationship stems from the fact that radio drama, by its non-visual nature, depends primarily on the spoken word to deliver its dramatic theme. For this reason, characterisation and theme are going to be treated together. However, in order to gain better insight into each of them, this chapter will be divided into two main sections, namely characterisation and theme.

**4.1. Characterisation**

Cohen (1973:37) defines characterisation as:

The art of creating fictional characters in words which give them human identity ...

Msimang, in a rather broad definition, is of the opinion that the term characterisation must be viewed as referring to the sum

total of techniques that are used by an artist in presenting characters in a literary work of art so that they are perceived by the audience as persons endowed with moral dispositional as well as physical qualities. (Msimang, 1983:99)

The importance of good characterisation in radio drama cannot be overemphasised. Commenting on good characterisation in drama in general Madadzhe (1985:69) rightly observes:

Characterization is one of the cornerstones of drama. A drama without a convincing characterization may end up being a failure. Thus, a dramatist should endeavour to bring life into his characters.

The question whether characters in radio drama must honestly reflect those of people in real life is debatable. This study, however, supports the views of Willis and D'Arienzo (1981), Msimang (1983), Hilliard (1984), and other scholars, which espouse the idea that characters need not be like people of flesh and blood such as we are. Characters need only be real and be understood in terms of the world that the script-writer creates for them.

#### 4.1.1 Classification of characters

In this study characters are analysed according to Willis and D'Arienzo's classification. The traditional approach which seeks

to look at every drama as having a protagonist, an antagonist, a tritagonist, and so forth, will not be followed because of the practical problems in the analysing of drama in the electronic media in general. Characters will be divided into three main categories, namely principal, secondary and incidental characters.

#### 4.1.1.1 Principal characters

Principal characters in a radio drama are characters whose actions have a direct effect on the origin, direction and resolution of the dramatic conflict. Their actions, or at least the actions of one or two of them, form the subject of the radio drama.

Principal characters include the focal character and either the opposing or supporting forces, or both. Of special interest in this study is the focal character.

The term 'focal character' seems to have been derived from the fact that it is upon this character that the audience chiefly focuses its attention. Willis and D'Arienzo view a focal character as a character who arouses the greatest audience interest. (Willis and D'Arienzo, 1981:207)

Differentiating between the focal character of a decision-centred drama and that of a goal-centred drama Willis and D'Arienzo (1981:201) argue:

In the decision-centered play, the focal character is the person who makes the decisions most vitally affecting the development of the plot; in the goal-centered play the focal character is the person who carries out the struggle constituting the most important action.

There is a view that a focal character must always be one with whom the audience sympathises. This view seems to have been influenced by moral and/or religious beliefs. The view in this study is that the question whether a character is focal or not depends on his/her own actions in relation to those of other characters in the radio drama under discussion.

In *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi* Tshengelo, Tshililo and Mavis are principal characters. Tshengelo may also be further viewed as a focal character since the audience's attention chiefly focuses on his actions. His selfish determination to achieve his goal makes him the character with whom the audience is unlikely to sympathise. However, his willingness to take any step that may help realise his goal attracts more audience attention than do the actions of any other character. It is his desire to divorce the less-educated Tshililo and marry the well-educated Mavis which brings tension into the otherwise stable family situation. His efforts to realise this goal, and the counter-efforts of Tshililo and other family members, propel the dramatic action towards the climax. His defeat brings the dramatic action to an end.

Tshililo and Mavis also play crucial roles. Whereas Tshililo's role is to oppose Tshengelo's efforts to realise his goal, Mavis plays a supportive role since it is to her advantage for Tshengelo to marry her because of his status in the community.

As Willis and D'Arienzo rightly observe, although audience interest usually focuses on the decisions or struggle of one character, there are stories in which such attention may be equally divided between two characters, or it may even be focused on an entire group. (Willis and D'Arienzo, 1981: 207) The radio scripts of *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha*, *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi* and *Tshenzhelani* all tend to spread the interest evenly between two or more characters.

In *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha* the principal characters are Mashango and Marengwa. These two characters may also be viewed as focal characters. From the beginning of the radio drama until his arrest and acquittal the audience's interest focuses on Mashango's efforts to avoid arrest. It is after the court decides to acquit Mashango that the audience's attention is shifted from Mashango to Marengwa, who sets out to take revenge. The script-writer's concentration on the traditional doctor Matambile and the police is unjustified since they are merely indirectly involved in the central problem of the radio drama.

In *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi* the character Avhurengwi, whose name is echoed in the title, her parents, Thomani and Mudzunga, Mukatshelwa, and her mother Mudzuli are all principal characters.

As the dramatic action concentrates on all of them, from the beginning to the end, the audience's interest is also focused on all of them. Thomani and Mudzunga, as Avhurengwi's parents, are depicted as failing in their duty to guide their daughter towards a bright future. Mukatshelwa provides a contrast between the life of a badly-brought up child (Avhurengwi in this instance), and herself as a disciplined and school-loving child. Mukatshelwa's mother, Mudzuli, symbolises perseverance and determination in the face of hardship. Although she was a single parent during her daughter's formative years she, realising the importance of education, raised her strictly. However, it is also notable that such a spread of audience attention is brought about by the script-writer's weak efforts to compare two families of unequal opportunities. If one were to guess which one of them attracts more interest it would probably be Avhurengwi, for her decision to live an irresponsible life affects the development and the denouement of this radio drama somewhat more critically than does that of any other character.

In *Tshenzhelani* the audience interest is shared between Zwiapenga and her kid sister Ndiafhufha. In the first episodes the attention of the audience is focused on Ndiafhufha's behaviour in having too many love affairs and her lack of seriousness about her schooling. However, after Zwiapenga's marriage to Salume, his decisions becomes very much more crucial than those of Ndiafhufha, who is only concerned with getting rid of Vusi. Therefore, despite the contribution that is made by Ndiafhufha to the flow of the dramatic action, the actions of Zwiapenga or



those actions that are directed at him, attract somewhat more audience interest than those of Ndiafhufha and other characters. Other characters who also play crucial roles are Zwiapenga's two wives, Salume and Ndivhudza, his mother Nyamatzhaku, and Ndiafhufha's live-in lover Vusi. Salume's role is to produce conflict between Zwiapenga and his first wife Ndivhudza, between Zwiapenga and Vusi, and also between Ndiafhufha and Vusi. The script-writer uses her behaviour to prove that the first wife is the better wife. Ndivhudza is used to prove that rural women are better than urban women. Although Zwiapenga has neglected Ndivhudza she does not double-cross him as Salume does. Nyamatzhaku is used to encourage Zwiapenga and Vusi on their path to self-destruction. Vusi is used to bring havoc to Zwiapenga's home. Although he is Ndiafhufha's boyfriend he falls in love with Salume and always forcefully protects Salume when Zwiapenga tries to discipline her.

Comparatively speaking, principal characters are better revealed in Mashamba's radio drama than in the other three. Whereas in the radio dramas of Magwabeni, Ramaite and Rambau the attention of the audience is focused on more than one focal character, Mashamba concentrates on one focal character and uses the other principal characters only in a supportive capacity to emphasise his one main idea.

#### 4.1.1.2 Secondary characters

Apart from principal characters there are other characters whose

actions help in the creation, maintenance and resolution of the dramatic conflict. These characters are known as secondary characters since their role is seen as supportive of the principal characters in expressing the dramatic theme.

Although such characters are generally viewed as less important in function than the principal characters, their significance in radio drama must not be underestimated. The use of a confidant is an example of such a secondary character. Through dialogue between the focal character and his confidant a skilful script-writer may convey the former's thoughts without creating an unnatural situation.

In *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi* Ndiitwani and Banzhi (Tshengelo's mother and father), his two younger brothers, Khathakhatha and Mashudu, as well as their two wives, Fulufhelo and Tshedza, respectively, all play a secondary role. All except Fulufhelo are against Tshengelo's second marriage, and they act in unison to make Tshengelo and Mavis as uncomfortable as humanly possible. The death of Banzhi in the middle of the radio drama, as is the case with any removal of a secondary character from the dramatic situation, does not disturb the flow of the action. However, it accelerates Tshengelo's downfall since there is nobody left who can force him to do what he is supposed to do to restore normality to the family, and indeed to his own life.

In *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha* the roles of the traditional doctor, Matambile, the police, Marengwa's son Tsimbe,

and her parents, Kati and Matiosi, must be viewed as secondary to those of Mashango and Marengwa. Matambile's role is to support Mashango's efforts to escape arrest, whereas the police are obviously used to make the efforts fail. Marengwa's parents, Kati and Matiosi, are divided between their loyalty to Marengwa and Mashango. Whereas Kati supports Marengwa's decisions to get Mashango punished for what he has done to her, Matiosi is sympathetic towards Mashango since he administered the love potion with the intention not of harming Marengwa, but of strengthening their love. Tsimbe, on the other hand, helps to bring the two fighting parents together.

In *Vhutshilo* a vhu rengwi Avhampfuni and Musuki play secondary roles to those of Avhurengwi, Thomani, Mudzunga, Mudzula and Mukatshelwa. The undue attention that they are given is questionable as they do not act in support of the main events which form the core of the dramatic action. One may regard them as undesirable extras the radio drama could have done very well without.

In *Tshenzhelani* Ndivhudza's mother Alilali, her kid brother Thabelo and his girlfriend Muofhe, and Ndiafhufha's first boyfriend, Tshilidzi, play secondary roles in support of the actions of the principal characters. Thabelo is used to convey the idea that poverty may be overcome if one is sufficiently determined. Tshilidzi's love for Ndiafhufha makes Vusi conclude that the two have hired people to kill him. It is unfortunate that he only comes to know the truth after attempting to kill

Ndiafhufha.

With the exception of *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi*, in which the inclusion of Avhampfuni and Musuki is unnecessary, secondary characters are well drawn in the four radio dramas under discussion. Their roles are supportive of the principal characters in their efforts to reach their goals, or in making their decisions.

#### 4.1.1.3 Incidental characters

Willis and D'Arienzo view incidental characters as characters needed to fill out a play or scene. They usually appear in a service function and, in many cases, are not even identified by name. (Willis and D'Arienzo, 1981:200)

Characters falling into this category in African radio drama may include taxi and bus drivers, policemen, hotel attendants, petrol attendants, crowds of people and any other type of character that one can think of who emerges merely to serve a certain purpose and then disappears immediately.

The difference between incidental and secondary characters must be clearly emphasised. Whereas the latter appear more frequently along with principal characters, the former's appearances may be restricted to one or two occasions on which they serve specific purposes.

In *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i yafhi* the script-writer does not make use of incidental characters who participate in the dramatic dialogue. He successfully denies those characters direct participation by merely informing the audience about their presence in situations where they are required to propel the dramatic action forward. For example, the presence of the police who arrest Tshengelo in episode 33, and the inspectors who find Tshengelo with some cans of beer at school, is communicated to the audience through the use of soliloquy.

Incidental characters are used in a number of instances in *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha* to fulfil various functions. In episode 7, pages 5, 6 and 7, Magwabeni uses girls one and two (who later introduce themselves as Nelly and Lizzy) as incidental characters as they appear only in the scene where they are drinking with the two policemen who are hunting for Mashango. Their presence is irrelevant to this radio drama as they don't contribute anything to the decisions that have to be made by the two focal characters, or by any of the principal characters. However, *Ipfi* (The Voice), which identifies herself as Marengwa's late grandmother in episodes 15 and 17, is effectively used to make Mashango's stay in his hideout at Madibo very uncomfortable. *Ipfi* (The Voice) harasses him every night.

In *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi* Mukatshelwa's husband, Dr. Maita, may be viewed as an incidental character since his role is limited to some few scenes at the end. He is used to inform Mukatshelwa's mother that her daughter has given birth to bouncing twins and

to announce the death of Musuki and of Avhampfani's wife at the old age home. Dr. Maita's marriage to Mukatshelwa contributes to creating the theme of the radio drama as the marriage produces a contrast between Mukatshelwa's life and that of Avhurengwi.

In Tshenzhelani Muofhe acts as an incidental character. She is used to inform Tshilidzi about Ndiafhufha's bad behaviour. At the end of the radio drama she is used to reconcile Zwiapenga and his first wife, Ndivhudza.

Mashamba succeeds in reducing the number of characters by creating incidental characters who do not participate directly in the dramatic dialogue. Magwabeni, Ramaite and Rambau also create useful incidental characters. However, Magwabeni's use of Nelly and Lizzy spoils his effects because their inclusion is basically irrelevant to the radio drama. Also, the status of the police should have been incidental rather than secondary.

#### 4.1.2 Character revelation

Character revelation in this study refers to methods used by script-writers to make their characters understood as they want them to be understood by the listening audience. The concept 'Character revelation' is used in the same sense as Serudu's 'character delineation', by which he refers to the way in which an author conveys the qualities, actions, sayings and reactions of people in a work of art. Serudu also argues that the term must be used to embrace the way in which an author creates

relationships among the various characters in his work, and the purposes they serve. (Serudu, 1979:09).

This study further argues that the degree of success with which a script-writer uses a method of revealing characters is critical because if the audience forms an impression which is too far different from that intended by the script-writer the intended dramatic meaning of the work as a whole is likely to be lost. In this study attention will be paid to the spoken word, and the use of names.

#### 4.1.2.1 The spoken word

In radio drama the first and the most important technique for establishing a character is that of the use of the spoken word. Lawson's view of the spoken word adequately sums up the importance of the spoken word in radio drama, which has been referred to by some critics as 'the blind medium'. For Lawson the spoken word (which he calls 'speech') conveys the actual impact of events through words. It dramatises forces which are not seen. To do this effectively, to make events visible, requires language which is incandescent. This is not a matter of beauty in general, but of achieving the color and feel of reality. (Lawson, 1960:291)

A supplementary role is played by sound effects and music, but the spoken word is the primary communicative device between the character and the audience. Supporting this view Willis and

D'Arienzo (1981:211) rightly argue:

Speech is the primary means through which the audience finds out about past actions and learns about those contemplated. It provides the main clues to the values dominating a character's life and thus reveals his or her true nature. Again, it is almost always speech that makes the decision a character has reached clear to the audience.

For purposes of this study the spoken word is divided into dialogue, monologue (and soliloquy) and narration.

#### 4.1.2.1.1 Dialogue

Gray views dialogue as the speech and conversation of the characters in any line of literary work. (Gray, 1984:64)

There is a view among some scholars that the concept dialogue refers to a verbal communication between two people. This view is motivated by the fact that this noun is divided into the prefix 'di-' which means 'two' and 'logos' which means 'knowledge'. Therefore, dialogue is seen as a verbal interaction between two participants in which they share or exchange knowledge.

This view is erroneous for at least two reasons. First, it is



based on an incorrect division of this noun since it is not the prefix 'di-' meaning 'two' which must be interpreted, but 'dia-' which means 'through or across'. Secondly, the assumption that the other participant(s) must react verbally to the preceding speech is fallacious. Consequently, dialogue may be defined as a communication activity in a work of art where two or more characters interact by imparting knowledge one to the other. Dialogue is successful if the addressee responds verbally or by reacting appropriately in a given situation.

Dialogue plays a central role in radio drama. Its indisputable importance has led some critics to conclude that drama and dialogue are inseparable twins. In support of this viewpoint Ash (1985:34) writes:

Radio drama is dialogue... Through dialogue the characters become known to us. Dialogue may be the most important element in a stage play: it is the *sine qua non* of radio play.

The importance of dialogue in drama in general is also well summed up by Cohen (1973:41) who maintains that:

Although the playwright may use some ... (other) means...to develop a character, he relies far more on the dialogue he writes for the fictional person.

For dialogue to be effective in characterisation it must be able to communicate certain information about the nature of the characters and their relationships. Mabley (1972:29) gives the following aspects which dialogue in drama in general may fulfil, and which are also relevant to the present study:

- (1) It must characterize the speaker, and perhaps the person addressed.
- (2) It must reflect the relationship of the speaker and other characters.
- (3) It must reflect the speaker's mood, convey his emotion etc.
- (4) It must be connective, that is, grow out of a preceding speech or action and lead into another.
- (5) It must advance the action.
- (6) It must be idiomatic, maintaining the individuality of the speaker, yet still blend into the style of the play as a whole.
- (7) It must be clear and comprehensible to the audience.
- (8) It must often reveal the speaker's motivation.
- (9) It must often carry information or exposition.
- (10) It must often foreshadow what is to come.

Ash mentions another function of dialogue that may be very useful

to a radio script-writer. Dialogue in radio may also be used in ending or beginning a scene or indicating the lapse of time. In support of this viewpoint Ash (1985:36) gives the following practical example:

All right. Meet you in half an hour, then, at  
the Dog and Duck...

Ash argues that the above quotation communicates the following useful information to the audience:

- (a) Where the characters are at the beginning of the next scene, namely 'at the Dog and Duck'
- (b) How much time elapses between their parting and meeting again, which is half an hour.
- (c) Who the characters are in the next scene, namely those who were in the previous one.

Boulton, although agreeing with the views of the above critics, warns that a dramatist must take some care when constructing the dialogue that his characters will have to articulate. On how to do this Boulton (1960:100) gives the following general advice:

The dialogue of a play must be such that the normally competent actor can speak his lines without stumbling, stopping for breath in the wrong place or speaking with so little animation

or such a false intonation that it is obvious he does not understand what he is saying; it must also be such that the audience for whom the play is written can take in most of what is being said in the time available.

There is a view that for dialogue to be convincing it must exactly resemble that which is used by people in real life. One of the exponents of this view, Maxwell-Mahon (1984:36), writes:

The dialogue that you give to your characters must sound convincing and true to life.

This view has been convincingly proved to be erroneous by other critics. Scholes and Klaus (1971:56) maintain that:

The give and take of dialogue is a highly specialised form of conversation..., it can hardly be expected to sound like our customary pattern of speech.

Supporting this view Hilliard (1984:306) writes:

Inasmuch as the play does not duplicate real people or the exact action of real life but heightens and condenses these elements, the dialogue also has to be heightened and condensed

rather than duplicated.

Rubenstein and Maloney (1988:196), in support of Hilliard, Scholes and Klaus, observe:

Often in fiction,... we write dialogue with an economy of movement never encountered in real life. What people actually say, as you can learn by listening to a recorded conversation, is often ungrammatical, verbose, and roundabout in phrasing. Words are often used because they sound right, not because they convey the correct dictionary meaning.

This study subscribes to the view that dialogue in a work of art should not sound exactly like the normal conversation to which we are accustomed in everyday life. The artist should use words economically to achieve the maximum desired effect. The use of figurative language, where possible, should be considered as a means to serve this end. However, the artist must guard against the possibility of creating dialogue which is too artificial to be believed.

All in all, the importance of dialogue in radio drama cannot be overemphasised. Dialogue helps us to know and understand characters better. An understanding of characters in a work of art is in turn vital to the understanding of its underlying

theme.

In *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi* dialogue is used successfully to reveal a number of aspects which are crucial to the understanding of the whole radio drama. The script-writer creates dialogue which characterises different speakers, establishing their individuality. Tshengelo's love of English and his insistence that he be called by his European name, Theophilus, reveal him to be one of those Africans who believe that once they reach a certain academic level they become pseudo-Americans or pseudo-Britons. In portraying his character the script-writer draws a comparison between him and his uneducated father, Banzhi. Whereas Tshengelo expresses himself in English which is mixed with Tshivenda here and there, Banzhi basically uses Tshivenda which is sometimes mixed with Afrikaans when he is angry. This reinforces the character of Tshengelo as an educated person, and of Banzhi, who uses threatening Afrikaans, such as 'Jy moet my mooi luister, jong', which he probably learned from his employers when he was a migrant worker.

Dialogue is also used in a number of instances to reflect the character's mood, emotions, and attitude. In episode 5 page 2 Banzhi uses the word *tshikwati* to refer to Mavis. This clearly shows his disapproval of her affair with his married son Tshengelo. It also shows anger and frustration because his efforts to end the affair do not immediately bring the expected results.

The dialogue in this radio drama also reveals much about the Tshivenda culture. The following dialogue in episode 21 page 3 shows Mavis's status in the Tshivenda culture:

3. Tshengelo: Mmawe, naa vha nnyamba hani na musadzi wanga naa?

4.Vho-Ndiitwani: Shi! Ndi musadzi tshithu tshenetshi tshine ri si divhe na uri tsho malwa nga thundu nngafhani? Na ha hatsho vho sala vho tou xuu! Vho awela.

(3. Tshengelo: Mother, how do you talk about me and my wife?

4.Ndiitwani: :Gosh! Is this thing a wife, a thing we don't even know how much lobola was paid for? Even at its place they feel happy. They are relieved.)

The fact that Mavis came on her own, without the two families meeting and Tshengelo's family paying any form of lobola so that Mavis's family gives her over to the other family formally, means that in Tshivenda culture Mavis is a woman of no value (a cheap woman who always allows herself to be taken anywhere anytime). Her status is below that of a human being - she is a thing. Also, as no lobola was paid for her and because Tshengelo already has a first wife, her position in his family is that of a concubine, and not of a second wife. The use of the word *tshithu* (a thing) in referring to her also reveals Ndiitwani's bad attitude towards

her and her unsuitability to be Tshengelo's wife.

In contrast the dialogue between Banzhi and his wife Ndiitwani reveals total respect and affection. In episode 5 page 7 Ndiitwani, when called by her husband, does not use the usual Aa! response, but uses Banzhi's totem Ndou. This totem is later used to convey an aspect of the culture of the Vhavenda people. After Banzhi's death Ndiitwani, when in a happy mood, refers to Tshengelo by the name of Ndou because, in terms of the Tshivenda culture, he has 'stepped into his father's shoes' as head of the Banzhi family.

Mashamba also uses dialogue to emphasise the contrast between Tshengelo's two wives, Tshililo and Mavis. Mavis is depicted as a modern educated woman, whereas Tshililo is depicted as a traditional African woman. The following dialogue from episode 11 page 1 reveals some aspects of Mavis that Tshililo does not have, but which Tshengelo likes in a woman:

6. MAVIS : Theo my sweetheart, ndi a ni funa nga mbilu yanga yothe. Really I cannot see my life being much good without you...

7. TSHENGELO : Ndi khou zwi vhona mama, and that is the way I feel.

(6. MAVIS : Theo, my sweetheart, I love you wholeheartedly. Really, I cannot see



my life being much good without  
you.

7. TSHENGELO : I see it, mummy, and that is the  
way I feel.

Mavis knows how to treat Tshengelo. She calls him Theo, the short form of his favourite name Theophilus. She even uses the saccharin name 'sweetheart' to refer to him, knowing that this will make him happy. Her use of English also blends well with Tshengelo's idea of expressing oneself. Tshililo cannot express her feelings as Mavis does because of her being firmly based in African culture. She calls Tshengelo *khotsi a Fulufhelo* (Fulufhelo's father). Calling him Theophilus or sweetheart as Mavis does would sound disrespectful. She does not mix her Tshivenda with English as Mavis does because she did not get far with European education. However, within the African cultural context, she is better educated than Mavis because she gives her in-laws and her husband the respect they deserve.

In general the dialogue used in this radio drama is also very informative and yet the information being conveyed blends naturally into the conversations between the various characters. The following example from episode 19 page 4 illustrates this point:

4. TSHILILO : Ngoho ni na mashudu vhukuma. Hone  
no vha ni tshi funza kha tshikolo  
tshifhio henefhala Tshiozwi.

5. Tshedza : Ndo vha ndi tshi funza kha hetshila tsha phuraimari ya nthu ya Munakuli.
6. TSHILILO : Ee! itsho ndi sokou pfa tshi tshi ambiwa, a thi tshi divhi lini.
7. TSHEDZA : Vha tshi divha nga bvumo la ula muthannga wa u gidima we a vhuya a huma na seli nga u gidima hawe?
8. TSHILILO : Ii, ndi tshi divha nga zwenezwo. Hone houla muthannga, u ngafhi zwino? Ngoho houla na mme awe vha a ditongisa ngae.
9. TSHEDZA : U sekondari ya Tshivhanda, u khou ita murole wa fumi, sekondari ya hone ndi heyo ine vho-khotsimuhulu vha vha thoho ya tshikolo khayoyi.
10. TSHILILO : (MANGALA) Hei, naa khotsi a Fulufhelo vho no vha thoho ya tshikolo?
11. TSHEDZA : Ii, naa vhone a vho ngo vhudzwa?
- (4. TSHILILO : You are very lucky. By the way, at which school where you teaching there at Tshiozwi?
5. TSHEDZA : I was teaching at that higher primary school Munakuli.
6. TSHILILO : Yes! I only hear about that one when they talk about it. I don't know it.

7. TSHEDZA : Do you know it because of the rumour of that boy who runs, who even went overseas because of running?
8. TSHILILO : Yes, I know it because of that. By the way, where is that boy? His mother is proud of that one.
9. TSHEDZA : He is at Tshivhanda secondary. He is doing standard ten. This secondary school is the one where (my) big brother-in-law is principal.
10. TSHILILO : (AMAZED) Hey, is Fulufhelo's father a principal?
11. TSHEDZA : Yes, didn't you know?)

The above dialogue is very informative since it reveals the following important information about the characters in this radio drama. Tshedza had been living at Tshiozwi before joining this family as Mashudu's wife. (Incidentally Tshiozwi is also where Mavis lives.) She is a higher primary school teacher because she was teaching at Munakuli Higher Primary school. Tshengelo, who is referred to as **Khotsimuhulu** (big brother-in-law) by Tshedza and **Khotsi a Fulufhelo** (Fulufhelo's father) by Tshililo, has been recently appointed principal at Tshivhanda Secondary School. The fact that his wife Tshililo does not know about this clearly reflects the strained relationship between this couple. It is interesting to note how skilfully Mashamba puts together this informative dialogue which is also well

connected to preceding speeches.

In *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha* Magwabeni uses dialogue to convey the seniority between the three policemen. The Captain, who is in command of them all, shouts orders which he expects to be carried out without question. Mutanda, the second in seniority, is responsible for seeing that the Captain's orders are carried out properly. Binyuka, the most junior of them all, is not worried about the Captain's orders. He drinks and is always chasing women during working hours.

Dialogue in this radio drama also reveals the position that traditional doctors occupy in African societies. Matambila and Tshipoipoi are respected because of their ability to help those who consult them. Matambila also has magical powers with which to communicate with his ancestors. His explanation to Mashango about the various traditional medicines and the kind of ailments that they treat is communicated to the audience as useful information.

There are instances where Magwabeni fails to use dialogue to communicate information to the audience. The example in episode 28 page 5 illustrates this point:

1. MARENGWA : Rabelani-ha hafhu tie i do vhuya ya  
nga i sa fhola.
2. TSIMBE : A RAMBELA KUTABELO KUPFUFHI

(1. MARENGWA : Pray, then, because the tea is going to get cold.

2.TSIMBE : HE PRAYS A SHORT PRAYER)

In this example Magwabeni waives his responsibility to provide appropriate dialogue. **A RAMBELA KUTABELO KUPFUFHI (HE PRAYS A SHORT PRAYER)** does not provide the dialogue, as indicated in the script, that must be communicated to the audience. The producer is forced to work out dialogue which is in line with the production and also suitable for this particular situation.

There are cases where the use of dialogue in this radio drama does not advance the dramatic action. The detailed explanation given to Marengwa and her mother about how the policemen felt tired and sleepy on their way to arrest Mashango at Matambila's place, and the step by step report by the policemen given to their super, the Captain, are unnecessary because the information has already been communicated to the audience. This shows that the use of dialogue in these instances misses its target. Instead of addressing the audience it addresses other characters within the radio drama. The script-writer should have given this information to the other characters as briefly as is believable. Another recommended way is to inform the audience indirectly that the characters have received this information.

The dialogue that is assigned to Tsimbe is sometimes too profound for a little boy of his age. There are places where he is made to reason and argue like a mature person. The way he argues with

his mother that she must reconcile with his father could not come from a child of his age. His acceptance of his suffering while he is in hospital and his concern about the whereabouts of his father are also not convincing.

In *Vhutshilo* a *vhu rengwi* dialogue has, in a number of cases, been used well to communicate useful information to the audience. By means of the dialogue the script-writer informs us of Mukatshelwa's achievements from the time of passing standard ten, to finishing a three-year nursing diploma, becoming a nursing sister, and her appointment as a matron. This information is well blended into the characters' speeches, and is gradually communicated to the audience on various occasions to advance the dramatic action.

Mudzula's poor relationship with her husband is also well communicated to the audience. Her attitude towards him because of his long stay in town without maintaining his family provides a good background to her later decision to attack him for demanding that Mukatshelwa be married so that he can get lobola.

Another element which also comes out very successfully in this radio drama is what Willis and D'Arienzo call 'mannerism'. By 'mannerism' they refer to a way in which a character speaks or behaves under certain circumstances. This mode of expression also involves the choice of words which the character deems most appropriate for expressing his feeling when certain issues are discussed. Musuki always uses the words 'ndi zwiitashango' when

he is confronted in such a way that he cannot defend himself and leaves the person confronting him. His brother-in-law Thomani nicknames him **Vho-Ndizwiitashango** (Mr Ndizwiitashango) because of this habit.

However, there are certain occasions when the script-writer fails to use dialogue convincingly, and violates the principle of the economic use of words in radio drama. The dialogue that he gives to the characters is verbose, reflecting that used in real life when things are sometimes said because they sound nice, and not because they are right or contribute anything to advance the dramatic action. This example from episode 13 page 1 illustrates this point:

5. VHO-THOMANI : Mafhungo ndi a onoyu Avhurengwi.  
 kavhe a tshi edela fhando hayani.  
 Zwino hai, u diita mudzhulumba.  
 Ro ri ndi zwa u ya Mothela  
 fhedzi! Fhedzi zwino zwo kalula.  
 Avhurengwi ndi muthu a dianeho  
 shango! Hu a fhela minwedzi a sa  
 vhuyi fhando hayani. Tshawe ndi  
 halwa na vhanna na vhuada na  
 vhudakwa.

(5. THOMANI : The problem is this Avhurengwi. If she were sleeping here at home. But no, she makes herself into a

**mudzulumba** (a wayward woman). We thought it (the problem) was that of going to the motel only. But now it is worse. Avhurengwi is a person who has given herself to the country. (meaning that she falls in love with anybody). Months can elapse without her coming back home. With her it is liquor and men and bad behaviour with men and drunkenness.)

Whereas the first part of the above dialogue communicates different and useful ideas about Avhurengwi's character, the last sentence of this dialogue is verbose. If the sentence was **Tshawe ndi halwa na vhudakwa** (With her it is liquor and men) only, the fact that Avhurengwi loves liquor and men would still have been well communicated to the audience. The further use of **vhuada** (which signifies a person who associates sexually with many partners) and **vhudakwa** (drunkenness) is unnecessary as this information was communicated by the first part of the sentence.

In **Tshenzhelani** dialogue is used in episode 1 page 1, episode 19 page 6 and episode 22 page 1 to establish an urban milieu as well as to characterise. Whether the use of ungrammatical expressions such as **could I help** on both occasions intentionally depicts character, or whether it reveals the deficiency of the script-writer as far as the English language is concerned, is debatable. In episode 1 page 1 the dialogue goes as follows:



1. SALUME : Whitey's motors, good morning,  
could I help?
2. LUTINGO : Extension 331 please!
3. SALUME : One moment please, hold on!
- SOUND EFFECTS : (U PUTEDZWA HA SWITCHBOARD, I  
PFUKELA OFISINI YA ZWIAPENGA)
4. ZWIAPENGA : Extension 331, Zwiapenga on the  
line, could I help?
5. LUTINGO : Zwiapenga, ndi nne khaladzi anu,  
ndi Ndiafhufha, ndi ngeno  
Tshitandani.
- (1. SALUME : Whitey's Motors, good morning,  
can I help you?
2. PHONE : Extension 331 please!
3. SALUME : One moment please, hold on.
- SOUND EFFECTS : (THE SWITCHBOARD IS OPERATED, THE  
CALL GOES TO ZWIAPENGA'S OFFICE)
4. ZWIAPENGA : Extension 331, Zwiapenga on  
the line, can I help you?
5. PHONE : Zwiapenga, it is I, your sister  
Ndiafhufha. I am here in Louis  
Trichardt.)

The script-writer uses the above dialogue to provide the audience with important information which the audience must know right at the beginning of the radio drama. The use of the English language and the name 'Whitey's Motors' reveals the milieu. It is evident

that the dramatic action is taking place at a garage where the clientele is not only Venda. This goes on to suggest that the milieu might be urban. The script-writer also informs the audience about the characters, namely, Zwiapenga and Ndiafhufha. The relationship that exists between the characters is communicated, namely, that Ndiafhufha is a sister to Zwiapenga. The audience is also informed that Ndiafhufha is in the far northern Transvaal, in Tshitandani (Louis Trichard)

Dialogue is also successfully used to reveal Ndiafhufha's character. Her use of tsotsitaal words such as 'ri do via grand' (we will go well), skholana (coke), two jongos (for two rand), and her reference to her boyfriend Tshilidzi as bari shows that she considers herself to be a smart girl.

Rambau also reveals Ndiafhufha as selfish and a person hungry for money. She falls in love with Tshilidzi not because she wants him, but because she wants money from him because his father is a businessman and his brothers are also well off. She also pretends to love Vusi because he has a lot of money. She fights with her brother's second wife because she wants to control all the money so that she can spend it as she likes. When her brother's first wife decides to go back to her parents' home because of the presence of the second wife Ndiafhufha insists that she must leave the clothes her brother bought because she wants to use them. The repetition of Ndiafhufha's traits in a number of different situations helps to establish her character.

The script-writer also uses dialogue to establish the individuality of Vusi as a non-Muvenda character. When Vusi speaks an audience with a basic understanding of the South African vernacular languages would realise that he is a Zulu. The following example from episode 14 page 2 illustrates this point:

2. VUSI : Nne ndi a savha Ndiafufa, ubaba wakho a  
ke kho la?

(2. VUSI : I am scared, Ndiafhufha. Is your father  
not around here?)

In the whole sentence Vusi pronounces only three Tshivenda words correctly, namely **Nne ndi a**. Ndiafhufha is pronounced **Ndiafufa**. The rest of this sentence is in Zulu. This technique is effectively used to show his limited knowledge of the Tshivenda language. However, in the later episodes the script-writer succeeds in indicating some improvement in Vusi's Tshivenda because of his stay in Venda. An example from episode 17 page 7 illustrates this point:

3. Vusi : A kuna problem sbali, vhone kha vha tuwe  
nga hei yanga goloi, nne ndi do da ndi  
tshi i thatha kha vhone, vha shuma  
Germiston nga ngafhi sbali?

(3.VUSI : There is no problem, brother-in-law. You  
take this my car, I will come and fetch

it from you. Where do you work in Germiston, brother-in-law?)

The above dialogue is dominated by correct Tshivenda words. There are only four words which reveal that Vusi is not speaking his home language. Those words are *kuna*, *problem*, *sbali*, and *thatha*.

Mashamba, Magwabeni, Ramaite and Rambau all use dialogue skilfully to reveal character. Important information about characters and their relationships is successfully communicated. In some instances the Vhavenda culture is also conveyed through dialogue. However, Mashamba constructs dialogue better than Magwabeni, Ramaite and Rambau do. Magwabeni and Ramaite do not use dialogue to contribute any new information. The repetitiveness of the information given shows the inability to understand that dialogue is meant not for the characters but for the audience. Characters are merely agents who are used by the script-writer to reach a supposed audience.

#### 4.1.2.1.2 Monologue and soliloquy

In addition to dialogue another important aspect of the spoken word is monologue. There are various views as to what constitutes monologue in a work of art. According to The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1964:665) monologue is a long speech by one person in a company. The Active English Dictionary (1980:285) on the other hand defines it as:

...a long speech written for one actor who is alone on the stage.

Gray regards monologue as a Greek word for speaking alone. He further argues that soliloquy is a variety of monologue. (Gray, 1984:129)

In this study the concept 'monologue' will be defined as a form of activity where a character produces a long verbal communication in the presence of other speakers, communicating directly to them.

Monologue must be distinguished from soliloquy. Whereas in monologue a character addresses fellow characters in the work of art, in soliloquy a character speaks to himself. The idea is to let the character conveniently communicate his thoughts to the audience without the interference of other characters.

In *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi* soliloquy is used to reveal a number of matters. In episode 10 page 5 what Tshililo says alone reveals Tshengelo's character. He proceeds with his journey to Durban to have a nice time with Mavis, despite his father's wish to see him before he dies. In episode 18 the script-writer uses soliloquy to evoke a sense of pity and identification from the audience. The script-writer reveals the desperate situation in which Tshililo finds herself. Tshengelo is driving her away from their home because he wants to marry the educated Mavis. She has nowhere to go because she has no living

relatives. Through soliloquy she presents her problem so powerfully that the audience is likely to become emotionally involved.

In *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha* Magwabeni uses monologue successfully to show that the Europeans laws, on which our courts heavily rely, view witchcraft as superstition. The magistrate gives his long judgement, with people interjecting approval and disapproval. However, the magistrate remains the person dominating the dramatic speech.

The script-writer uses soliloquy to present the different challenges that Mashango faces in this radio drama. From episode 1 to episode 24 soliloquy is used to clarify Mashango's reasons for running away from the police, and the various efforts that he makes to avoid arrest and a subsequent trial. However, from episode 25 to the end of this radio drama soliloquy is used to show Mashango's quest to be reunited with his family, especially with his son Tsimbe. Since audience attention is focused on the challenges that Marengwa faces after the court decision and her attempts to make appropriate decisions, soliloquy is also used to reveal some aspects about her life.

However, informative as Magwabeni's soliloquies are, in most cases they are too long for the audience to sustain their concentration. For example, in episode 1 the soliloquy is three pages, in episode 11 it is one full page, and in episode 12 one and a half pages.

In *Vhutshilo* a *vhu rengwi* Ramaite makes no use of either monologue or soliloquy. All the information pertaining to character and theme is communicated to the audience solely through dialogue.

In *Tshenzhelani* the script-writer does not make use of monologue. However, soliloquy is used in a number of instances to communicate necessary information. In episode 4 page 6 important information about Ndivhudza's situation is communicated to the audience through the soliloquy of her mother Alilali. The audience is informed that Ndivhudza is happy at her in-laws home because she has put on weight. The audience is also informed that Ndivhudza's brother, Thabelo, is doing standard nine. Ndivhudza's mother refers to Thabelo as *lito lithihi* (one eye) to show that he is the only male person in the family. As she complains about his school funds the audience come to know that the family is poor.

In episode 9 page 1 the script-writer uses soliloquy to emphasise Ndiafhufha's character as a money grabber. As her first boyfriend Tshilidzi doubts whether he will be able to fulfil Ndiafhufha's expectations indirectly he informs the audience that what matters to Ndiafhufha is money, not love.

In episode 22 page 4 what Zwiapenga says when he is alone at Salume's home reveals the character of Salume to the audience. Since her other name and surname are Tshivenda the audience is led to believe that she is a proper Muvenda staying in

Johannesburg. She is older than Zwiapenga by a full month. This fact the script-writer uses to evoke a negative attitude from the audience, because traditionally the wife should be younger than the husband.

Magwabeni is the only script-writer of the four under discussion who uses monologue. However, the four script-writers successfully use soliloquy to communicate various pieces of information pertaining to focal characters or other principal characters. Magwabeni writes soliloquies which are too long for the audience to sustain their concentration.

#### 4.1.2.1.3 Narration

The use of a narrator can be vital for describing some of the salient qualities of characters, in particular principal characters at the beginning of a radio drama.

However, script-writers should be aware that the use of a narrator should be limited lest other techniques be not used effectively. Drama essentially involves the evolution of the action through the characters themselves. Therefore listeners should be left to arrive at their independent conclusions from what they observe from the characters. This encourages audience participation in the radio drama and also stimulates their interest in the characters.

In I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi, A thi nga do tou fa ndi



do tou lovha, Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi, and Tshenzhelani, narration is not used at all. However, its absence does not disadvantage the scripts since the spoken word, sound effects and music are effectively used to communicate the required information.

#### 4.1.2.2 The use of names

In African cultural life the name that a person gets goes far beyond mere identification and distinguishing that person from other people. In support of this argument Raselekoane (1991:165), after drawing on the authority of African scholars like Kunene (1971), Satyo (1977), Serudu (1979), Mattera (1987) and Sirayi (1989), concludes:

Generally speaking, names in African culture are of enormous significance. They are expressive of circumstances prevailing at the time of birth of a child. They also help to reflect on the attitudes, intentions, hopes and aspirations of the parents of the child. They are also believed to be descriptive of their bearer's personalities.

In using spoken word script-writers may also use names to reveal some aspects of their characters. Certain names ascribed to characters may, to borrow from Makosana, seem ordinary if taken at face value. However, if taken within the context of the work

of art under consideration, we may find them to be loaded with meaning and significant in revealing the personality of the characters. (Makosana, 1991:46)

The use of the name Tshengelo to refer to the focal character in *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi* is meaningful and relevant to his interactions with other principal characters. Tshengelo, which literally translated means 'suffering', has a superiority complex because of his academic qualifications. He insists on being called by his European name, Theophilus. This emphasises his efforts to turn away from his African roots and, indeed, from himself. Tshililo, on the other hand, whose name literally means 'a cry', leads a sorrowful life because of Tshengelo's efforts to get rid of her and marry the educated Mavis. Since she has no relative who is well off she finds she has nowhere to go. Towards the end of the radio drama she regains her pride because Tshengelo is forced by circumstances to go to her and beg for forgiveness.

In *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha* the name Tsimbe, which literally means 'a fight where people try to knock one another down', is also relevant and meaningful. The script-writer uses it successfully to show the intensity of the fight between Tsimbe's parents, Mashango and Marengwa. The name Mashango, which means 'countries', is also significant because this character moves from one place to another trying to avoid arrest.

In *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi* the script-writer uses the name

Avhurengwi to reinforce his theme. The name Avhurengwi is linked to the title of the radio drama which literally means 'Life cannot be bought'. At the end of this radio drama it is evident that people need to use their lives well as there is no way of getting a second chance, even if one is prepared to pay for it. The name Avhurengwi may be a short form of a number of other names, including *vhuloi a vhu rengwi* (witchcraft cannot be bought). The name Nndanduleni, which literally means 'refuse me', is also relevant to Avhurengwi's child because his father does not assume responsibility for his upbringing. His grandfather also does not want him to stay at his homestead because he does not know his father. He refers to him as a *khangamutupo* (a person whose totem is not known).

Rambau uses names such as *Zwiapenga*, *Ndiafhufha*, *Ndivhudzannyi* and *Vusi* to add meaning to *Tshenzhelani*. *Zwiapenga*, which literally means 'they are mad', is always confronted with problems which are tricky to solve. *Ndiafhufha*, which literally means 'I fly', is always 'flying' from one boyfriend to another. The name successfully suggests that she is not a stable person. *Ndivhudzannyi*, which literally means 'who must I tell', only has her unemployed mother and her school-going brother as relatives. The name is also used successfully to suggest her desperate situation: she has no one to go to when confronted with a financial problem.

Mashamba, Magwabeni, Ramaite and Rambau show remarkable knowledge of the significance of names in Tshivenda. Name-giving is

successfully used by the four script-writers to build characterisation.

#### 4.2 Theme

Theme may be viewed as the message which the script-writer wants to convey to the audience. It is a central idea which the audience arrives at, at the end of the radio drama.

The centrality of theme in a work of art is emphasized by several scholars. In support of this idea Perrine sees theme as an abstract idea framed as a statement in order to express the central issue of a work of art. (Perrine, 1959:114).

Styan, supporting the central role that theme plays, argues that theme must be viewed as the real purpose for which a work of art is written. (Styan, 1965:71)

Ash (1985:17), on the other hand, holds the following view:

The theme is simply what, in the broadest sense, the play is about. It may be some very general subject like 'the self-defeating tendency of an obsessive search for pleasure.' Folk wisdom may provide the theme- 'love is blind', or 'blood is thicker than water' or ...'crime does not pay'. Any religion, of course, is full of moral sayings which can be a play's basic subject.

The problem with Ash's definition is, first, that it does not clearly differentiate between 'theme' and 'subject'. This may lead one to conclude that there is no difference between the two. Secondly, Ash's phrasing of theme statements is misleading since they sound like statements of fact.

Brooks and Warren (1965:27) dispute the second part of Ash's view by convincingly differentiating between the theme of a work of art and its subject (which they call topic):

For one thing, the theme of a piece of fiction is not to be thought of as merely the topic with which the story may be taken to concern itself—though the word is sometimes loosely used in this sense. The theme is what is made of the topic. It is a comment on the topic that is implied in the process of the story.

The term 'theme' in the latter sense - as a comment about the subject that is dealt with in the work of art - will be the sense on which this study will base its findings. The other sense of 'theme', which equates it simply with the subject of a work of art, will be called 'the subject' (that is, the vehicle by which the theme is conveyed)

According to Tshamano (1989:05), quoting Chatman (1983):

...to investigate the theme of a (work of art)

is to inquire into the motives of its characters, to interpret their relationships, to work out 'authorial intentions'- but always with respect to the named characters and their specific actions in the fiction itself.

The view of this study is in line with Chatman's. It is the contention of this study that characters in a radio drama must be viewed as agents that are used to effect its theme. However, this study seeks to extend the scope of this concept from the fictive world as created by the script-writer and relates it to the world at large. This view is convincingly supported by Beardsley, as cited by Chatman (1983), and quoted by Tshamano (1989), who argues that to say a work of art has a certain theme is to affirm that such a work does not merely construct its own world, but refers also to the real world. To refer, in his view, means to 'refer conceptually', not just tangentially. (Tshamano, 1989:05)

Maxwell-Mahon (1984:35), although agreeing with the use of characters in effecting the theme of the work of art, offers a cautionary and noteworthy suggestion:

Never use a character to inflict propaganda on your audience, to preach a favourable doctrine. Plays do have a 'message', but only through what the characters do and say as self-contained individuals and not as propagandists for the

playwright.

Maxwell-Mahon's view on theme raises some interesting but very difficult questions. What is propaganda in art? Where can one draw a dividing line between the two? To what extent does political agreement or disagreement guide an artist in handling even subjects that have been with us since time immemorial?

This study does not intend to go deeply into the questions raised above, but only feels obliged to say what it deems sufficient within its limited scope. The view in this study is that whatever one's appreciation of the African writer's artistic wizardry, it is difficult, within the present apartheid situation, to feel at ease with highly skilful works which are also politically dubious.

The underlining theme in *I shavhavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi* is based on the Venda idiomatic expression which translates 'a person cannot run away from himself.' The script-writer uses the idea of education to deliver his theme. Tshengelo, who has B.A, Honours B.A, and M.A degrees, thinks that, because of his educational qualifications, he is too good to associate with his less well-educated wife and family members. His desire to marry the well-educated Mavis is a consequence of this attitude. His love of, and ability to express himself in, English, a language that is viewed as having greater status than Afrikaans and the various African languages, also supports the theme of this radio drama. However, life as it is, brings him down to earth. By the

end of the radio drama the script-writer has succeeded in communicating to the audience that all people, whether educated or not, are equal in life.

Dialogue is also skilfully used to support the theme of this radio drama. The following example from episode 13 page 7 shows how dialogue reinforces the thematic idea of this radio drama:

2. Tshedza : ...Zwino kha vhone hu pfi hu khou khakhea mini?
3. Tshililo : Ahuna tshe nda khakha tshone. Na tshithihi. Hu khou tou pfi a thi tsha todea fhanu...
4. Tshedza : Ngoho vhanna vha na tshithuhu.
5. Tshililo : A si vhanna fhedzi nwana wa hashu. Na vhasadzi vhanwe vha khou ita vhanna hezwi zwine nne nda khou itwa zwone. Ni do wana arali musadzi o funzwa, munna a songo funzwa, hoyo wa musadzi ha toti u sumba munna wawe vhukati ha vhathu. U do di ri a tshi vhudziswa a fhindula a ri ndi muzwala wanga kana munwe wa shaka lawe sa zwenezwo zwine nne nda khou itwa zwone.
6. Tshedza : ...Hone hu uri zwi no ita uri muthu a shone u sumba munna wawe kana musadzi wawe ndi zwifhio?
7. Tshililo : Henefho a thi tou vha na vhutanzi.



Fhedzi nga u vhona hanga ndi vhona u nga munwe a vhuya a funzwa vhukuma kha vhenevha vhavhili, u thoma u dzhiela ula a songo funzwaho fhasi. Nahone a vho vhona u nga vhutshilo hawe na hoyo a songo funzwaho a vhu fani. Zwine zwi si vhe zwone na luthihi. Muthu arali o funzea kha zwi dzhie uri o wana ndila ine a do la ngayo vhutshiloni hawe hothe. A zwi a mbi uri nga u funzea hawe u fanela u shandukisa kutshilele kwawe lini.

- (2.TSHEDZA : ...So what are they saying is wrong with you?
- 3.TSHILILO : There is nothing wrong I did. Not even a single thing. It is just said that I am no longer wanted here.
- 4.TSHEDZA : Indeed men are cruel.
- 5.TSHILILO : It is not only men, my dear. Even some women are doing to men what is done to me. You will find that if a woman is educated, and the man is not, she will not like people to know that they are husband and wife. When asked she will say it is her cousin or a relative, as it is done to me.
- 6.TSHEDZA : ... What is it that makes a person

ashamed to point at his wife or her husband?

7.TSHILILO : There I am not sure. But as far as I see it, it seems as if one of the two becomes highly educated, then he/she begins to look down upon the less educated one. Then he/she will even start thinking that his/her life is not the same as that of the uneducated partner. Which is wrong. If a person is educated he/she must use it as a way of making a living for the rest of his/her life. It does not mean that by being educated, a person should change his/her life.)

The script-writer successfully uses the above dialogue, especially where Tshililo complains indirectly about her husband's behaviour, to communicate to the audience that educated people should not look down upon less educated or uneducated people. Education, according to the script-writer, must be viewed as a way to ease the burden of surviving in this world, and not as something that must be used to differentiate people.

A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha has as its central theme the old-aged problem of the perpetual fight between good and evil. As usual good triumph over evil. The script-writer demonstrates

this, first, by showing that a person (Mashango in this case) cannot forever escape from justice. Secondly, when Marengwa wants to gain revenge by using traditional medicines, her plans are not successful. She ends up by further complicating her already-complicated life.

The script-writer in *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha* develops a sub-theme that shows the role that traditional doctors play in their community and the powers that they have. For example, Matambila can hear people from far away if they are planning to harm him, or people in his company. He can lengthen short journeys so that enemies cannot reach him or his clients. He can make enemies tired, sleepy and confused. He gives Mashango some medicine which, when used, changes him to *tshiulu* in the eyes of the police so as to protect him from arrest. He also has the power to communicate directly with his ancestors in time of crisis. This all goes to prove that there are traditional doctors who are good at their work, and can be of good service to those who consult them. This sub-theme is successfully used to reinforce the main theme. It shows that a person can get any kind of service from the traditional doctor to solve his/her dilemma. However, it also proves that a person cannot escape punishment forever through the use of traditional medicines.

In *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi* Ramaite also draws his thematic foundation from the subject of education. He compares children from families with unequal educational opportunities. Avhurengwi has parents who can afford to send her to school. She chooses to

live a wicked life. At the end of the radio drama she is a nobody. Mukatshelwa, on the other hand, is raised by her mother on her own. However, she manages to pass standard ten despite all the hardships she has to endure at school. She later joins the nursing profession and through hard work and determination is promoted up to the rank of a matron.

A sub-theme that is obvious in this radio drama is the effect of liquor on people. Liquor is shown to be bad for one's health. It also destroys the moral fibre of society. Thomani, his wife and his daughter have no time to sit down and solve their problems because they are always drunk. All the characters who drink suffer from high blood pressure. Although this may be so in some cases in real life, its presentation in this radio drama is not convincing. The radio drama could have done very well without the inclusion of this sub-theme.

The subject of education is also used as the theme of Tshenzhelani. Ndiafhufha has every opportunity to further her education. She is depicted as above average at school and has a brother who is determined to see her as somebody in life. She, however, chooses to live a wicked life of good times with many different boyfriends, including married men. She ends up a nobody. Thabelo, on the other hand, is from a very poor family which sometimes cannot afford any kind of meal. Through determination and hard work he gets a bursary and becomes a lawyer.

The theme of the advantages of education in life is developed together with another theme which is centred on the apartheid lie that in South Africa there are several black minority nations which cannot live together in harmony. This aims to curb black nationalism and unity among the various South African tribes so that the strategy of divide and rule is easily implemented. This lie, which constitutes the basic framework of this radio drama, also dominates the script-writer's use of images and symbols. All the characters who are not Vendas (for example, Vusi), or are not from Venda (for example, Salume) are used to reinforce the apartheid claim that there will never be harmony if contact between people with different backgrounds is allowed. In line with influx control measures the city is mainly used to signify exploitation and disillusion.

Mashamba, Ramaite and Rambau use education as a subject through which to depict their themes. Whereas Ramaite and Rambau use children from different financial backgrounds to prove that the disadvantaged always succeed through hard work and determination, Mashamba sets out to prove that education can destroy or promote success in life. Magwabeni differs from the approach of the three other script-writers because he sets good against evil to prove that good always triumphs. Of the four script-writers Mashamba uses dialogue most successfully to reveal the theme and sub-themes in his radio drama. His sub-themes are also supportive in the sense that they help to build the main theme, rather than working independently to create new themes, as is the case with the other three script-writers.

### 4.3 Recapitulation

In this study the concept 'characterisation' has been defined as a way of creating fictionalised human beings bestowed with qualities reasonably close to those of real people. Characters were divided into principal, secondary and incidental characters. This chapter concludes that, as far as characterisation is concerned, Mashamba succeeds better than Magwabeni, Ramaite and Rambau. His success is based on his ability to concentrate on one main character, with other characters playing supportive roles. This chapter further argues that the way in which Magwabeni, Ramaite and Rambau elevate two or more characters to leading positions mars the causal link between the various elements of their radio dramas.

Mashamba, Ramaite, and Rambau use education to convey their themes. Ramaite and Rambau seek to prove that financial standing is not necessarily the determining factor in one's educational success. Education is further viewed as a passport to success and prosperity in life. Mashamba, however, develops the argument further by successfully proving that education can destroy as or promote success in life. According to the events in this radio drama, the onus rests on the person to use the acquired education successfully. Magwabeni, on the other hand, bases his theme on the perpetual fight between good and evil. The radio drama propounds the old philosophy that a person cannot solve a problem by using evil means, however real the problem might be.

**CHAPTER 5****CONCLUSION****5.1 GENERAL CONCLUSION**

The aim of this study was to explicate the contribution that is made by radio drama in the field of African literature in general, and Tshivenda literature in particular. This study concludes that radio drama is still going to fulfil an essential role in educating and entertaining the Muvenda audience even in the post-apartheid era. Equal access to, and use of, the resources of the South African Broadcasting Corporation will still not mean that all households will be able to afford to own the more expensive and technologically advanced machines, such as televisions, within the foreseeable future. Therefore, the role of radio drama, both in Tshivenda and other African languages, will remain important for a long time.

Proper use of the microphone, sound effects, and music is crucial to the success or failure of a radio drama. These elements (which are referred to as 'technical tools' in this study) must be clearly marked in the script so that they are not confused with the characters or the spoken word. Indications as to their use should, to quote McLeish, be '...bracketed, underlined, or in capitals so that they stand out clearly from the dialogue.'

(McLeish, 1988:199)

This study concludes that there is a general failure on the part of Mashamba, Magwabeni, Ramaite, and Rambau to exploit the advantages of the various microphone positions. In most instances microphone positions are either not indicated at all, or are incorrectly indicated. Rambau is the most successful of the three in indicating microphone positions. Although Mashamba indicates the position 'fade out' to mark a character leaving the centre of the dramatic action, other positions, such as 'off mike', 'fading on', and 'behind obstruction' are not indicated. Magwabeni and Ramaite make no effort ever to indicate microphone positions in their scripts.

The script-writers have used sound effects convincingly to fulfil various functions such as establishing setting, directing the attention and emotions of the audience, establishing time, establishing the mood of characters, and signifying entrances and exits. Magwabeni fared better than Mashamba, Ramaite, and Rambau in using sound effects sparingly, but with the maximum possible desired effects.

The four script-writers have also used music to bridge from one scene to another, to create background, and to create mood and atmosphere in scenes. The choice of the type of theme music to be used in each of the four radio dramas was left to the discretion of the producers. One noted with concern that there were no effort on the part of the Radio Venda producers to



commission the composition of original theme music which is tied to the title of a particular radio drama. Evans (1977:153), commenting on the resources that producers in African radio stations do not exploit fully, rightly observes:

Drama producers in developing countries, African countries in particular are in one respect luckier than they realise. In their societies music remains a thriving folk-art, and the fees demanded by its practitioners remain absurdly low. It seems to me that the reluctance of so many African producers to build dramawise on this living foundation is a waste of a great opportunity. So often one hears African radio plays on traditional local themes, or on timeless universal themes, adorned with European music which is inappropriate either in general or to the rhythms and overtones of the actors' voices. Successful attempts have been made to create truly African operas and music for the stage. Why isn't more done in radio?

Although the deficiencies on the part of the script-writer in indicating the various technical tools may be addressed by the producer and his/her team, this study argues that the quality of the final product is always better if the script-writer does his/her work properly. The use of relevant African music would have also advanced the quality of the four radio dramas under discussion.

The creation of good scenes, episodes, conflict, suspense, surprise, dramatic irony, believability, and plot structure is also essential in radio drama. As far as these aspects are concerned this study found the general trend in the four radio dramas under discussion unacceptable. This study concludes that script-writers should seriously consider the following comment by Brenner (1980:56). It lays a sound foundation for a good script in any of the sub-genres of drama in which ideas are formulated:

One of the first laws of the dramatist's art is to make the denouement the logical and enforced consequence of the characters and\or events of the play. The last scene of a play is often written (conceived) before the first, because till that last scene has been found there is virtually no play, and as soon as the author has got his denouement he must not lose sight of it for a moment; he must subordinate everything else to it.

Mashamba's use of scenes, episodes, conflict, suspense, surprise, dramatic irony, believability and the construction of the plot structure is purposeful and contributive to the aesthetic merits of the work as a whole, as compared to the use of these aspects in the radio dramas of Magwabeni, Ramaite and Rambau. Magwabeni, Ramaite, and Rambau focus their attention, and indeed that of the audience, on too many characters and facets of life that do not necessarily create purposeful relationships in their radio dramas. The arrangement of events into scenes and episodes, the

characters and their situations do not hang together to target specific themes. Magwabeni, Ramaite, and Rambau make efforts to reproduce life as it is in its totality. However, the limited time within which radio drama operates demands that a script-writer should choose one aspect of life and concentrate on it in order to convey his/her intended theme. Therefore in this aspect Mashamba was more successful than the other three as events in his radio drama are well organised around the principal characters, especially the focal character, Tshengelo.

Mashamba is also distinguished from the other three script-writers by his unique writing style and his ability to conceive situations that fit perfectly into the overall movement of the dramatic action. His radio drama echoes natural tensions which give his text a quality that makes it unique among the other three radio dramas.

Mashamba's radio drama is also marked by a serious tone, making it both informative and entertaining. In his radio drama one witnesses the rather peculiar problem of an abuse of educational advantages which derives from years of economic, social and political degradation under apartheid. The theme based on the advantages of education, a theme that is prevalent in Tshivenda literature, and which Ramaite and Rambau also use, is advanced by Mashamba to show that education does not always produce the same result in all people. It may produce success for those who use it properly, but may destroy those who misuse it.

The influence of Tshivenda culture in the modern world is also handled reasonably well by Mashamba, Magwabeni, Ramaite and Rambau. In *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i ya'fhi* Mashamba establishes a cultural conflict between modern and traditionally-oriented people. Tshengelo does not perceive the need for his marriage to unify his family and that of her second wife, Mavis, as is expected in African culture. The result is that Tshengelo's family concludes that Mavis must have been troublesome at home so that her parents are happy that she enticed Tshengelo into marriage. In *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha* the role of traditional doctors, even in the modern world, is depicted. The traditional doctor, Matambile, is a powerful figure in his community. He is feared by the people because of his ability to use traditional medicines in all kinds of ways. In *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi* Ramaite shows the influence that a *makhadzi* (a sister to the male head of a family) has in Tshivenda culture. Mudzula, the *makhadzi*, is very respected by her brother's family, so much so that they cannot do anything without seeking her advice and permission. In *Tshenzhelani Ndiafhufha* also feels that she must be given special attention by her brother's wife because she is a *makhadzi*. This also produces conflict as she comouflages her laziness by expecting her brother's wife to work like a slave, and assuming that she, the brother's wife, has no say as she does not belong to the family culturally. The four script-writers must therefore be commended for their efforts to preserve aspects of Tshivenda culture in their works, particularly in view of the influence of Western culture that is so strongly intruding on all aspects of African life.

Mashamba's radio drama can also be seen to be superior on language usage to those of Magwabeni, Ramaite, and Rambau. Whereas the other three script-writers sometimes appear to be searching for words to be uttered by their characters, Mashamba displays evidence of a mind at work which is sensitive to the disparities of language amongst various people. The educated and modern are marked by mixing Tshivenda with English in their speeches, whereas the uneducated use basically Tshivenda, with bit of Afrikaans here and there. This reflects a typical modern African milieu where education and language shape people's ways of thinking and expression.

On the whole Mashamba in *I shavha i tshi sia muinga i yafhi*, is more successful in dealing with the various elements of radio drama than Magwabeni in *A thi nga do tou fa ndi do tou lovha*, Ramaite in *Vhutshilo a vhu rengwi*, and Rambau in *Tshenzhelani*. Mashamba's radio drama reveals a skilful script-writer whose art captures the realities of our time in an engaging and articulate manner without sacrificing the quality of most of radio drama's requirements.

## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study argues that radio drama is a sub-genre of drama. For this reason, it is recommended that the radio script-writer should first understand the rules that govern drama in general, before making any attempt to write a script for radio drama. These rules affect the creation and use of characters, the spoken

word, conflict, plot and other elements, such as scenes, episodes, suspense, surprise, dramatic irony, and believability. In addition the radio script-writer should understand that in radio drama these rules must be modified to suit its non-visual nature. It is also necessary for him/her to understand the use of different microphone positions, sound effects, and music to achieve various effects.

While this study acknowledges that fundamental changes are unfolding in our society in general, the influence of the past is likely to hinder this form of literature in the fulfilment of its central role in generating and shaping constructive ideas in our communities. A possibility which exists, and is well evidenced by the bulk of the manuscripts that are currently in review, is that the sub-genre of radio drama may be dominated by characteristics of the 'shouting literature' syndrome which took African literature written through the medium of English (mostly the so-called protest poetry) by storm during the past years because of the pain, anger, and frustration which were denied an outlet during the heyday of total repression. This may dominate the sub-genre to such an extent that aspects of style and technical quality are overshadowed.

African radio drama must, therefore, redefine its objectives in view of the coming new order. It should reflect on the society objectively. As life is not only made up of the social aspect, there is a need to move on and tackle new avenues which involve other aspects such as those in politics and economy. The

realities of our country, which are influenced by the system of apartheid, should also be addressed. African Radio drama must accept the fact that it must serve the needs of its people first, and then those of other people, and not vice versa. Secondly, it must help to foster unity among the very people that it helped to divide. Thirdly, it must help to heal the wounds of the past, and not exacerbate the current distressing state of affairs.

There is a need for the script-writer to conduct the relevant research if he/she is going to include technical matters such as those relating to the field of science, law, and medicine. Lack of proper knowledge can reduce the credibility of the entire script. An aspect that is handled with a degree of ignorance can have a negative influence on situations that are crucial to the radio drama. This is also related to the creation of milieux about which the script-writer has no sound knowledge. For example, a radio drama script-writer who has never been to a shebeen will be making a fatal error if he/she uses a shebeen as the setting of some of the important scenes in his/her radio drama. The same applies to those who try to set their scenes on the moon, in the sea, or in certain large cities of which they have no proper knowlege or experience.

Most South African blacks have an advcantage over other races since they can communicate in more than one language. An aspirant radio script-writer should strive to be well informed about the material which radio stations of other languages are offering. This will help him/her to evaluate his/her product by comparing

it with those produced by others.

Although this study recognises that the people who are involved in the production of radio dramas have the practical knowledge and experience, it will pay dividends if experts in the field, such as those at universities, are involved. As these experts have a sound theoretical background and are in touch with new developments, their contribution will prove valuable if it is combined with that of producers.

There is also a need for further research to be conducted on radio drama in order to increase understanding of the significance of this sub-genre. The study of African radio drama, like that of other forms of literature, should be included in school, college, and university curricula so that a sound knowledge and appreciation of this sub-genre of drama is properly cultivated. This will assist script-writers and producers in improving their understanding so that they may be able to handle the medium more confidently in view of the challenges that it will face from other sub-genres in future.

Since this is a pilot study in the field of radio drama in Tshivenda it is hoped that the findings and suggestions made in the study will be helpful to aspirant radio script-writers and those involved in the production of radio drama, and may assist future research on radio drama in Tshivenda in particular, and in other African languages in general.



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