


The Relevance of *Tselane le Dimo* Folktale in the Life of the Current Generation



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ABSTRACT

Before the origin of writing, oral literature was used by many African families to pass down values and impart knowledge and good morals from one generation to the other and to pass knowledge from one generation to the other. However, modern families hardly see value in narrating these folktales to their children as they claim that they have no time to narrate stories. This paper aimed to demonstrate the relevance and significance of *Tselane le Dimo* folktale in the current space and time. The study was guided by a functionalism theory which postulates that society is more than the sum of its parts; rather, each aspect of it works for the stability of the whole. The study is descriptive, and a qualitative approach was employed. Content analysis methods and secondary sources in the form of books and articles were used as data collection methods. The findings of this paper indicated that narrating folktales is still necessary and *Tselane le Dimo* folktale is still relevant in the current space and time, to the younger generation. This paper concluded that modern African families should get back to their roots and narrate stories to their children to impart knowledge, values, and morals to them.

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INTRODUCTION

Folktales are part of folk literature, which is more widely referred to as folklore. Folktales are customary narratives that are orally transmitted from one generation to the next long before writing systems were developed hence, they are termed ‘oral’ literature. These stories were narrated at night by grannies. According to Phindane, grandparents are regarded as the master storytellers since they are senior citizens.¹ Nyaugwa affirms that folktales are a kind of entertainment that children like hearing after dinner to help them get ready for bed.² They act as a wellspring of imaginative ideas that give rise to a number of contemporary literary masterpieces.³ He further argues that they are essential to the oral culture of Africa. Above all, they typically explain and connect to the different traditional and cultural facets of the society from which they originate.

Children need to be exposed to folktale oral genre to create a positive impact on them. However, most modern families seem to consider them as part-time art.⁴ This explains why kids would much rather

¹ P Phindane, “The Structural Analysis of Sesotho Folktales: Propp’s Approach,” *South African Journal for Folktale Studies* 24, no. 20 (2014): 122–33.

² O. Nyaugwa, “Folktale Influence on the Shona Novel” (UNISA, 2008).

³ Halima Amali, “The Function of Folktales as a Process of Educating Children in the 21st Century: A Case Study of Idoma Folktales,” in *21st Century Academic Forum Conference Proceedings IC21CE*, vol. 21, 2014, 88–97.

⁴ Amali, “The Function of Folktales as a Process of Educating Children in the 21st Century: A Case Study of Idoma Folktales.”

play video games, listen to pop music, watch movies on television, and use their phones to kill time than hear folktales told.

It is against this background that this paper attempts to show the relevancy of the *Tselane le Dimo* folktale by reinforcing the cultural values it entails, educating the current generation about the danger around themselves and inculcating the culture of narrating folktales by modern families. This article argues that the folk narrative is still relevant and should continue to be narrated to children as it fosters the personal and educational development of an individual, coping strategies, encouraging good morals, and so forth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To determine what has already been done, this study will first analyse the literature on folktales in general before concentrating on Basotho folktales. Nthako asserts that folktales are literary works that capture the essence of any community by expressing its aspirations, expectations, and worldview.⁵ It is for that reason why as children our grandparents were telling us stories like the one of *Tselane le Dimo*, because they had desires that they needed to achieve such as behaving well. For one to understand the folktales, one must classify them according to the types they serve such as social function, content, structure, or typical audience.⁶ For instance, the *Tselane le Dimo* folktale falls under social function. The family and cousins of *Tselane* worked collectively to rescue *Tselane* from *Dimo* after noticing her finger in the bag of *Dimo*. The cousins reported the matter to their parents, and they gave *Dimo* beer and put ants, snakes, and bees in the bag of *Dimo*. Many scholars such as Propp, 1958; and Dundes, 1964 are among the first scholars to analyse folktales.⁷ Apart from that, many scholars have made a significant contribution to folktales.

These include Jacottet, Moephuli, Nakin, Phindane et al.⁸ Moephuli analysed a Sesotho folktale *Ntekekwane*, using the theory of Propp and Dundes.⁹ Moephuli discovered that in the study of Nakin titled 'A Deconstructionist Analysis of the Sesotho Folktale, *Ngwana ya kgwedi sefubeng*, the researcher discovered that the element of power is used by men over women and women over other women.¹⁰ This on its own demonstrates that the narrating of such a story is still relevant as it demonstrates how women or those in positions of power use their powerful positions to suppress their subordinates. For instance, in the *tshomo* of *Tselane le Dimo*, the element of power is limited due to the issue of children's rights. In South Africa, children have rights and parents must consider those rights before imposing anything on their children. In this case, the mother of *Tselane* was supposed to engage with *Tselane* before deciding to go to another village. This law interferes with parents' intentions of raising their children compared to children's perceptions of being raised.

Phindane in the analyses of *Kgubetswana le Talane* used the Binary Opposition Approach to argue that the folktales are similar and universal in nature.¹¹ In that analysis, the researcher found out that *Kgubetswana* is loved by most people due to the positive behaviour she has demonstrated. This is an education to the youth, that if they portray good behaviour amongst the elderly people or in society, they are likely to be loved and appreciated. The element of love and care is demonstrated in the *tshomo* of *Tselane le Dimo* after her cousins recognised her finger and rescued her. That is why the government of South Africa has partnered with many non-profit organisations (NGOs) to come up with programmes that are aimed at rescuing the youth from drugs, alcohol and abusive relationships. On the other hand, Maake in the analyses of *Tselane le Dimo* used the Strategic Analysis Approach to argue that *Mmatsetlane* used the Shortcomings, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) strategy to ensure that *Tselane* could survive in that forestry area which was filled with cannibals.¹² On many occasions, parents find

⁵ M. S Nthako, "The Structural Analysis and Interpretation of Sesotho Folktale: Mokoko Le Phakwe," 2012.

⁶ John L Fischer, "The Sociopsychological Analysis of Folktales," *Current Anthropology* 4, no.3 (1963):235–95.

⁷ Rosalia Moroosi Nakin, "A Deconstructionist Analysis of the Sesotho Folktale, Ngwana Ya Kgwedi Sefubeng," *Southern African Journal for Folklore Studies* 27, no. 1 (2017): 30–41; A. Dundes, *The Study of Folklore* (Englewood Cliff: Prentice-Hall, 1965)..

⁸ E. Jacottet, *Litshomo: Buka Ea Pele* (Moriya; Lesotho: Morija Book Depot, 1985); Nakin, "A Deconstructionist Analysis of the Sesotho Folktale, Ngwana Ya Kgwedi Sefubeng"; Phindane, "The Structural Analysis of Sesotho Folktales: Propp's Approach"; I M Moephuli, *A Structural Analysis of Southern Sotho Folktales* (University of South Africa, Department of Bantu Languages, 1972), Nhlanhla Maake, "A Strategic Analysis of the Folktale of Tselane Le Dimo," *Southern African Journal for Folklore Studies* 27, no.1(2017):1–9.

⁹ Moephuli, *A Structural Analysis of Southern Sotho Folktales*; Dundes, *The Study of Folklore*.

¹⁰ Nakin, "A Deconstructionist Analysis of the Sesotho Folktale, Ngwana Ya Kgwedi Sefubeng," 31.

¹¹ Phindane, "The Structural Analysis of Sesotho Folktales: Propp's Approach."

¹² Maake, "A Strategic Analysis of the Folktale of Tselane Le Dimo,"2.

themselves in a situation whereby they have to make sacrifices and compromise after their children have disappointed them. For example, they must look after their grandchildren, take their children to therapies and so on since they refuse to listen to them. At the same time, *Dimo* used the Specific, Measurable, Agreed upon, Realistic, and Timeline (SMART) strategy to achieve his goal of outsmarting *Mmatsetlane*. Looking at the two, approaches, *Dimo* has capitalised on the weakness of *Mmatsetlane* which was the code (song) they were using to catch *Tselane*. This has forced *Dimo* to come up with ways to change his voice to be more like that of one of *Tselane's* mothers. *Dimo* succeeded in infiltrating the setup and eventually caught *Tselane*. *Dimo's* ability to manoeuvre around all the considerations put in place to embrace the child's wishes and protection brings into question the capacity of families to quickly detect *Dimo*-like tendencies of manoeuvring and obliterating sacred codes built for spaces inhabited by children. This posits that the current generation is being caught up by many things outside such as drug abuse, dating blessers, early pregnancy, alcohol abuse, and dropping out of school because of the weakness they have, and parents have to seek ways of overcoming this challenges as this will temper with their future, as a result, the country will be faced with a lot of children to support. Mensele and Khanyetsi studied *Leobu* through a contextual approach.¹³ They have found that Basotho folktales can still give people insight into the realities that many individuals and societies face in the modern world. As in the case of *Tselane le Dimo*, the youth especially the girls are faced with kidnapping, dating blessers, and gender-based violence due to ill-discipline.

The experts' research holds significant value in this study as it provides insights into the significance of folktales. They are different from the current study, though, in that they did not analyse the relevancy of the *Tselane le Dimo* folktale in the current generation.

Theory of Interpretation and Analysis

The article employs functionalism theory to analyse the *tshomo* of *Tselane le Dimo*. The basic elements of this theory order, stability, and productivity will guide my analysis. This theory was deemed appropriate for the study since it emphasises the roles that social structures including institutions, hierarchies, and norms play in society Diago.¹⁴ It first appeared in the early 20th century and is linked to writers who shaped American social theory in the 1950s and 60s, including Robert Merton, Talcott Parsons, Herbert Spencer, and Émile Durkheim.¹⁵ It asserts that each component of society functions to maintain the stability of the whole and that society is not just the sum of its parts.

Crossman featured a striking colour scheme that recognises the diversity of social interactions.¹⁶ Diversity is now essential and serves as the primary catalyst for the development of social structures. Each fulfils their role and helps to make a peaceful society a reality.¹⁷ This statement is supported by Harper who argues that, A society's ability to function depends on the work done by comparable "organ-type" institutions which Durkheim refers to as norms, beliefs, and morals of the society.¹⁸ Harper interprets society in terms of the roles played by the constituent parts, particularly by norms, traditions, practices, and institutions.¹⁹ According to Ostro, this is an analogy made popular by Herbert Spencer that depicts some facets of our society as "organs" that contribute to the overall "body" of natural causes.²⁰ Hence, according to functionalists, society should be viewed as a system of interconnected pieces. They contend that all social systems have certain needs or functional conditions, that must be satisfied.²¹ Durkheim recognised the value of social order and emphasized the significance of equilibrium, harmony, and

¹³ Mary Mensele and Mabohlokoa Khanyetsi, "Dynamics of Botho/Ubuntu in Basotho Folklore: The Relevance of Basotho Folktales in the 21st Century Exemplified by 'Leobu,'" *Southern African Journal for Folklore Studies* 32, no. 2 (2022): 12.

¹⁴ G.G. Diago, *Functionalist Theory* (SAGE Publications, Inc, 2019).

¹⁵ D Harper, "Structural-Functionalism: Grand Theory or Methodology," *Leicester: University of Leicester*, 2011.

¹⁶ A. Crossman, "An Overview of Qualitative Research Methods. Direct Observation, Interviews, Participation, Immersion, Focus Groups," *Thought Co*, 2020.

¹⁷ Joni Indra Wandu, Nora Afnita, and Hefni Hefni, "Study of" Functional Structure" Emilie Durkheim Reviewed From Educational Anthropology on Character and Behavior Society," *Ikhtisar* 1, no. 1 (2021): 35.

¹⁸ Harper, "Structural-Functionalism: Grand Theory or Methodology."

¹⁹ Wandu, Afnita, and Hefni, "Study of" Functional Structure" Emilie Durkheim Reviewed From Educational Anthropology on Character and Behavior Society."

²⁰ Jules Ostro, "Weber, Durkheim, and the Duality of Structure in Modern Society.," 2019.

²¹ John Holmwood, "Historical Developments and Theoretical Approaches in Sociology," *Functionalism and Its Critics. Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems* 11, no. 1 (2005): 1.

consensus Wandu and Hefni.²² He argues further that for community-oriented activities to emerge as a consensus, harmony, and equality, they must create cultural values and homogeneity that support the social community order. Furthermore, according to Durkheim, the younger generation requires educational support in order to get ready to enter a society with a set of values. Because young people are not prepared to enter the public sphere, preparation is required.

METHODOLOGY

A Content Analysis (CA) was used in this paper to analyse the functions performed by social structures in the selected folktale of *Tselane le Dimo*. A study process called content analysis is used to interpret messages found in texts, pictures, symbols, or audio files.²³ To distinguish between other methodologies used to analyse text ...Krippendorff defines CA as a research method for drawing reliable conclusions about the circumstances in which texts (or other significant content) are used whilst Berelson argues that CA is a method for quantitatively, methodically, and objectively describing the apparent substance of communications.²⁴

Its main focus is on the prevalence of ideas in texts rather than on their construction. In concurring with this Neuendorf argues that CA focuses on meaning and context.²⁵ It focuses more on the meaning that texts have overall and on semantic relationships rather than just the words themselves.²⁶ It uses some guidelines for inference and strict procedural rules to move from unstructured text to answers to their research questions.²⁷ The *tshomo* of *Tselane le Dimo* was taken from the book of *Litsomo buka ya Pele* written by Jacottet.²⁸ To accomplish its objective, the study examines three social systems in this folktale in connection to the functions they perform in society. The analysis of *Tselane le Dimo* through social structures is significant since it will help the researcher ascertain the functions performed by each social structure in bringing order, stability, and productivity within the community.

An Examination of *Tselane le Dimo's* Story

In this *tshomo*, *Tselane* and her mother were living amid the forest. After a long period of staying there, her mother suggests that they should leave that place and go to another place since this one was occupied by a lot of cannibals. *Tselane* refuses to leave, and her mother has to leave her there alone. However, they have agreed that she will visit her daily. Since the forest was treacherous, she warns *Tselane* not to open the door for anyone but herself. To secure her safety, they devise a song which will serve as a code that she will use for *Tselane* to know when it's her and open the door, otherwise, she will open it for dangerous enemies such as *Dimo*. The song goes like this:

*Tselane, nongoan; 'a ke; Tselane, nogoan'a ke,
Nka,nka bohobe u je, Tselane, nogoan'a ke,
(“Tselane my child; Tselane my child”)
(“Take,take bread, and eat; Tselane my child”)*

Tselane would respond in saying:

*Ke a utloa 'me; Ke utloa, 'me,
'Me o bua sa nonyana thaha
Obua sa tsoere e lutse lehlakeng. ²⁹
(“I hear you, mother, I hear you, mother”)
(“Mother talks like the tsoere perched in the reeds”)*

²² Wandu, Afnita, and Hefni, “Study of" Functional Structure" Emile Durkheim Reviewed From Educational Anthropology on Character and Behavior Society.”

²³ N. Gheyle and T. Jacobs, *Content Analysis: A Short Overview* (SAGE Publication, Inc., 2017).

²⁴ Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (Sage publications, 2018); Bernard Berelson, *Content Analysis in Communication Research* (New York: Free press, 1952).

²⁵ Kimberly A. Neuendorf, *The Content Analysis Guidebook* (Sage Publications Ltd, 2017).

²⁶ Gheyle and Jacobs, *Content Analysis: A Short Overview*.

²⁷ Marilyn Domas White and Emily E. Marsh, *Content Analysis: A Flexible Methodology, Library Trends*, vol. 55 (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

²⁸ Jacottet, *Litshomo; Buka Ea Pele*.

²⁹ Jacottet, *Litshomo; Buka Ea Pele*, 31.

On hearing the song, *Tselane* would open the door and her mother would enter, and they would sit together and eat in a safely locked house. At dusk, *Mmatsetlane* would leave and return on the next day. All this time, *Dimo* was sitting and watching every action. One day, he decided that it was time for him to make his move and capture *Tselane*. Just before *Tselane*'s mother arrived, *Dimo* tried deception by going to the door and singing the song

*Tselane, nongoan; 'a ke; Tselane, nogoan 'a ke,
Nka,nka bohobe u je, Tselane, nogoan 'a ke,
(‘Tselane my child; Tselane my child’)
(‘Take,take bread, and eat; Tselane my child’)*

Then *Tselane* responded by saying

*Tloha mona wena limo ka lentswe le makgerenhwa
(‘Go away Dimo with your hoarse voice’)*

Then *Dimo* went back disappointed. *Tselane* could not mistake *Dimo*'s voice for her mother's. However, *Dimo* did not throw in the towel. He kept on trying to trick several times but in vain. As he was about to give up, he pondered over a possible strategy that he thought might work for him in catching *Tselane*. He went to consult a traditional doctor, who advised him to put an iron rod on fire, and when it was red with heat, shove it down his throat to cleanse the hoarseness. After doing that, *Dimo* went back to *Tselane*'s house to deceive her into letting him in. This time his trick worked in his favour and managed to get *Tselane*. He put her in his bag and strutted away in victory. On his way home he kept singing.³⁰

*Khetsi ea limo, kholoma, Kholoma re utloe!
(‘Speak, limo's bag, speak so that we can hear!’)*

Tselane would respond

*Ke ea kholoma, ke kholome ke r'eng oee, limo!
Khom tseso li ka linaledi le joang ba tsane oee, limo!
(‘I speak, speak and say what, limo!’)
(‘The cattle at my home are as many as stars and tsane grass!’)*

The song and response were *Dimo*'s strategy of ascertaining that *Tselane* was still in the bag. Along the way, *Dimo* got tired and took a detour to a tavern to quench his thirst. He put the bag outside the house and joined a group of fellow drinkers. Whilst he was drinking, some children who were playing outside, saw a finger on the bag. Their curiosity led them to come closer to the bag and one realised that the finger looked like the one of *Tselane*. He called the elders, and they opened the bag and found that indeed it was *Tselane*. They took her out and put in the bag a swarm of bees and many other kinds of ants and closed the bag again. When *Dimo* was done drinking, he took his bag, threw it over his shoulders, and went home. On his arrival, he left the bag outside and got into the house. He closed every opening that could be found and ordered the child to fetch the bag. All the children and his spouse reported that the bag was stinging. He got angry and chased them away. He collected the bag himself and bolted the door so that he could enjoy his food alone and in peace. When he opened the bag, the bees flew out and stung him. He screamed with pain, but his family was not able to help him because he had bolted the door inside. He eventually managed to escape. He ran to the river and took a dive, to get rid of the bees. He drowned and, *ke tshomo ka matheto*. (‘Thus end of the story’). The next section will continue to analyse the narrative in terms of the functionalist perspective.

Functionalist Perspective

The functionalist perspective is more interested in how social order is possible, and how society remains relatively stable to yield productivity. In this *tshomo*, there are two opposing functional parties. One being that of *Tselane*'s side and the other one of *Dimo*'s side. The three components of functionalism are at play

³⁰ Jacottet, *Litshomo; Buka Ea Pele*, 32.

for both parties. The components are at play on the part of *Tselane* and her mother and on the part of *Dimo* and his family: 1) Order- *Tselane*'s mother came up with the code which was the song she was singing as she visited *Tselane*, whilst on the other hand *Dimo* send children and wife to collect the bag 2) Stability- *Tselane* was rescued by her relatives after her cousins noticed her finger in *Dimo*'s bag. The collection of bees, snakes, spiders, etc was put in *Dimo*'s bag. Productivity-After being rescued, *Tselane* was taken back to her mother and her mother was happy to see her child coming back alive. *Dimo* was stung by the bees and cried in pain.

Mmatselane's Functional Perspective

- a) *Mmatselane*'s goal is to protect *Tselane* from cannibals.
- b) *Mmatselane* and *Tselane* devise a code to signal her arrival.
- c) She executed the code several times and it worked.

Dimo's Functional Perspective

- a) *Dimo*'s goal was to capture *Tselane*.
- b) *Dimo* devised a plan to catch her.
- c) He executed his plan and failed.
- d) He came up with another plan.
- e) He executed the plan for the second time and succeeded in breaking the code.

After accomplishing his mission of capturing *Tselane*, he orders his children to bring the bag that he had left outside (order). *Dimo* does not want to listen to everyone. He then closes every hole in his house, collects the bag and locks the door tightly (stability) since he wanted to eat his food (*Tselane*) in peace. He then opened the bag. The swarms of bees, snakes, and spiders came out and stung and bit him. He cried in pain until he managed the escape through the keyhole. He ran into the river and took a dive to get rid of the bees, and he drowned. (Productivity).

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

From this folktale, it was discovered that all the functions of functionalism are addressed, order, stability, and productivity. Usually, order comes to maintain stability in the form of punishment which results in productivity. Instability is usually caused by misbehaviour and greediness. They are the consequences of not listening to advice given to you. For instance, in the *tshomo* of *Tselane le Dimo*, *Tselane* was warned about the cannibals in that area which is why they should leave the place. On the other hand, *Dimo* was advised by members of the family that the bag was stinging but he couldn't listen. Their stubbornness of not listening to others led them to serious consequences which included being kidnapped and being stung by the bees.

The analysis of *Tselane le Dimo* reflects the maintenance of order, *Tselane* was warned by her mother that they are living in the vicinity of the cannibals, and they should vacate that place, but her stubbornness and pride did not let her go. Her mother had to devise a song to serve as a code to maintain order within her family. On the other hand, being rescued from her death taught her a lesson that in life "you are not all alone, and you cannot survive in this life if you not listening to the elderly and other people around you." The act of not listening caused the relatives of *Tselane* to rescue her because losing her was going to cause pain and imbalance in the family. The lesson here is that not listening to the elderly or one's parents can lead to trouble.

On the other hand, the trickery of *Dimo* is as emblematic of an adversary that threatens the lives and livelihoods of the society. *Dimo* has done everything in his power to get *Tselane* which will cause instability in a family and society at large. This is to indicate that the cannibals will do everything in their power to ruin the future of this generation. *Tselane* is a very young lady with visions and dreams to accomplish. But the tricks and greediness of *Dimo* would not allow her to reach them. He did everything in his power to catch *Tselane*. His motives were loud and clear; hence, he did everything in his power to manipulate his voice. On the other hand, *Dimo* was also stubborn and could not listen to anyone. His behaviour of kidnapping people was not tolerated in the community which is why he was punished. The relatives of *Tselane* maintained order and stability required by this community by rescuing *Tselane* and

putting bees, snakes, and ants in the bag of *Dimo*. He created a trap for himself. He did not want to listen to his family members, and he chased them away so that he could enjoy his food alone, not knowing that he would suffer the consequences. He was stung by the bees, and he could not easily escape from the trap he created himself.

Dimo in today's life is associated with blessers who are using money, cars, and entertainment to attract the youth, especially females. This act causes an imbalance in society. As a result, society could not produce the kind of citizens it wants. Rescuing *Tselane* and punishing *Dimo* would lead to the kind of citizens that society wants to have. Society stands against evil and inappropriate behaviour such as that of the current *Dimos* whose plans are to demolish the future of the youth. On the other hand, *Dimo* can also be associated with outsiders who invade the country and feed the youth with drugs, and alcohol, and engage in human trafficking. This negative energy destroys the future of the society and the country at large.

DISCUSSIONS

Tselane le Dimo Folktale in the Education of the Youth

Children are taught via the storytelling of the folktales to act in a way that is expected of them by society. They have been mediums of communicating social ideas, values, morals, and philosophy.³¹ *Tselane* was obstinate and her obstinance attracted *Dimo* and caused him to come up with plans to catch and eat her. To curb this, her mother had to maintain order by devising the code that she would use to protect her against *Dimo* as seen in this paragraph.

Tselane refuses to leave, and her mother has to leave her there alone. To secure her safety, they devise a song which will serve as a code that she will use for Tselane to know when it's her and open the door, otherwise, she will open it for dangerous enemies such as Dimo. The song goes like this:

*Tselane ngwanake
Tselane ngwanake
Nka nka bohobe o je
Nka nka bohobe o je*

Tselane my child
Tselane my child
Take some food and eat
Take some food and eat

This call-and-response song was derived after her mother had made a compromise, and this seemed to be the only way to keep her safe and reach out to her on her arrival. Apart from that *Tselane* was instructed to keep the door closed and locked and never open for anyone except her mother.

This is relevant to the generation of today who demonstrate deviant behaviour such as drug abuse, alcohol, gangsterism, partying and dating blessers. This has caused a change in societal components, as a result, the society is forced to adjust to achieve stability by coming up with mechanisms to contest this. Likewise, the youth do not listen to or obey every instruction given to them by their parents and choose to go their own way. When faced with challenges and danger that's when they shout for help, whilst they turned to be blind by the time they were advised and rebuked.

Readers also realise that honesty and loyalty were maintained by both *Tselane* and her mother. Her mother kept her promise of coming daily to visit her and giving her food. This is seen through this code.

*Tselane, ngwanake; Tselane ngwanake
Tlo tlo nka bohobe o je, tlo tlo nka bohobe o je
('Tselane my child; Tselane my child')
('Come, take a bread, and eat; come, take a bread, and eat')*

³¹ Chandra Shekhar Sharma, "Bhutanese Folktales: Common Man's Media with Missions for Society," 2007.

Whenever she hears this code, she knows that her mother is around, and she will open the door. They will sit together and eat. This on its own shows a good relationship between the child and parents. This kind of relationship brings up interesting dimensions in terms of how children should interact with their families.

On the other hand, *Tselane* maintained honesty by not opening the door to strangers such as *Dimo* who has used his plans to catch her as seen in this phrase.

Tloha mona wena Dimo ka lentswe le makgerenhwa
("Go away Dimo with your hoarse voice")

This is an indication that at some point children are still able to identify between good and bad, and all they need is guidance from their parents. The bad practice is when they think of the rights they have and move away from what they are taught at home. In addition to providing amusement, folktales serve as a medium for spreading knowledge and information.

According to Pommaret, the subliminal message that any media conveys is consequently a reflection of the culture in which the media themselves are generated.³² The Media transmit values that are frequently culturally or religiously oriented.

This statement attests that folktales are media with a mission in our society. They play a significant role in shaping the society. This is justified by the fact that they imbibe ideas of equality, freedom, justice, and harmony. From this statement, it can be deduced that the freedom of movement of *Tselane* was restricted and taken away from her due to her stubbornness. The presence of *Dimo* could not allow her to move freely as she wanted, and she was forced to stay locked in a house as seen in this phrase.

Since the forest was treacherous, she warns Tselane not to open the door for anyone but herself. To secure her safety, they devise a song which will serve as a code that she will use for Tselane to know when it's her and open the door, otherwise, she will open it for dangerous enemies such as Dimo.

This was done to abide by the rules, standards, and laws they had set for themselves as these new orders would bring stability in the society. If this code is not followed, it will cause instability in their relationship. This will also bring discomfort to the family and pressure on her mother to find her. In turn, the whole society will be affected by the loss of the family, which causes instability within the community as they had expectations.

Folktales aim to instil certain cultural values in their audience. They are told to close the knowledge gap in the younger generation. As this statement indicates, the social principles conveyed in the folktale aim to amuse the youth and instil in them some behavioural changes that will make society happier and more affluent.

On hearing the song, Tselane would open the door and her mother would enter, and they would sit together and eat in a safely locked house.

This implies that, if the young generation could listen when they are being rebuked by their parents and change their ways of living, this would yield to a happier family which will in turn cause the whole society to be happy since their children will follow the good direction. Every time they meet, there will be joy as they sit together and eat. It is a precious thing when parents and children spend time together and live happily as a family. This is a sign of a healthy relationship that every parent is looking forward to having with their children.

Moral Lessons from *Tselane le Dimo* Folktale

The morals in the folktale point to the attitudes and effects of behaviour. They demonstrate that bad behaviour is punished, and good behaviour is positively rewarded.³³ We have seen from *Tselane le Dimo* folktale that *Dimo* was punished for his bad behaviour as seen in this paragraph.

³² Françoise Pommaret, "Dances in Bhutan: A Traditional Medium of Information," 2006.

³³ Phindane, "The Structural Analysis of Sesotho Folktales: Propp's Approach."

Their curiosity led them to come closer to the bag and one realised that the finger looked like the one of Tselane. He called the elders, and they opened the bag and found that indeed it was Tselane. They took her out and put in a swarm of bees and many other kinds of ants and closed the bag again. When he opened the bag, the bees flew out and stung him. He screamed with pain, but his family was not able to help him because he had bolted the door inside.

This is an indication of the society which knows each other well. The principle of *ubuntu* and harmony that this society aimed to achieve is portrayed. Everyone who seems to bring instability within the society is being punished like *Dimo* was. Agreeing with this, Paul says tales are told to demonstrate that whilst evil does not and cannot go unpunished, virtue must be rewarded.³⁴

When he opened the bag, the bees flew out and stung him. He screamed with pain, but his family was not able to help him because he had bolted the door inside.

Dimo got his punishment for stealing and not listening to his family members when they told him that something was going on in the bag. His obstinance led him to pain, which relates to the consequences that the blessers, gangster leaders, drug dealers, and tavern owners who sell alcohol to youth must face. There should be policies, laws and regulations implemented by the government to fight and punish the criminal offenders for their bad practices in society. Tales impart to the audience certain moral lessons on why it is wrong to be avaricious, slothful, evil, or to plot crimes against one's neighbours. These morals are emphasised by the communicator after narrating a story.

This accounts for why *Tselane* was discouraged from disobeying her parents and *Dimo* was punished for theft and unfaithfulness.

Above all, children are urged to demonstrate good attitudes such as respect, love, honesty and the like. In this folktale, *Tselane* was observed respecting her mother and the children of *Dimo* also respected their father and they were honest to him. The major aim here is to foster a healthy upbringing, appropriate child behaviour, and a limit on indulgence in societal ills. The lesson from this folktale is that respect and honesty as children are key as they contribute to good behaviour that is expected from a child by the family and society. Africans believe that the child belongs to the society hence the saying that "it takes the society to raise the child." Therefore, if such behaviours are demonstrated in the tale, they should be rewarded.

Social Structure in *Tselane le Dimo* Folktale

According to Sharma, societal structure is hinted at in folktales. In most cases, the poor and the rich are the characters in the folktale.³⁵ Apart from this social structure, there is survival as a part of the social structure. The folktale of *Tselane le Dimo* attests that eating other people happened to be one of the activities on which the survival of the giant was largely dependent as seen in the below excerpt.

He collected the bag himself and bolted the door so that he could enjoy his food alone and in peace.

Today, there are other groups of outsiders who have invaded South Africa and are trying hard to destroy the future of South African youth through selling drugs and alcohol and exposing them to prostitution. Due to the socio-economic status of their families and the high unemployment rate, young people have found themselves trapped in these societal vices. At the same time, the South African police and the Office of Justice cannot protect them because they are being bribed to protect the law offenders.

Achufusi further argues that morality lessons and social life lessons are imparted through moral stories.³⁶ Some of them propagate the idea that in African communities, being greedy, obstinate, or lazy is deplorable. Therefore, the stubbornness of *Tselane* led her into the hands of *Dimo* who was also faced with bees, snakes, and ants' bites due to his stubbornness.

³⁴ W. Paul, *Notes on Bossa Folktale* (Abuja: Council for Arts and Culture, 1992).

³⁵ Sharma, "Bhutanese Folktales: Common Man's Media with Missions for Society."

³⁶ G. I. Achufusi, "The Main Genres of African Traditional Literature," *Nigeria Magazine*. (National Council for Arts and Culture, 1986).

Discussion Summary

From the analysis of this folktale, it is noticed that order, stability, and productivity were observed; order (code/song) stability (a bag filled with bees/snakes and ants and punishment of *Dimo*), and productivity (rescue of *Tselane/Dimo* stung by bees). This demonstrated that the community works as a system and if one part is not working it leads to dysfunction of the system hence, it is proper for the stability to be always maintained by the society to bring productivity in the community, they live in. Therefore, this folktale has contributed much to shaping and educating the youth at large. The social values and virtues are largely covered in this folktale. Events taking place in this folktale teach values, self-control, and social customs, and stimulate mental attentiveness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the society, communities, and government to curb this act, there is a need for stakeholders to join hands together and come up with strategies to fight these cannibals whose aim is to destroy the future of the next generation in the country. It is therefore recommended that the society, government, and churches stand up like the relatives of *Tselane* to rescue the youth from this ‘giant’ that is demolishing the moral fibre of the country which has led to the abuse of law and order, and economic stability. It is also recommended that modern families read folktales to their children and pass down the knowledge, and teachings embedded in them and also relate them to the current situation as they analyse them to their children. Stakeholders (families, organizations or companies) need to stand together and start a melody whether from a reed, like the canary bird or home, from social clubs, schools, or other locales, like *Tselane*'s cousins to rescue the youth and generations to come from these societal cannibals.

CONCLUSION

The study has discovered that the folktale of *Tselane le Dimo* is still relevant to the current generation. The research also clarified the positive practices, values and morals that need to be observed by the society, government, and other stakeholders. It has demonstrated the importance of storytelling, obeying, respecting, and listening to parents to avoid being exposed to the hands of cannibals whose aim is to destroy the future of the next generation in the country. As a result, this may open their eye to the people who have hidden agendas concerning their future. The study, therefore, encourages the youth to be more vigilant about people who pretend to have good motives when they are not and further encourages the families to narrate the stories to their children to instil good values and morals.

The study concludes that modern families must go back to their roots by narrating tales to their children, to preserve and harness their folktales to avoid the danger the current generation is facing. It is concluded that the folktale of *Tselane le Dimo* is still relevant, and it should be narrated to warn, educate, and direct the youth of today and the generations to come.

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