



Time Ahead of its Telling: Flashforward as a Literary Strategy for Narrative Progression and Emotional Tension in Chokoe's *Lengwalo* (2015)

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Abstract

Flashforward is a narrative technique frequently employed by authors to accelerate plot progression and provide foresight into future events. This study examines the deliberate use of flashforward by Chokoe (2015) in his novel *Lengwalo*, focusing on how it contributes to plot advancement and offers readers insight into forthcoming developments. The research demonstrates that Chokoe strategically employs flashforward to shape the narrative structure, allowing readers to anticipate events that later unfold as foreseen. A qualitative research methodology was adopted, utilising a case study design. Data were collected through content analysis to explore events depicting flashforward in the novel. The findings reveal that flashforward is used to create a cohesive and structured plot, ensuring continuity and logical flow in the development of events. Furthermore, the technique enhances reader engagement by fostering anticipation and emotional investment in the storyline. Additionally, flashforwards serve to unveil deeper thematic elements and character motivations, enriching the narrative and providing a nuanced understanding of the novel's social and psychological dimensions. Based on these findings, the study recommends two key actions: (1) the inclusion of flashforward as a focal point in the teaching of narrative techniques in literature curricula, particularly in African literary studies; and (2) further scholarly exploration of flashforward in other African literary texts to uncover its broader relevance and application in postcolonial storytelling.

Keywords

flashforward, narrative technique, plot development, literary analysis, *Lengwalo*, character motivation, thematic exploration, Chokoe, qualitative research, case study

INTRODUCTION

The use of flashforward as a literary device has become increasingly prominent in contemporary narrative structures, serving as a vital tool for authors to manipulate time, foreshadow events, and enhance reader engagement. While its application varies in purpose and execution, flashforward typically offers glimpses into future events, thereby creating a sense of anticipation, deepening thematic resonance, and contributing to a cohesive narrative arc. In the context of African literature, where traditional storytelling often embraces nonlinear narrative forms, the incorporation of such techniques adds a layer of complexity and innovation. However, the extent to which African authors intentionally employ flashforward to achieve specific narrative outcomes remains an area that warrants scholarly exploration.

Within this framework, Chokoe's *Lengwalo* (2015) emerges as a compelling case study. The novel exemplifies the strategic use of flashforward to guide plot development, provide contextual background, and subtly shape the reader's expectations. Rather than presenting events in strict chronological order, Chokoe intersperses forward-looking passages that serve both as narrative signposts and interpretive cues, allowing the audience to anticipate pivotal moments before

they unfold. This deliberate disruption of temporal linearity not only underscores the author's mastery of literary craft but also enriches the storytelling by inviting readers into a dialogic engagement with the text, one in which foresight and retrospection coexist dynamically.

Despite the clear presence of flashforward in the novel *Lengwalo*, questions remain as to whether such usage is the result of conscious narrative planning or an instinctive storytelling impulse. Regardless of intent, its effect is undeniable: the technique heightens suspense, fosters emotional investment, and encourages sustained reader interest from the outset to the novel's conclusion. Chokoe's implementation of flashforward contributes significantly to the structural integrity of the plot, seamlessly integrating moments of future revelation into the fabric of present action and past reflection.

This study positions itself within the broader discourse on narrative techniques in African literature, with a particular focus on flashforward as both a literary and pedagogical device. By analysing specific instances within *Lengwalo* where flashforward is employed to signal future developments, this research aims to illuminate how such a technique not only propels the storyline forward but also enhances the depth and richness of the characters and themes. In doing so, the study seeks to contribute to the growing body of scholarship that recognises the sophistication of African narrative strategies and to advocate for the inclusion of advanced literary techniques like flashforward in the study and teaching of African novels.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the increasing recognition of non-linear narrative techniques in global literature, the intentional use and narrative significance of flashforward within African literary contexts remain underexplored. There is a lack of scholarly focus on how African authors, such as Chokoe in *Lengwalo* (2015), deploy flashforward not only to advance plot structure but also to convey critical background information and deepen thematic and character development. While flashforward is commonly discussed in broader literary studies, its specific function, impact, and pedagogical value in African fiction have not been adequately examined. This gap limits our understanding of how temporal manipulation can serve as a sophisticated narrative strategy in African storytelling traditions. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the deliberate use of flashforward in *Lengwalo*, addressing how it shapes narrative coherence, enhances reader engagement, and contributes to the broader discourse on postcolonial literary techniques.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Flashforward, as a literary device, occupies a significant place in the temporal architecture of narrative fiction. Scholars such as Genette (1980) categorise such manipulations of time under the broader umbrella of "anachrony," specifically referring to flashforward as "prolepsis." This narrative technique functions not only to disrupt chronological storytelling but also to establish narrative tension, guide reader expectations, and deepen thematic resonance. According to Genette, prolepsis enables authors to "narrate ahead of time," often serving an anticipatory role that reveals future outcomes, thus framing the present about its consequences (Genette, 1980).

In the context of African literature, where non-linear storytelling traditions are deeply embedded in oral and written forms, the use of flashforward aligns with indigenous narrative models while also introducing modernist innovations. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) argues that African literature frequently blends past, present, and future to emphasize continuity and historical consciousness. Within this paradigm, the use of flashforward reflects a narrative sophistication that challenges Western conceptions of linear temporality. This approach fosters reader engagement by inviting a reflexive interaction with the text, where anticipation and retrospection operate in tandem.

Recent scholarship further underscores the functional and aesthetic value of flashforward in contemporary African fiction. For example, Ogundele (2002) posits that temporal devices like flashforward are instrumental in facilitating character development and thematic exposition, particularly in narratives grappling with socio-political upheaval. Flashforward, in this sense, acts not merely as a structural mechanism but also as a symbolic gesture toward destiny, trauma, or inevitability, especially in postcolonial contexts where time is often contested and reframed.

Within this framework, Chokoe's *Lengwalo* (2015) exemplifies the deliberate deployment of flashforward to achieve multifaceted narrative goals. Chokoe uses anticipatory scenes to foreshadow emotional climaxes and moral dilemmas, thereby enhancing narrative coherence and reader investment. The technique not only provides insight into future events but also constructs a roadmap for thematic exploration, such as identity, memory, and social change. As such, Chokoe's method echoes the insights of scholars like Bal (1997), who contend that narrative time manipulation is pivotal to the construction of meaning in a text. Bal emphasizes that the reader's awareness of future events alters their interpretation of present actions, creating a dynamic interplay between knowledge and uncertainty.

In sum, flashforward functions as a critical literary tool for temporal orchestration and thematic enrichment in African fiction. It not only accelerates plot development but also foregrounds deeper psychological and cultural layers within a narrative. The analysis of *Lengwalo* contributes to this growing body of scholarship, illustrating how flashforward, when strategically used, can redefine narrative flow and augment reader experience.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored in narratology, the theoretical study of narrative structure and how stories are told. At the heart of this analysis lies the concept of temporal manipulation, particularly *prolepsis*, commonly referred to as flashforward,

which is central to Genette's structuralist theory of narrative discourse. As espoused by Genette (1980), *prolepsis* involves the narrative anticipation of events that will occur later in the story's timeline, thereby providing the reader with glimpses of what is to come before it chronologically unfolds. This technique functions to enhance narrative cohesion, suspense, and thematic clarity, enabling authors to bridge gaps between past, present, and future within a single narrative flow.

In applying Genette's theory, this study interprets flashforward in *Lengwalo* not as random literary ornamentation but as a deliberate structural device that governs the progression and interpretation of the plot. As espoused by Genette, the manipulation of narrative time allows authors to control the disclosure of information, thereby influencing reader perception and engagement. The strategic use of flashforward in Chokoe's novel exemplifies this function by embedding foreshadowed moments that guide reader expectations and enrich subsequent revelations.

Additionally, this framework is supplemented by postcolonial narrative theory, which examines how African authors adapt and innovate literary forms to reflect indigenous epistemologies and sociopolitical contexts. As espoused by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986), African storytelling traditions inherently resist Western linearity, often employing circular or fragmented temporal structures. In this light, Chokoe's use of flashforward aligns with a broader narrative tradition that values temporal fluidity as a means of capturing the complexities of lived African experience.

By synthesizing Genette's structural narratology with postcolonial perspectives, this study frames flashforward as both a literary strategy and a cultural narrative practice. It underscores how Chokoe's narrative choices reflect not only technical mastery but also a deeper engagement with African modes of meaning-making and reader interaction.

STUDY SITE AND SAMPLING

This study does not rely on a traditional research site or physical sampling methods commonly associated with empirical or field-based investigations. Instead, it is firmly situated within the domain of literary analysis and textual interpretation. The research is centered on the novel *Lengwalo* by Chokoe (2015), with a specific focus on the use of flashforward as a narrative device. As such, the concept of a "study site" is metaphorically represented by the text itself, which serves as the primary source and object of inquiry.

The selection of *Lengwalo* was deliberate and purposive, based on the novel's rich use of narrative techniques that warrant deeper scholarly attention. In particular, the study isolates flashforward instances, those narrative moments where the storyline temporarily shifts forward in time to reveal events that are yet to unfold within the main plot. These segments were systematically identified throughout the novel using close reading methods and subsequently analysed to determine their narrative significance and predictive function. The sampling approach employed in this study does not involve participants, interviews, surveys, or any data collection instruments typically associated with social sciences or natural sciences research. Instead, it involves a qualitative, interpretive selection of textual excerpts that exemplify the flashforward technique. Each identified passage was critically examined in terms of how it contributes to thematic development, character evolution, plot advancement, and the reader's anticipation of future events.

Furthermore, the analysis explores whether these flashforward moments are explicitly predictive and whether they align with the eventual outcomes presented later in the text. This entails a comparative examination of early foreshadowed elements and their eventual realisation, allowing for an assessment of narrative coherence and authorial intent. As a purely content-based study, there are no geographical boundaries, environmental variables, or external influences shaping the research. The entire analytical process takes place within the confines of the literary work and the theoretical frameworks applicable to narrative studies. The absence of traditional sampling methods is consistent with qualitative literary research, where meaning is derived from interpretive engagement with the text rather than empirical observation or data-driven analysis.

DATA COLLECTION

Given the literary and interpretive nature of this study, data collection was conducted through systematic textual analysis of *Lengwalo* by Chokoe (2015). The primary data consisted of selected excerpts from the novel that contain instances of flashforward, narrative techniques that transport the reader ahead in the storyline to events that have not yet occurred. These instances were identified through multiple close readings of the novel, with a particular focus on shifts in temporal structure, linguistic markers indicating future events, and changes in narrative perspective or tone that signal forward movement in time.

The process began with a comprehensive reading of the text to gain an overall understanding of the storyline, character arcs, and narrative flow. Subsequent readings were more targeted, aimed at isolating and cataloguing flashforward passages. Each identified flashforward instance was documented, along with its location in the text (e.g., chapter and page number), context within the surrounding narrative, and a summary of the predicted event. These data entries were organized into a thematic table to facilitate comparison and deeper analysis.

To ensure analytical rigor, each flashforward was evaluated using narrative theory concepts such as foreshadowing, anticipation, and temporal distortion. Secondary sources, including literary criticism and theoretical literature on narrative time and structure, were also consulted to contextualise and support the interpretive process.

This method of data collection enabled a focused and systematic engagement with the novel's content, allowing for the extraction of relevant textual evidence necessary to address the study's objectives. As this is a qualitative study rooted in literary criticism, no human subjects, interviews, or surveys were involved.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected for this study comprised selected flashforward passages from *Lengwalo*, which were subjected to qualitative content analysis grounded in narrative theory. The analysis was interpretive, with a focus on how flashforward as a literary device contributes to the thematic structure, character development, and overall narrative coherence of the novel. Each instance of flashforward was examined in terms of its placement within the plot, its linguistic and stylistic features, and its relationship to events that eventually unfold later in the text.

The primary analytical approach involved a close reading of the flashforward passages, followed by a comparative evaluation against the actual events that occur subsequently. This allowed the study to assess the degree of alignment between the predicted and realized events, revealing that most flashforward scenes in *Lengwalo* are not merely decorative or stylistic, but serve an anticipatory and foreshadowing function. These projections into the future often reflect the psychological states of the characters, hint at turning points in the narrative, or subtly prepare the reader for emotionally charged developments.

A particularly striking example occurs when the protagonist dreams of a deceased character, who was previously killed under suspicious circumstances, appearing and demanding a lottery ticket that had recently won a jackpot. This dream sequence functions as a flashforward by alluding to an unresolved conflict surrounding the ownership of the winning ticket and hinting at the turmoil and guilt that will unfold as the story progresses. The dream does not merely symbolise the protagonist's inner fears but foreshadows a key conflict that escalates later in the narrative, involving claims, disputes, and moral reckoning over the source of sudden wealth. This predictive vision intensifies narrative tension and alerts the reader to the ethical dilemmas and hidden truths yet to be revealed.

The analysis also explored the narrative rhythm created by the interplay of past, present, and future within the novel. Flashforward sequences frequently disrupt linear chronology, creating a layered narrative that requires active reader engagement. This temporal complexity contributes to the richness of the storytelling and invites deeper reflection on cause and effect within the plot.

Overall, the analysis confirms that flashforwards in *Lengwalo* are strategically employed to enrich the narrative and guide the reader's interpretive journey. They function as a structural and thematic tool that enhances the predictive dimension of the story, making them a critical component of the novel's literary architecture.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of flashforward events in *Lengwalo* is structured under three key thematic categories to ensure clarity and coherence. Each identified flashforward instance is examined concerning: (i) the presentation of the event, including a brief description and its location within the text (by page number); (ii) the significance or predictive strength of the event in foreshadowing future developments; and (iii) the extent to which the event guides or enables readers to anticipate the novel's eventual outcome.

By organising the discussion around these categories, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how flashforwards function narratively and thematically within the novel. The categorisation also facilitates a focused interpretation of each event's role in shaping the reader's engagement with the unfolding story. All relevant flashforward passages are discussed regarding these analytical dimensions.

The presentation of flashforward events with significance or predictive strength – Maleka's injury in the field of play

On page 4, the narrator, Chokoe (2015), introduced a hostile character by the name of Sergeant Sehlola to injure the protagonist in the field of playing football. The narrator as a character called Letshela Maleka, says:

“Ke rile ke sa le lebelong, ke feta kgauswi le monna yo mongwe yo motelele, yo motala, wa sekhomo e ke ke sa tšhwene, a nkgokoetša ka lenotlo la gagwe la gore swi! Ka re go betha fase ka be ka thinyega monwana wa mogorupa.”

(While I was running, I ran past a tall, extremely dark-skinned man with the protruding forehead like that of a baboon. the man tripped me with his ugly, dark, long leg, and I fell and broke my big toe/hallux).

How does the event guide readers to anticipate the novel's eventual outcome?

The event described is a typical example of a flashforward. The author doesn't introduce the character, Sergeant Sehlola, by chance. Instead, he presents him as a likely antagonist. Throughout the story, Sehlola constantly opposes and humiliates the main character, especially in their efforts to find the real killers of Seila Mapole.

From the moment Sehlola appears, his rude and hostile behavior signals to readers that he will be a major obstacle to the protagonist. His actions make it clear that he will likely work against the main character's goals, helping readers anticipate future conflict and the direction of the story.

The presentation of flashforward events with significance or predictive strength – false accusations

On page 15, the author presents a revealing conversation between the calm and polite Sergeant Montle and the main character, Letshela Maleka. The dialogue goes as follows:

<p>“Morena Maleka, o tseba mogatša Seila, ke šupa MmaMapole?”</p> <p>“Ee, ke a mo tseba.”</p> <p>“Ke yo mo bjang?”</p> <p>“Ga ke kwešiše Seresanta.”</p> <p>“Ga o kwešiše eng? Ke re na o mo tseba bjang?”</p> <p>“Ke mo tseba e le mogatša wa mogwera wa ka, go fela fao.”</p> <p>“Bjale o bone bokaone e le go bolaya mogwera go gore o šale o mo hlokomela, o mo tseba kudu?”</p> <p>“Ga ke kwešiše mong’aka”</p>	<p> (“Mr. Maleka, do you know Seila’s wife, MmaMapole?”</p> <p>“Yes, I know her.”</p> <p>“How well do you know her?”</p> <p>“I don’t understand, Sergeant.”</p> <p>“What don’t you understand? I asked how well you know her.”</p> <p>“I know her only as the wife of my friend, that’s all.”</p> <p>“So, you thought the best way to take care of your friend’s wife was to kill him first, since you know her so well?”</p> <p>“I don’t understand you, sir.”)</p>
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This exchange offers readers an early insight into the growing suspicion that drives the rest of the novel. It becomes clear that Sergeant Montle, together with his ally Sergeant Sehlola, is intent on framing Letshela Maleka for the murder of his close friend, Seila Mapole. Their chosen motive? That Maleka killed his friend to take his wife. This accusation is intensified by the fact that Seila’s wife is beautiful, a detail that seems to fuel the suspicions even more. This beauty is highlighted on page 15, where Maleka, thinking aloud, reflects:

<p>“Ke ka baka la eng go thwe ke nna ke bolailego Seila? Ke ka baka la eng le Refiloe ba mo gononwa? A e ka ba ba nagana gore re a ratana gomme re tlošitše Seila tšatšing gore re sale re le duletše? Ga se ka phošo ge ba nagana bjalo gobane o bopegile ngwana wa mosadi yola...”</p>	<p> (“Why do they say I’m the one who killed Seila? Why are they jealous of Refiloe and me? Could it be that they think we love each other and got rid of Seila to be together? I don’t blame them for thinking that way—she truly is a stunning woman...”)</p>
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How does the event guide readers to anticipate the novel’s eventual outcome?

The accusations against Maleka rely heavily on circumstantial and questionable evidence, but they create a consistent narrative of blame. This flashforward not only hints at the central conflict of the novel but also sets the stage for the difficult path Maleka must walk to prove his innocence. It keeps readers on edge, anticipating a tense and emotionally charged investigation.

The presentation of flashforward events with significance or predictive strength - the dream

On page 18, the author introduced yet another naked flashforward event that seems to be the main reason why Seila Mapole was killed, the Jackpot winning ticket. The revelation came about through the main character, Letshela Maleka’s dream. The author says:

<p>“Gateenyana ka re ka boroko feu!”</p> <p>“Borokong ke bone disabonwego. Ka ipona ke na le motho šo; sebopego ke sa mohu Seila, fela leina le mo a lego gona ke ga Mašilo. Seriti se se a nkgotlakgotla, se senne meno; mahlo a tuka mollo; ge se re se a bolela go tšwa kgabo fela. Ke mantšu a mabetšana fela ao ke a gopolago: “Thekethe ya ka e kae? Ke be ke e beile ka ngwakong.”</p>	<p>(Upruptly, I was taken down by a sleep"</p> <p>"In the dream, I saw visions. I saw myself with a strange person; the form was that of the late Seila, but the name he gave was Mašilo. The presence was terrifying, exposing terrifying teeth; eyes blazing like fire; when he spoke, flames came out. I only remember these few words: 'Where is my Jackpot ticket? I had placed it in the house.)</p>
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How does the event guide readers to anticipate the novel’s eventual outcome?

With this discovery, the author didn’t hide anything and told the readers that Seila was killed because of his winning jackpot ticket. The people who killed him wanted to blame someone else, and the easiest people to blame were his best friend and his widow. As the story goes on, it becomes clear that the two suspects killed Seila so they could take his jackpot winnings for themselves.

The presentation of flashforward events with significance or predictive strength - taking the detective role

The author, Chokoe, 2015 best qualified this novel to be a detective one. Although the protagonist and the main character is not a qualified detective, but he was determined to be one. Letshela Maleka was motivated by the zeal to clear up his name because deep inside him, he knew that he was framed but did not know who.

On page 17 last paragraph, Letshela Maleka says:

<p>“Mmolai yoo ga go yo a ka mo ntšhago ntle le nna! Ke nna fela ke swanetšego go mo ntšha! Ka se dire bjalo ke ile go ba mmolai, ka tswalelelwa, ka senywa leina, ka se sa ba morutiši Maleka...”</p>	<p>(no one can take out this killer except me! I am the only one who is supposed to take him out! If I don’t do it that way, I will be seen as the killer, I will be imprisoned, my name will be ruined, and I will no longer be a teacher, Maleka...)</p>
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Chokoe (2015) portrays this novel as a detective story. Although the main character, Letshela Maleka, is not a professional detective, he is determined to become one. He is motivated by a deep need to prove his innocence because he knows he was falsely accused, even though he doesn't know who set him up.

How does the event guide readers to anticipate the novel's eventual outcome?

Letshela Maleka's relentless determination to take charge of the investigation into his friend's murder plays a key role in shaping the reader's expectations about how the story will unfold. His persistence not only uncovers the truth by the end of the novel but also drives the development of a sequence of suspenseful events. These events, filled with tension and discovery, form the backbone of an engaging detective narrative. Through his actions, readers are drawn deeper into the mystery, gradually anticipating justice and resolution as the story progresses.

The presentation of flashforward events with significance or predictive strength - Refiloe Introduction

The author added another character on purpose, not by mistake. This was done to make the detective story more complex, move the story forward faster, and most importantly, to show readers that things are going to get more intense. Every character in the story has a purpose. On page 40, paragraph 3, the author, who is also the main character, says:

<p><i>“Ke rile ke sa re ke araba potšišo yeo, gwa feta mothomotho Morena, ngwana yo moswana wa nko ya lenono. O rile ge a ntebelela ka mahlo a mašwaana, a go lauma lerato, ka itshola ke nišhitše leo le rego: “Le nna ke a go rata.”</i></p>	<p>(Just as I was about to answer that question, a beautiful woman, a black beauty with a sharp nose, passed by. When he looked at me with her beautiful eyes, I felt love strike me. Without thinking, I said: 'I love you too.)</p>
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The author did not introduce this woman by mistake; this woman was deliberately assigned to observe Mr. Letshela Maleka's activities. Aware of her influence over him due to her physical attractiveness and his susceptibility to her requests, she frequently solicited large sums of money. These transactions were documented to gather evidence implicating Mr. Maleka in the alleged murder of his friend and the subsequent cashing of a winning jackpot ticket, suggested as the source of his wealth. The conversation between Letshela Maleka and Refiloe bears evidence:

<p><i>“O tla nthekele sefatanaga rato?”</i> <i>“Ke tla go rekela moratiwa, fela ka morago ga kgwedi ye.”</i> <i>“Ka lebaka la eng? A ke re o na le tšhelete?”</i> <i>Tšeo ga di tshwenye, lebaka le gona, fela nka se go botse lona gona bjale. Ga ke a hlwe ke go tšhepa kudu.”</i></p>	<p>(Will you buy me a car, my love?) “I will buy you one, my love, but after this month.” “Why? I thought you had money?” “That doesn't matter, the reason is there, but I can't tell you right now. I don't fully trust you yet.)</p>
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How does the event guide readers to anticipate the novel's eventual outcome?

The introduction of Refiloe made the reader curious and eager to read more to find out what she was really up to and whether her plan would succeed. The knife she had in her handbag confused not only the readers but also the main character, Letshela Maleka. He was surprised, how could such a beautiful woman carry a knife? This made her seem like she might be dangerous or a bad person. Readers could tell that more would be revealed about her later. We see Letshela's surprise on page 53, paragraph 3, when he finds the knife and says to himself:

<p><i>“Kgarebjana ye botsana ye, e iša kae thipa? E sego thipa fela, eupša yona ya mafadi a Gauteng – “Okapi.” Afa o a tseba gore o be a swere sebolai?”</i></p>	<p>(This beautiful little girl, where is she going with a knife? Not just any knife, but a deadly one from Gauteng – an Okapi. Does she even know she's carrying a killer weapon?)</p>
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The Use of Flashforward and Symbolic Naming

In literary fiction, flashforwards often carry symbolic or predictive significance, subtly hinting at future events through details like character names. Authors must be adept at choosing names that mirror a character's traits or moral disposition. For example, names such as *Lerato* (meaning “love,” mentioned on page 28) may suggest warmth or compassion, while *Montle* (meaning “beautiful,” on page 11) might symbolize elegance or charm. Conversely, names linked to negative connotations can foreshadow a character's sinister role within the narrative. This narrative device invites readers to anticipate that virtuous characters will continue to act morally, while morally flawed characters will remain so, a concept examined by Abrams and Harpham (2015) in their analysis of character archetypes and the symbolic use of names.

Constable Sehlola

An illustrative case is Constable Sehlola, whose name is imbued with dark connotations. In Northern Sotho, *Sehlola* refers to a person who ambushes others, physically, emotionally, or verbally. The name reflects his brutal and malicious behavior, particularly towards the protagonist, Letshela Maleka. Constable Sehlola consistently torments Letshela, beginning with a violent encounter during a game in which he nearly breaks Letshela's finger. His cruelty continues as he repeatedly arrests Letshela in a rough and humiliating manner.

On page 10, the narrator describes Sehlola's aggression:

<p><i>“A ntshwara ka kgokgo ye a e bitšago seatla, ka kwa e ke menwana ya ka e robegile ka moka. A ahlamiša molomo wo moso wo o ka rego ke phago; sa rora Sebata sa mariri, ka ba ka phula sa leseana le swere ke hlogwana”.</i></p>	<p>(He grabbed me forcefully with what he arrogantly called “a hand,” and I felt all my fingers being bent out of shape. He opened his dark mouth, resembling the jaws of a wild animal, and growled like a vicious beast. I was terrified, like a helpless child cradling their head in fear)</p>
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This vivid imagery underscores Sehlola’s violent nature and foreshadows his ongoing antagonism throughout the novel.

Lerato

As previously indicated, **Lerato**, a name that translates to *Love*, symbolises a person filled with compassion and incapable of intentionally harming others. In the novel, *Lerato* is portrayed as a young woman coerced into a romantic relationship by Constable Sehlola, despite her genuine love for the protagonist, Letshela Maleka.

On page 29, Lerato confides in Letshela, expressing her emotional turmoil and fear:

<p><i>Letshela moratiwa, motho yo ga ke mo rate, fela ke tšhaba go mmošša. Ke senatla sa motho, ebille o tseba molao kudu – a ka mpolaya.</i></p>	<p>(Letshela, my beloved, this is someone I do not love, but I am afraid to tell him. He is a powerful man, and he knows the law very well – he could kill me.)</p>
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Throughout the novel, Lerato is portrayed as a gentle and empathetic character—incapable of causing harm or disappointing those around her. Her strength and loyalty are particularly evident in a crucial moment when Constable Sehlola intrudes into her room and discovers Letshela. In a brave and selfless act, Lerato protects Letshela in the following manner:

<p><i>“A tsoga Lerato a goga lepai la ka godimo, a fihla a ema pele ga ka. Ka emelela, a nkhetšha ka lona, ra tšwa e ke o tšwa a nnoši. Ge re fihla ntle, ra laelana, ka metšwa ke leswiswi.”</i></p>	<p>(Lerato woke up, pulled my blanket up, and came to stand in front of me. I stood up, and she covered me with it, and we left with her leading the way alone. When we got outside, we said our goodbyes, and I was swallowed by darkness.)</p>
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Surgent Montle

In the Sotho language, the word *Montle* refers to something beautiful, kind, and worthy of appreciation. In the novel, **Sergeant Montle** is portrayed as a soft-spoken and gentle character who consistently addresses the protagonist with kindness and calmness, despite being the primary antagonist. He appears to be someone Letshela can trust, a facade he cleverly maintains in order to manipulate and extract information. Montle ultimately uses this trust to frame Letshela as the prime suspect in the death of his best friend, Seila Mapole.

Page 39 provides clear evidence of this deceptive dynamic:

<p><i>“(Original Sesotho: “Ge ke re mahlo iša, ka tšhoga go lemoga gore ke swerwe ke Seresanta Motle. A ema sebakanyana a ntebeletše, ka lentšhu le boleta a bolelela fасыnyana.”</i></p>	<p><i>(When I opened my eyes, I was startled to realize that I had been captured by Sergeant Montle. He stood there for a moment, looking at me, and then spoke softly in a low voice.)</i></p>
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This scene captures Montle’s dual nature, his outward gentleness masking a strategic and manipulative role in the unfolding of events.

FLASHFORWARD AND REAL LIFE

The novel conveys an important lesson, especially for young or novice readers: what a person says repeatedly often reflects what they are truly capable of. If someone constantly threatens, “I will kill you,” it may be a sign that they are capable of doing so, and if not taken seriously, such threats could eventually become a reality. This message is especially relevant in today’s world, where domestic violence is sadly widespread. In such situations, if a woman is being abused, it is important that she leaves the relationship to protect her life and well-being. Sometimes even the conscience or the inner person can take an initiative to warn you to pull out of the abusive relationship. On page

Life, in many ways, mirrors the structure of a novel. Just as authors use flashforwards to hint at future events, we often experience similar warnings in real life. Sometimes, God allows us to see signs or hear words that are meant to alert us to potential danger. Therefore, we must listen carefully and think critically about what people say. Words can serve as warnings, just like flashforwards in a novel, and if we ignore them, we risk missing vital cues that could save our lives.

CONCLUSION

In his 2015 detective novel, Chokoe demonstrates a thoughtful and intentional use of the literary technique known as *flashforward*. This narrative device allows the author to briefly transport the reader into future events before returning to the present storyline. Chokoe employs this technique with skill, using it to offer the reader a glimpse of what is yet to come. These flashforwards not only build anticipation but also serve as an effective tool to shape the structure of the novel. They help guide the reader's expectations and set the tone for events that are later explored in more detail. This

kind of foresight contributes significantly to the overall development of the plot, maintaining suspense and driving the story forward in a compelling way.

The use of flashforward in this novel reflects deliberate artistic planning. Rather than presenting events in a strictly linear sequence, Chokoe carefully plants future events to keep readers engaged and curious. Each flashforward acts as a puzzle piece, gradually revealing the bigger picture of the mystery. This enhances the reading experience by inviting readers to think critically and connect earlier clues with later revelations.

This study applauds the author for his success in crafting a detective novel that is not only entertaining but also filled with gripping and intense moments. Chokoe's storytelling is both creative and strategic, capturing the true spirit of detective fiction. His ability to keep the reader on edge while weaving complex character interactions and suspenseful scenes makes the novel stand out in the genre. The events unfold in a way that consistently builds tension, making it difficult to put the book down.

One particularly breathtaking moment in the novel occurs on page 31. In this scene, the main character, Letshela Maleka, finds himself in a dangerous and nerve-wracking situation. He is asleep at his girlfriend's house when he is suddenly disturbed by the unexpected arrival of the man he fears most, Sergeant Sehlola. Sehlola storms into the house unannounced. Luckily for Maleka, Sehlola is heavily intoxicated, which gives him just enough time to quickly hide under the bed and avoid confrontation. The sense of urgency and fear in this scene is intensified by Maleka's narration:

“A bula ngwana wa batho, la tsena Lekgema. Ka nyaka go Neela moya ge ke lebeledišiša ke lemoga gore Leslie yoo ke mang. Ka hwetša e le yona tšhukudu yela ya go ntlhakatlhakanya ka beneng ya maphodisa. Ka tšhoga ka ba ka kwa le ge sethito se elela le mongetsana.”

(The poor girl opened the door, and the Ogre entered. I tried to catch my breath and look closely to see who this Leslie was. I realised it was that very same troublemaker who had given me problems at the police station. I got scared and could even feel the sweat run down my spine.)

This vivid description captures the character's anxiety and the high stakes of the situation. The tension in this moment is a clear example of Chokoe's talent for storytelling and his ability to keep the reader fully immersed in the narrative.

Overall, Chokoe's work stands as a powerful example of modern detective fiction. Through his effective use of flashforward and his ability to create suspenseful, emotionally charged scenes, he successfully delivers a novel that is both thought-provoking and thrilling.

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