The Cherry Orchard transposed to contemporary South Africa: space and identity in cultural contexts

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Abstract

The transposition of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* (originally published in Russian in 1904) to contemporary South Africa in Suzman's *The Free State* (2000) is based on the corresponding social changes within the two contexts. These social changes cause a binary opposition of past and present in the two texts. Within this context memory functions as a space in which the characters recall the past to the present and engenders a dialogue between past and present. Memory is illustrated in the two plays by associations with place as an important aspect of identity formation. Memory and place are fused in the plays by means of Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope which is best observed in the plays in memories of specific places such as the respective orchards, houses and rooms such as the nursery and the ballroom in *The Cherry Orchard* and the garden in *The Free State*. Furthermore, the influence of the past is also evident in the present when ideas of social status, class, race (in the case of *The Free State*) and behaviour are contrasted and when various characters express their perceptions of personal relationships and ideas about marriage. The influence of the past is also evident when the characters voice their different perceptions and expectations of the past and future. In *The Cherry Orchard* these cultural differences are evident in the concept of heteroglossia. However, in *The Free State*, these dialogues are directed by a specific politically liberal view which diminishes the heteroglossia in the text. The juxtaposing of past and present is also illustrated in *The Cherry Orchard* by various subversive strategies such as comedy of the absurd in order to portray the behaviour of the characters as incongruous. Another subversive strategy is the contrasting of characters and ideas in order to expose pretensions and affectations in speech and actions to parody both the old establishment and the ambitions of former peasants. These conventions are best illustrated by the concept of the carnivalesque that also features as one of Bakhtin's terms to capture incongruous ideas and situations in literature. In *The Free State*, comedy is unfortunately much diminished and in contrast to Chekhov's ambiguity, only directed against politically conservative characters. The prevalence of these three Bakhtinian concepts in the texts shows how identity formation is to a large extent influenced and defined by occupied space. When social change affects the distribution of land, a character's concept of identity is destabilised. Although Suzman uses this similarity in the two contexts in order to transpose Chekhov's text to contemporary South Africa, she organises the various stances in the text to advocate a specific politically liberal view. Thus, Suzman's transposition leads to an interesting comparison between the Russian and South African contexts as well as between the two texts. However, her text is limited by her political interpretation of Chekhov's text.

Keywords: Bakhtin, M.M.; Chekhov, A.P.; Suzman, J.; *The Cherry Orchard*; *The Free State*; carnivalesque; chronotope; comedy; drama transposition; heteroglossia; identity; intertextuality; postcolonial drama; social change; memory; space/place.

Opsomming

Die transposisie van Tsjechof se toneelstuk, *The Cherry Orchard* (vertaal as *Die Kersieboord*, oorspronklik in Russies gepubliseer in 1904) na kontemporêre Suid-Afrika in Suzman se toneelstuk genaamd *The Free State* (Die Vrystaat, 2000) is gebaseer op die ooreenstemmende sosiale verandering binne die twee kontekste. Hierdie sosiale veranderinge veroorsaak 'n binêre teenstelling van die verlede en hede in die twee tekste. Geheue funksioneer dan as 'n ruimte waarbinne die karakters die verlede in die hede herroep en vorm 'n dialoog tussen die verlede en hede. In die twee toneelstukke word geheue geïllustreer deur assosiasies met plek as 'n belangrike aspek van identiteitsvorming. Geheue en plek word in die toneelstukke versmelt deur Bakhtin se konsep van die chronotoop wat vergestalt word in herinneringe aan bepaalde plekke soos die onderskeie kersieboorde, huise en vertrekke soos die kinderkamer en die balsaal in *The Cherry Orchard*, of die tuin in *The Free State*. Verder blyk die invloed van die verlede op die hede duidelik uit die kontras tussen verskillende opvattings oor sosiale status, klas, ras (in die geval van *The Free State*), gedrag en die karakters se persepsies oor persoonlike verhoudings en die huwelik. Die invloed van die verlede op die hede blyk ook duidelik uit die verskillende persepsies en verwagtinge wat die karakters teenoor die verlede en die toekoms uitspreek. In *The Cherry Orchard* kom hierdie kulturele verskille duidelik deur die aanwesigheid van heteroglossie na vore. Tog word hierdie dialoë in *The Free State* deur 'n spesifieke polities liberale standpunt inspireer wat sodoende die heteroglossie in die teks verminder. In *The Cherry Orchard* word die jukstaposisionering van verlede en hede ook geïllustreer deur verskeie ondermynende strategieë, soos byvoorbeeld absurde komedie, wat die gedrag van die karakters as onvanpas uitbeeld. Nog 'n ondermynende strategie is die kontrastering van karakters se opvattings wat die pretensies en gekunsteldheid in hul spraak en handeling blootlê en sodoende die vorige bestel, asook die aspirasies van die voormalige landvolk, parodieer. Hierdie gedrag word die beste geïllustreer deur die konsep van karnaval, wat een van Bakhtin se kenmerkende begrippe is om onvanpastheid in letterkunde uit te beeld. In *The Free State*, is die komedie ongelukkig heelwat verminder en, in teenstelling met Tsjechof se dubbelsinnigheid, word dit slegs gebruik teen polities konserwatiewe karakters. Dus wys die voorkoms van hierdie drie Bakhtiniaanse konsepte in die tekste hoe identiteitsvorming tot 'n groot mate deur bewoonde ruimte beïnvloed word. Wanneer sosiale verandering die verdeling van grond beïnvloed, raak 'n karakter se begrip van sy identiteit onstabiel. Hoewel Suzman die ooreenkoms tussen die twee kontekste gebruik om Tsjechof se teks na kontemporêre Suid-Afrika te transponeer, het sy die verskillende standpunte in die teks gebruik om 'n bepaalde polities liberale mening te bepleit. Dus lei Suzman se transposisie tot 'n interessante vergelyking tussen die

Russiese en Suid-Afrikaanse kontekste sowel as tussen die twee tekste. Tog word haar teks ingeperk deurdat dit 'n politieke interpretasie van Tsjechof se teks is.

Sleutelwoorde: Bakhtin, M.M.; Suzman, J.; Tsjechof, A.P.; *The Cherry Orchard*; *The Free State*; chronotoop; dramatransposisie; geheue; heteroglossie; identiteit; intertekstualiteit; karnaval; komedie; postkoloniale drama; ruimte/plek; sosiale verandering;

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Contextualisation

This study aims to compare two disparate, yet in certain respects, two similar texts or plays.[1] *The Cherry Orchard*,[2] a Russian play written by Anton Chekhov in 1904, anticipates the imminent changes which will occur in Russia with the uprising of the proletariat in 1917, an event that would forever dispense with the old way of life and the traditional distinctions made between the serfs and nobility. In *The Free State* (2000) Janet Suzman creates a "response" play by creating the same structural composition of *The Cherry Orchard* as well as the same themes of change and class, but transposes the play to South Africa. In this play, a new dispensation has already begun and the yoke of apartheid, with its correlative racism, has been discarded.

Although both plays feature change as a major theme, it is argued that the individual characters, their interactions and respective ideological backgrounds cannot be equated without a considerable loss of meaning in both texts. As a re-write of *The Cherry Orchard*, but situated within the South African context, *The Free State* also juxtaposes the past and the present through the evocation of memories, reminders of the past in the form of older and younger characters, dialogue, and by introducing evocative symbols of the former dispensation such as the cherry orchard. However, in comparison the somewhat tarnished grandeur of the Russian nobility is lost in the African veld, while the fall of the Russian aristocracy and the abolition of the system of apartheid in South Africa also fail to evoke similar responses. Subsequently, the two texts are analysed and compared to determine their claims to significance and meaning within their respective domains.

1.2. Social conditions in Russia and South Africa

Chekhov's Russia represented a time and place of great social upheaval and change due to several revolutionary forces at work. Even though, as Fisher (1985:3-4) points out, industrialisation initially developed at a much slower pace in Russia than in Europe, the process of industrialisation quickened after the Crimean War (1853-1856). Together with this major development, another

[1] As this study will focus on a textual analysis of these plays, the word 'text' will be used interchangeably with 'play'.

[2] The play was read in translation. Suzman used a literal translation of *The Cherry Orchard* by Tania Alexander in her adaptation. However, no such translation could be found in print, and I therefore used a version of the play by Pam Gems (1996) from the literal translation by Tania Alexander. I also consulted English translations by Laurence Senelick (2006), Elsaveta Fen (1954), Julius West (1916) and an Afrikaans translation by Karel Schoeman (1975) (see References).

significant change occurred in Russia during the latter half of the nineteenth century, namely the abolition of serfdom in 1861 – one year after Chekhov's birth. This occurrence marked a "revolutionary break with the past" (Zakharova, 2006:593).

The quickened pace of industrialisation in combination with the freeing of the serfs resulted in far-reaching social changes in the Russian context. According to Fisher (1985:4), the older and established members of the nobility, defined by lineage (class), education and landownership, were losing influence and were ill-equipped to compete with people from all classes. Although poverty persisted, 85% of former serfs were in possession of the land they worked by 1881 (Chapman, 2001:93).

These developments created tension among the different social spheres as the educated and wealthy Russians were becoming aware of the plight of the less fortunate and became more critical of situations that they realised were "miserable, unjust, and unworthy of a proud nation" (Fisher, 1985:4). Accordingly, the bureaucracy of Chekhov's time were split into three separate groups: those who wanted to suppress development in order to preserve tradition; those who wanted to industrialise and at the same time retain strong state control; and the 'modernisers' who wanted economic development along with reduced state control (Fisher, 1985:10). Yet, even more drastic and far-reaching changes were still to come in Russia. In 1917, Tsar Nicholas II abdicated, an event that marked the end of the Romanov Dynasty and Imperial Russia and also initiated a social and national revolution (Lohr, 2006:655). Chekhov's time therefore still had great social and political changes in store.

On the literary scene, Chekhov represented a more objective voice than his contemporaries. Most Russian authors of his time – like Tolstoy, Turgenev, Goncharov and Dostoevsky – committed themselves to a specific moral conviction and presented these convictions as a thesis in their work. Chekhov, on the other hand, chose to remain impartial and objective (Emeljanow, 1981:1-2). In a letter Chekhov wrote to Alexei Pleshcheyev in 1888, he states:

> I am neither liberal, nor conservative, nor gradualist, nor monk, nor indifferentist. [...] I look upon tags and labels as prejudices. (Quoted in Karlinsky, 1973:109.)

Because Chekhov avoided taking a specific political stance in his work, his work was often criticised as being morally indifferent, aimless and pessimistic by Russian critics of his time (Terras, 1985:167-168). Maxim Gorky was the first of Chekhov's contemporaries to acknowledge his ambivalence and subtlety (Terras, 1985:168-169). However, it was only well after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 that Chekhov's work was generally appreciated for its innovatively subtle and humanist themes (Terras, 1985:180).

Correlating with Russia's history of social reform, South Africa has also undergone far-reaching social change in its recent history. South Africa was left isolated as the last major country whose political policy was based on white supremacy and racism in the latter half of the twentieth

century (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007:307). The government of South Africa, led by the National Party, was based on the system of apartheid from approximately 1953 to 1991 (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007:306). Several laws supported apartheid, including "the restriction of all power to whites, racial classification and racial sex laws, group areas for each racial community, segregated schools and universities, the elimination of integrated public facilities and sport, protection for whites in the labour market, a system of influx control that stemmed the movement of blacks to the cities, and designated 'homelands' for blacks as the basis for preventing them from demanding rights in the common area" (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007:314).

Thus, although the apartheid government aimed to keep black and white South Africans apart, in the last decade of the twentieth century the National Party eventually succumbed to increasing national and international pressure. Some of the apartheid laws were abolished, and several anti-apartheid leaders, of whom the most prominent was Nelson Mandela, were released from prison. After the complete abolition of the apartheid laws in 1991, the country's first democratic election ensued in 1994. In this election, the African National Congress was voted the ruling party with Nelson Mandela as the first black president of the Republic of South Africa (Giliomee & Mbenga, 2007:306).

The political struggle for freedom from apartheid was associated with a tradition of resistance literature. The political climate influenced the artists in South Africa, and specifically the dramatists and theatre makers. By the 1980s, a significant number of South African plays were directed against the apartheid regime. However, as the country became more democratic, playwrights emerged who focused more on creating a common identity for all South Africans, and who created work to represent the "voices of reconciliation and reason" (Fourie, 2006:7). South Africa is a country with a diverse topography, climate, natural resources and people who are further divided with regard to their origins, languages, cultures and aspirations. This diversity and attempts at reconciliation after the forced segregation under apartheid have influenced much of South African literature (Hauptfleisch & Steadman, 1984:3).

1.3. *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Free State*

The transitional phases in the settings of *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Free State* are quite evident in the two plays. *The Cherry Orchard* is a play about a Russian noblewoman, Lyubov Ranyevskaya, and her brother, Leonid Gayev, who are in the process of losing their estate. Due to the abolition of serfdom, the Gayev family has to compete economically with the lower classes. Their poor financial management and ineptitude at farming have caused the bankruptcy of their estate. Their peasant-born businessman friend, Lopakhin, offers to help the family retain their land by devising a plan which would entail the cutting down of the family's beloved cherry orchard to

make space for a more economically practical housing development. The family rejects the plan, as they cannot bear to see their orchard cut down, and the estate goes up for sale. Although the estate belonged to Lyubov, she had not lived on it for years. She had left the estate after her husband died from alcohol abuse and her infant son drowned, leaving her adopted daughter, Varya, in charge of the housekeeping and staff. The play thus opens with Lyubov returning to the home of her childhood and youth after an absence of five years.

The plot of *The Free State* is, in essence, the same as that of *The Cherry Orchard*. The full title of the play is *The Free State: A South African response to Chekhov's The Cherry Orchard* and as a response text, it evokes a dialogue between Chekhov's text and context and the postcolonial context from which Suzman writes. Suzman not only responds to Chekhov's text, but also to the system of apartheid. According to Gilbert and Tompkins (1996:2), postcolonial literature engages with and contests colonial discourses, power structures and social hierarchies. Often postcolonial texts use intertextuality as a canonical counter-discourse. In these texts the author subverts or decentralises the power hierarchy within the text (Gilbert & Tompkins, 1996:12). In Suzman's version of Chekhov's play, the setting has been changed from early twentieth century Russia to contemporary South Africa. The white siblings, Lulu Rademeyer and Leo Guyver, lose their farm in the Free State Province, as they are not prepared to cut down their cherry orchard and lease the land out. A black businessman, Leko Lebaka, then buys the land at auction – after failed attempts to persuade the family to divide their land into plots to be leased out. Lulu and Leo can no longer enjoy the benefits of apartheid and, like Lyubov and Gayev in *The Cherry Orchard*, need to compete for employment and business opportunities on the same footing as those the government once regarded as inferior. Therefore, as Suzman writes against the apartheid regime, her text is postcolonial. But, since she does not subvert or decentralise the power hierarchy in Chekhov's text, but rather transposes it, her text is not counter-discursive, although it is intertextual.

The nostalgia for a life under threat, which is experienced by the characters in *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Free State,* is symptomatic of the transitional phase that the characters in both contexts find themselves in. The transition that arises from the different social changes causes the characters to experience anxiety when faced with the unfamiliar, as well as a desire to return to the familiar past (Viljoen & Van der Merwe, 2007:2). This trend is quite evident in the plays as the old order has passed and a new order is not yet accepted by some of the characters. Consequently, the various characters prefer to cling to their memories of the past instead of accepting the changed present. However, as Wall and Thomson (1993:62) claim, "[m]emory becomes a complex space where new communities and relationships can be forged through [...] inscription". When the characters pass through this space, it could either indicate acceptance of the new or retention of the old. The younger generation in these plays opts for the former and the older members remain static like Firs/Putswa, the old footman or butler.

In *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Free State* the nostalgia that prevents the characters from cutting down their respective orchards, creates a space in memory that imbues the orchard and the house on the estate with past values. Lyubov Ranyevskaya/Lulu Rademeyer refuses to accept the reality that the orchard is barren, the estate is bankrupt, and that she is forced to either give up the estate or cut down the orchard. This shows the difficulty experienced by the former Russian nobility and white South Africans to accept the substantial social changes that happened in their time.

The most important aspect of this transitional state lies in the anxiety caused by the destabilisation of the characters' concept of identity, which was formerly defined by landownership. Spatial orientation forms an important aspect of any individual's identity, which could be defined by geographical location, social and cultural expression. According to Viljoen, Lewis and Van der Merwe (2004:12) the spaces one occupies help to mould and determine the "self". Therefore, a loss of land usually leads to a loss of identity (Viljoen, Lewis & Van der Merwe, 2004:10). With regard to *The Cherry Orchard*, the nobility who were settled on their farmlands and forested land had to adapt to new social conditions after the abolishment of serfdom in 1861 (Fisher, 1985:4), a process that entailed the recognition of a new dispensation and the loss of land as a result of poor financial management. Consequently, Chekhov's plays and stories often dramatise these issues of landownership, social and individual interrelatedness of man and nature and the reconceptualisation of identity (Clyman, 1985:19).

In his four major plays, Chekhov recurrently uses a central symbol to convey a sense of romantic longing. In *Uncle Vanya*,[3] the character Astrov tries to protect the Russian forests from eradication, fighting a battle too ambitious for one man. These forests are a symbol for decorum, natural resources, animal habitat and landscape – all of which are rapidly declining. Astrov's attempts to rescue the forests are insignificant and worthy in gesture only. *Three Sisters*[4] shows the three female siblings of the Prozorov family trying to escape their declining surroundings by planning to go to Moscow. They have fond childhood memories of Moscow and the place has thus become idealised in their memories. However, the sisters never succeed in returning to Moscow, and the city remains as an increasingly vague beacon of hope. These two plays thus show a specific place as the symbol of something which is slipping away from the respective characters and becoming increasingly unattainable. In *The Cherry Orchard*, Chekhov refers to the central symbol of nostalgia and romantic longing in the play already in the title. Thus, in all three instances in his final plays, the central symbol shows the longing for a rapidly disintegrating time in the past in which decorum was regarded as a priority. According to Ganz (1980:52), the orchard represents –

[3] *Uncle Vanya* was first published in Russian in 1897. For the purposes of this study I consulted a translation by Laurence Senelick (2006) (see References).
[4] *Three Sisters* was first published in Russian in 1901. For the purposes of this study I consulted a translation by Laurence Senelick (2006) (see References).

among other things – youthful innocence, beauty and dignity. As can be seen from Lyubov's attachment to the orchard, she longs for her youthful innocence, beauty and dignity in a nostalgic manner. Hahn (1977:20) also states that the return to the orchard is in essence only an attempt to return "to a way of life which is idyllic and pure, but which there is no hope of sustaining". The way of life represented by the orchard cannot be upheld any longer and Lyubov, despite her nostalgic longing, chose to live in Paris for the past five years. Yet, Lyubov says to Trofimov in Act Three when the sale of the orchard is pending: "I was born here. [...] I can't imagine my life without the cherry orchard. If it's to be sold, then I go with it!" (1996:58). Thus, she still wishes to own the orchard as it represents her childhood and youth to her. These issues will receive more attention in the analyses of the specific plays.

Due to the themes of loss and trauma critics tend to label Chekhov's plays as depressing. Yet, Chekhov's work features much comedy[5]. Abrams (2005:339) defines humour as "any element in a work of literature [...] which is designed to amuse or to excite mirth in the reader or audience". Colebrook (2004:137) states that humour results from an incongruity in the concept of the self. In other words, comedy arises when a character becomes in some way disconnected from his or her sense of self and acts in a disrupted manner. The Theatre of the Absurd provides ample examples of humour resulting from incongruities. Beckett's characters, for example, are often disconnected from their memory, time and space, resulting in humorous situations. In Chekhov's work, comedy as a result of incongruity is also prevalent. According to Pitcher (1985:100-101), Chekhov uses four types of comedy in his works which he developed in his short stories of the 1880s. These four types of comedy include: comedy of situation or characterisation, comedy of subversion, comedy of the absurd and comedy of surprise (Pitcher, 1985:90-94). The first three types of comedy are prevalent in *The Cherry Orchard.* Chekhov uses comedy of situation or characterisation in the characters of Pishchik, the neigbouring landowner, and Trofimov, the perpetual student, to relieve tension through their ridiculous or clumsy behaviour. Comedy of subversion is found in the behaviour of the servant characters when they attempt to overthrow the hierarchy which separates them from their masters, while Lyubov's and Gayev's ignorance of their financial situation is an example of comedy of the absurd. Therefore, an incongruity between a character's pretences and true nature, as well as between what a character believes and his or her true situation, results in comedy. In a time of social change, Chekhov represented the resulting trauma not only as tragic, but also as comic.

Like Russia, South Africa is also known as a country with an unstable political climate. During apartheid, there were social imbalances between white and black South Africans. After the abolishment of apartheid, and the country's first free and democratic election in 1994, South Africans also needed to adapt to new social conditions. Thus, South African literature in general

[5] "Comedy" is sometimes regarded as a genre of drama as opposed to tragedy. However, in this dissertation, the term will also be used interchangeably with "humour".

has also been concerned with issues of the reconceptualisation of identity – especially since 2002. Crystal Warren (2003:130; 2004:113, 119; 2005:196; 2006:181) repeatedly recognises identity as a theme in South African literature in her introductions to the list of published South African works of the years 2003-2006. Issues of identity are furthermore found in theatre works such as Greig Coetzee's *Happy Natives* (2003), Antony Sher's *I.D.* (2003) and Anton Krueger's *Living in Strange Lands* (2003). Coetzee aims to dispel the notion that South African theatre either represents adversity or traditional dancing. Sher and Krueger both explore the theme of identity through the character of Demetrios Tsafendas, the assassin of former Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd. Sher's play shows how two men in South African history struggled with the concept of identity: Hendrik Verwoerd, who aimed to define a national identity for the Afrikaner, and Demitrios Tsafendas, who was unable to accept that his racial classification was keeping him from the woman he loved. Krueger, on the other hand, questions whether it was Tsafendas' insanity or his insane surroundings that motivated his assassination of Verwoerd, which provides an interesting and opposing perspective on events.

Besides the theme of identity, the question of landownership also features, especially in Afrikaans theatre. Examples of this include Charles Fourie's *Vrygrond* (Free land, 1994) and Deon Opperman's *Donkerland* (Dark land, 1996). Reza de Wet's drama *Diepe Grond* (translated as *African Gothic*, 1986) which strongly evokes the pastoral farm novel through the setting and also features the theme of landownership and identity. De Wet aims to invert and deconstruct the old-fashioned patriarchal narrow-mindedness, short-sightedness and conservatism associated with the traditional Calvinist upbringing of the Afrikaner (Van Zyl, 2006:268-270). Identity and landownership are thus themes addressed by both Chekhov and South African dramatists. The plays mentioned above show how a character's identity and space are inextricably linked. Friedland and Hecht (2006:33) posit that the link between a person and a space he or she occupies or values is of such significance that they compare an empty site where a demolished building once stood to a phantom limb.

Because of these similarities between the Russian context of Chekhov's time and contemporary South Africa, Chekhov has been repeatedly staged in South Africa since the 1930s (Botha, 1989:168) and has influenced various South African dramatists, most notably Reza de Wet. De Wet's *Russian Trilogy* (2002) uses Chekhov's four last plays, *The Seagull*,[6] *Uncle Vanya*, *Three Sisters*, and *The Cherry Orchard* as starting point. The first in the trilogy, *Three Sisters Two*, is a continuation of Chekhov's *Three Sisters* in which she also superimposed some of the elements from *The Cherry Orchard*. According to De Wet (2002:8), she used her "own 'distilled' version of the characters from *Three Sisters* but took elements of the plot, structure, tone and rhythm from *The*

[6] *The Seagull* was first published in Russian in 1897. For the purposes of this study I consulted an English translation by Laurence Senelick (2006) (see References).

Cherry Orchard". *Yelena*, the second play in the trilogy, features the characters of *Uncle Vanya*, and is set eight years after the original play. De Wet (2002:11) describes *Yelena* as the shadow of *Uncle Vanya*. She emphasises in *Yelena* certain darker themes such as decay and claustrophobia – which are present in *Uncle Vanya*, but submerged to a great extent. The last of the trilogy, *On The Lake*, is a continuation of Chekhov's *The Seagull*, but the Chekhovian world is presented in this play "as seen through a distorting fairground mirror". The style of the play – in contrast to the rest of the trilogy – resembles magic realism, as the "action and characters are filtered through the prism of Nina's dream-state" (De Wet, 2002:13). De Wet also wrote a play, *The Brothers* (2007), based on the lives of Anton Chekhov and his brother Alexander, set immediately after the death of their brother Nikolai.

De Wet (2002:7) explains her fascination with Chekhov by stating that his plays speak on the simplest level poignantly of a vanishing order. As an Afrikaner, De Wet feels that she can identify with these characters as they are also "standing on the threshold of far-reaching socio-political change". Furthermore, De Wet identifies with these characters as they also sense that their existence is precarious and morally flawed. This state of socio-political change, which is found in both the twentieth century Russian and the contemporary South African contexts, is thus the basis of De Wet's intertextual references to Chekhov's work and life.

Charles Fourie is another dramatist who found inspiration in the work of Chekhov. His Afrikaans drama, *Die eend* (The duck, 1994) transposes Chekhov's *The Seagull* to a farm in the Free State Province, South Africa. Suzman's transposition of Chekhov's text to South Africa is thus by no means based on a novel concept. According to Suzman (quoted in Van der Spoel, 1997:34-35), the South African fascination with Chekhov stems from the recognition of a passion for land and nostalgia for a life under threat in his texts. This similarity in a passion for land between Chekhov's context and the contemporary South African context is confirmed by Marthinus Basson (2006) who is well known for his direction of De Wet's plays. Basson states that the geographical resemblance between the wide open spaces used for farming in both contexts and the attachment to these spaces by the people who inhabit them explains the South African relation with Chekhov. It is thus clear that space is an important aspect to take into account when investigating the transposition of a Chekhov text to South Africa.

1.4. The theatre and space

When investigating the implications of space in a dramatic text, the first and most obvious consideration to take into account is that, unlike a novel or a poem, a drama is intended to be performed at a specific time and place. The place of performance is usually a theatre in which the dramatist uses the stage space to show the audience his or her play. Glass (1974:118) states that

"[t]he problem of space is felt perhaps more acutely in theatre than in other artistic media because the nature of the theatre is space". Glass thereby acknowledges that theatre not only alludes to space, but necessarily functions within a specific space. Stage space includes both mimetic space, which is seen by the audience on stage, and diegetic space, which is referred to by the characters in the play (Issacharoff, 1981:215). Thereby the spatial coordinates within which a play is set are not only signified by the stage itself, but the larger context of the play is also envisioned through the characters' references. In *The Cherry Orchard*, for example, the nursery, field, ballroom and drawing room of Lyubov Ranyeskaya's estate are shown, but the characters also refer to the cherry orchard, the nearby town, the railway station, Moscow and Paris. Elam (2002:40) also refers to acoustic space, which forms another dimension in which messages in theatre can operate and denote place. In *The Free State*, for example, the sound of dogs barking in the distance combined with silence at the beginning of Act One reinforces the farm-setting of the play from the start. Space in a play thus includes both the spaces mimetically represented and shown on the stage, either visually or acoustically, and the places diegetically referred to by the characters. A distinction will be made in this study between abstract spaces, such as the space of memory, and identified or named geographical places, such as a house and a field.

A stage furthermore does not merely provide a backdrop for the action of the play to take place, but can also be used to convey symbolic meaning. Elam (2002:9) asserts that any object on stage does not merely signify the object as used in real life, but also becomes a sign. Thus, a table on stage signifies more than only a piece of furniture used by characters in a play. It also signifies family unity, security and togetherness. In this way, a house, an orchard and cherry blossoms are shown in *The Cherry Orchard*. Yet, as Lyubov can no longer afford to live in the house and the orchard is barren, these objects also signify a patrimonial estate with hereditary debt and a life lived mainly for aesthetic pleasure.

1.5. Questions and aims

In light of the above-mentioned context, the following questions will be addressed by the study:

- How has Chekhov's drama, *The Cherry Orchard*, been adapted to the Free State Province in South Africa?
- How could the application of the Bakhtinian concepts of *chronotope*, *heteroglossia* and *carnival* add a new dimension to the interpretation of *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Free State*?
- Which aspects in each play are foregrounded to enable this transposition?

- Do this comparison and the use of Bakhtinian concepts contribute towards a better understanding of both the South African and the Russian texts?

The aims of the study will then be the following:

- To show the similarities between the two contexts which make this dramatic adaptation possible.
- To reveal the meaning that the Bakhtinian concepts of chronotope, heteroglossia and the carnivalesque add to the texts.
- To determine the commentary made by the texts on the two contexts.
- To evaluate this adaptation and determine to what extent it contributes to an understanding of the two contexts.

1.6. Thesis statement

This study will argue that, despite radical differences in context and culture, Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* and Janet Suzman's *The Free State* can be compared by placing the two texts in dialogue with each other. These texts correlate with regard to certain historical and social similarities in context, such as the emancipation of the serfs in 1861 in Russia and the abolition of apartheid in South Africa in 1994. There are also large, rural areas used for farming in both countries that explain the attachment to land that both these plays express. Furthermore, *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Free State* both express the dialectic between space and identity and the consequent tie of nostalgia that becomes evident through the discourse of the characters. Significantly, Suzman also emulates the general structure and dialogue patterns of the characters. It is posited that the Bakhtinian concepts of chronotope, heteroglossia and the carnivalesque will prove to be useful tools for the analysis of these issues in the texts as they represent the core issues of time, space, place and culture that initiate the dialogue between the texts. It is suggested that this adaptation will be successful in creating a better understanding of the plays and the contexts in which they are set.

1.7. Methodology

As mentioned, the core issues of time, space, place and culture will be investigated within a theoretical framework based on the concept of dialogics as described by Bakhtin. Since Suzman's text is a response work, it evokes a dialogic situation (Keuris, 2007:2). Furthermore, the attachment of the various characters to a time and place of the past creates a dialogue between past and present within the texts. Lastly, the ambivalence with which change is accepted in the texts implies

a heteroglossia in their dialogue. The concept of dialogics is thus posited to be a suitable framework with which to analyse *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Free State*.

1.7.1. Bakhtin's concept of Dialogics

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895-1975) was one of the most important Soviet thinkers of the twentieth century (Holquist, 1990:12). His oeuvre comprises, inter alia, a book on Dostoevsky's novels, writings on the dialogic nature of the novel, the *carnivalesque* found in the work of Rabelais and what remained of Bakhtin's work on the *Bildungsroman* (Dentith, 1995:5-7).

Bakhtin asserts that language is dialogic: it is not a code – which can be decoded – but a creative process. As this process exists only in dialogue, it is interactive and incomplete (Davis & Finke, 1989:593). Thus, language cannot be separated from discourse. Contrary to the communication model of Jakobson, Bakhtin's communication model locates the meaning of an utterance within the process of interaction between interlocutors, and not within the message sent. An utterance is thus only an attempt to voice the interlocutor's meaning. Therefore, an utterance cannot be independent of the interlocutor who voices it (Todorov, 1984:55-56).

If the meaning of an utterance lies within a process of interaction and not within the message, this would imply that the context within which the utterance was uttered also enters into the dialogue. And indeed, for Bakhtin, an utterance consists of both linguistic matter and nonverbal enunciation. The nonverbal elements that comprise part of the utterance, is the spatial horizon, the knowledge shared by the interlocutors and a common evaluation of the situation (Todorov, 1984:42). Thus, an utterance, and by implication a literary text, cannot be divorced from "particular subjects in specific situations" (Holquist, 1990:68), as an utterance contains its context.

The context-bound nature of language also implies that every utterance is necessarily unique. As the exact time and space of an utterance cannot be recreated, each utterance is new – even when its linguistic matter is repeated. Because all utterances are shaped by unstable forces and conditions, an uttered word carries a meaning that it would not carry in another time or place (Holquist, 1990:69).

As no utterance can be exactly reproduced, it can only be preserved in memory, where an event from the past is recalled to the present. According to the Bakhtinian line of thought, memory is a social rather than an individual act, as recalled memories are generally shared (Shotter & Billig, 1998:18). Hence, the recaller engages in dialogue with the remembered situation. Wall and Thomson (1993:62) state that memory becomes a palimpsest where new communities and relationships are continually forged. Since the time and space of the initial event cannot be recreated, the person who remembers engages with an emotionally hued perspective with the memory as if it were a text. Every time an event or place is recalled in memory, it takes on a unique

meaning as it is brought into contact with the present. Accordingly, a dialogic discourse between the past and the present is formed.

The concept of memory can successfully be explained and illuminated by Bakhtin's idea of the *chronotope*. Bakhtin (1981:84) derived the term from Einstein's relativity theory, and it literally means "time space". When used in literature, it refers to "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships" expressed in literary works. Bakhtin further describes the *chronotope* as time that thickens and becomes artistically visible, or space that "becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history". A literary image can therefore be seen as *chronotopic* when it fuses time and space and the effects of time become visible in it.

It has been said that every visual literary image is necessarily *chronotopic* as objects in space can only be described in temporal sequences (Pier, 2005:64). Yet, the *chronotope* is not always linked to imagery. In *The Dialogic Imagination,* Bakhtin (1981:86-146) describes three types of *chronotopes* found in ancient Greek literature. The three *chronotopes* include an abstract *chronotope*, a *chronotope* associated with metamorphosis and a *chronotope* of autobiography.

The abstract *chronotope* is found in the Greek adventure novel. In these novels, a hero undergoes a number of adventurous ordeals. Bakhtin (1981:89) sees the adventure-time in these novels as *chronotopic* as all the elements in the novel – including geographical space – are fused into the unity of novel-time. However, the adventure-time does not change the character of the hero, but rather affirms his identity. The chronology of the adventures is irrelevant, since there are no direct consequences to be linked with them. The *chronotope* is thus abstract since the plot is handled in an extratemporal way (Bakhtin, 1981:90). The second type of *chronotope* referred to by Bakhtin is the *chronotope* associated with metamorphosis. This *chronotope* directly links a character's development with an adventure he experiences. In this novel, the hero's course of life and his course of travel will correspond. Unlike the first *chronotope*, this *chronotope* of adventure is directly linked to the hero's change of identity (Bakhtin, 1981:111). The third *chronotope*, the *chronotope* of autobiography, shows a character's life laid bare and shaped by (what was known as) the public square. In this type of biographical novel, the time of a character's life is thus fused to a public space to form a chronotope (Bakthin, 1981:130-131).

Bakhtin therefore describes different types of *chronotopes* according to the relation between the *chronotope* and the relevant character's identity. Further *chronotopes* are depicted in tales of a hero in the process of becoming (as in the *Bildungsroman*) or *chronotopes* that resemble a motif, as in the picaresque novel (Pier, 2005:64).

In this study, the focus will be placed on the *chronotope* that resembles a motif, which is defined by Würzbach (2005:322) as a "concrete realisation of a fixed abstract idea". A motif can be realised in character, action, locality, objects, temporal phases or dispositions which could recur throughout a work of literature and be manifested in various ways. Pier (2005:64) asserts that the

use of a *chronotope* provides a means by which an author can depict certain motifs, themes or ideas in his or her work. The conjoined temporal markers and spatial features then define the relevant historical, biographical and social relations specifically. It therefore becomes a useful tool with which to analyse these relations.

Thus, as various sources (Pier, 2005:64; Holquist, 1990:109) acknowledge, it is evident that the *chronotope* is a broad term which often eludes definition. For the purposes of this study, it will be defined as a literary image which conflates time and space. This *chronotope* is thus imbued not only with the physical marks of time, but also with the histories of the characters who have engaged, and continue to engage with it. In this study, these motifs will be illustrated through places such as houses and orchards, characters and social relations, and actions and their cultural implications. However, memory will serve as a vehicle to represent these *chronotopes* created through the fusion of time and space.

In *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Free State*, the central image of the orchard acts as such a *chronotope*. It is a spatial feature, as it is the contested place owned by the Gayev/Guyver family around which the plot of the two plays revolve. The orchard is also a temporal marker, since it represents both the grandeur of the past – when the orchard was fertile – and the present: a time in which the orchard is almost barren, and is only retained for aesthetic pleasure and nostalgia. Thus, the history of the Gayev/Guyver family, their nostalgia for their glorious past and the social structures which upheld that glorious past can be explored through this image. It is also through the *chronotope* of the orchard that the characters engage with their memory. The characters' memories are set in the orchard, and are thus also triggered by it. Thus, the *chronotope* does not only reveal information about the spatio-temporal setting in which the relevant action takes place, but also reveals the relation of the relevant characters to it.

The dialogic nature of language furthermore implies that discourse is multi-voiced. If language only exists in discourse, then the speaker needs to be addressing a listener. There should thus be a minimum of two voices present in discourse (Holquist, 1981:xix-xx). This speaker-addressee condition of language prevails not only in discourse between more than one person, but also in thought. The unconscious is dialogic and thereby language is always aimed at someone, even if that someone is a person's own inner addressee. Even within an apparently unitary self, there are contending languages (Dentith, 1995:91).

Bakhtin refers to multi-voiced discourse as *heteroglossic* discourse. *Heteroglossia* is a multiplicity of interacting versions of languages in discourse (Badenhorst-Roux, 2006:29). These languages need to differ from each other, as the emphasis of *heteroglossia* is not on the plurality of the voices, but on the distinction between them (Todorov, 1984:56).

The difference between the voices in heteroglossic discourse causes tension. The tension is mainly caused by two contending forces which are present in discourse: centripetal forces and

centrifugal forces. Centripetal forces pull towards the metaphorical centre and aim to unify language (Badenhorst-Roux, 2006:30). Thus, according to Bakhtin (quoted by Holquist, 1981:xix), they aspire to avoid the potential chaos of variety and "guaranteeing a more or less maximal mutual understanding". Bakhtin also claims that "[a] unitary language is not something that is given [*dan*], but is in its very essence something that must be posited [*zadan*]". Unitary language is contested, resulting in *heteroglossia*. *Heteroglossia* is thus an inevitable phenomenon which results in centrifugal forces pulling towards the metaphorical periphery of variety. Unless a conscious effort is made to unify language, it will remain *heteroglossic*.

To perceive these *heteroglossic* voices, one needs to engage with them. Human beings are bound to subjectivity, as it is impossible to observe the world, and its discourses of which we are part, with objectivity. This engagement with other *heteroglossic* voices would then be an engagement between the self and the Other. Shotter and Billig (1998:16) state that "our sense of our own and other people's mental states exists only 'in' the *internal relations* within such acts [observable acts of communication]". The only way to know either the self or the Other is through dialogic discourse.

Yet, one can never fully know the Other. According to Hitchcock (1998:92), Bakhtin affirms that "pure identification with the Other is a fiction (no one can fully experience his pain)". One can try to imagine another's circumstances, but never experience them for oneself. According to the law of placement, each person has a unique placement in time and space. It is thus impossible to occupy another's space and experience his or her perspective. Ironically, this unique attribute is universal (Holloway & Kneale, 2000:74). Thus, each person's observation of the world is unique and this unique version of the world can never be fully shared.

For dialogism to be authentic in literature, it cannot merely show heteroglossia; these different voices must also interpenetrate each other (Dentith, 1995:42). The interpenetration of voices implies that in discourse the utterances made by these voices influence each other's responses. Each utterance thus refers to an utterance made prior to it, and sparks a response to it. As a result, language is an infinite chain (with neither beginning nor end).

Dialogism further undermines the authority of the narrator. When, in a work of literature, there is recognition of conflict in a text which is resolved in the end by an integrated authority, the discourse is not dialogic (Dentith, 1995:42). As there can be no objective authority in real life, dialogic discourse is necessarily open-ended and unfinished, with all of the participating voices contending on the same plain. According to Balme (1999:2), postcolonial literature merges voices from the enforced colonial power as well as the indigenous context. Thereby postcolonial literature also overthrows the authority of the colonial Empire and allows voices to contend in a heteroglossic way.

Another prominent concept derived from the dialogic line of thought, is the concept of *carnival*. The term is taken from the popular festivities of (among others) the Renaissance and the Middle Ages. At these festivities, social hierarchies were "discrowned", parodied and overturned (Dentith, 1995:65). The Roman Saturnalia, for instance, inverted social binary oppositions, such as clown and ruler; or slave and master (Bakhtin, 1981:58). According to Dentith (1995:65), *carnivalesque* writing is literature which uses its own devices to subvert authority and reproduce the characteristics of carnival.

Although *carnival* subverts authority, this subversion is ambivalent. The subversion of these social hierarchies in carnival generally aimed to ridicule such a state of overthrow. Thus, *carnival* reinforces the status quo instead of indicting it. Still, Bakhtin asserts that *carnival* creates a free space where engagement with a social taboo is possible (Dentith, 1995:74-76). Hence, the status quo is both affirmed and indicted by it. Although ambivalent, *carnival* still has the power to overthrow all which is immortalised and complete (Holloway & Kneale, 2000:79-80).

The ambivalent nature of *carnival* is especially clear in its depiction of the human body. In contrast to the classical body which was complete, finished and an image of perfection, the grotesque body of the *carnivalesque* is "a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed; it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body" (Bakhtin, as quoted by Hitchcock, 1998:84). Thus, the grotesque body is in a constant state of renewal and regeneration. But it is also in a state of degradation. As Hitchcock (1998:85) remarks, the grotesque body contradicts the pretensions of perfection in its "defecation, sneezing, farting, belching and bleeding". In the *carnivalesque*, degradation is seen not only as negative, but also as positive. A finished, complete and perfect body which cannot be degraded by its baser functions cannot regenerate and renew itself. Thus, there needs to be degradation for renewal to follow (Dentith, 1995:67).

It is thus clear that *carnival* brings binaries in contact with each other: peasants and the gentry; the taboo and the status quo; and degradation and renewal. Bakhtin sees *carnival* as a utopian alternative to socio-political conditions (Gardiner & Bell, 1998:6-7). This utopian alternative can be engaged with, even if only temporarily. In this way, a dialogic discourse is formed between the real world and an alternative utopian world. Apart from the *carnivalesque*, this dialogic engagement with an alternative also recalls intertextuality. The term, coined by Julia Kristeva, refers to a mosaic of writing, taken from other writing, and which redirects and reinflects the discourses of their specific times. This mosaic also illuminates the subjectivity implied in these discourses (Dentith, 1995:94). Like *carnival*, intertextuality uses the quotation or reference of one text in another to either appropriate or subvert the prior text's meaning and ideology (Badenhorst-Roux, 2006:31-32). Consequently, when the prior text is now cited in a new context, attention is drawn to the contexts of both texts. Through intertextuality, specific contexts are placed beside

each other where they can engage in dialogue and thus comment on each other. Accordingly, the prior text is not merely repeated, but a completely new utterance is formed. This would then – as stated above – emphasise the subjective and shifting contexts of the relevant texts.

These concepts of *heteroglossia*, *carnival* and *chronotope*, derived from Bakhtin's theory of dialogics will be used in this study to analyse the two plays by Chekhov and Suzman. It is therefore suggested that Bakhtin's (1984:17) claims with regard to the inappropriateness of identifying concepts of dialogism in dramatic texts in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* are unfounded. In fact, this study will argue that Bakhtin's theories seem eminently suitable for analysing the discourse and cultural contexts of the respective plays.

1.7.2. Bakhtin and drama

Bakhtin not only ignores drama, but also pointedly states that the nature of the genre is monolithic. Bakhtin renounces drama on the grounds of two assertions. Firstly, he states that dramatic language is too thin to be dialogic (Dentith, 1995:86). Secondly, Bakhtin (1984:17) states in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* that a unity of plot is a necessary requirement for a dramatic text. Therefore, Bakhtin implies that in the creation of a world in which a dramatic text is set, discourse needs to be monologic. However, both these claims have been contested.

Various studies have used the concept of the *carnivalesque* in analyses of Shakespeare's drama (Knowles, 1996:70; Whitney, 1994:448). Bakhtin himself also added Shakespeare to his Renaissance avatars of grotesque realism (Dentith, 1995:86). From these studies, it is evident that the ambivalence of Shakespeare's festive scenes lends itself to a *carnivalesque* analysis.

In modern drama, dialogics have also been used to aid analysis. In a study of *chronotopes* in the later plays of Eugene O'Neill, Laurin Porter (1991:369) identifies various instances where *chronotopes* illuminate and emphasise the relation between past, present and memory. The dialogic nature of modern drama is further explored by Helene Keyssar (1991:88) in her article *Drama and the Dialogic Imagination: The Heidi Chronicles and Fefu and her Friends*. In this article, Keyssar argues that "almost everything Bakhtin had to say about language and representations sharply illuminates [her] ways of thinking about drama". She defends this statement by claiming that meaning in the theatre is created through interaction and the interanimation of two or more forms of communication. Furthermore, Keyssar (1991:88-89) sees each theatre production of a play as a recreation and a renewal. Thus, according to Keyssar, the nature of theatre and the nature of language as Bakhtin saw it resonate very clearly. According to Elam (2002:49-51), meaning is conveyed in theatre through numerous theatrical subcodes. These codes include movement, spatial conventions, costume, make-up, scenic subcodes, pronunciation, intonation, etc. Although it is difficult to analyse these different subcodes in a textual analysis, it should be noted that – as

Keyssar states – theatre is indeed made up of a multiplicity of contending voices, not only in the discourse of the respective characters in a play, but also in the way theatre communicates.

To explain why Bakhtin renounced drama despite its obvious dialogic potential it may be helpful to investigate what exactly Bakhtin meant when he spoke about the novel. In *The Dialogic Imagination* Bakhtin (1981:5-6) states that other genres may also become "novelised" when they show certain characteristics. These characteristics include the novel's freedom and flexibility; its incorporation of heteroglossic layers of literary language; its dialogised language; its laughter, irony, humour and self-parody; and lastly, its interdeterminancy (Bakhtin, 1981:7). These characteristics are not exclusively salient to the novel, and when other genres adopt them, these genres thus become "novelised". Holquist (1981:xxxii) states that Bakhtin consequently comes very close to naming Socrates as the first novelist – as his dialogues fulfilled the provocative role that Bakhtin ascribes to the novel.

Within the context discussed above, drama can be seen as "novelised" when it meets Bakhtin's criteria. Bakhtin (1981:5) names Ibsen and other Naturalists as examples of "novelised" and thus dialogic drama. Keyssar (1991:95) also lists a substantial number of modern dramas which she considers as dialogic. This list includes "much of Chekhov, all of Beckett's dramas, most of Brecht's dramas, Pinter's *The Homecoming*, and several of Handke's plays". Keyssar argues that these plays show an assertion of polyphony, refuse to affirm a specific ideology and resist a unified field of vision (1991:95).

Thus, contrary to what Bakhtin claims in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, drama can be dialogic. However, can Chekhov's plays – and in particular, *The Cherry Orchard* – be seen as dialogic?

1.7.3. Bakhtin, Chekhov and Suzman

The Cherry Orchard is a play about the eventual sale of a bankrupt estate. The estate is sold to a peasant-born businessman, Lopakhin, whose father and grandfather were once serfs on that land. Lopakhin, however, feels an obligation towards the family from whom he buys the estate. Before he buys the estate in the Third Act, he devises a plan which would enable the family to keep their land. The family, nonetheless, rejects this plan, as it would entail that their precious cherry orchard be cut down. As the family refuses to take practical action, the estate goes on auction and Lopakhin buys it for himself.

However, the play is – like other Chekhov plays – not plot-based, but character-based. Chekhov does not use his characters' discourse and actions merely as a tool to convey the plot of the play in the clearest possible way to the reader/audience. He rather gives the reader/audience

the opportunity to deduce the plot from the characters' discourse and actions. When discussing *The Seagull*, Valency (1966:147-148) describes this technique of Chekhov as follows:

> In life we see people; we do not see stories, and we do not hear thoughts. In the world, what is ordinarily played before our eyes is not a story, but a scene. The scenes that we see are in relation to other scenes, which in sequence perhaps suggest stories. These sequences are known only to those who have lived through them. What the ordinary spectator sees is merely people in various states of calm or excitement, quarreling, eating, yawning, weeping, laughing, chatting, sometimes one after the other, and sometimes all at once. The story, if there is a story, must be deduced from their expressions, their words, and their actions. It resides within the characters, and motivates their behaviour; but it is certainly not visible and, perhaps also, it is not there.

As Valency states, Chekhov's character-based technique more closely resembles real life than a plot-based play would. As Chekhov (quoted by Gottlieb, 2000:60) himself stated:

> In life there are no clear-cut consequences or reasons; in it everything is mixed up together; the important and the paltry, the great and the base, the tragic and the ridiculous.

Through this, the subjective view of a spectator (be it the reader/audience or another character) is taken into account. Chekhov deliberately shows the failure of communication and through this the notion that we can always try to understand the Other, but never understand him or her completely. Chekhov thus shows human relations as being subjective, self-centred and deduced from incidents rather than having an objective certainty established by clear communication.

These scenes and incidents which the spectator perceives are accordingly open-ended. Open-endedness is a device used by postmodernists, and is defined by Abbott (2005:65-66) as the refusal to satisfy expectations or answer questions raised over the course of the narrative. And Chekhov indeed does not resolve all the issues arising in his plays as he depicts life not as a story, but a sequence of scenes which can be interpreted as a story. Accordingly, at the end of *The Cherry Orchard*, the reader/audience does not know whether Firs is left to die, or will be discovered; what Lyubov will do once her money runs out; or what will become of Gayev as his appointment at the bank is bound to be temporary. We also do not know why Lopakhin does not propose to Varya in Act Four. It is impossible for the spectator to determine his reasons – all one can come up with are possible hypotheses. We are not given the full details of these characters' lives, but only a glimpse into them. In his discussion of Chekhov's story, *Ward No. Six*, Valency (1966:125) comments on Chekhov's need to keep questions unanswered, and issues unresolved. Herein lies the vitality of Chekhov's work.

In his approach, aiming to resemble real life, Chekhov organises his verbal messages on stage in a quasi-simultaneous manner (Golomb, 1984:189). Chekhov generates a complex semantic load on stage by the intersecting and interrupting of verbal lines to simulate real simultaneity. Furthermore, the nonverbal semantic material on stage, such as the visual, auditory and gesticular, interacts with the verbal lines to create multiple lines of discourse occurring

simultaneously on stage (Golomb, 1984:191). Yet, as Golomb (1984:189) also states, Chekhov never allows the actual sounding of two or more verbal texts at the same time – as this would render the text unintelligible to the audience. Sir Ian McKellen (2000:124), a British actor known for his numerous Chekhov interpretations, also noted this polyphonic nature of Chekhov's work. He states that an audience of Chekhov's work "is likely to be picking up as much information from a character who is quietly listening – or not listening, or not speaking – as the character who *is* speaking."

Among these polyphonic messages and voices, Chekhov also refuses to authorise any of his characters as the primary voice. Valency (1966:148) states that "... Chekhov never assumes the role of an omniscient being, creating and relating; nor is he ever a partisan, or a power sitting in judgement." McKellen (2000:129-130) affirms that because of this it is paramount to work out all the parts before a Chekhov play can be staged – a statement not necessarily true of other playwrights where the action revolves mainly around two or three main parts. Chekhov thus sketches a situation where all the voices in the play contend on the same plain of importance. He does not try to manipulate his reader/audience into a specific way of thinking. In contrast with Tolstoy, he also does not moralise. Senelick (2006b:973) affirms this notion and maintains that "to grade Chekhov's characters as 'right-thinking' or 'wrong-headed' ignores the multi-faceted nature of their portrayal". The reader/audience can thus never make a clear-cut judgement of Chekhov's characters as they are ambivalent, contradictory and, moreover, their author does not take them too seriously.

In *The Cherry Orchard* – meant as a comedy – Chekhov continually undermines his characters. Whenever a character defends an issue he or she regards as serious, Chekhov overdresses them, he makes them fumble and clumsily fall or have them speak in an inappropriate register. He also uses a technique Styan (1971:247) terms 'undercutting'. The moment directly after an announcement or revelation is made, the discourse takes a completely irrelevant or deprecating turn. By mixing these farcical elements with speech patterns and an organisation of verbal messages that closely resemble real life, Chekhov's plays acquire an ambivalent type of comedy.

From this discussion of Chekhov's drama – with the focus on *The Cherry Orchard* – it is evident that Chekhov's drama is indeed "novelised". The open-endedness and subjective, character-based nature of his plot allows for freedom and flexibility, especially since the author refuses to take a stance himself. The various layers of discourse in Chekhov's texts allow for *heteroglossic* discourse, which is interdetermined. Lastly, Chekhov includes ample elements of humour and self-parody in *The Cherry Orchard* by continually undermining his characters.

Suzman's version of *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Free State*, closely resembles the original text in plot and dialogue. The changes Suzman makes mainly concern transposing the setting of the play from early twentieth century Russia to contemporary South Africa. She adapts the play to the new race, ethnicity and language of the characters. The former landowners of *The Cherry*

Orchard become white South Africans, while the former peasants and servants become black South Africans. As South Africa is a multilingual country, the *heteroglossia* in this play also takes on a literal meaning as some of the characters lapse into their mother tongues from time to time, emphasising their diversity.

A Bakhtinian analysis of these texts with focus on the *chronotope*, *heteroglossia* and the *carnivalesque* would result in an interesting comparison. It is assumed that this comparison would highlight the similarities and differences between the two contexts, and facilitate a better understanding of both texts and contexts.

1.8. Conclusion

Although the transposition of Chekhov's source text to contemporary South Africa is enabled by similarities in social change in the two contexts, the two authors had very different intentions with their plays. As mentioned, Chekhov shied away from any overtly political view or label. His avoidance of labels and strong political views thus differ from Suzman's positive and specifically political intention with her play. Suzman dedicated her play to Nelson Mandela as she intended it to be a celebration of democracy (Suzman, 2000:xxi).

Thus, the two plays will differ significantly from each other – despite the similar plots. As both texts are concerned with the attachment to and loss of land as well as the overthrow of hierarchy, the theoretical framework with which this study will analyse the plays and thus discern the extent of these similarities and differences is the theoretical concepts used by Bakhtin.

The above-mentioned motivations have therefore contributed towards the rationale upheld in this study and have influenced the argument to evolve in the following pattern stipulated by the different chapters and their contents. In the first chapter, the "Introduction" contextualises and explains the argument followed in this dissertation. Most of Chapter 1 is taken up with definitions and examples of the methodology, namely Bakhtin's Dialogics.

The second and third chapters focus on an analysis of the two texts *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Free State* respectively. The analysis distinguishes the three concepts constructed by Bakhtin that were considered appropriate for this study. The fourth chapter addresses the differences and similarities in an attempt to explain the meanings that can be derived from this comparison, and the final chapter, Chapter 5, concludes this study and pinpoints the significance of such a study within the contemporary context.

Chapter 2:
Dialogic elements in Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*

2.1. Introduction

In the introductory chapter of this study, it was suggested that contrary to Bakhtin's own assertion, dramatic texts can be dialogic. It will be argued that Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* can be perceived as a dialogic text in which the concepts of the chronotope, heteroglossia and the carnivalesque can be identified. This chapter aims to investigate the meaning that these concepts could add to the interpretation of the text.

The study will argue that through the characters' engagement with the cherry orchard, the past is juxtaposed with the present and the cherry orchard thus acts as a chronotope in which time and space are conflated. The cherry orchard represents the values, status, innocence and youth of some of the characters in *The Cherry Orchard* who, when they come into contact with the cherry orchard, initiate a dialogic engagement between past and present. Reference to the past is evoked through memories of particular places that are associated with the identities of various characters: the orchard as a possession, the house which forms part of the social standing of the owners and the ball room and nursery that can be associated with status and innocence respectively.

The discourse in the play represents a multiplicity of voices that contend with one another so that the different points of view, attitudes and backgrounds of the characters emerge. Debates also ensue within the play as a result of the conflicting views and values of some of the characters, which makes it difficult to discern one voice as authoritative. Despite the prevailing social hierarchy in the play, the dialogue between the characters remains heteroglossic, as no one character is given an authoritative voice. Furthermore, the social hierarchy in the play is carnivalised, with a comic effect. The behaviour of the servant characters subverts the social hierarchy in the play. However, Chekhov implicates both parties when the servants imitate their masters, while the masters assume their importance to be still paramount.

2.2 The conflation of past and present as represented in "space" and "place"

The chronotope is defined, for the purposes of this study, as a literary image that conflates time and space. This image is imbued with both the physical marks of time and the histories of the characters who engaged, and continue to engage, with it (Bakhtin, 1981:84). The chronotope creates a point of reference for the interaction between past and present as it provides the author with a means through which to depict certain motifs, themes and ideas relating to time and space

(Pier, 2005:64). In *The Cherry Orchard*, the present situation is continually juxtaposed with the past in terms of the memory and nostalgia that are associated with the location or place of the cherry orchard, the social lives of the characters, and their respective personal relationships.

According to Carter, Donald and Squires (1993:xii), space becomes place by being named. Crang (1998:103) argues that space become place when it is time-thickened by experience. Thus, as people attach meaning to space, it becomes place. Therefore, a newly acquired piece of land can be referred to as a space, while a childhood home is a place to its inhabitants, because of the experience gained at the specific location. The former Russian nobility's status was based on their possession of farmland and forested land. By inheriting it for generations, the Russian nobility's land had become a place to them. After the serfs were freed in 1861, the landowning nobles gradually lost their influence and thus had to compete with non-nobles who gained power through business, the professions, the sciences, the arts, etc. (Fisher, 1985:4). The Russia of Chekhov's time was thus known for great social change especially concerning landownership. Consequently, the land owned for centuries by nobles was now being reappropriated.

2.2.1. Memory and nostalgia

The conflation of past and present revives positive memories of the past which underline the changed circumstances of the present. In a study about the significance of space and place, Bachelard (1994:5) explores the connection between memory and place. He describes a person's remembrance of a childhood home in later years and asserts that, in this recollection, memory and imagination remain closely associated. Thereby the memory of former homes forms images that, in dreams, co-penetrate other inhabited places. Therefore, the memory of the childhood home always retains the treasures of former days. Thus, the childhood home will remain in its former inhabitant's mind and continues to be imbued with the frozen image of the person's childhood.

This attachment between a person and his or her childhood home is quite evident in *The Cherry Orchard* as Lyubov comes into contact with her childhood home for the first time in five years. According to Styan (1971:250), it was ingenious of Chekhov to start *The Cherry Orchard* in the nursery of the old family house. In this way, all the characters who have a childhood memory of the house will be reminded of their pasts when they come in contact with it. Bachelard (1994:7) also asserts that the house or home is the human being's first world, a cradle which remains so in a person's daydreams. By reliving the memories of childhood, a person is comforted (Bachelard, 1994:5-6). Thus, the characters who spent their childhoods in the nursery will not only remember their childhoods when they come into contact with it, but will also relive a time of comfort and protection.

When Lyubov enters the nursery for the first time in five years in Act One, these childhood memories overwhelm her. Her assessment of the nursery shows that it does not differ significantly from her memory of it. As she states, "I feel a child again" (1996:18), Lyubov is noticeably in contact with her past. While beholding the orchard, Lyubov later remarks:

> Oh my lovely innocent childhood! Sleeping here in the nursery, looking out into the orchard, ... every morning waking up to happiness. And here it is... the same, just the same as it was, nothing's changed. [*She laughs with delight.*] All white... oh my dear orchard! Stormy autumn, wicked cold winter and here you are, young and fresh and full of happiness again, ... all the darkness over, the angels haven't forsaken you. (1996:29.)

This apostrophe is spoken after Lopakhin has broken the news that the orchard must be cut down in order to save the estate. Lyubov imposes her own history onto the orchard and admires it for staying as lovely as in her childhood. The orchard thus becomes a substitute for Lyubov's memory, as Friedland and Hecht (2006:23) suggest when they state that the phenomenon in which memory and identity are fused to place could be an important factor in generating resistance, conflict and change. People who once inhabited a building sometimes resist the demolition of that building – not because of its material value, but because of their memorial connotation to it. Friedland and Hecht (2006:29) continue to argue that "places or emplacements are a substitute for memory. This means that history is not about the past. Memory is intensely present and not past". Thus, contact between a person and a place he or she attaches meaning to causes a dialogic engagement between the person at present and his or her past and memory of that place. As it is spring at this point in the play, the orchard should be a mass of white blossoms symbolising innocence and purity. The orchard endured the hardships of autumn and the Russian winter, as Lyubov endured the hardships of losing her husband and son. Although the orchard can no longer produce a profitable crop, it can still survive the harsher seasons with grace, emerging in spring as young and fresh as a bride. Lyubov longs for the simpler time of her childhood in a way that is often found in the pastoral literary tradition. The pastoral is defined by Abrams (2005:210-211) as an idealisation of the simplicity of life in a rural and natural setting. In recent decades, the pastoral has been expanded to include more general representations of a simpler life – be it the life of a shepherd, a child or a simple worker. The orchard thus also represents a pastoral image in Lyubov's longing for her simple childhood.

Lyubov, on the other hand, returned after her hardships older, tainted, and because of her life of dissipation abroad, unable to return to the place of her innocent childhood. In this way, the orchard acts as Lyubov's foil, accentuating both the similarities and differences between them. Thus, by representing grace, innocence and beauty, and by contrast showing Lyubov's decadence and inability to cope with her circumstances, the orchard contains both positive and negative associations.

From the excerpt it is also clear that from Lyubov's perspective, the orchard resembles an *imago*. According to Klein (1997:3-4), an *imago* is a frozen, idealised image of a place in a person's past and thus constitutes, through being idealised, a kind of deception of the past. Bachelard also describes a recollection of the childhood home as entering a "Motionless Childhood" (1994:5), motionless as it is merely a fixation of happiness. Even though the orchard is not fertile anymore, and only remarkable for its size and beauty – especially in springtime – Lyubov still regards it as pristine and pure, the way she did when she was a child, since the orchard has come to contain her childhood.

Viljoen, Lewis and Van der Merwe (2004:7) write that the reminiscing about times and places of the past is painted in rosy colours. Although an experience at a specific place might have been harsh, it is often remembered as glorious. When recollecting a place, memory thus recreates the place rather than representing it. The orchard which Lyubov remembers is such a recreated place. The improbability of her "waking up to happiness" every morning and her overall idealised description of the orchard is clear. Lyubov is thus not necessarily addressing the orchard, but the frozen *imago* of it in her mind. Lyubov's memory thus shows a preference for the past above the present. She also prefers not to think about the immediate future in which the orchard must be cut down. Although Lyubov admires the orchard for having survived the harsh, dark winter, it must ironically be cut down.

2.2.2. The cherry orchard as "place" and status symbol

According to Crang (1998:103), the idea of space extends beyond the idea of location, because it establishes a sense of belonging to a community. This relationship between people and places is studied often because of a general consensus that the places and thus also their identities and sense of community culture are under threat.

As *The Cherry Orchard* revolves around the eventual loss of the specific orchard denoted by the title, it appears to be a significant place of value to which the characters in the play attribute meaning as a symbol of the past. Ganz (1980:40) notes that the cherry orchard becomes a central point of coherence for the sense of romantic longing expressed throughout the play.

In addition to verbally mentioning the time longed for nostalgically, Chekhov also visually shows this time in *The Cherry Orchard.* According to Glass (1974:189), "the line between the past and present blurs, and becomes a transparent and permeable membrane through which ideas move freely back and forth". The house as chronotope shows the reader/audience simultaneously what it once was in the heyday of the Russian gentry and how it has deteriorated since the social change; therefore, the reader/audience can perceive the past and present simultaneously on stage. The characters also indulge themselves in behaviour which would have been suitable in the past,

and thus Glass's notion of a permeable membrane is valid and useful. This notion is especially evident in Act Three, which shows a ball which is held on the night that the orchard is to be auctioned. The reasons for this untimely ball are unclear, as Lyubov herself states, "Hardly the time for a band... or for a ball. ... Never mind." (1996:55.) The untimely ball is thus another sign of Lyubov's frivolous and dissipating lifestyle which costs her the orchard. It could also, on a more subconscious level be a final attempt to celebrate the lifestyle and decadence of the former gentry. The result, however, is a parody.

Firs, the Gayev family's life-long servant, is the first character to compare the ball in Act Three to balls held in the past. According to Firs, the ball, which is attended by the station master and the post office clerk, compares poorly to the balls of the past, which were attended by generals and admirals. Styan (1971:295) comments on this comparison between past and present in the third act, which is set in the drawing room and ballroom, connected by an archway:

> In the drawing-room itself we shall be loaded with the anxieties of the present, while the action in the more formal ballroom beyond represents a parody of the gay past, the fading sights and sounds of innumerable parties on the estate from generation to generation. The sounds pull us into the past, where, indeed, from time to time we escape with members of the family.

As Styan indicates, there is a visible juxtaposition of present and past on stage. The past is represented by the ballroom upstage and the present by the drawing room downstage. The characters then alternate between these rooms as well as between the past and the present. The archway between the drawing-room and ballroom thus represents the permeable, transparent membrane between past and present through which the characters move freely back and forth, described by Glass. These rooms and places are thus chronotopes as they represent both space and time. The ballroom contains the past while the drawing room contain the present. In this way, the past is seen not only by the characters, but also – as Styan affirms – by the reader/audience. As the toned-down ball of the present acts as a parody of the balls of the past, both are seen simultaneously. An effect is created in which the characters are re-enacting the past with an inadequate cast: the station master and the post office clerk are attempting to portray the roles of generals and admirals. Yet, the effect is not achieved, and the result only emphasises the difference between the balls of the present and the balls of the past.

The number of guests that attend the ball cannot be determined from the text, but if not in number, in social status they have definitely declined, as Firs – the historical resource – states. The ball is also attended by an insufficient number of ladies, and Dunyasha has permission to dance with the guests. At a proper ball in olden times, it would have been unthinkable for a servant girl to dance with guests of the family.

Firs, on the other hand, acts in a way which would have been appropriate in the past, but has now become redundant. When he starts to look unwell and Lyubov tells him to go to bed, he

replies: "... and who's going to do the waiting and look after everybody? There's only me for the whole house." (1996:62.) The reader/audience sees the Firs of the past: young and indispensable to the household, contrasted with the remains of serfdom: one ancient footman, his old-fashioned livery exchanged for a tailcoat, with hardly any work to do. Firs fails to realise that his situation in the house has changed: he has aged and is now the person who needs to be taken care of, rather than the person taking care of the household.

Both these examples of Firs and Dunyasha compare the past with the present: Dunyasha's dancing shows that the rules of etiquette relaxed out of a need for suitable dance partners, while Firs' waiting shows how the old rules for running the household are no longer applicable. Thus, as the orchard is slipping through the family's hands, the noble status they had as land owners is also disintegrating.

The disintegrating status of the cherry orchard as place and status symbol is further underscored by the cyclical structure of the play – cycles that are both completed and broken. The play starts with arrival and ends in departure. The arrival scene in Act One is set in the nursery: the chronotope containing the warm, childhood memories of generations of the Gayev family. Act Two moves the characters into a rather pastoral setting in a field outdoors. Act Three is set in the drawing room and ballroom, while Act Four returns the characters to the nursery. In Act One, the nursery still contains ancient nursery furniture and old-fashioned toys (Styan, 1971:250). It is thus still strongly imbued with the history of the family. When the nursery is seen again, just before the departure in Act Four, it is stripped of decoration. By ending the play in the same room where both the play and the characters' lives began, it is suggested that a cycle has been completed, and a new cycle can now begin at the end of the play. However, the nursery is quite changed. Just as the Gayevs are stripped of their life of luxury and privilege the nursery is stripped of decoration. Thus, the nursery and the family both underwent a process of purging, suggesting that the new cycle will differ from the completed one.

In this cycle, nature also becomes a present force as the seasons portrayed support the structure of the play. According to the pastoral tradition, seasons and nature become synchronised with the emotions of the characters (Smit, 2005:34). In *The Cherry Orchard*, this synchronisation is applicable as the play starts in early spring, the winter chill still felt by the characters, and the threatening sale of the orchard still only a possibility. The second act, in which the fate of the orchard becomes increasingly sealed, is set outside, as it is summer. The third act, in which the final sale of the orchard happens, marks the end of summer, while Act Four – the departure – is almost set in winter. Thus, throughout the play, not only the characters and their ownership undergo changes; the orchard itself also experiences a cycle of changes: from the potential promise of blossoms to the shedding of leaves.

However, Lindheim (1985:57) notes the ambivalence of nature's synchronisation with the characters' emotions:

> Nature seems to delight in confounding the characters' expectations by not conforming to their emotions and moods. The sentimental warmth of homecoming at the beginning of the play is contrasted with the unnatural chilliness of the May morning, while the gloominess of departure dominating the end of the play is made even heavier by November's unseasonably warm, bright weather.

Lindheim thus highlights the ambivalence in Chekhov that also prevails in his characters' relation to nature. By having the weather different from what was expected, an uncertainty and an unnatural mood is created. Thus, the promise of spring at the start of the play is shown to be only a promise: the cherry blossoms will not bear fruit, as the orchard will not be saved. Thus, the chronotope of the orchard contains both present and future time.

The cycle of nature is again evident in the second act. The characters sit in a field with "[*a*]*n overgrown wayside shrine, some old tombstones, and a bench*" (1996:37). This setting, not in a graveyard, but among tombstones, a place that was once a graveyard, again evokes a cycle. Apart from the seasonal cycle which represents the loss of the orchard, this cycle represents the lives of generations of people who have occupied the land. The deceased and their ancestors represented by their tombstones may have sat in that same field, talking, as the characters do. The field thus contains the histories of these people represented by their tombstones. However, these deceased people lived a few generations ago, as the field which had become a graveyard became a field again as nature reclaimed it. However, this peaceful setting also show signs of industrialisation. Telegraph poles and the outline of a town are shown in the distance, and the characters speak of a nearby railway line. The undisturbed and peaceful cycle evoked by Act Two is thus also shown as being under threat by industrialisation creeping in on the edges.

Thus, each of the settings in *The Cherry Orchard* affirms that the orchard, everything it represents and the lifestyle which upholds it are under threat, thereby containing the past as well as the future.

2.2.3. Social relations: gentry and peasants

As the orchard is associated with different memories by different characters, it also reveals the social imbalance between the noble, peasant and servant characters. The gentry's prestige has always depended on their status as landowners. Similar to the pastoral literary tradition of the farm novel in South Africa, a bond of inheritance exists between the inheritor of a piece of land and the land itself. This bond cannot exist between the land and its purchaser (Smit, 2005:37). In *The Cherry Orchard*, this bond of inheritance between Lyubov and the orchard is clear as she defends her attachment to it against Trofimov, her deceased son's former tutor:

> ... I was born here. My father and my mother – and my grandfather... they all lived here before me. I love this house. I can't imagine my life without the cherry orchard. If it's to be sold, then I go with it! [*She kisses him on the forehead.*] My child was drowned here. [*She weeps.*] (1996:58.)

This extract reveals a third aspect of Lyubov's attachment to the orchard. Not only does the orchard represent her innocent childhood and the death of her son, but also the lives of her parents and her lineage. Yet, it is exactly this culture of receiving land as a birthright which makes Trofimov unsympathetic, and implies a nostalgia of the gentry for the time of slave-owning in Russia. It is also ironic that Lyubov managed to be away from the orchard for five years despite her claims that she cannot imagine her life without it.

Like Lyubov, Gayev also alludes with nostalgia to his childhood and upbringing when addressing the bookcase in celebration of its centenary:

> Dear, beloved, respected bookcase... I salute you! I salute your very existence which for over a hundred years has served the ideals of virtue and justice. You have stood there, your voice calling out to us... silently... exhorting us to work... inspiring generation after generation of this family with courage... with faith... with belief in a better future. You, bookcase, have instilled and fostered in us all our ideals... our standards... of virtue... of nobility... and social consciousness.
> [*Pause.*] (1996:27.)

The bookcase can therefore also be seen as a chronotope, since it contains the history of the past hundred years. For Gayev, the chronotope of the bookcase harbours the ideals of past Gayev generations. However, his ode becomes ironic because of his stilted speech and melodramatic attachment to ideals in which he does not seem to believe himself. Gayev, as part of the gentry, has never worked, despite the allusion in his ode to the importance of work. When Gayev is offered a job in a bank, Lyubov remarks: "That's not for you. Stay as you are." (1996:44.) Thus, Gayev's mention of work is in sharp contrast with reality. Furthermore, despite his allusion to social consciousness, Gayev displays no sense of social awareness with regard to his treatment of the servants. This preposterous and inappropriate ode of Gayev thus serves to show both his misperception about himself and his social values, and how he values the past in terms of objects and places. In his ignorance, Gayev believes that the past should be cherished and celebrated, although he is unable to execute the preservation of the chronotopes containing the past himself.

Apart from allusions to the Gayev lineage, the lineage is also suggested visually on stage, in the same way that the balls of the past are in Act Three. Noting the ingenuity of staging the first act in the nursery, Styan (1971:250) also comments: "Here Lyubov will see herself as a child, and here we shall *see* Lyubov as a child when we watch her own daughter Anya." When Lyubov and Anya enter the nursery while Lyubov reminisces about her youth, mother and daughter as well as Lyubov at present and Lyubov in her youth are perceived by the reader/audience simultaneously.

Styan (1971:255) explains that at a performance of *The Cherry Orchard* by the Moscow Art Theatre in 1922, Michel Saint-Denis commented on Anya's first entrance. Under the guidance of Stanislavski, she enters the nursery in which she was brought up, "jumps on to a sofa and, crouching on it, is caught up by a fit of that high-pitched laughter which is induced by a combination of tiredness and emotion". This entrance of hers evoked a spontaneous applause from the audience of two thousand five hundred people. Of course, not every production of *The Cherry Orchard* will handle Anya's entrance in this way, but what is important to notice about this example, is that the youthful and childlike nature of Anya should be stressed. In a letter to Nemirovich-Danchenko (co-founder of the Moscow Art Theatre), Chekhov (quoted in Karlinsky, 1973:462) wrote: "Anya can be played by anyone at all, even a complete unknown, as long as she is young and looks like a little girl and speaks in a youthful, vibrant voice."

Thus, when the youthfulness of Anya is stressed, the reader/audience would see Lyubov talking about her youth, reminiscing, and simultaneously the youthful Anya as if she was Lyubov in her youth. When Gayev later kisses Anya goodnight, he says to her:

> God bless you, dearest... oh, how like your mother you are... Lyuba, she looks just as you did at her age. (1996:22.)

When Gayev stresses the likeness between Lyubov and Anya, he confirms the impression that Anya represents both herself and her youthful mother. Anya becomes part of the chronotope of the nursery. Upon entering, Lyubov's youth, which had been preserved in the nursery, becomes visible. The generational link between Lyubov and Anya is thus clear. Anya's accentuated youth at this point in the play further creates the suggestion that a new phase in the Gayev generative cycle is about to begin.

The references to Lyubov's mother at the start and end of the play further suffice to emphasise the chronotopic nature of the orchard and the nursery. In Act One, Lyubov imagines seeing her mother, wearing a white dress, walking towards them in the orchard. When this startles Varya, Lyubov explains:

> I just imagined it. Look, over there, by the path to the summer house... the little tree bending over... it looks like a woman... (1996:30.)

Through Lyubov's imagination, the visibility of the past in the orchard is emphasised yet again. Lyubov imagines a tree in the orchard to be her mother. The importance of the bond of inheritance between the Gayevs and their ancestors is thus alluded to already in the first act.

At the end of the last act, Lyubov's mother's memory is recalled once again. In Act Four, when Lyubov says goodbye to the nursery, she remarks to Gayev: "... how Mother loved to walk in this room... " (1996:79.) Lyubov thus directly places her mother not only in the orchard, but also in the nursery. Right after Lyubov's speech, Anya calls her mother from the outside: "Mama!" (1996:79.) In this way the generation shift from Anya to Lyubov extends so that for a moment,

Lyubov *is* her mother walking in the nursery and she is being called by herself from the outside. This shift between generations gives the reader/audience a glimpse into the past and youth of Lyubov as the present is juxtaposed with the past. The young and carefree Lyubov of the past is compared to the bankrupt and repentant Lyubov of the present. It also shows the past imbued in the nursery and the orchard. The reader/audience is made privy to the past as Lyubov connects it to these places. It also becomes clear to the reader/audience that as gentry, the Gayevs share a bond of inheritance with the orchard.

However, despite their freedom from serfdom, the peasants and serfs also display a similar attachment to the land as the gentry, a bond that becomes increasingly significant in *The Cherry Orchard*. Lyubov's late son's tutor, Trofimov, is a student at the time of the play. He has been repeatedly expelled from universities because of his overtly progressive viewpoints. To Trofimov, in contrast with Lyubov and the rest of the older gentry, the cherry orchard is an abominable place. At the end of Act Two, after the characters' discussions of their views of the future, the social conditions of the peasants, and Lopakhin's and Trofimov's contrasting views on these topics, a stranger enters and upsets the peaceful atmosphere in which the characters are conversing. All of the characters consequently leave, and Trofimov and Anya are left alone on stage. Trofimov then persuades Anya, his romantic interest, to leave the orchard behind, and he speaks of the wrongs committed by her ancestors:

> Think of it, Anya. Your father, your grandfather... all your forebears were serf owners – they owned living souls! Can't you see them... all those people – behind every cherry, every leaf, every tree-trunk a human being watching you – can't you hear their voices? To own living souls! It's changed you, perverted you, all of you... your forefathers, your mother, your father, your uncle... you don't even notice – you're living on credit at the expense of others... people who you don't even allow beyond your front hall! We're two hundred years behind the times... at least! We still have nothing – no attitude to our past, all we do is sit about philosophising, and drinking vodka and complaining that we are bored. How can we begin to live in the present if we don't redeem the past... come to terms with it? There is only one way. By suffering. By work. By extraordinary effort... by unceasing toil. Try to understand that, Anya. (1996:50.)

This excerpt, in which Trofimov speaks, once again emphasises the orchard's chronotopic value as it represents the past also to him. Yet, he sees the former gentry and their custom of serf-owning represented by the orchard, behind the fruit and leaves, and also notes how that custom – embodied by the orchard – affects the family at present. Trofimov sees the dissipated lifestyle of Lyubov and Gayev as a result of their decayed origins. Because of their history of serf-owning, the Gayevs cannot take responsibility for their own actions and finance their own lifestyle.

Furthermore, in Trofimov's opinion, the only way to redeem the past, is through work. He sees work as the only way to reverse the idle habits of the gentry reflected in the decline of the orchard. Trofimov lacks sympathy with Lyubov for her loss of the orchard, because it is perceived

as a symbol of an abominable past. The orchard and its history are regarded differently by the various characters, because the history that the orchard represents means something different to each character. This contrast in perceptions of the orchard that Lyubov and Trofimov harbour, serves as an example of Crang's (1998:40) reference to as a double encoding of space. In other words, the same space contains different meanings at different times to different people. Lyubov, Gayev and Firs value the land according to the outdated values of the serf-owning gentry. Trofimov, on the other hand, has different views about serf-owning and the idle gentry and thus encodes the land with his own meaning.

The orchard becomes a contested space, because Lyubov and the rest of the gentry want the orchard – and the life of the past it represents – to be preserved, while Trofimov and some of the other former peasants want the orchard and all that it stands for to be cut down so that a new history can be encoded in the land. The future of the orchard is in the balance. The tension that emanates from this situation becomes comical and shows the need for a change of lifestyle among the characters in *The Cherry Orchard*.

One of the ways in which the tension between past and present is shown, is through the behaviour of the servant, Firs. As the oldest character in *The Cherry Orchard*, Firs acts as a historical resource by continually giving a clear account of the past and comparing it to the present. Although Firs is not part of the former gentry, he, too, is nostalgic about it. As a loyal servant, Firs shares his master's sentiments. Through his nostalgic attachment to the past, he helps to create the pristine *imago* of the orchard's glory days for the reader/audience. Firs' first remembrance of the past happens while he is preparing Lyubov's coffee in Act One. He thinks of the place she has just come from: Paris. The connotation that Firs has with Paris include memories of his late master having gone there first by horse and later by train. With this first remembrance, Firs' role as a historical resource is already established.

When the possible loss of the orchard is discussed later in Act One, Firs starts to account his memories of its former glory. He is the only character in the play who remembers the fertile years of the orchard. In those days, the cherries were dried, preserved in sugar and made into jam. The surplus was sent to Moscow and Kharkov. The cherries were thus also a source of income. However, when Lyubov asks him about the methods of cherry preservation, Firs cannot remember them. These methods did not survive with him, but have gone with the past. All that is left of the orchard are blossoms and the remembrance of its glory – its practical use has gone.

Firs as the historical resource is not taken seriously by most of the characters. He is seen as a senile, muttering old man and is rather humoured than responded to – especially by the younger characters. The older characters, like Lyubov and Gayev, from time to time indulge themselves in Firs' outdated behaviour. Gayev especially joins Firs in his outdated behaviour – with a comic result. Throughout the play, Firs and Gayev indulge in conduct which used to be

appropriate when Gayev was a boy and needed Firs to take care of him, as the following examples show. In Act One, after Lopakhin unsuccessfully tries to convince Lyubov and Gayev of his plan and leaves, the characters are waiting for Lyubov to finish her coffee so they can go to bed. Firs, without being noticed, interrupts the characters' conversation:

FIRS : [*Brushing GAYEV down.*] Tch, he's done it again – the wrong trousers! What are we to do with you? (1996:29);

At the end of the same act, Firs enters as Gayev tries to convince Anya and Varya that he has a plan to save the orchard:

FIRS : [*Enters.*] Leonid Andreyevich, may the Lord forgive you, have you no fear before God... when are you going to your bed?! (1996:34);

In Act Two, after Gayev has told the other characters that he has been offered a job in a bank, Firs again enters to bring is master his overcoat.

[*FIRS enters. He carries an overcoat.*]
FIRS : On with this, if you please, sir. It's getting damp.
GAYEV : You're an old nuisance, my friend.
[*But he puts on the overcoat.*]
FIRS : It's no good. Off he goes this morning... never told me.
[*He inspects his master.*] (1996:44);

When the characters are anticipating the sale of the orchard with bated breath in Act Three, Anya enters and says that an unknown man in the kitchen has told her that the orchard has been sold. Nobody knows who could have bought the orchard at this point, and Lyubov nervously awaits an answer from the absent Gayev. At this point Firs voices his own concerns about Gayev's extended absence:

FIRS : And Leonid Andreyevich still not back. He's only got a light coat on, it's a mid-season coat, he'll catch his death, you see... these young people! (1996:61.)

These scenes, like the scenes that represent Lyubov's youth, show the reader/audience the past: the conscientious footman, Firs; and the boy, Gayev. Yet, it also shows the present: a senile footman; and a middle-aged man who never grew into a self-sufficient adult capable of dressing himself appropriately. It is ironic that Firs refers to Gayev as one of "these young people!" (1996:61), because at 51 years of age Gayev is hardly young anymore. The absurdity of their relationship is highlighted when they try to treat the present as if it were the past. Thus, the tension between past and present and the way in which Firs and Gayev refuse to accept the present are shown to the reader/audience simultaneously.

While Firs' and Gayev's scenes of interaction parody the symbiosis which is said to have existed between serfs and their masters in pre-revolutionary Russia, the subsequent master-servant interaction between Yepichodov and Varya shows the opposite. In Act Three, just after it has become known that the cherry orchard has been sold, Varya scolds Yepichodov for behaving like a guest at the ball when he is indeed only a servant. Unlike the submissive Firs, who would not need scolding in the first place, Yepichodov resents Varya's scolding:

> [*Offended.*] The only people who are entitled to judge whether I work, or wander about, or eat or play billiards are my elders and betters... in other words, those in a position to do so. (1996:63)

It is clear that Varya does not have the authority over Yepichodov that she used to have. The class difference between them is not enough to oblige Yepichodov to obey Varya's orders. The orchard is as good as sold, and the family does not have the status that it used to have. However, Varya still approaches Yepichodov in the same way she would have in the past, only to find that her actions have no authority.

Through parody and tension the absurdity of the present situation is exposed and it becomes apparent that the lifestyle of the former gentry has become inappropriate. The cycle needs to be broken as the ways of the past have become redundant, irrelevant and even preposterous. The first of the Gayevs to break this cycle is the youngest, Anya. Apart from representing Lyubov's youth, Anya is also associated with spring throughout the play.

When Trofimov sees Anya for the first time in five years at the end of Act One, he describes her as the first flower of spring. Like the cherry blossoms, Anya is at the start of her life. As noted earlier, Chekhov emphasises that Anya's youthfulness should clearly be noticeable in her voice and laughter. However, through her association with Trofimov, she is also the first Gayev to break with the way of life upheld for generations. She is the first who will not raise her children in the nursery and who will not uphold a lifestyle which has become inappropriate. When it is known that Lopakhin has bought the estate in Act Three, Anya consoles her mother by telling her that a new beginning awaits the family. She tells her mother that her life is still ahead of her and that, at a new place, they can plant a new cherry orchard. Whether or not these words of consolation are overtly optimistic and ridiculous, they serve to emphasise the idea of cyclicality and Anya as representative of a new beginning in the play.

However, the break with the ways of the past is not shown in the play as something definite. When exactly the break with the past occurs is open to interpretation. According to Ganz (1980:53), when Lopakhin announces that he has bought the cherry orchard at the end of Act Three, he makes an unalterable break with the past which he intended, for Lyubov's sake, to sustain throughout the play. This moment in the play indeed marks a distinct break with the cycle of the past – for the first time in history a former peasant is in possession of the Gayevs' precious cherry

orchard. However, there are already signs of a break with the cycle earlier in the play. Lopakhin's announcement thus only provides closure to what might have remained uncertain before.

The sound of the breaking string heard in Act Two and again at the very end of the play could signify this break. It is an audible, unnatural sound that could be assumed to represent that a link with the past has been broken. What can be deduced from the sound is that a link has been severed, that something has snapped. The sound is first heard at the end of Act Two, when the chances of Lyubov and Gayev securing the estate have become more and more improbable. Thus, it is possible that this link which has been severed is the link between the characters and the past; the former social hierarchy of gentry and peasants and the present. However, the sound is heard once again – at the very end of Act Four. Thus, it could not previously have signified one definite, unalterable break. The suggestion is rather that the cycle of the past has already been broken, and the links which were holding them in place are coming undone one after the other.

It is also significant that the characters only hear this sound when they are outside, removed from the refuge of warm childhood memories. They are sitting in the open by a road: a setting which invites a new path to be taken, unlike the safe nursery of the previous act. It is only when removed from these chronotopes which contain their respective pasts that they are able to hear the sounds of change. This change is also evident in the technological advancements in this Act which shatter the illusion of a peaceful pastoral setting.

The notion that the break with the past has happened further back in the past, corresponds with Hahn's (1970:20) notion that what is lost at the end of the play has already been lost at the beginning. Thus, it is clear that whenever the final break with the cycle of the past occurred, it is long before Lopakhin's announcement in Act Three. The vague hope that Lyubov still harbours is a mere grasping at straws by then. Yet, like the cycle of nature, the break with the past is also greeted with ambivalence. The final departure from the cherry orchard not only evokes nostalgia and longing, but also a sense of relief, as Gayev remarks: "Think how worried... how miserable we all were... before the cherry orchard was sold. When it was all over... done... no going back... we all calmed down, we even cheered up." (1996:73.)

To corroborate Hahn's (1977:20) contention mentioned above, the distinctive, traditional binary oppositions that were formerly evident between the peasants and gentry also seem to have become blurred in personal relationships. This relaxation of social status is noticeable in some of the characters from the older generation, but becomes more prominent in the younger generation. For example, the relationship between Lyubov and Lopakhin – although inconclusive – is one that attempts to breach the line between peasant and gentry. When the play opens, Lopakhin is shown to wake up after falling asleep waiting for Lyubov and thereby missing out on his chance to meet her at the station – as he had initially planned. From the conversation between Lopakhin and Dunyasha at the start of Act One, Lopakhin's connection to Lyubov and the orchard as well as his

own history become known. After Lopakhin and Dunyasha have talked briefly about when Lyubov is expected to arrive at the house, he pauses and says:

> Lyubov Andreyevna! Five years! It's going to be funny seeing her again, I wonder if she's changed. Fine woman – well, she was. Straightforward. Very easy to talk to. I remember once, when I was a lad... it was when we had the shop, I must have been about fifteen. My nose was bleeding, my father'd hit me in the face... drunk... anyway, we'd come up here for something or other. Very young she was then. Very... slender. She brought me right in here, right into the nursery as it then was, to the washstand, to rinse the blood off. (1996:15.)

Lopakhin recalls the first day he met Lyubov. This first encounter happened in the nursery of the past, or as Lopakhin states, "as it then was". By standing in the exact space of the memory as he recalls it, Lopakhin engages with the past in a very clear way. Through this recollection, the audience is painted the first flattering picture of Lyubov's youth – through the eyes of the youthful Lopakhin. From his fond memories of Lyubov, it is suggested that Lopakhin was, and maybe still is, infatuated with her. It is significant that this memory is set in the nursery of Lyubov's house, and thus Lopakhin also has a fond memory of being cared for in the nursery, along with the characters who spent their entire childhoods there. Even before the reader/audience is introduced to the Gayev family, the nursery is already presented as a meaningful place, even to the peasant-born Lopakhin.

While recalling this fond memory at a very early stage of the play, Lopakhin also alludes to his peasant origins. He continues:

> "Don't cry, little peasant" she said, "you'll be all right for your wedding day!" [*Pause.*] Little peasant. True. Son of a peasant. And here I stand, in a white weskit and yellow boots like a pig in a pastry shop. Done well for meself. Still a peasant though, eh? [*Picks up the book that has fallen from his lap, flicks the pages.*] See this? Don't understand a word of it – sent me to sleep! [*Pause.*] (1996:15-16.)

The fact that Lyubov referred to Lopakhin's peasant status as she rinsed the blood from his face, must have made an impression on him, as he specifically recalls it now – years later. It also shows that he is still conscious of his peasant origins, as he pauses after his recollection. This pause provides the transition from past to present for Lopakhin, whereupon he ponders his current status. Although Lopakhin has risen financially from his peasant status, he is still not part of the nobility, a fact of which he is fully aware. He refuses to reinvent himself, or pretend that his origins were otherwise. Lopakhin is thus neither peasant nor nobleman. He refers to himself as "a pig in a pastry shop" who cannot understand a word of the book he attempted to read. With this recollection of Lopakhin's first meeting of Lyubov – mere seconds into the play – the reader/audience becomes aware of the social distinction between the peasants and the gentry. The nursery was thus both the setting of the start of Lopakhin's fondness of Lyubov and his consciousness of the social boundary between them.

Later, when Lopakhin proposes his plans for the cherry orchard to the family, he alludes again to his fondness of Lyubov and his peasant origins. Before Lopakhin explains the extent of his plan to save the estate, he first tries to gain her trust by professing his fondness of her, despite the boundary of social status between them:

> I mean, merciful God, when you think of it, my father was a serf! Your father and grandfather owned him! But you're not the same. You're different. With you I forget all of it. What I remember is what you did for me, I don't forget that. You're more to me than my own flesh and blood. (1996:23-24.)

Despite Lopakhin's aversion to the past, and the fact that Lyubov is part of the system that is responsible for it, his views of her are elevated above this aversion. He makes a clear distinction between Lyubov and her origins by explicitly stating that she is different from her father and grandfather.

Lopakhin's aversion to the past is again alluded to in Act Two. When the old footman, Firs, speaks nostalgically about the past, Lopakhin sarcastically remarks: "Yes, so much better in the old days. At least you got your back flogged!" (1996:45.) Lopakhin's lack of sentimentality may be a result of his aversion to the past. Yet, although Lopakhin feels an aversion to the orchard, he feels an attachment to the vast, open spaces of Russia. Close to the end of Act Two, Lopakhin remarks:

> Sometimes, when I can't sleep, I get to thinking... 'Dear God... look at what you've given us. Endless forests... fields... horizons... so much!' We should be giants, living in such a country. (1996:47.)

Lopakhin is ambivalent about the past and the places associated with it. Although he resents the culture of slave-owning and Lyubov's lineage, he exempts her. He feels indifferent towards the place of the cherry orchard but is moved by the vast spaces of Russian scenery.

2.2.4. Assessment

From the above discussion, it follows that in literature, the chronotope provides a means through which certain themes and motifs relating to time and space can be investigated in order to serve as a point of reference for the interaction between past and present in *The Cherry Orchard.* As space becomes place by being named and conceptualised, the land the Russian nobility had inherited for generations was a place, and not only a space to them. The loss of this place thus had certain implications regarding nostalgia, social status and personal relationships for the former Russian nobility as depicted in *The Cherry Orchard.* As the orchard contains the memories of Lyubov's innocence and youth, she regards it with her own subjective values. Even though the orchard is almost barren and only remarkable for its size and beauty, Lyubov sees it as a beacon of pristine youth and innocence.

The past is further juxtaposed to the present by a parody of the grand balls held at the estate in the past. Lyubov attempts to recreate the glory of the past with the ball in Act Three, but as the gentry's extravagant forms of entertainment have become inappropriate, the present ball compares poorly to past balls. Firs' waiting on the guests of the family has become unnecessary, showing how the noble status awarded to the family because of the land they owned is disintegrating as the orchard slips through their fingers. This disintegration is supported by the cyclical structure of the play which suggests completed and broken cycles. The family as well as their inhabited spaces, such as the nursery, have undergone a process of purging, suggesting that the commencing cycle will differ somewhat from the completed one.

Furthermore, as the orchard represents different things to different characters, the social imbalance between the gentry and peasants is also alluded to by the characters' engagement with the orchard. While Lyubov and Gayev regard the orchard as a dignified symbol of their noble lineage, childhood innocence and youth, Trofimov and Lopakhin regard it as a symbol of their oppression. However, the youngest Gayev, Anya, is less nostalgic about the past and the orchard and looks forward to a new life, without the orchard.

Throughout the play, incidents of friction are shown where characters are ignoring social change and act in ways which would have been appropriate in the past. These frictions point to an impending break with the cycles of the past. The sale of the cherry orchard – which signifies this break – also influences the relationship between characters from different sides of the social divide between gentry and peasants. Lyubov's and Lopakhin's relationship does not manage to cross the boundary that divides them as former peasant and former noblewoman – even though Lyubov's status as landowner has been transferred to Lopakhin.

Thus we can see that in *The Cherry Orchard* there is a dialogic engagement between the past and the present by continual references to the past, both verbally and visually. The past remains a constant force in the play as the characters attempt to continually recreate it. However, tension arises, as it is inevitable that the cycles of the past have to be broken, which happens throughout the play. There is also a noticeable ambivalence in the characters towards the cycles of the past and the breaking of these cycles. This ambivalence is evident in both Anya's representation of Lyubov's youth and part of the Gayev lineage as well as her associations with spring and new beginnings. The eventual loss of the cherry orchard is greeted in Act Four with a sense of relief as well as grief. Even the seasons and the weather underscore this ambivalence by acting in a manner contrary to what is expected.

2.3. Heteroglossic discourse in *The Cherry Orchard*

As defined by Bakhtin, heteroglossia constitutes the multiplicity of contending voices in discourse. However, when regarding this multiplicity of discourse, not the number of different voices, but rather the distinction between them should be emphasised (Todorov, 1984:56). Furthermore, within heteroglossic discourse, tension arises between centripetal and centrifugal forces. Centripetal forces aim to unify the language of discourse, and thus minimise heteroglossia, while centrifugal forces aim for ultimate heteroglossia and variation in language (Badenhorst-Roux, 2006:30). This variation in voices implies that each voice in discourse has a unique way of observing the world and in heteroglossic discourse each of these unique observations contend on the same plane (Holloway & Kneale, 2000:74).

As can be seen from the chronotopic analysis of *The Cherry Orchard*, the place of the cherry orchard is encoded and regarded in different ways by different characters. However, not only the perspectives of these voices, but also their language differ from each other. These differing languages and perspectives, as well as the extent to which the discourses interpenetrate each other, is especially evident in the characters' discourses about certain issues, such as the loss of the orchard, the overall social change in the milieu and their personal relationships.

2.3.1. Characters and social status

According to Styan (1971:241-243), the characters in *The Cherry Orchard* can be categorised in various ways: by birth and class, economic considerations, age and sex. In this way, an array of characters is presented to the reader/audience, representative of a number of social positions. By birth and class, the Gayev siblings, Lyubov and Gayev; Lyubov's children, Anya and Varya as well as their neighbour, Pishchik, represent the former gentry, whose status is slowly but surely eroding. The peasants are represented by Lopakhin, the merchant, Trofimov, the student and the governess, Charlotta. Yasha, the younger footman, Dunyasha, the maid, Yepichodov the estate clerk and Firs, the older footman, represent the servants who – apart from Firs – ironically all aspire to a higher social rank.

The economic divide between the characters differs considerably from the divide between them with regard to birth and class. The only characters concerned with money matters are Lopakhin, Varya and Charlotta – of whom only Lopakhin is wealthy. While Lopakhin can generate his own money from his farming business, Charlotta and Varya are dependent on employment. Lyubov, Gayev and Pishchik are careless concerning money, and in great financial difficulty as a result. It is only by chance that clay is found on Pishchik's neighbouring estate and his financial situation is temporarily relieved. Trofimov and Anya claim not to be dependent on an income, and

are therefore oblivious to any financial matters while the servants are also unaffected as they are dependent on their masters.

When the characters are divided according to age, the priorities of each age group can be identified. The older characters, Lyubov, Gayev and Pishchik, live in the past, while the younger characters, Anya, Trofimov, Dunyasha and Yasha, look forward to the future. According to Styan (1971:242), it is only the characters who are neither young nor old – such as Varya, Lopakhin and Charlotta – who are concerned with the pressing problems of the present.

Styan (1971:243) further makes an assessment of the characters based on their marital situations or aspirations. The spinsters, Charlotta, Varya and Dunyasha, are troubled by their marital status in varying degrees, while the bachelors, Pishchik, Lopakhin and Yasha are unresponsive for different reasons. Anya and Trofimov have renounced love – as they did material dependence, while Lyubov's foolishness regarding money seems to extend to her conduct regarding her love affairs.

Judging by the categories into which the characters of *The Cherry Orchard* can be divided, Styan (1971:243) distinguishes certain characters that act as opposites to each other. Pishchik and Yepichodov, although equally fatalistic, differ in attitude: Pishchik is the eternal optimist, while Yepichodov remains pessimistic. Gayev's idleness – despite his speech advocating the need for work – counters Lopakhin's hardworking lifestyle. The practical Lopakhin is further opposed to the philosophical – and also idle – Trofimov. Lastly, Trofimov – who declares himself "above love" (2006:1021) – is also in contrast to Lyubov with regard to their respective opinions on matters of love.

This assessment by Styan shows how Chekhov's characters find themselves in unique situations. It is from these differing situations that the unique voices of the characters emerge. Each character not only has his or her own perspective, but as Senelick (2006a:xxxvii) observes, each character also speaks in his or her own cadence and register. The result is a polyphonic discourse – not only with regard to *what* is said, but also *how* it is said.

Thus, the dialogue in *The Cherry Orchard* results in a number of conversations which show an interpenetration, or lack thereof, between different voices and perspectives. The main issues which are discussed by the characters, causing friction between two different perspectives, are the characters' reaction to the loss of the orchard, the impending social change and their attitudes towards love affairs and marital needs.

2.3.2. The loss of the orchard as status symbol

As the plot of *The Cherry Orchard* revolves around the loss of the specific orchard, this event is assumed to be of great significance. Senelick (2006b:974) states that the action in *The Cherry*

Orchard consists of the family's gradual loss of the orchard: "In Act One, the cherry orchard is in danger of being sold; in Act Two it is on the verge of being sold; in Act Three it is sold; and in Act Four, it has been sold." Thus, the characters are defined by their responses to the progress of the sale.

Before the orchard is eventually auctioned off, Lopakhin's attempts to save the Gayevs' estate and the rejection of these attempts by Lyubov and Gayev causes significant tension. In Act One, Lopakhin informs the family of their dire financial position. His solution to their problems is to cut down their orchard, divide their land into plots, build dachas on these plots and then lease the plots out. But both Lyubov and Gayev immediately dismiss his plans. When Lopakhin raises the subject again in Act Two, he still cannot persuade Lyubov and Gayev to cut down their orchard:

LOPAKHIN	:	You must make a decision. Time won't wait. It's quite simple. All I need is a straight answer. Will you agree to lease your land for building dachas or not? All I need is one word, yes or no... just one word!
LYUBOV	:	Who on earth's been smoking these disgusting cigars? [*She sits.*]
GAYEV	:	Very good, you know... the railway. Having it so close. Into town for lunch... yellow into the middle – here we are again, just in time for a frame or two... (1996:40.)

Hereafter the conversation drifts to Lyubov's management of her money (without any reference to the impending sale of the orchard) and Gayev's lack of discretion in his conversation with the waiters at the restaurant where they had just dined. Lopakhin steers the conversation back to the orchard, and when he states that a prominent and wealthy man is interested in buying the orchard at auction, Gayev replies that they are expecting funds from an aunt in Yaroslavl. The amount that they expect turns out to be ridiculously insufficient, whereupon Lopakhin loses his temper:

LOPAKHIN	:	Forgive me, but with all due respect you're the most frivolous, unbusinesslike people I've ever met in my life. Here you are, being told in plain Russian that the estate is being sold over your heads, and you don't seem to understand a word.
LYUBOV	:	But what are we to do? Tell us what to do.
LOPAKHIN	:	I've told you. I keep telling you. I never stop telling you... I repeat the same thing, day after day. The cherry orchard, and the rest of the land must be leased out for building dachas, it must be done now, at once... the auction's almost on us, there's no time! For God's sake say you agree... here – this minute! The moment you say yes, I can lay my hands on money for you, as much as you want. No more debt... you'll be saved...
LYUBOV	:	Dachas? Summer visitors? Forgive me, Yermolai Alexei, but we couldn't! Not in the cherry orchard! So... ugly!
GAYEV	:	I entirely agree. Out of the question.
LOPAKHIN	:	I shall fall down or start screaming in a minute! It's no good, I can't stand any more... [*To GAYEV.*] and you're nothing but an old woman!

GAYEV	:	[*A snub.*] Who?
LOPAKHIN	:	You heard me – a useless old woman! [*He makes to go.*]
LYUBOV	:	No, please – don't go! My dear, stay, please... I beg of you. We'll think of something, surely?
LOPAKHIN	:	Think of what?
LYUBOV	:	Please stay. Don't go. At least it's cheerful when you're here.

(1996:41-42.)

From these extracts, it is clear that Lopakhin tries his best to reason with the family in a logical way. Lyubov and Gayev, on the other hand, resist entering into this dialogue with Lopakhin and aim to reject his plans completely. Overall contrasting attitudes can be perceived between Lopakhin and the Gayev siblings.

Accordingly, Lopakhin's concise, well-structured sentences and his commercial vocabulary differ from Lyubov's and Gayev's vague, irrelevant turns of speech and digressions to billiard strategy (Senelick, 2006b:977-978). Styan (1971:262) describes Gayev's continual reference to billiards as a way of communicating his "state of mind at different stages of the play, while at the same time conveying that he is at a loss for words".

From the beginning of the play, Gayev is associated with billiards as Lyubov draws attention to his habit of citing billiard strategy in Act One. Gayev's response to the embarrassing silence following his inappropriate ode to the bookcase in Act One, is: "Into the corner off the right... screw shot into the middle..." (1996:27.) When he is embarrassed again in Act Four, after being stopped before giving another melodramatic speech, he again reverts to billiard phrases: "Double the yellow... middle pocket... silence!" (1996:78.) Furthermore, when Gayev confirms the routes the family will take after the sale of the orchard, he refers to his new position as a banker, and uses the billiards strategy as an affirming interjection: "I'm an old hand at banking, no problem there... a man of finance, eh? ... Yellow into the centre pocket, eh?" (1996:73.) Gayev thus uses these references to billiard games as a way to hide embarrassment or as an interjection which conveys that he is at a loss for words, and also as an indication that he is about to go and play the game. Gayev's references to billiards furthermore emphasise his idle lifestyle, which contrasts sharply with Lopakhin's, whose lifestyle has always consisted of hard work.

Apart from Lyubov's and Gayev's digressions from Lopakhin's proposed plan, their discourse also shows the failure of communication between these characters. When this conversation is evaluated according to Grice's (quoted by Elam, 2002:155-156) model of communication, in which an interlocutor should follow four maxims for effective communication, it is evident that Lyubov and Gayev fail to communicate clearly. The four maxims include the maxim of quantity, the maxim of quality, the maxim of relevance and the maxim of manner. In the quoted citation, Lopakhin tries to persuade the family of a logical solution to their financial crisis, while the Gayev siblings either drift off into frivolous conversations and preoccupations or bluntly reject

Lopakhin's plans to save the estate. Lopakhin does not succeed in convincing the family of the urgency of the matter. The impracticality of the Gayevs prevents Lopakhin from persuading the family: while Lopakhin thinks the close-by railroad is convenient for summer visitors, Gayev can only see its use in making quick trips into town for lunch. In the extract cited above, Lyubov and Gayev thus clearly disregard the maxim of relevance in their irrelevant digressions, causing the communication between Lopakhin and the Gayevs to fail.

When Lopakhin loses his temper and states his frustration about the fact that Lyubov and Gayev do not take his concern seriously, Lyubov asks him what they should do – blatantly ignoring the plan he had just proposed. Lopakhin repeats his plan and Lyubov replies that dachas and summer visitors in the orchard are too "ugly". The orchard thus also has aesthetic value to Lyubov. However, pride and vanity prevent Lyubov from allowing Lopakhin to save the estate and when Lopakhin realises this, he becomes even more frustrated and prepares to leave. Lyubov wants him to stay, as it is more "cheerful" when he is around. Again, Lyubov ignores the role Lopakhin could play in saving their estate and can only propose superficial pretexts for his presence. The family's superficiality, vanity and pride thus prevent them from engaging with Lopakhin in order to save their estate.

However, these attempts of Lopakhin to help the family retain their land only continue up to the second act. At the end of Act Three, when it becomes known that Lopakhin has bought the cherry orchard for himself, the dialogue between them also ceases. The finality of the sale severs the bond between Lopakhin and Lyubov, and their discourse in that act noticeably differs from previous discourses.

When Lyubov receives the news that Lopakhin has bought the orchard, she is shocked. She needs to steady herself against a table, and later collapses in a chair and weeps bitterly. Lopakhin, on the other hand, rejoices. After his patient attempts to persuade the family to take viable action, he – being slightly drunk – now bursts out in an uncharacteristic expression of joy:

> If my father and grandfather could see me now. My God, if they could rise from their graves! If they could see me, their son, Yermolai, who was illiterate... beaten... who ran about barefoot in the snow... that Yermolai has bought this estate...!
> I've bought this estate. The most beautiful thing in the whole world. Where my father and grandfather were serfs. Where they weren't allowed even into the kitchens. I must be dreaming... (1996:66.)

Lopakhin then picks up the keys that Varya – upon hearing the news of the sold orchard – threw on the floor before his feet, thereby acknowledging that he is the new master of the estate. He continues his joyous expression:

> Everybody – come and see Yermolai Lopakhin wielding his axe on the cherry orchard... down they come – down comes the cherry orchard... watch the trees come crashing down! We're going to build dachas for our children... and our children's children – they'll see a new life here – music... play! (1996:66.)

Clearly, Lopakhin does not see his purchase of the estate only as a personal accomplishment, but also as a way in which the history of slave-owning on the estate can be redeemed, by building a new life for his children and grandchildren. This life will be different from the lives of his ancestors who were regarded as inferior to Lyubov's ancestors. Lopakhin's victory sharply contrasts with Lyubov's defeat: she is shown crying whilst he rejoices.

In contrast with Lyubov and Gayev's opinion that the sale of the orchard would indicate the defeat of the Gayev family, the youngest Gayev, Anya, does not experience the sale of the orchard as such a defeat. As stated, Anya is associated with spring and new beginnings. Through her association with Trofimov, she has detached herself from the orchard and its significance. In Act Three, she confesses this to Trofimov:

> What have you done to me, Petya? Why don't I love the cherry orchard as I used to? I loved it so dearly I thought there was no better place on earth. (1996:50.)

When Trofimov then tells her of his associations of the orchard with slavery and the dissipated lifestyle of the gentry, Anya replies:

> This house hasn't been ours for a long time now. Believe me, I shall go. I give you my word. (1996:50.)

Thus, when Anya receives the news that the orchard is sold in Act Three, she only agitatedly informs her mother of this news and continues to dance with Trofimov. It is only later, when Anya sees her defeated mother weeping at the news, that she comforts her with visions of a new life and new beginnings.

Anya's detachment from the orchard and her ideas about new beginnings and a bright future – which contrast with Lyubov's attachment to the orchard – are in turn countered by the objective Charlotta. The German governess, Charlotta, is portrayed throughout the play as isolated from the family. In three of the four acts she is seen only once. After she has made her entrance with her nut-eating dog, Charlotta is seen only one more time in Act One: when she crosses the stage on her way to bed. In this crossing, she refuses interaction with the family when they ask her to do a conjuring trick for them. In Act Two, she is only shown at the start of the act when she laments her loneliness and criticises Yepichodov for his melodramatic desperation in his quest for Dunyasha. In Act Three, she does conjuring tricks at the ball. Lastly, in Act Four, she is only briefly seen, parodying Lyubov and Anya. Through these few appearances, Charlotta is firmly established as an outsider. She is not part of the family, and although she laments her loneliness in Act Two, her isolation from the family seems to be by choice. It is this detachment from the family that gives her an objective view of them and the ability to criticise Yepichodov, Anya and Lyubov.

After Anya's reassurance to her mother of the wonderful life now ahead of them, in which they will "sit together in the long autumn evenings and read and read, [...] and a whole new world

will open up for" them (1996:74), Charlotta is shown picking up a bundle and holding it like a baby. She then addresses the bundle:

> Bye, bye my little one...[*The bundle 'cries'.*] There, there, be good...[*More 'cries'.*] Ah, my pretty one, my darling boy! [*She throws the bundle down.*] (1996:74.)

Anya's overtly sentimental image in which a new world will open up for her and Lyubov, contrasts with Charlotta's unsentimental mockery of the situation. According to Styan (1971:325), Charlotta parodies the archetypal image of mother and child, and thereby comments on Lyubov's and Anya's views of the future. The archetypal image shown by Charlotta is, however, rather the opposite of Lyubov and Anya. In this situation, Anya is comforting the defeated Lyubov. The line between mother and child is thus blurred, as Lyubov is comforted with naïve visions of the future as if she were a child. Charlotta thereby draws attention to the unrealistic, naïve and childlike behaviour of Lyubov and Anya.

2.3.3. Social change: past and future

The main reason why the Gayev family could not go on living as their ancestors had for generations, and thus the reason for the consequent loss of the orchard, is the social change that took place in the time and setting of the play. Apart from the characters' reaction to the loss of the orchard, their general attitude towards the social change in Russia after the freedom of the serfs is also evident in their discourse.

The clearest symbol signifying social change and a break with the cycles of the past in *The Cherry Orchard* is the sound of the breaking string heard in Act Two. When the family, Trofimov, Lopakhin and Firs sit in a field they discuss pride and the unbalanced social conditions in Russia. They notice the beauty of the natural scenery of Russia. After this discussion, a pause ensues.

> [*Silence, except for FIRS muttering. A sound, as if from the sky, far off... like a string breaking. A sad sound which dies away.*]
>
LYUBOV	:	What was that?
LOPAKHIN	:	I don't know. Perhaps a cable in a mineshaft breaking... whatever it was, it was a long way off.
GAYEV	:	Might have been a bird. A heron perhaps.
TROFIMOV	:	Or an owl...
LYUBOV	:	[*Shudders.*] Eerie... [*Silence.*]
FIRS	:	It was the same before the disaster. An owl hooted and the samovar never stopped singing.
GAYEV	:	What disaster?
FIRS	:	The freedom [*Pause.*] (1996:48.)

After the unnatural sound is heard, each character gives his or her own possible explanation for it. Lopakhin gives the logical and scientific explanation that it was a cable in a mineshaft that had

snapped. Thereby Lopakhin's practical and businesslike manner is emphasised. Gayev and Trofimov give the impractical explanations that it might have been a bird, a heron or – more ominously, as Trofimov states – an owl. While Anya sobs and Lyubov shudders, Firs claims he recognises the incident to have happened before: just before the serfs were freed.

Styan (1971:287) observes that the sound of the breaking string is heard in an atmosphere where each characters is "isolated in his own world, each is incapable of seeing the whole; only the audience is invited to do that." From their own perspectives, the characters are unable to determine the significance of the sound, because although they are detached enough from their usual surroundings to be able to *hear* the sound of change they are still too involved in their own affairs to objectively identify it. Ironically, it is the senile Firs who can recognise the sound as symbolic of social change: it reminds him of the freedom of the serfs he regards as a disaster.

Firs' resistance to social change, despite the fact that this change is in his best interest, is evident not only in his reaction to the breaking string, but throughout the rest of the play. Before the sound of the breaking string is heard, Lyubov remarks that Firs has aged. He replies to her remark by giving an account of his own history and his opinion of the freedom of the serfs:

FIRS	:	I've lived a long time, that's why! They were marrying me off before your dear Papa was born. [*He laughs.*] I remember the day the freedom came. I was head valet by then... I didn't want no freedom, I never took it, I stayed with my Master. Oh, they was all singing and carrying on because they was free... what it all meant nobody knew.
LOPAKHIN	:	Yes, so much better in the old days. At least you got your back flogged!
FIRS	:	[*Not hearing.*] That's it! The peasants belonged to the masters, and the masters belonged to the peasants, you knew where you were. Now it's all topsy-turvy, can't make any sense out of it. (1996:44-45.)

What can be seen from this account of Firs, is that he resists social reform. He clings to the traditional notion that there existed a symbiotic relationship between a master and a servant before the emancipation of the serfs in 1861: the symbiotic relationship which is parodied by Firs' and Gayev's behaviour towards each other. Further, Firs never made any decisions about his life himself. Even the choice of a wife was made for him. Firs has never taken responsibility for his own life, and consequently, he cannot. Firs has been raised – and believes in – a social system that assigned him to a "master". When Lyubov asks Firs what will become of him after the orchard is sold, he answers: "Where you tell me to, that's where I'll go." (1996:61.) Thus, Firs is represented as a relic from the time of serf-owning. He cannot adjust after the social reform and longs for a time which has passed. When he is forgotten in the house at the end of the play, it is once more confirmed that Firs is unable to leave his servile life, the cherry orchard and everything it is associated with.

While the older generation of serfs, like Firs, struggle to adjust to the social reform, the younger generation embraces and demands this change. In Act Three, when the sale of the orchard has become more and more inevitable, Varya reprimands Yepichodov for acting disrespectfully. He, however, resents her authority:

VARYA	:	[*Enters from the ballroom.*] Semyon, what are you doing here, you don't belong here, why haven't you gone, [...] First you go and break a billiard cue – who said you could play billiards? Now I find you walking all over the drawing room as if you were a guest!
YEPICHODOV	:	Permit me to venture to assert... Who do you think you are, asking me to vacate the premises?
VARYA	:	I'm not asking you, I'm telling you. All you do is wander about doing nothing. What on earth we employ a clerk for heaven knows, you never do any work.
YEPICHODOV	:	[*Offended.*] The only people who are entitled to judge whether I work, or wander about, or eat or play billiards are my elders and betters... in other words, those in a position to do so.
VARYA	:	How dare you speak to me like that! You dare! Are you telling me that I'm not... that I don't know what I'm talking about? Get out of here! This minute... go on!
YEPICHODOV	:	[*Cowering.*] I must ask you to express yourself with more delicacy.
VARYA	:	[*Beside herself.*] Out... this minute... out!
[*He goes to the door. She follows him.*]		One foot in the Cowpat! Out! Get out of my sight!
[*He goes.*]		
YEPICHODOV	:	[*From behind the door.*] I shall complain... (1996:63-64.)

The tension between Varya and Yepichodov is clear not only through the substance of their argument, but also from the language that they use. Varya's plain, emotive language is contrasted with Yepichodov's inappropriate grandiloquence. According to Styan (1971:254), "[w]hatever the topic, everything is spoken [by Yepichodov] in the same earnest tone". Yepichodov uses a register he thinks is appropriate for a more noble appearance, but he lacks the intuition to decide when to use this register.

This extract also shows a struggle for authority. Varya tries to enforce her authority over Yepichodov by telling him that he does not belong in the house and may not play the master's game: billiards. However, Varya has lost her authority over Yepichodov. She is acting in a way which was appropriate before the serfs were freed. Yepichodov – aware that the social change implies new rights for him – refuses her authority; even if he does so in an inappropriate register. Varya does not accept his refusal of her authority, and chases him from the house with force. The argument between Varya and Yepichodov thus shows the friction which arises when one tries to enforce outdated rules. It also shows the way in which the characters perceive the social change: Varya still aims to uphold her authority as if the change never happened, while Yepichodov clumsily aspires to what he believes his new role to be.

Apart from this tension between characters from different sides of the former social barriers between nobility and peasants, tension also arises among the former peasants. Although both Lopakhin and Trofimov welcome the social change, they too differ in their approaches to it. As mentioned, the merchant, Lopakhin, is the counter character for Trofimov, the student. This antithesis between Lopakhin and Trofimov of worker versus thinker is quite evident in their discourse about the social conditions and change in Russia.

In Act Two, these adversaries are for the first time in conversation with each other during the family's peaceful picnic in the field. Lopakhin pesters Trofimov for still being a student in his late twenties and then asks his opinion of him (Lopakhin). Trofimov replies that Lopakhin is a materialistic boor that will devour everything in his path – but as the predatory beasts in nature, he too has his place and function. Trofimov further continues to philosophise about pride and human dignity:

TROFIMOV	:	[...] You [Lyubov and Gayev] saw something mystical in man's pride in himself. Perhaps you're right, from your point of view, but if we look at the matter simply, what have we to be proud of as a species? [...] We should stop admiring ourselves and get down to work.
GAYEV	:	Why? We die in the end just the same.
TROFIMOV	:	Who knows? And what does it mean, die? It may be that man has a hundred senses, that with death, only the five senses known to us perish, and the other ninety-five remain alive.
LYUBOV	:	You're so clever, Petya!
LOPAKHIN	:	[*Ironic.*] Oh, absolutely amazing!
TROFIMOV	:	We do advance, mankind is going forward. All that is beyond our reach today will be known, will be understood. But we must work! We must support those who seek the truth! How many people, here in Russia, commit themselves to serious work? The vast majority of the intelligentsia that I know do nothing, they're incapable! [...] They call themselves intelligentsia and sit about *talking* about science, understanding nothing of art... all they do is pull heavy faces and philosophise about abstractions and weighty matters. And all around them, under their very eyes, people starve! [...] What are all these fine conversations for? [...] In real life, what do we see? Dirt, squalor... and barbarism. When I listen to these intense conversations...[...], do you know what it does? It frightens me. I think we'd do a lot better to shut up.
LOPAKHIN	:	You know, I get up at four o'clock every morning. I work from morning to night handling money, my own and other people's. And I can tell you, there aren't many decent – very few honest people. When you work you soon find that out. Sometimes when I can't sleep, I get to thinking... 'Dear God... look at what you've given us. Endless forests... fields... horizons... so much!' We should be giants, living in such a country. (1996:46-47.)

According to Trofimov, human pride means nothing when the terrible conditions of most Russians are taken into account. He sees life as possibly eternal, and therefore Gayev's claim that all humans perish, no matter if they worked or not, is refuted. He sees the answer to all the social problems in Russia as hard work. Yet, Trofimov is never in the play associated with work himself. Lopakhin, whom he claims to regard as a materialistic beast, is one of the only characters in the play who commit themselves to work.

Trofimov criticises those who only talk about upliftment but never work towards it – a criticism which seems rather hypocritical when his lack of work is taken into account. He further criticises the Russian intelligentsia for not understanding art. Ironically, it is his adversary, Lopakhin who comes closest to heeding Trofimov's lectures. As stated, Lopakhin commits himself to hard work, and has become disillusioned about people through it. Although he did not understand the book that he tried to read in Act One, he is sensitive enough to appreciate the beauty of the "[e]ndless forests... fields... horizons" of nature; and laments the fact that people fail to appreciate it and see its potential.

It would initially seem that the reason for the conflict between Lopakhin and Trofimov is their categorisation of worker versus thinker, or materialist versus spiritualist. Trofimov speaks about life after death and seeking a higher truth while Lopakhin accounts how he handles his own and other people's money. However, Lopakhin proves to show most of the characteristics Trofimov upholds as desirable for building a better Russia, while he himself (Trofimov) remains largely passive. The tension between these two characters is therefore rather caused by Trofimov's inability to recognise the things he philosophises about in a worker like Lopakhin.

In Act Four, Trofimov and Lopakhin converse together again as they take leave of each other. Lopakhin states that he cannot wait to get back to work as it gives him a purpose. After Trofimov sneers at him for making such a high priority of his work, Lopakhin offers him money:

LOPAKHIN	:	I sowed three thousand acres of poppy last spring, God, what a sight, you should have seen it. Take the money... I cleared 40 000, I won't even notice the difference. Come on, what's the matter with you? Why turn your nose up? Look, don't expect fine words, I'm just a peasant.
TROFIMOV	:	The son of a peasant. And I'm the son of a chemist, and neither has the least bearing. [*LOPAKHIN pulls out his wallet.*] Don't! If you offered me two hundred thousand I wouldn't take it! I'm free of all that... all the things you crave, all you rich people – and poor people.... All these things have no power over me. [...] Humanity is on the move towards a higher truth ... [...] ... and I am in the van, in the front rank!
LOPAKHIN	:	Get there, will you?
TROFIMOV	:	I'll get there. [*Pause.*] I'll get there. Or point the way. Others will get there. [*In the distance, the sound of an axe hitting a tree.*]

LOPAKHIN : Time to go. Goodbye, my friend. We've no opinion of each other – well what does it matter, life slips by as we talk. When I'm working my head off, day after day, I do get the feeling... my thoughts move from one thing to the other [...] I feel I know why I exist. How many people in Russia, my friend, have any purpose in their lives... eh? Still, the world circulation... er... circulates just the same. (1996:70-71.)

Lopakhin declares the reason he knows that he exists: his work. And still, he is again shown not to be a stereotypical unpoetic businessman: he is moved by the sight of beauty of his poppy fields. Yet, before the audience can indulge in an opinion of Lopakhin as a refined hero, he again draws attention to his peasant origins. He does not want people to expect overly refined behaviour from him. And, his lack of tact indeed shows when he starts to cut down the cherry orchard before the family has left.

In contrast, Trofimov declares himself free from material baggage. He aspires to truths higher than that of the material and believes that if he will not completely uncover these truths, others will after him. The counterpoint of worker/materialist versus thinker/spiritualist is again emphasised. Trofimov is concerned about a life free from the material in which he is aiming to reach a higher truth. On the other hand, Lopakhin, is concerned about Trofimov's material well being, and cites exact numbers as he speaks. The adversaries part, acknowledging that their low opinion of each other, but also stating that their opinion of each other is irrelevant.

Thus, the adversity between Trofimov and Lopakhin is shown to reach a truce by the end of the play. Ironically, Lopakhin is shown not to be the coarse materialist that Trofimov makes him out to be – although he should not be mistaken for a genteel hero either. Trofimov is shown to be rather hypocritical in his philosophies in advocating work, being idle himself. He further criticises Lopakhin, who comes much closer to fulfilling his philosophies than Trofimov himself.

2.3.4. Personal relationships and marriage

Styan (1971:243) indicates an important binary opposition between characters with regard to personal relationships and marriage. The tension that results from these opposing views also creates a source of miscommunication and comedy. While Styan (1971:243) points out that Trofimov is a counterpoint for Lyubov with regard to love issues, Ganz (1980:52-53) also sees Lyubov and Trofimov as irreconcilable opposites with regard to their reactions to the loss of the orchard and their attitudes towards love affairs. In Act Three of *The Cherry Orchard*, a direct confrontation between these opposite views of Lyubov and Trofimov takes place. Trofimov states his irritation with Varya's attempts to constantly chaperone him and Anya:

TROFIMOV : [...] All summer she's been after Anya and me, frightened we're going to fall in love! Why should she think that? It's so trivial! We're above all that.

LYUBOV : And I must be beneath it, I suppose. (1996:57.)

They start to discuss their conflicting views on the sale of the orchard in which Lyubov asks Trofimov to try and understand her attachment to the orchard. She further comments on his wispy beard, upon which he replies that he is not trying to look attractive. Their conversation again turns to matters of love after Trofimov picks up a telegram that Lyubov has dropped:

LYUBOV : [*Takes the telegram from him.*] It's from Paris. I get one every day. He wants me to forgive him... to go back. I should, he needs me, he's hopeless on his own – oh, don't look like that, Petya... I know, I know, but what am I to do? He's ill! He's all on his own, there's no-one to look after him. Who'll see he gets his medicine, stop him getting into trouble? Why shouldn't I say it, why should I hide it... I love him. I love him! He'll drag me down, I know he's a millstone, I know that. But I love him. I can't be without him. [*She presses his hand.*] Please, Petya, don't say anything... don't judge. Just... nothing... please... mmm?

TROFIMOV : [*Upset.*] Forgive me. I'm sorry... but – for heavens' sakes, he's robbed you – well hasn't he?

LYUBOV : No, no, please... no, don't... don't say it... [*She covers her ears.*]

TROFIMOV : He's a parasite, everyone knows it but you, nothing but a petty, worthless –

LYUBOV : And you are twenty-seven years old and you still behave like a schoolboy.

TROFIMOV : Oh, never mind me!

LYUBOV : Grow up! You should be old enough by now to understand what it means to be in love... don't you know what it means, aren't you capable of love? You should fall in love – love someone! Yes! Yes! Forget about all this purity... you're nothing but a prig... a freak – a monster!

TROFIMOV : [*Horrified.*] What are you talking about? ... I don't know what you mean!

LYUBOV : "I'm above love"! Are you insane... no, I'll tell you what you are [...] ... Not having a mistress... at your age... it's unnatural!

TROFIMOV : You... can say this? I can't believe what I'm hearing... no... please... awful... [*He stumbles off towards the ballroom.*] you, of all... [*He returns.*] it's over between us! [*He goes.*] (1996:59-60.)

Lyubov and Trofimov clearly have very different views about love and sex. Their argument is perhaps best summarised by Lyubov when she states that if Trofimov is "above" love, she must be beneath it. Lyubov is foolish and indulgent, on the verge of returning to her lover in Paris who has robbed her and left her for another woman. Although she realises that it is a foolish decision, she justifies it with her supposed love for him. The realistic Trofimov is unable to understand her lack of

dignity and she cannot understand his disinterest. Two incongruous and heterglossic voices are thus shown to engage: one of indulgence and one of pragmatism. In this antithesis, neither of the voices are authoritative, and therefore the discourse remains unresolved.

Although Lyubov's foolish conduct seems to extend to both material and personal matters, Trofimov's propriety regarding sex should also not be taken too seriously. Senelick (2006b:972) notes how Trofimov is constantly undercut by comic devices so that he is also discredited as an authority . His dramatic exit, when he declares that everything is "over" between Lyubov and himself, is undercut when he falls down the stairs. When Lyubov and Trofimov finally decide to call a truce later in Act Three, the tension caused by their conflicting views remains unresolved, like the tension between Lopakhin and Trofimov.

Lyubov's indulgent attitude towards matters of romance further makes her oblivious to the unlikelihood of a union between Lopakhin and Varya. From the start of the play, the improbability of this union is apparent. In Act One, after Lopakhin has interrupted Varya's and Anya's conversation about the declining finances of the estate with sheep-like bleating, their conversation turns to the supposedly impending union:

ANYA	:	[...] Has he proposed yet? [*VARYA shakes her head.*] Look, why not have it out? You know he loves you, what are you waiting for?
VARYA	:	I don't think anything will come of it. He never takes the slightest notice of me – he's busy all the time! All it does is make me miserable, listening to everyone talking about it... "I hear you're getting married, when's the big day?" – there's nothing in it, it's all wishwash. [*Change of tone.*] You've got a new brooch. Is it a bee? (1996:20.)

Anya misunderstands the situation and encourages Varya to become engaged to Lopakhin although – from Varya's reply – she is clearly not the character who needs encouragement. As the subject is a sensitive one to Varya, she changes it by asking about Anya's new brooch. Yet, by this time, the reader/audience should be aware of the situation between Lopakhin and Varya: the other characters expect them to get engaged, she is in love with him, but he remains aloof in this regard.

At the end of Act One, the expected union between Lopakhin and Varya again becomes the topic of conversation. After Lyubov and Gayev have rejected Lopakhin's plans for the estate, and Lopakhin has left, Gayev makes derogatory remarks about him:

GAYEV	:	The man's a boor. Oh. Pardon. [*With a French accent.*]... I forgot. Varya's going to marry him. He's the precious fiancé, isn't he?
VARYA	:	Uncle, please.
LYUBOV	:	I shall be very happy, Varya. He's a good man. (1996:28.)

When Gayev teases Varya, it increases her embarrassment about the inconclusiveness of the situation. Lyubov misinterprets Varya's agony as coyness. Dramatic irony arises as the reader/audience knows that Varya resents Gayev's teasing and that Lopakhin's unwillingness to propose to her embarrasses her, yet both Lyubov and Gayev are oblivious to Lopakhin's inaction.

This situation of Lyubov's ignorance and Varya's anguish is repeated in Act Three when Varya becomes angry at Trofimov for teasing her about her supposed betrothal to Trofimov and Lyubov still does not understand the situation:

LYUBOV	:	Darling, don't be cross – why be upset? If you want to marry Lopakhin, marry him. He's an interesting man, a good man. Of course if you don't want to, then don't. Nobody's forcing you.
VARYA	:	I know, Mother. But all this joking. I take it seriously. He is a good man. I do like him.
LYUBOV	:	Then marry him my dear. What are you waiting for?
VARYA	:	Darling Mama, I can hardly propose myself! For two years everyone's been talking about it... everyone but him! He either says nothing, or he makes jokes. (1996:56-57.)

Lyubov thus remains ignorant until Varya spells Lopakhin's apathy out to her. This is the third time in the play that Varya is urged to get engaged to Lopakhin while she is not the reluctant party in the engagement. The play started in spring, and by Act Three, autumn is approaching while Lopakhin still has not proposed. It has become more and more unlikely that the two will marry, just as it has become more and more unlikely that the orchard will be saved.

Lyubov, however, stubbornly believes that the union is possible, and after an initial suggestion to Lopakhin in Act Two, applies more pressure in her suggestion that Lopakhin should marry Varya in Act Four. She asks Lopakhin why he and Varya seem to avoid each other. Upon this, Lopakhin answers:

> Not sure I do myself. It's odd. If it's not too late, let's settle it here and now. Let's settle it – basta! Mind you, without you here, I don't think I'd ever do it. (1996:76.)

Lopakhin is obviously ambivalent about this decision, as he states that if Lyubov had not instigated it, he would never have proposed himself. Lyubov remains ignorant of this ambivalence and calls Varya. Lopakhin, however, cannot bring himself to propose to Varya, and lets the moment pass.

The misunderstanding about Varya's and Lopakhin's supposed betrothal represents a clear example in the play of the failure of communication due to heteroglossia that also creates dramatic irony. From her indulgent point of view, Lyubov can neither understand Trofimov's avoidance of romantic entanglements, nor Lopakhin's reluctance to get engaged to Varya. As Lindheim (1985:59) remarks, Chekhov constantly engages people with different temperaments, who are from different social strata and value systems in dialogue with one another, only to illustrate their inability to converse intelligently. This strategy not only causes confusion and frustration for the participants in these unsuccessful conversations, but also serves as amusement to the onlookers.

Consequently, these incidents of failed communication about personal relationships and marriage issues provide comedy and show how miscommunication between people with heteroglossic views and different values cause a conflict of interests.

2.3.5. Assessment

In *The Cherry Orchard,* different contending voices form heteroglossic discourses on a number of topics. As the characters in the play can be categorised in various ways, a unique position is formed for each character, regarding issues such as birth and class, economic considerations, age and marriage. Some characters also act as a counter for other characters concerning the mentioned issues, and it is from the discourses between these counterpointed characters that the unique voices of the respective characters emerge.

With regard to the sale of the cherry orchard, Lopakhin is opposed to Lyubov and Gayev. Significant tension is caused by Lopakhin's plan to save the estate for the Gayev family, and by their rejection of this plan. Up to the end of the second Act, Lopakhin tries to engage in a clear and logical discourse with Lyubov and Gayev about the sale of the orchard. They, however, constantly digress into irrelevant chatter and bluntly reject Lopakhin's plan on account of their pride and vanity. When Lopakhin buys the orchard for himself, this unsuccessful dialogue between Lopakhin and Lyubov about the cherry orchard ceases.

Much of the discourse centres on the social changes in early twentieth century Russia. These social changes are represented by the sound of the broken string which is heard in Act Two. Each character has a different hypothesis for the origin of this sound, and yet no character can see the deeper meaning of it – except for the senile Firs who connects it with the sounds of social change. Firs also further shows his resistance to the change signified by the breaking of the string. Even though the social reform is to his benefit, he is unable to adapt to it, and is thus metaphorically left behind the times – just as the characters leave him behind in the house at the end of the play. In contrast to Firs, the younger generations of serfs embrace the social change.

The two former peasants, Lopakhin and Trofimov, also show a binary opposition in their characterisation as worker/materialist versus thinker/spiritualist. However, Lopakhin – as a hard worker – practises more of Trofimov's philosophies than Trofimov himself. These heteroglossic voices are thus shown to interact with one another, and since no one voice can be seen as authoritative, the tension between the characters often remains unresolved.

The characters also have different opinions about their own and each other's personal relationships and marital needs. The opposition between Lyubov and Trofimov on this matter clearly shows an inability in these characters to understand the other's point of view; since the former is indulgent and the latter is abstinent in matters of love and sex. Lyubov's ignorance and

indulgence also makes her oblivious to the more subtle motivations in the inconclusive supposedly impending engagement of Lopakhin and Varya. In this sub-plotline, dramatic irony develops as the reader/audience is able to understand Varya's predicament while Lyubov ignorantly intervenes in the situation.

In the dialogues between respectively heteroglossic views on different matters, different barriers in communication, such as class, pride, vanity and superficiality, can be perceived. These social barriers prevent an interpenetration of dialogue – as in the case between Lopakhin, Lyubov and Gayev; an inability to recognise another's point of view – as with Trofimov and Lyubov; Trofimov's failure to recognise his own philosophies in Lopakhin; Varya's refusal to accept new social protocol; and Lyubov's obliviousness to reality.

The discrepancy between how Yepichodov wishes to be perceived and the actual result perceived by the reader/audience as well as by the other characters is a source of comic relief, as is Trofimov's constant failure to maintain an assumed pose or register. Some of the comedy – as that of Yepichodov's stilted speech – stems from the inversion of social hierarchies. These incidents of comic relief form part of the carnivalesque qualities of the play, to be discussed subsequently.

2.4. The carnivalesque subversion of hierarchy

Carnival is defined – according to the Bakhtinian concept of dialogism – as the "discrowning", parody and overturning of social hierarchies. Literature which takes the carnival spirit onto itself by subverting authority can be considered as carnivalesque literature (quoted in Dentith, 1995:65). A carnivalesque subversion is also necessarily ambivalent in that it is aimed at reinforcing the status quo, but at the same time creates a space in which this status quo can be overturned temporarily (Dentith, 1995:75-76). The carnivalesque is further distinguished by a depiction of degradation – as renewal cannot happen without degradation. Carnival thus aims to overthrow all which is immortalised and complete, as that which is immortalised cannot be alive. A cycle of degradation and renewal is rather accentuated in the hierarchy of society (Dentith, 1995:67).

From the discussions of the chronotope and heteroglossia, it is clear that the characters in *The Cherry Orchard* are still coming to terms with the social change of their time. The comic representation of the outdated relationship between Firs and Gayev, the ball in Act Three which compares poorly to the balls of the past, as well as the argument between Varya and Yepichodov at the end of the ball emphasise the need for and resistance to change in the play. It has also become clear that in contrast to Lyubov and Gayev who yearn for the past, the young Anya is associated with new and fresh beginnings. It is only through the sale of the orchard – which overthrows Lyubov's and Gayev's authority – that the cycles of the past can be broken and a new

life can start for the former inhabitants and guests of the cherry orchard, including people of all social strata. Firs, the relic of the past who is incapable of moving with these changing times, is left in the house to die with the orchard and all that it symbolises.

And yet, Chekhov also shows that this overthrow of authority in favour of renewal is ambivalent. As was evident in the argument between Varya and Yepichodov in Act Three, the stilted speech of Yepichodov undermines his aspiration to be treated as an equal by Varya. In this fashion, the overthrow of authority is further comically depicted in *The Cherry Orchard* through the noble aspirations of the servant characters of Yepichodov, Dunyasha and Yasha.

However, Chekhov's sceptical detachment prevents him from ridiculing only characters with a specific viewpoint (Lucas, 1965:117-118). Thus, these servants aspiring to a higher social rank can also be seen as satiric reflections of their masters. Barrault (quoted by Senelick, 2006b:974) notes how Yepichodov's musings on the purpose of life parody Trofimov's philosophical speeches. According to Ganz (1980:55), the servants' behaviour also parodies their masters' behaviour, as Dunyasha's infatuation with Yasha is a vulgarisation of Lyubov's relationship with her Parisian lover.

Through subtle comic devices, Chekhov thus uses the ambitious behaviour of the servant characters to show the artificiality of their fumbled attempts to rise from their low social status and to parody those characters who outrank them in the social hierarchy.

2.4.1. Chekhov's comedy

The humour in Chekhov's plays has been notoriously overlooked by producers, directors and actors. Stanislavski, the Moscow Art Theatre director, refused to interpret *The Cherry Orchard* as a comedy and rather produced it as a drama – much to Chekhov's outrage (Magarshack, 1980:14). On the notion that his plays were received as tragic and tearful, Chekhov (quoted by Thikonov in Valency, 1966:298-299) remarks:

> You say that you have wept over my plays. Yes, and not you alone. But I did not write them for that; it is Alexeyev [Stanislavski] who has made such cry-babies of my characters. I wanted something else. I wanted to tell people honestly: 'Look at yourselves. See how badly you live and how tiresome you are!'. The main thing is that people should understand this. When they do, they will surely create a new and better life for themselves. I will not see it, but I know it will be entirely different, not like what we have now. And so long as it does not exist, I will continue to tell people: 'See how badly you live, and how tiresome you are!' Is that what makes them weep?

Chekhov intended his plays to be more lighthearted than Stanislavski's interpretation of them. His aim was to show his reader/audience characters who were sabotaging their own happiness. Thereby, Chekhov wanted to indict the lifestyle of his reader/audience, by showing them how dull,

bleak and depressing he believed their lives to be. Chekhov saw the possibility of improvement not as tragic, but as lighthearted and comic.

Yet, in his indictment of his reader/audience, Chekhov refused to take a specific stance. According to Gottlieb (2000b:228), Chekhov creates comedy in an objective and detached manner. Gottlieb (2000b:230) continues:

> It is almost impossible to detect Chekhov's dislike of a character in his plays – except, perhaps, of Ivanov, Natasha in *Three Sisters* and Yasha in *The Cherry Orchard*. With most of his characters, their three-dimensionality results in a 'realistic' perspective, with decent and weak aspects to each character, and no sense of the 'black and white' which informed the stereotypic characters and plots of many of the contemporary popular comedies.

Chekhov's comedy did not originate from a clear derisive ridiculing of a character, but rather from what Abrams (2005:340) describes as harmless comedy. This type of comedy arises from a situation, or is humorous within itself. Gottlieb (2000b:263) states that "we rarely laugh *at* Chekhov's characters; we usually laugh *with* them". No matter how foolishly Chekhov's characters behave, or how much he undermines them, an amount of sympathy is always retained for them. Chekhov thus uses "harmless comedy" in his plays.

Chekhov (quoted in Magarshack, 1980:33) furthermore prefers to ask questions rather than provide answers, as he writes in a letter to Suvorin:

> The creative artist must not set himself up as a judge of his characters or their opinions, but must be an impartial witness. If I happen to hear a rather confused discussion about pessimism which does not solve anything, I have to report this conversation in the form in which I heard it, and it is for the members of the jury, i.e. for my readers, to express an opinion about it.

Thus, although Chekhov makes his characters act in ridiculous ways and does not take them too seriously, he never ridicules them. Chekhov leaves the judgement of the situation to the reader/audience.

Of the four types of comedy in Chekhov's work that Pitcher (1985:90-91) describes, comedy of characterisation, comedy of the absurd and comedy of subversion are prevalent in *The Cherry Orchard*. Comedy of situation or characterisation entails the sketching of funny situations or characters and often the use of comic and sometimes ironic names (Pitcher, 1985:90-91). Chekhov makes use of this technique in *The Cherry Orchard*, especially through the characters of Yepichodov and Pishchik. Yepichodov wears boots which squeak, he drops things and blunders his attempts at impressing Dunyasha. This character is likely to be the source of laughter throughout the play as a result of his clumsy behaviour alone.

Semyonov-Pishchik has much the same comic effect. Chekhov gives him a humorous name by combining the ordinary and respectable Semyonov with the absurd name of Pishchik, which means "Squeaker" (Pitcher, 1985:101). His behaviour borders on farce as he suffers from narcolepsy. With apt comic timing, he falls asleep mid-sentence, wakes up and continues talking as

if nothing happened. In Act One, for example, after Lopakhin tried to persuade the family of his plan for the first time and left, Pishchik starts to account his daughter's opinion of Lopakhin. He realises that he is speaking out of turn, drops off and snores. He wakes up promptly, and asks Lyubov for a loan of 240 roubles.

Pishchik's turn of speech at the start of Act Three is equally funny. The act starts with all the characters dancing. When the dance is over, Pishchik and Trofimov enter the drawing room, with Pishchik complaining about his health. He has trouble keeping up with the dancing on account of his blood pressure, but still does the best he can. Directly afterwards he tells Trofimov that he is indeed as strong as a horse. He then jokingly tells that he is descended from the horse Caligula brought into the Roman senate. He speaks about the expense of keeping a horse, namely the price of hay and oats, and states that as he has financial difficulties he mainly thinks about money. He again falls asleep and after he awakes, continues his conversation. Trofimov remarks that Pishchik indeed looks like a horse, Pishchik replies that a horse is a "noble beast" (1996:54) as you can get a good price for it.

Pishchik's chain of thought can be clearly seen. He starts to complain about his health after which he contradicts himself with the cliché that he is as healthy as a horse. His mention of the word "horse" reminds him of the anecdote that he is descended from Caligula's horse. As he is preoccupied with money, he then considers the cost of keeping a horse, and concludes by stating that a horse's value lies mainly in the money for which it can be sold. This strange and enthusiastically delivered speech creates comedy as it reveals Pishchik's preoccupation with money, and again shows him to continue a conversation despite having fallen asleep half-way. Pishchik is again the source of humour when he later alleges that according to Nietzsche, it is acceptable to forge banknotes. However, he has never read Nietzsche, but relies on his daughter's accounts of her reading. Pishchik thus creates comedy throughout the play by making ungrounded assertions, giving voice to irrelevant talkativeness and his comically timed narcoleptic attacks. The reader/audience thus gets to know the characters of Yepichodov and Pishchik as being clumsy and irrelevant respectively and expects behaviour which affirms these preconceptions throughout the play. When these expectations are satisfied, the reader/audience is amused. These characters are thus comic devices Chekhov uses to relieve the tension and mood of the play and to provide constant comic relief.

Chekhov furthermore uses comic incidents such as Lopakhin's misquotation from Hamlet, Trofimov's fall down the stairs and Lopakhin's accidental injury when Varya hits him with Firs' stick as incidents which provide comic relief throughout the play. These incidents, which will not be discussed in detail, also reveal information about the characters involved in them and sometimes undercut the characters.

Lastly, Chekhov creates humorous situations caused by Firs' hearing impairment and senile muttering. Firs is known to mutter unintelligable things to himself, which the other characters have come to disregard. In Act One, after Pishchik has swallowed all of Lyubov's pills as a joke Lyubov and Lopakhin remark that the pills will make Pishchik ill. Firs then speaks:

FIRS	:	[*Mutters.*] ...ate half a bucket of cucumbers during Lent.
LYUBOV	:	What is he saying?
VARYA	:	He does it all the time now ... we don't take any notice.
YASHA	:	He's past it! (1996:27)

When Varya states that none of the characters take notice when Firs mutters, it is clear to the reader/audience that they do not take Firs seriously. However, the attentive reader/audience member will notice Firs' mutterings are indeed not nonsensical. After Pishchik's gluttonous behaviour of swallowing all of Lyubov's pills, Firs accounts that during Lent Pishchik also ate half a bucket of cucumbers. As Lent is supposed to be a period devoted to fasting and abstinance, this behaviour of Pishchik shows him to be self-indulgent. Firs thus gives valuable information, which can sometimes be humorous, in his mutterings which are ignored by the other characters.

Firs furthermore misinterprets conversations and gives inappropriate answers to questions as his hearing is impaired. After Firs accounts his life and voices the opinion that he is against the abolition of serfs in Act Two, Lopakhin makes a sarcastic remark which is misinterpreted by Firs, as he did not hear it correctly:

LOPAKHIN	:	Yes, so much better in the old days. At least you got your back flogged!
FIRS	:	[*Not hearing.*] That's it! The peasants belonged to the masters, and the masters belonged to the peasants, you knew where you were. Now it's all topsy-turvy, can't make any sense out of it. (1996:45)

Firs thus interprets Lopakhin to say the opposite of what he actually said, again creating humour through a situation.

The second type of comedy described by Pitcher (1985:95) that occurs in *The Cherry Orchard*, is the comedy of the absurd. This type of comedy entails the use of incongruous, ridiculous, bizarre and grotesque elements. Comedy of the absurd is also known to be unsentimental and brutal and according to Pitcher, black humour was part of Chekhov's comic make-up.

These instances of comedy of the absurd include the failure in communication about the fate of the cherry orchard between Lyubov and Lopakhin, as Lyubov's ignorance is absurd. Firs' treatment of Gayev as if he were a child is obviously incongruous, while Pishchik's repeated borrowing of money from Lyubov despite the dire state of her own finances is also plainly absurd. Lyubov further behaves in bizarre ways by easily changing the topic of conversation from the urgent and serious to the trivial. After Lopakhin has told Lyubov that the only way to save her estate

is by cutting down the cherry orchard she starts to talk about exotic dishes she ate in Paris. Again, after confessing her sins to Lopakhin in Act Two, Lyubov's feelings of guilt easily disappear when she decides to arrange the ball. An incidence of black humour occurs when the family forget Firs inside the house at the end of the play.

Lastly, Chekhov uses comedy of subversion in *The Cherry Orchard* to ridicule the hierarchies within society (Pitcher, 1985:92). The rest of this chapter will analyse the carnivalesque elements in the behaviour of Yepichodov, Dunyasha and Yasha. These characters' imitation of their masters' behaviour becomes a parody of that behaviour, but simultaneously indicts the aspirations of the servant class.

2.4.2. Parody of servants and masters

Throughout the play, Yepichodov tries to create an image of a sensitive, romantic martyr but fails, as he does not convince the other chararcters. According to Lindheim (1985:56), the tension between mask and face is a recurrent theme and source of humour in the work of Chekhov. He is fond of representing a character's true nature in contrast with the image he or she would like to portray. In such a way, the tension between the image Yepichodov is trying to portray and his incompetence in this portrayal, creates comedy as it is incongruous. His unlucky clumsiness further reduces him to a clownlike figure.

Yepichodov's aspirations to rise above his peasant status are already evident in Act Two when he tries to impress Dunyasha by attempting to appear poetic and well-read. The scene opens with Charlotta, Yepichodov, Dunyasha and Yasha who sit in the open field before the other characters arrive:

YEPICHODOV	:	[*Plays the guitar and sings.*] "What do I care for worldly pleasure, What do I care for friend or foe..." The playing of the mandoline is very consoling.
DUNYASHA	:	[*Powdering her nose.*] It's not a mandoline, it's a guitar.
YEPICHODOV	:	Not to a man in love. To a man who is mad with love it is a mandoline. [*He sings.*] "If only that my heart were warmed, By her returning passion's flame..." [*YASHA joins in.*]
CHARLOTTA	:	Dreadful... ach... you sound like hyenas on a wet night!
DUNYASHA	:	[*To YASHA.*] You've been abroad, you're lucky.
YASHA	:	[*Yawns, lights a cigar.*] I am, who's arguing?
YEPICHODOV	:	Absolutely. I mean to say... abroad everything's been sorted out long ago.
YASHA	:	Yes, take my word for it.
YEPICHODOV	:	I'm a mature person. I read... I've read any number of books. Remarkable books. But there's no guidance. Nothing to tell you. Should one? I mean... live? Or shoot oneself. So to speak. I carry it with me all the time. Just in case. [*He produces his revolver.*]

CHARLOTTA : There... finished. [*She puts the gun over her shoulder.*] I go. You... Yepichodov... yes, very clever man... frightening too – the women fall over themselves for you, eh? Brrr! [*She moves off.*] These clever boys – so stupid.

[...]

YEPICHODOV : Strictly speaking, and absolutely on the point, I have to say, as far as yours truly is concerned, fate seems concerned to treat me with no mercy whatsoever. I feel like a tiny boat. Buffeted. In a storm. If I'm mistaken then why, when I woke up this morning, was there a huge fat spider sitting on my chest, as big as this. [*He makes a fist.*] Sitting. Right here. Looking at me. Again, I go to pour myself a glass of kvass, and what do I see, waving at me through the bottle? A cockroach. An object of remarkable repulsiveness.

[*Pause.*]

Have you read 'The History of Civilisation' by the English historian, Buckle?

[*Pause.*]

Could I, perhaps, have a few words with you, Avdotya Fyodorovna? (1996:37-39.)

Yepichodov tries to create the image of a melancholic suitor as he sings and strums his guitar, which he refers to as a mandoline. However, the object of his affection – Dunyasha – immediately breaks this illusion as she points out that he is not playing a mandoline, but a guitar. Yepichodov tries to defend his pretentious name for his guitar by stating that – being in love – his imagination has turned his guitar into a mandoline. He continues his song in an attempt to win Dunyasha's heart. However, this time his adversary, Yasha, shatters the atmosphere he tried to create by joining him in song.

Yasha thus defeats Yepichodov's attempt to attract Dunyasha's attention with his guitar. After reproaching him, she continues to speak to Yasha about his experience abroad. Yepichodov again attempts to draw Dunyasha's attention to himself by trying to appear intellectual. He continues to ponder the purpose of life, and this time his attempts are shattered by Charlotta, who realises that he is only trying to impress Dunyasha. With sarcasm she tells Yepichodov that he is neither clever nor romantically desirable. Yepichodov, however, continues his attempt to sound sophisticated and muses on the meaning of his unlucky clumsiness. He then asks if either Dunyasha or Yasha has ever read the works of Henry Buckle. The reference to the English historian is lost on his audience and after a pause, which shows this failure in communication, he asks Dunyasha if he could speak with her in private. Dunyasha, however, postpones the conversation by sending Yepichodov away to fetch her little cape – in order to be alone with Yasha. Defeated, Yepichodov leaves – strumming his guitar.

Yepichodov's last attempt at sounding well-read and intellectual is his reference to Henry Buckle, which fails to evoke a reaction from Yasha and Dunyasha. According to a footnote by Senelick (2006b:1003), Buckle's 'The History of Civilisation' was controversial and popular when

published in 1860, but had become outmoded by the end of the century. Thus, Yepichodov's reading – as his stilted speech – remains only an unsuccessful attempt to rise to a more sophisticated status.

As Barrault (quoted by Senelick, 2006b:974) notes, these musings of Yepichodov also act as a parody of Trofimov's speechifying which will follow later in this act. Trofimov's fall down the stairs after his argument with Lyubov in Act Three is also parodied by Yepichodov's perpetual clumsiness. Yepichodov's attempts at being perceived as an intellectual thus both parody Trofimov's idealistic philosophies and Yepichodov's own attempts at overthrowing the intellectual hierarchy between himself as a servant and Trofimov as a peasant-born student.

Like Yepichodov, Dunyasha also aspires to rise above her peasant status. In Act One, Dunyasha and Lopakhin converse while waiting for Lyubov to arrive:

DUNYASHA	:	The dogs have been awake all night... they know she's coming! They know!
LOPAKHIN	:	What's up with you?
DUNYASHA	:	I feel all faint... my hands are trembling!
LOPAKHIN	:	Too many fancy ideas, that's your trouble. Done up like a lady – your hair all – you're not a lady, what's the matter with you? (1996:16.)

In Fen's (1954:334) translation of the play, Lopakhin tells Dunyasha in this extract: "You must remember your place." After reprimanding Dunyasha for acting more refined than is expected of her as a maid, he sends her to fetch him kvass.[7] Later, when Lyubov arrives, Dunyasha again continues her ladylike behaviour:

LOPAKHIN	:	Listen, is that them?
DUNYASHA	:	Ooh they're here, what's the matter with me, I've gone cold all over!
LOPAKHIN	:	Yes, it's them. Come on. I wonder if she'll recognise me, it's five years...
DUNYASHA	:	Oh I feel faint, I feel faint! (1996:17)

Dunyasha is thus acting in an overly refined manner which seems exaggerated for a maidservant of the Gayev family. Lopakhin, who has remained true to his own peasant roots, reprimands her about this – because, ironically, as Styan (1971:252) points out, a peasant is "the best, at any rate the harshest, judge of another peasant". As Lopakhin knows Dunyasha's origins, he sees right through her show of refinement.

The discrepancy between Dunyasha's real status, referred to by Lopakhin, and her aspired status of a delicate lady is thus clearly shown in this extract. Although Lopakhin reprimands her for her aspirations, and treats her like a maid by sending her to fetch him a drink, Dunyasha continues to act in this refined manner by stating that she feels faint and trembles.

[7] An alcoholic drink with a low alcohol content, which resembles rye beer (Woolland, 1996:122).

Later in Act One, Dunyasha also attempts a friendly conversation with the noble Anya:

DUNYASHA	:	We've been waiting and waiting for you! [*She takes off ANYA's hat and coat.*]
ANYA	:	I couldn't sleep on the train, I haven't slept for four whole nights – oh, I'm so frozen!
DUNYASHA	:	You went away in the snow and the cold, and now look! Oh, you lovely, lovely, lovely... ooh, you're back.... [*Laughing and kissing ANYA.*] I've been waiting and waiting – there's something to tell you, I can't keep it in another minute, I'm going to burst!...
ANYA	:	What is it this time?
DUNYASHA	:	It's Yepichodov..., the clerk! He proposed! Just after Holy Week!
ANYA	:	Here we go again... [*She arranges her hair.*] I've lost every single hairpin.
DUNYASHA	:	I don't know what to do, he's madly in love with me!
ANYA	:	[*Looks lovingly into her bedroom.*] My own room. My own windows. I'm home again. [...]
DUNYASHA	:	Trofimov's here!
ANYA	:	Petya?
DUNYASHA	:	He's staying in the bathhouse, he says he doesn't want to be in the way. I was going to wake him up but Varya said "Oh don't wake *him* up!" [*Varya enters, keys at her waist.*]
VARYA	:	Quick, Dunyasha, make some coffee, Mama's asking for coffee.
DUNYASHA	:	I won't be long. [*She goes.*] (1996:18-19.)

Dunyasha tries to engage Anya in a conversation about her own love life. She tries to impress Anya with her supposed predicament of Yepichodov's love for her. Anya, however, is reluctant to engage in this informal and friendly conversation with Dunyasha: she is markedly agitated and ignores Dunyasha for the most part. When Anya clearly does not listen to Dunyasha and speaks about how much she has missed her room, Dunyasha shares information that she knows will evoke a response from Anya: the news that Pyotr Trofimov, whom the family has not seen since the death of Anya's little brother, is on the estate. However, the attention that Anya now gives to the conversation with Dunyasha is short-lived as Varya enters and orders Dunyasha to make coffee. Dunyasha leaves, stating that she would not be gone long – meaning to take up her conversation with Anya later.

In accordance with the noble image Dunyasha is trying to portray through her mimicry, she tries to befriend Anya – who is noble by birth. This attempts fails, however, as Anya rejects Dunyasha's friendly advances. When she uses information at her disposal which she knows will evoke a reaction from Anya, Varya enters and orders her from the room. Thus, also this attempt by Dunyasha at nobility is unsuccessful. According to Bhabha (1994:126), "the desire to emerge as 'authentic' through mimicry [...] is the final irony of partial representation". It is thus Dunyasha's

attempts to be perceived as a lady despite the transparency of her imitative behaviour which creates comedy through irony.

In Act Two, after Yepichodov has left Yasha and Dunyasha alone in the field, she again tries to pass for a lady. After powdering her nose and sending Yepichodov off to fetch her little cape, Dunyasha tries to impress Yasha even further:

DUNYASHA	:	I hope to Heaven he *doesn't* shoot himself. [*Pause.*] I don't know what's the matter with me, I'm so nervy! I suppose it's being here since I was little, I've got out of the way of being a peasant. I mean, look at my hands – white as white, like a lady's. I'm frightened of everything, I'm all tender and delicate now, sort of noble really.... Yasha if you deceive me I don't know what I'll do my nerves won't stand for it!
YASHA	:	[*Kisses her.*] Little pumpkin. Still, we must behave ourselves, mustn't we? I'm not very keen on girls who make fools of themselves.
DUNYASHA	:	But I love you so much! You're educated! You can talk about anything!
YASHA	:	[*Pause. He yawns.*] Ye-es. In my experience, once a girl's fallen in love, she loses all sense of shame. [*Pause.*] If there's one thing I enjoy, it's lighting up a cigar in the open air. [*He listens.*] Somebody's coming. It's them. [*DUNYASHA embraces him impetuously.*] Go back along this path here, as though you'd been for a swim. I don't want you bumping into them, they'll think we're keeping company, heaven forbid! [*DUNYASHA snuffles quietly.*]
DUNYASHA	:	It's the smoke... from your cigar... (1996:39-40.)

In this extract, it is clear that Dunyasha wants to be perceived as sophisticated and delicate through her concern over Yepichodov's suicide threat, her account of how she cannot be regarded as a peasant anymore and her faint, disapproving cough when Yasha smokes his cigar. Styan (1971:277) comments that Dunyasha is attempting to play the part of a lady as she "examines herself in a hand-mirror and dabs at her nose with a powder-puff, just as Madame might have done, only in private." Her attempts to appear ladylike thus fail as they remain only imitations. Yasha treats her with disrespect and scorns her attempts by blatantly smoking a cigar in her presence. He clearly does not regard her as a lady, as neither of the other characters (except maybe for the infatuated Yepichodov) does.

When Dunyasha loses her grip on her ladylike pretences and excitedly embraces Yasha, two voices can be perceived in her language. Dunyasha has a spontaneous and impetuous voice, stemming from her peasant origins, as well as a more affected voice, stemming from her noble aspirations. It is the tension between these voices which exposes Dunyasha's behaviour as obvious mimicry.

Styan (1971:279) further notes how Dunyasha's "prim reprimand" of Yasha's cigar ends this scene as a parody of gentility and a prelude to the entry of the master and mistress. As the act which follows reveals Lyubov's foolish behaviour with her Parisian lover, a clear parallel can be drawn between the affairs of Dunyasha and Yasha, and Lyubov and her lover in Paris. In this way, Dunyasha's love life becomes a vulgarised parody of Lyubov's – as Ganz (1980:55) suggests. Despite both these women's airs of sophistication, they are not treated with due respect by the men with whom they are having an affair. Dunyasha's attempts to rise in the social hierarchy, only exposes her own imitations (and limitations) and causes her to act as a parody of her mistress.

Dunyasha is again seen at the ball in Act Three, where she is allowed to dance with the guests. An arrangement which suits her noble aspirations perfectly.

DUNYASHA	:	[*Stops to powder her nose.*] The mistress said I could join in the dancing because there aren't enough ladies... ooh, it's made me all dizzy, my heart's pounding. Oh, and you'll never guess what the post-office clerk said to me just now, Firs Nicolayevich... took my breath away!
FIRS	:	What?
DUNYASHA	:	He said... "You... are like a flower."
YASHA	:	[*Yawns.*] Ignorant peasants! [*He goes.*]
DUNYASHA	:	Like a flower. I absolutely love it when people use words like that. I'm very sensitive. I take it all in...
FIRS	:	Oh, you'll get taken in all right. (1996:62.)

Dunyasha's attempts at gentility are practised on Firs – who would not have the faintest interest in either her social aspirations or her popularity among men – when she complains how dancing affects her delicate constitution. Making sure that Yasha is within earshot, she tells Firs about a compliment she received from the post-office clerk. However, she fails to impress either Yasha or Firs with this account, as Yasha walks away and Firs reprimands her. When Yepichodov then enters and demands to have the conversation with her that she promised him in the second act, Dunyasha declares that she wishes to be left alone as she is "all in a dream" (1996:63). While she is playing with her fan, Varya enters and sends Dunyasha off, after which the argument between Varya and Yepichodov ensues.

Therefore, a pattern of Dunyasha's behaviour can be discerned. By overstating her sensitivity, she becomes a caricature of a lady, instead of actually being perceived as such. The result of her behaviour causes Dunyasha's aspirations to be ridiculed and Lyubov's behaviour to be parodied. To her disappointment, none of the other characters responds to her behaviour as a lady. In fact, Lopakhin reprimands her for not knowing her place and Yasha treats her disrespectfully. Every time that Dunyasha makes a show of her sensitivity, she is sent offstage by some character on an errand. Lopakhin sends her for kvass in Act One, Yasha sends her away to hide their affair in Act Two, and Varya sends her to her post as a maid in Act Three.

Dunyasha's affectations and aspirations are then comically exposed, much like Trofimov's fall after his argument with Lyubov undercuts his dramatic exit. Comedy is created as Dunyasha's inverted social status as a lady is overthrown by her actual social status as the maid of the household. Furthermore, Dunyasha is seen for the last time in Act Four as she is begging Yasha not to leave her, but he simply shrugs her off, because he is excited to return to his beloved Paris, a place where the plain Dunyasha does not belong. After Dunyasha's show of affected elegance, she is still left with the unlucky Yepichodov.

Dunyasha's affectations can be seen as attempts to emulate the behaviour of her superiors, to act in a way she thinks is appropriate for a lady. She, however, undermines her own aspirations, as her affectations are so exaggerated that she becomes a caricature. Yet, at the end of the play, her social status has not changed. Although the family has lost their estate, Lyubov still outranks Dunyasha in the social hierarchy. Dunyasha's behaviour thus shows the ambivalence of carnival by enforcing the status quo of social hierarchy and at the same time creating the freedom in which it can be overturned.

As Yasha is on his way to Paris with Lyubov, he may seem to be more successful than Dunyasha in his aspirations to a higher social rank. However, these aspirations are also carnivalised and undercut. When Yasha and Dunyasha meet for the first time in the play in Act One, their behaviour is caricatured:

DUNYASHA	:	Yasha! I wouldn't have recognised you!
YASHA	:	Hmmm – what's your name?
DUNYASHA	:	It's me! Dunyasha! You remember! Fyodor Kosoyedov's daughter. I was only this high when you left!
YASHA	:	Mmm. Quite a little pumpkin. [*He looks round swiftly then embraces her. She yells and drops a saucer. YASHA leaves.*] (1996:21.)

Dunyasha is impressed by the seemingly worldly flair of Yasha who apparently looks very different from when he left in the past. She greets him with simplistic enthusiasm. He, on the other hand, pretends not to recognise her. After looking to see if anyone can see them, he seizes the opportunity of the impression he has clearly made on Dunyasha and embraces her. In response, she yells and he leaves. Styan (1971:261) comments on this ironic parallel when he says:

> His performance might be a parody of Lyubov's French lover – 'H'm! ... And who are you?' – for Yasha shares with Dunyasha ideas above their station. [...] He and Dunyasha are well matched: she responds like the caricature of a lady. After looking round to make sure he is not seen, a gesture which reveals the conflict between his origins and his unwillingness to acknowledge them, Yasha gives her an over-dramatic kiss, behaving to the servant-girl much as he imagines the master would have done. With appropriate refinement, she gives a polite scream, drops a saucer and wipes at a tear. Brief and mocking, the tiny scene offers a quick perspective on the social life of civilized Paris, the same that has so obsessed Lyubov and troubled Varya and Anya.

The characters behave according to their personal impressions of the behaviour of their masters and mistresses, which creates caricatures of their aspirations to higher social status. They act as they think the master or mistress would have acted. Their behaviour further parodies the life Lyubov lives in Paris, and it also draws attention to the romantic incompetence of Yepichodov and Lopakhin. Yasha and Dunyasha thus superficially invert the social hierarchies by playing the parts of the master and mistress. Through this, they are actually subverting their own aspirations.

2.4.3. Change

Lindheim (1985:63) notes how often Chekhov emphasises the problems people face when adapting to socio-economic change. These problems can be clearly seen in the characters of Yepichodov, Dunyasha and Yasha as their attempts to renounce their peasant origins and rise in the social hierarchy remain attempts only. In a review of a production of *The Cherry Orchard*, Brantley (2009) describes this comic social behaviour as a situation in which "the old codes don't apply, but the new ones haven't arrived yet". The characters are thus aware that the social change should in some way better their situation, but – as they do not know in which way – behave as they imagine they should.

Yasha's attempts to renounce his roots, further prompts him to refuse to see his peasant mother. Yet, his affected behaviour is as much a mask as is Dunyasha's. Although she might have been impressed by his Parisian affectations, it fails to make an impression on the other characters, especially on Gayev.

In Act One, after Lyubov agreed to lend Pishchik more money, Gayev remarks on his sister's foolish conduct regarding money. He then notices Yasha in his company:

GAYEV	:	My dear sister – still throwing her money away. [*To YASHA.*] You – clear out... you smell of the hen house.
YASHA	:	[*Grins.*] You haven't changed, Leonid Andreyevich.
GAYEV	:	[*As a snub.*] Who? [*To VARYA.*] What's he say?
VARYA	:	[*To YASHA.*] Your mother's here, I wish you'd go and see her, she's been sitting in the servants' hall for the last two days. (1996:31.)

Gayev is thus indignant that Yasha is in his company, and sends him out as he smells like a chicken coop. Yasha arrogantly declares that Gayev has failed to change with the times by ordering him to leave and saying that he smells like a chicken coop as he is a peasant. Varya, however, puts Yasha in his place when she reprimands him for refusing to see his mother. Yasha then reluctantly leaves.

In the last act, this scene is repeated when Gayev walks into the room after Yasha has finally rejected Dunyasha:

GAYEV : We must go soon... almost time. [*With a hard look at YASHA.*] There's a sort of peasant smell in here... who's smelling of herring? (1996:73.)

Gayev again does not approve of Yasha's relaxed presence in the house and again undercuts his aspirations by alluding to a "peasant smell" which bothers him when Yasha is around.

There is thus tension between Gayev's expectations of a servant and Yasha's aspirations and behaviour. Gayev regards himself as superior to Yasha, and expects him to be as submissive as Firs is. Yasha, on the other hand, does not see himself as a servant, but as someone higher in social hierarchy. As Gayev and Firs are shown to be ridiculous by their behaviour which alludes to the past, Yasha is also criticised because of his ambitions to renounce his peasant origins. Gayev remarks that despite Yasha's air of Parisian snobbery, he still smells like a peasant. This tension provides comic relief and shows both Gayev and Yasha as ridiculous.

2.4.4. Assessment

This discussion illustrates how the use of the carnivalesque in *The Cherry Orchard* anticipates the overthrow of the status quo and envisages the new order. This overthrow is ambivalent and accentuates the cycles of degradation and renewal in the text. In *The Cherry Orchard*, the sale of the orchard overthrows Lyubov's and Gayev's authority, but at the same time creates the opportunity for a new life for these characters. The overthrow of authority is further shown as ambivalent: the noble aspirations of the servant characters become comic as these aspirations are both an indictment of their ambitions and a parody of their masters.

Yepichodov, Dunyasha and Yasha attempt to emulate a more sophisticated social status. Yet, the tension between mask and face, or the image they try to uphold and their true character and origins, is very apparent to the other characters as well as to the reader/audience. Their clumsy attempts are thus comic. Yepichodov's attempts to pass as a romantic martyr, Dunyasha's act of a delicate lady and Yasha's pretence of Parisian flair are emphasised to the point where they become caricatures.

In their show of ambition, these characters are also constantly undercut, which accentuates their imitative behaviour and creates more comedy. Yepichodov is never taken seriously by any of the characters, and his stilted speech and outmoded reading make him seem preposterous. Yasha does not treat Dunyasha with any respect, and after each attempt to appear ladylike, she is repeatedly sent off stage by another character. Yasha's Parisian flair is undercut by Gayev's comments that he smells like a chicken coop or herring.

In the ambivalent spirit of carnival, the behaviour of these characters not only ridicules themselves, but also their masters. As Yepichodov's attempts at philosophising parodies Trofimov's

rhetoric and the affair of Yasha and Dunyasha parodies the affair of Lyubov and her lover in Paris, the nobility is also ridiculed.

Thus, the spirit of carnival is apparent in *The Cherry Orchard* in the imminent cycles of degradation and renewal in which new codes of behaviour have not yet been established, thus causing a superficial overthrow of hierarchy. The characters attempt to elevate their social status with refined behaviour which results in a mimicry of their masters. Through this, both the servants and their masters are ridiculed in the Chekhovian style of ironic detachment. No character is treated with indulgence, as all are exposed as fools.

2.5. Conclusion

To conclude, this Bakhtinian analysis of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* indeed shows the text to be dialogic. The concept of the chronotope is evident in the text as the orchard, nursery, ballroom and house act as points of reference for an engagement between past and present. As place can be a substitute for memory, the orchard contains Lyubov's childhood memories. The value that the orchard has to Lyubov is thus only as a relic of her youth. The orchard has no value for Lyubov at present. The ballroom, which evokes the grand balls of the past, is thus also a place imbued with memory. When in this space, the characters also indulge in behaviour which would have been appropriate in the past. They forget about their present problems and dance in the ballroom as if it really were the glorious past. It is only when Lyubov moves into the drawing room: the place which represents the present, that she is bothered by her present problems. The past and present are continually juxtaposed and compared through the characters' engagement with chronotopes that are multiply encoded with meaning as the history contained in these spaces means different things to different characters. Trofimov regards the history of the orchard with abhorrence, while Lyubov indulges herself in her childhood memories.

The text is further shown to be heteroglossic – not only with regard to the different ways in which the characters engage with the chronotopes, but also with regard to various debates throughout the play. Lopakhin's practical businesslike language contrasts with Trofimov's philosophical spiritual and moralistic discourse. The discourse of these two characters in turn contrasts with Lyubov's ignorant and nostalgic language and an engagement between these voices often leads to conflict. Furthermore, Firs's senile mutterings, which would have been appropriate in the past, contrast with Anya's vibrant voice, laughter and optimistic visions about her future. Anya is in turn undercut by Charlotta's unsentimental and detached commentary. As the discourse emanating from these voices shows no distinctive voice of authority over the others, it illustrates that the discourse in *The Cherry Orchard* is truly heteroglossic.

Furthermore, the analysis of the carnivalesque elements in *The Cherry Orchard* shows how different voices can contend in the language of one character. By creating a space for the status quo to be overturned, the ambivalence of the social hierarchy as well as its overthrow are intimated, just as Dunyasha's discourse is ambivalent in depicting both her peasant origins and her noble aspirations. Comedy is created in the text through different forms of incongruity. Lyubov's and Gayev's behaviour does not fit their dire financial situation, as Dunyasha's behaviour also reveals the tension between her origins and aspirations.

The analysis of the concepts of the chronotope, heteroglossia and the carnivalesque reveal that although a play might be limited to a specific time (now) and place (here), different scenarios can be shown and engaged with on stage simultaneously. Through the characters' engagement with the orchard, the past as well as the present is shown to the reader/audience simultaneously, while Yasha's and Duyasha's mimicry of their masters give the characters a subtle glimpse into Lyubov's Parisian life without any disruptions in the timeline of the plot. This analysis shows that *The Cherry Orchard* is a textured and nuanced text that opens up various debates on social change, personal trauma and outdated behaviour. Yet, as no authoritative voice prevails in these debates, Chekhov seems to prefer posing questions to providing answers.

In order to establish how Suzman transposed Chekhov's representation of a society in a state of change, a similar analysis of Suzman's text must be made. Suzman's transposition of the characters' attachment to place and nostalgia, their different perceptions of the past, present and future as well as the subversive possibilities in the text will subsequently be investigated.

Chapter 3:
The transposition of selected dialogic elements in Suzman's *The Free State*

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, it became evident that the analysis of the chronotopic, heteroglossic and carnivalesque elements in *The Cherry Orchard* reveals various dialogic discourses which can be found within the text. Through the various chronotopes in the play, the characters interact dialogically with the past. The past and present are thus juxtaposed and compared to each other. Various counterpoints are also shown in the play through the heteroglossic stances of the different characters. Debates about adverse issues bring binary oppositions, such as materialism versus spiritualism, into contact with each other. In these debates, Chekhov never endorses one character or viewpoint, with the result that the discourse in the play remains unresolved and unjudged. Furthermore, Chekhov subverts both sides of the social hierarchy through the carnivalesque subversion in the peasants' mimicry of their masters.

This chapter will investigate how Suzman transposes the above-mentioned aspects of Chekhov's play in *The Free State*. By investigating the similarities and differences between the source text and the transposed target text, Suzman's commentary on the two respective contexts can be discerned. Thus, the concepts of the chronotope, heteroglossia and the carnivalesque will also be applied to *The Free State* in order to discern how Suzman transposed *The Cherry Orchard* to the contemporary South African context.

As both plays express feelings of nostalgia for a life under threat in their respective contexts, the chronotopic value and interpretations of the orchard, house and nursery are directly transposed from *The Cherry Orchard* to *The Free State*. However, as most of the conflicting debates in *The Free State* are easily resolved, the heteroglossia is less obvious. As the inversion of hierarchy is not shown to be temporary (and therefore carnivalesque), but permanent, Suzman only indicts the formerly dominant level of the overturned social hierarchy, and not both sides – as Chekhov does.

This chapter will firstly analyse the memory and nostalgia represented by the orchard, the role of the orchard as status symbol in the South African context, and the engagement of black and white characters with the orchard. Secondly, the chapter will investigate how the sale of the orchard and the political change in the context are experienced by different characters, also exploring the relationships between characters across the racial divide. Lastly, the permanent inversion of hierarchy in the social context will be investigated.

3.2 The chronotopic engagement between past and present in *The Free State*

As in Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, the chronotope as literary image which conflates time and space is also evident in Suzman's *The Free State.* The past and present are again juxtaposed in this play as memory and nostalgia remain a constant force which is associated with the setting of the play. The characters' social status and lives – and the divides between them on the grounds of race – form part of this continual comparison between past and present.

In South Africa, as in Russia, the implications of space and place are highly relevant following the great social and political changes in the country. As a result of the social imbalances brought about by apartheid, the land was also unequally divided between black and white. The Free State Province, the area in which the play is set, is known to have been previously predominated by white farmers. After the first democratic elections in 1994, white South Africans could no longer take the land they had owned for generations for granted. With current issues concerning land reforms still not resolved, the question of land and its rightful ownership is relevant also in the South African setting.

Suzman (2000:xxii-xxiii) states in her introduction to the play that although Chekhov's original text need not necessarily be interpreted through the prism of politics, she based her adaptation on such an interpretation as it was justified by the overall emphasis on politics in contemporary South Africa. Yet, she also intended her adaptation "to celebrate the year 1994 when South Africa held its first democratic elections and optimism rode high". Thus, although Suzman (2000:xxi) is aware of the inefficiencies of the new democracy, her play aims to celebrate the advent of democracy and is meant to be "both a query and a hope".

3.2.1 Suzman's plot

The plot of *The Free State* is to a great extent based on the plot of Chekhov's original play. Like Lyubov Ranyevskaya, Lucy (or Lulu) Rademeyer returns to the estate of her childhood after an absence of five years. Yet, the Guyver estate is bankrupt and needs to be auctioned off. A successful black businessman, Leko Lebaka – whom Lucy and her late husband, Johan, assisted in giving an education – first offers a plan that would save the family's estate (at the cost of their orchard) and when this plan is rejected, he buys the land himself. Throughout the play, Suzman emphasises and expands on certain characters. Varya, Lyubov's adopted daughter in *The Cherry Orchard*, becomes Maria, the illegitimate child of Johan Rademeyer and a young Sotho girl in *The Free State.* The Russian tutor, Trofimov becomes the young ANC activist, Pitso Thekiso. The retired Afrikaans secretary, Karlotta, replaces the German governess, Charlotta. Suzman changes

the context of these characters as she sees fit in order to either acculturise them or to convey her intention with the transposition.

3.2.2 Memory and nostalgia

In *The Free State*, Lulu experiences a sense of nostalgia when returning to the surroundings of her childhood, as Lyubov does in *The Cherry Orchard*. Thus, the notions of both Bachelard (1994:5) and Friedland and Hecht (2006:29) about nostalgia and the attachment to a place because of memory are applicable to Lulu as well. Lulu's childhood home remains in her memory and retains the glory of former years. She also sees the orchard as the site of her childhood and youth. When Lulu addresses the orchard in Act One, just as Lyubov does in *The Cherry Orchard*, it is clear that the orchard is a representation of her childhood and youth as well as her foil:

> Childhood. Yes, so vivid, images burned into the mind. Each morning my eyes would spring open to this – this ocean of white. It's all just as I remember. You're a ravishing orchard, oh yes, you are! All virginal white like a blushing bride – shady in summer, naked in winter – and now, bursting with life all over again. I wish I were a tree, I wish I could drop my thoughts like winter leaves. (2000:21.)

Lulu admires the orchard for its beauty and for staying the same as in her childhood. She further admires it for emerging fresh and full of life after the winter months and even wishes that she could leave her troubling thoughts behind as easily as the orchard sheds its winter leaves. Yet, this orchard is also barren and about to be cut down. The orchard in *The Free State* thus also represents beauty, grace and innocence as well as – by contrast – Lulu's inability to cope with her circumstances. The orchard further forms an *imago* in Lulu's mind as she longs for her childhood: the time of innocence.

The emphasised childlike behaviour of Lulu and her brother, Leo, evokes the past as Gayev's behaviour does in *The Cherry Orchard*. When they are reunited in Act One, and again when they part in Act Four, the siblings revert to their childhood selves in the joy and sadness of the arrival and departure scenes of the play. Gayev refers to his and Lyubov's childhood when he recalls how they slept in the nursery as children. The bond between the siblings is further established by Lyubov when she kisses Gayev while reminiscing on first seeing the orchard again. In *The Free State*, the siblings' childhood is further evoked when Leo grabs Lulu's scarf upon her arrival and runs away with it. She reacts to this childlike behaviour of Leo's, and the stage directions indicate that "*they both run off like kids*" (2000:6). Their behaviour brings to mind sibling rivalries of the past, witnessed by the very nursery in which these occurred. Thus, the nursery of the past becomes visible to the reader/audience.

In *The Cherry Orchard*, Lyubov and Gayev are left alone in the nursery at the end of the play. They are the last two people to leave the house and orchard forever and they embrace each

other and cry softly. In *The Free State*, this emotional scene also emphasises a reversion to childhood as they sit "*together on the window seat, like small children, holding hands. The teddy bear sits next to them*" (2000:73.) Their childhood again becomes visible to the reader/audience, and the fact that they have to say goodbye to this recollection of childhood is highlighted. In addition, Lulu's last goodbye to the house also suggests a parting with her mother: "Goodbye, Mama..." (2000:73.) There is a definite break between Lulu and Leo and their childhood, parents, the past, orchard, house and nursery. These places act as chronotopes, because they recall the histories of all the characters who inhabited and will continue to inhabit them.

Within these transposed notions of Lulu's memory and nostalgia in *The Free State*, the African setting of the play is also emphasised. When Lulu states how glad she is to be back on the estate and how much she loves her country in Act One, she says:

> Is this actually me? In this very room? (*Laughs.*) What if it's all a dream? God knows, I love my country, love it! When I peered out of the plane at Africa, dappled like a huge old leopard, the tears kept coming, so not a thing could I see. (2000:13.)

Lulu explicitly shows her emotional turmoil on returning to her beloved country when comparing Africa with one of its indigenous animals. Therefore Lulu's attachment is not only restricted to her childhood and the orchard, but also to Africa and South Africa.

The nostalgia in the play further extends to also show incidents of political nostalgia. The nostalgia that Leo shares with Lulu has a more deliberate political element than that of Leo's Russian counterpart. When the sun is setting in Act Two, after a discussion on politics led primarily by Pitso, the former tutor, Leo breaks out in song. He sings the pre-1994 national anthem of South Africa, in Afrikaans, to the embarrassment of Lulu's children Anna and Maria. Leo justifies his singing by saying: "It's still our national anthem – oh, all right, I'll shut up. Always liked the tune." (2000:42.)

In the past, the anthem was disliked by anyone opposing the apartheid regime, because it symbolised the victory of the Afrikaner over other races. After the political discussion that preceded Leo's singing, Maria and Anna sense that Leo is yearning for the old regime. Furthermore, he sings it in Afrikaans, the language of the Afrikaner, or, in the case of apartheid, the oppressor. Thus, Leo's singing could suggest nostalgia for the past, and specifically the old South Africa.

However, Leo only sings the first four lines of the anthem describing the beauty of the South African natural scenery. These four lines of the anthem are incidentally also the four Afrikaans lines which were incorporated into the new national anthem of South Africa. Apart from the political discussion, Leo's singing was also preceded by the businessman, Leko, remarking how blessed they are to have such beautiful natural scenery and Leo's own observation that the sun has set. Leo defends himself, stating that he has always "liked the tune" of the anthem. It is therefore

possible that Leo intended the song as an ode to the South African natural scenery and is merely singing it as an expression of aesthetic and auditory pleasure.

Leo hereby chooses to negate the symbolic value of the old national anthem for two possible reasons. He is either negating it on purpose to hide his political *faux pas* of being nostalgic about the apartheid era or ignorantly intended his singing as a mere ode to nature. Leo's true motives are left unexplored and open to interpretation by the reader/audience and the cast and director in the case of production. Whatever his reasons for singing, his song evokes the political past of South Africa, yet also refers to the natural scenery of the country. Thus, the context in which the orchard is set is depicted as a place of both beauty and oppression.

3.2.3 The space of *The Free State* and the orchard as status symbol

Crang's (1998:102-103) notion that space extends beyond location as it establishes a sense of community to human beings is also evident in *The Free State*. As in *The Cherry Orchard*, the orchard in *The Free State* is also a chronotope imbued with the past of the characters. However, in *The Free State*, the broader setting of the Free State Province is emphasised as well. According to Keuris (2004:157-158), the title of *The Free State* summons up historical and political associations for South Africans. Thereby, in the title, the past, present and future interlock. The province was founded in the 1800s when the Afrikaners moved from the Cape Colony in an attempt to escape British colonialism (Anon., 1973:346). The province thus came into being as part of a search for freedom. As an Afrikaner-dominated province, the state of freedom which was striven for did not include non-whites during the apartheid era.

When the title is interpreted in a literal sense, a different meaning is obtained. The word "free" immediately evokes the concept of freedom, and while the word "state" refers to the organised political community in which the play is set, it could also refer to a condition. Thus, the title could refer to a condition in which one is free. As Suzman had an optimistic intention with the play, the title of the play could convey her vision of the new South Africa as a state of freedom. In this manner, the title interlocks the past, present and future, as Keuris suggests.

This interlocking of past, present and future is again emphasised in Act Three, when a party is held on the night the orchard is to be auctioned off. Like in *The Cherry Orchard*, this party is a mere ghost of the parties of the past – as the old servant, Putswa, informs the reader/audience:

> Once upon a time judges, professors, surgeons would come to our parties. But now we send for a band of tsotsis from the location. (2000:54.)

In *The Cherry Orchard*, the interaction and juxtaposition between present and past are visually presented in Act Three through the stage setup, where the drawing room downstage signifies the troublesome present and the ballroom upstage the glorious past. In *The Free State*, Act Three is

set on the veranda of the house with the garden visible behind it. As South African houses normally have neither drawing rooms nor ballrooms and the weather generally permits and encourages outdoor entertainment, the veranda and garden serve as an obvious choice for the party in Act Three. There is the glow of a barbecue, tables and chairs on the veranda as well as dancing in the garden. A balustrade – which corresponds to the archway in *The Cherry Orchard* – separates these two areas. The veranda could also suggest a space of transition between home and garden, indicating the state of the country and the relationship between cultures.

Yet, the interaction between past and present through these two areas is not as clear in *The Free State* as in *The Cherry Orchard* as the entertainment of the past is not necessarily evoked by the dancing in the garden. However, the dancing and the band signify a carefree state that cannot be afforded by the family anymore, and thus still evoke a carefree past. On the veranda, the reader/audience can see the worrying Lulu, caught in the problems of the present. Thus, the past is more subtly evoked – not by a parody, but by evoking the idea of a carefree state once enjoyed, but which has now expired. Although the garden represents the carefree past, it is also the threshold between the house and nature, suggesting a passage into the great outdoors.

Viljoen, Lewis and Van der Merwe (2004:10) explain the ambivalent position of the farm that serves as an icon symbolising a heroic struggle against the wilderness. It both represents a safe home as well as a threat and constant fear of the loss of that home. Thus, the safety from the forces of nature offered by the farm is only temporary. The garden in Act Three of *The Free State* also serves this double function: the carefree way of life of the past and the threat of losing that way of life in the future. Lulu is shown to be at the brink of this loss: she is entering the outdoors, no longer shielded by her parents, her childhood home, her innocence, the orchard or apartheid. By superimposing both a carefree state and a threat in the garden, Suzman's staging of Act Three suggests that a carefree state might be achieved by crossing the boundary into the threatening outdoors.

The cyclicality of *The Cherry Orchard,* which further expresses the characters' nostalgic longing for the past, is also transposed to *The Free State*. The seasonal cycle in Chekhov's play has been preserved by Suzman (2000:xxvii), who situates her play between September 1994 and March 1995, as she explains:

> The play, to obey the seasonal aspect of Chekhov's play or rather the movements, for it's a bit like a symphony – must start in the spring and move towards autumn. That dictated the September after the first April elections, when the cherry blossoms would be at their full beauty and the bright optimism of the elections would still be vibrating in the air. A window in time of six months, not yet dissipated by the carping and questioning that the ensuing years inevitably brought, would cover the journey of the play.

Suzman wishes to capture the moments of euphoria after the advent of democracy, the moment right after the cycles of apartheid had been broken. Thus, she lays emphasis on the idea of a new

beginning, and accordingly Dikeledi also enters in Act One with a bunch of cherry blossoms – signifying spring.

As Suzman states, the new South Africa, like the day in Act One, had only just dawned in September 1994. The implications of a new government have not had time to become a reality yet, as can be seen from Leko's and Pitso's debates about the priorities the new government should adopt. Viljoen and Van der Merwe (2007:2) remark that the end of apartheid was not simply a "happy ending", but also a new beginning. Aside from causing relief to the country, "the new situation created a void in which the old narratives of strife had become obsolete". By September 1994, South Africa was still on very unfamiliar ground and both the uncertainty and new possibilities that this new cycle implies prevail throughout the play.

By its structure, which conforms to the seasons in Chekhov's text, this advent of a new cycle is confirmed in *The Free State*. As in *The Cherry Orchard*, the cycle of the past had indeed been broken by the time the sound of the breaking string is heard in Act Two.

Furthermore, the Free State Province is also a prominent setting regarding the weather. Although the amount of rainfall in the Free State varies significantly from the eastern to the western part of the province, it is generally known to be a dry area with little rainfall (Anon., 1973:345). After the cycle of landownership by birth is broken by the end of the third act, Act Four starts with heavy rainfall, thunder and lightning. The downpour of rain symbolises the release of the land by the Guyver family. Like Gayev in *The Cherry Orchard*, Leo also says: "[a]mazing what a decision does – before the sale we were all nervy and anxious, and then – bingo! – it's sold and it's like a burden has been lifted." (2000:66.) Lulu agrees with Leo and states that she too is relieved. Thus, the rain is also a symbol for the release of the Guyvers from the uncertainty that haunted them. The rain can wash away their feelings of guilt about the past, and is therefore a sign of rebirth for these white South Africans.

3.2.4 Society in *The Free State*: the lives of black and white South Africans

When Leko tells Lulu and Leo about his plan to save their estate in Act One, he gives an account of the history of the land. Leko has read Lulu and Leo's grandfather's memoirs. In these memoirs, the great-grandfather Guyver describes how he made his fortune from diamonds and then, in 1879, bought the land on which Lulu and Leo now live. Leko reminds the Guyvers of this history and then adds:

> And who helped him to get so rich? One Guess. Eya, where would you be without us, I wonder? So then what did he do? Why, buy land, of course, like they all did. Lots and lots of it – all along this lovely river and back to the krans behind. Three thousand hectares of prime grazing land was his for a song. Land once belonging to the Basotho people – my people, our land. So then he found a wife, he built this house and he planted his glorious

> orchard. And four generations of dear little Guyvers thought life would be like that for ever. But things have changed, wouldn't you say? And a lousy crop every second year is not what you'd call a living. Hell – you can't eat blossoms, dammit! (2000:16.)

This extract is thus an exposition of both the history of the land and the people, and it shows an engagement with the past on Leko's behalf. By choosing to read the great-grandfather Guyver's memoirs, he initiates a dialogue with the past.

By adding his own perspective to this history, Leko addresses the wrongs of the past concerning landownership in this dialogue. He refers to the role black people played in the economic success of white people in South Africa. He accuses the Guyvers' great-grandfather of taking land from his people, the Sotho people, and he accuses the successors of that great-grandfather of taking the land and accompanying lifestyle for granted. The need for a redistribution of the land is emphasised. At this stage, Leko still wants to help the family retain their land, but this passage already hints at his eventual purchase of the land for himself.

The chronotopic value of the land is thus emphasised. Leko's account of the history of the land represents the segregated and unjust history of the people who occupy it. With this speech, the reader/audience is prepared for the sale of the land to Leko, and its subsequent return to the Sotho people. In this way, the shaping of the landscape by Lulu's ancestors is seen to express certain social ideologies, as described by Crang (1998:27). These ideologies are perpetuated and supported through the landscape as can be seen from Leko's account of the history of the cherry orchard. Cutting down the orchard in order to make space for a more inclusive and economically sustainable project would thus be a way to reshape and re-encode the space of the cherry orchard. The orchard at present is nothing more than an aesthetic indulgence housing the ghost of apartheid guilt, as it is almost barren and represents the unjust distribution of land and resources during the apartheid era.

Apart from Leko's allusion to the unjust history of South African people, these differing social conditions between South Africans are apparent in the character of Chekhov's peasant estate clerk, who has become the black trainee manager of the estate in Suzman's version. Khokoloho only passed standard three at school, and when he states that this education was enough to teach him how to read a few languages, Dikeledi interrupts him to say that their schooling was insufficient and below average.

The effects of this social imbalance are also shown when Khokoloho begs Leko for a pair of shoes. The social imbalance has led to an economic imbalance in the country, and thus the unwanted goods of the more fortunate are often passed on to the less fortunate. Leko, having been assisted by the Rademeyers, is in a more fortunate position than Khokoloho; therefore Khokoloho expects Leko to pass on any unwanted goods to him.

Despite the inequality of the segregation between black and white, and the evident advantage that white people gained from this system (which can be gathered from Leo's apparent political nostalgia), Lulu and Johan Rademeyer are not shown to be nostalgic about this political system. In her introduction, Suzman states that she wanted to include Afrikaners in the play, as the English were largely irrelevant in the progress towards democracy. Yet, she did not want to portray the Afrikaner as stereotypically conservative and pro-apartheid. Suzman (2000:xxvi) thus stresses the role of liberal, anti-apartheid Afrikaners by basing Lulu's deceased husband's character on Bram Fischer, the lawyer who led the defence of Nelson Mandela at the Rivonia trial in 1964. Rademeyer is presented as an Afrikaans lawyer who offered his skills to the struggle. Unlike Fischer, he was not incarcerated, but became disillusioned in the process and surrendered to alcoholism, which was the cause of his death.

The stage directions of Act One indicate that a large oil portrait of Johan Rademeyer hangs in the nursery, confirming him as a visible force on stage. As Johan Rademeyer's history, his struggle against apartheid and his tragic death are represented by this portrait, another chronotope is created. The portrait is not only a device through which the characters can continuously engage with Rademeyer and his ideals, but it also creates a visual representation of him for the benefit of the audience.

From the characters' conversations, it becomes evident that Leko and Pitso were closely associated with Rademeyer: he gave Leko the opportunity to do his MBA, and was an academic mentor to Pitso. Leko recalls the anti-apartheid conversations that he and Rademeyer had in the nursery "during the dark days" (2000:13). It is because of this debt to Rademeyer and Lulu that Leko devises a plan which could save the family estate.

Rademeyer's liberal ideals and his history with Pitso and Leko are all imbedded in his portrait. At the end of the play, Anna asks Lulu if she and Pitso may take the portrait with them. Lulu answers that she "can't think of a better home for him" (2000:67), referring to the portrait as if it were a living thing. Thus, Rademeyer's ideals will not be forgotten when the orchard is chopped down, but will continue to be remembered by Anna and Pitso in the new South Africa.

Despite Rademeyer's liberal political ideals, Lulu still feels a sense of guilt about apartheid. As she is more politically aware than Lyubov in *The Cherry Orchard*, her sense of guilt about her privileged lifestyle is also more apparent. When she leaves the estate for the last time at the end of Act Four, she addresses the house, saying: "farewell lekkerlewe [*sic*]" (2000:66). By referring to the life she is now leaving behind as a good life, Lulu acknowledges that her life has been comfortable and easy. Anna underscores this notion when she addresses the house when leaving: "Totsiens to you, house. Totsiens the old life." (2000:73.) Saying goodbye to the old life when saying goodbye to the house, orchard and estate, again emphasises the chronotopic nature of these places. As Lulu

recognises: a new era has arrived – one in which luxury should not simply befall a person on grounds of his or her race.

Yet, in *The Free State*, the transition to a new era is not completely smooth. Young and Walen (2000:570) state that:

> Suzman boldly identified uncomfortable issues existing in post-apartheid South Africa – black racism, crime, and a continuing sense of dispossession – and the Stranger's violent intrusion in act 2 [*sic*] stressed their immediacy.

Whereas it is suggested above that the intrusion of the stranger in Act Two suggests a threat of violence in *The Free State*, in *The Cherry Orchard* Chekhov uses the stranger to remind the characters and the reader/audience of the reality that exists outside of the cherry orchard. Styan (1971:288) suggests that the stranger might be part of the landless gentry. Having lost his land and becoming impoverished, this former nobleman resorted to begging. When the passage of the stranger is interpreted in this way, the stranger might be a foreboding of what might become of Gayev in five years' time.

However, the stranger in *The Free State* represents a much more direct threat. Suzman stated in an interview with Dennis Walder (1999:261) that a stranger on a road transposes well from a Russian to an African setting. In Russia, as well as in Africa, people often travel long distances – sometimes on foot. She acknowledges the uncertainty the stranger adds to the scene when she continues:

> for a moment everything is uneased, nobody knows if he's drunk or he's serious, if he's going to attack them, if he's dangerous; but certainly he's frightening, he's a reminder of what's out there

Yet, the stranger in *The Free State* is more aggressive than his Russian counterpart. In *The Cherry Orchard*, the stranger approaches, asks the way to the station, sings a few lines, asks a few kopeks from Varya, and upon receiving a coin from Lyubov, leaves. In *The Free State*, the stranger assumes a more aggressive stance when he also asks the way to the station, but then has the effrontery to question why the black characters are mixing with the whites and then to ask Maria for some change. When Lulu offers him change, he tips the bottom of her hand, demanding a note. After receiving a note from Lulu, he rudely snatches a can of beer from the bucket and then goes over to harass Maria by inappropriately touching her before Leko chases him away.

The stranger does not merely unsettle the characters but indeed threatens them by being more demanding and by harassing Maria. The uncertainty created by the high incidence of violence in South Africa is presented in the play in this way. Although Suzman's intention with the play is one of optimism and celebration, she does include certain negative conditions of South Africa in her adaptation.

3.2.5 Assessment

The characters in *The Free State* – like the characters in *The Cherry Orchard* – engage with their pasts through the chronotopes in the play. Because of pending issues of land reform in contemporary South Africa, landownership remains a relevant theme also in Suzman's adaptation of Chekhov's text. Yet, Suzman handles this theme in a very politically optimistic way – as she had a very deliberate celebratory intention with the play.

Lulu regards the orchard and her childhood home with the same nostalgia as Lyubov does in *The Cherry Orchard*. In *The Free State*, the orchard thus also represents the positive associations of beauty, grace and innocence as well as the negative associations of the death of Lulu's son and her subsequent departure from the estate. Furthermore, *The Free State* also shows Leo's account of nostalgia about the political past when he sings the old national anthem while regarding the natural scenery of the Free State province. Although Leo denies any political nostalgia when directly confronted by Maria and Anna, his singing still shows how he makes a direct link between the space of the Free State and the history – be it cultural or political – of that place. The landscape therefore represents and alludes to both the beauty and oppression of the past in South Africa.

These historical and political associations of the Free State are already implied by the title of the play, and could also refer to Suzman's vision of the new South Africa as a free state. Thus, the title (and the play) not only oscillates between the past and the present, but also expresses a positive vision for the future. In spite of Suzman's portrayal of the social imbalances of the South African setting, she shows the main advantaged white characters as liberal-minded and harbouring anti-apartheid sentiments. Although her positive view of the immediate future is evident from the play, she allows certain negative conditions of the current South African setting to infiltrate her celebratory text.

Consequently, it is clear that although a similar nostalgia about the past is shared by *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Free State*, the latter text has a more overt political intention. While Chekhov represents the present and past as abominable, and regards only the distant future with optimism, Suzman is noticeably optimistic about the immediate future by emphasising the new beginning that awaits the characters. Most of the main characters also project a liberal and positive view of the future, although some of the characters experience a sense of nostalgia about the past. The extent to which the characters differ in voice and stance and the degree to which the heteroglossic voices in *The Cherry Orchard* have been advanced or weakened will subsequently be established.

3.3 Heteroglossic discourse in *The Free State*

The dialogue in *The Free State* is shown to consist of a multiplicity of contending voices – differing in language as well as in stance – like the dialogue of *The Cherry Orchard.* However, when Suzman transposed Chekhov's play, the dialogue of the play had to be rewritten in the South African idiom. According to Keuris (2007:4), the "South African idiom" into which the play had to be transposed includes both the language and the socio-cultural diversity of the South African setting. Suzman (quoted in Walder, 1999:257) also states that to turn a thesis into a play, the language has to sound authentic.

Suzman (2000:xxii) further states that:

> whereas in Russia the common language between the two estates is Russian, in South Africa there is no such binding unity, not in origin, nor history, nor culture. South Africa is polyglot and most South Africans will move from one language to another without noticing, even in a single phrase.

Suzman reflects this polyglot nature of South Africans in the dialogue of the play by having the characters continually mix Afrikaans or Sesotho phrases into their dialogue.

Another aspect in which Suzman's play differs from Chekhov's play, is her intention with it. As mentioned earlier, Suzman's intention with her adaptation of *The Cherry Orchard* is one of political celebration, and this optimistic aim is evident also in the dialogue of the play. Young and Walen (2000:571) noted in their performance review of the play that Suzman's version lacked a certain objective detachment which was found in Chekhov's original. They state that it is this objective detachment that helps to create more engaging theatre. Consequently, the characters in *The Free State* are looked on in a more indulgent manner.

The multilingual setting of South Africa and Suzman's positive intention with the play affect the characters' dialogue about matters such as the loss of the orchard, the political change in the country, as well as their personal relationships.

3.3.1 *Suzman's characters*

In her transposition of Chekhov's characters, Suzman retained a heteroglossic discourse between them to a large extent. Walder (1999:260) comments that the play "made you think in a context of debates, not in terms of just one position that you then either accept or oppose, but in terms of debates going on". Although Suzman retains Chekhov's multiplicity of voices in discourse to an extent, her positive political intention with the play takes precedence as Keuris (2004:158) aptly indicates:

> It is important to note that she makes a "political case" for each character and that each character thus has to fulfil a political function in this play. It is also obvious that she wants to

> present the group as representative of South African society as possible and, at the same time, preserve a positive tone in the play...

Suzman thus aims to give each character a specific political stance and perspective, while maintaining an optimistic tone in the play. As the multilingual situation in South Africa is also taken into account, Suzman's characters can be characterised according to language, race and ethnic origin, as well as their political stance.

According to language, race and ethnic origin, the siblings Lulu and Leo, as well as their neighbour, Pik, are English. The employees of the estate: Putswa, Nyatso, Dikeledi and Khokoloho as well as the other black characters, Leko and Pitso, are Sesotho. Karlotta and Lulu's unseen deceased husband, Johan, are Afrikaans. The children of Johan and Lulu Rademeyer are characters of mixed race. Anna is thus part English and part Afrikaans, although she grew up in an English environment. Suzman (2000:xxx) describes her as "the perfect amalgam for the new democracy, the blood of both white races coursing in her veins". Maria, on the other hand, is part Sesotho and part Afrikaans, and yet also grew up in an English home. The characters are thus divided into black (and specifically Sesotho) characters; white (distinguishing between Afrikaans and English) characters; and two mixed-race characters, one English-Afrikaans and the other Sesotho-Afrikaans by origin.

The Afrikaans and Sesotho characters lapse into their native tongues – except for Nyatso who denies his African roots and only lapses into French from time to time. This accentuates the variety of cultural and ethnic origins of the characters. The characters also sometimes borrow words and phrases from languages which are not their own. Leko's and Pitso's use of Afrikaans words or phrases shows the dominance of the language in the Free State Province during the apartheid years.

The characters are further divided according to their political sentiments – from conservative to liberal. Leo Guyver, Pik, the neighbour, and Putswa, the butler are shown to be conservative to varying degrees. On the other hand, Johan and Lulu Rademeyer, their children, Anna and Maria, Leko and Pitso are all politically liberal – also to varying degrees. Karlotta, Dikeledi and Nyatso do not take any discernable political stance. These different origins and stances of the characters are then of significance in their various discourses.

3.3.2 The loss of the orchard

As in *The Cherry Orchard*, Leko, the businessman, tries to persuade the Guyver siblings, Lulu and Leo, to cut their orchard down, divide their estate into plots and lease these plots out for a better income – which could save their bankrupt estate. In Act One, Leko's plans are rejected without consideration, as Lopakhin's plans were in *The Cherry Orchard*. Yet, when the subject is raised

again in Act Two, Lulu seems to understand Leko better than Lyubov understands Lopakhin. Leo states that Great-Aunt Newlands has agreed to send them money, and yet the amount turns out to be not near enough. Still, Leo remains optimistic, after which Leko becomes impatient:

LEKO	:	Sethoto! You're hopeless, you two. I tell you in the plainest language that your estate's going up in smoke, but you both refuse to take it in! Why? Why is this?
LULU	:	Naked terror, probably, Leko. Tell us, dear friend, what are we to do?
LEKO	:	But I keep telling you! My plan would give you, minimum, a million rand a year. You simply cannot afford to delay any longer!

LULU sighs; LEO gulps his drink. (2000:33.)

When Lulu and Leko then describe Leko's plan as sordid, he loses his temper:

LEKO	:	I've had it, I wash my hands! (*To LEO.*) Wena, u mo mosadimoholo!
LEO	:	What was that?
LEKO	:	(*collects his jacket, strides away, and shouts*) Mosadimoholo! You're an old woman! (2000:33.)

Although Leko still fails to convince Lulu and Leo to implement his plan, they do seem to have a better understanding of the situation. When Leko directly asks them why they ignore his warnings about the loss of their estate, Lulu responds with "Naked terror" as the answer. Thereby, Lulu acknowledges that Leko's warning is valid, that she is being foolish to ignore his plan, and that she is too afraid of any drastic changes (such as cutting down the orchard) to save the estate. There is a more visible interpenetration of their discourse, and the failure in communication seen between Lopakhin and Lyubov is much smaller between Leko and Lulu.

When Lulu and Leo still refuse to take action, despite Lulu's acknowledgement that they are being foolish, Leko loses his temper. He lapses into his mother tongue in his anger. He first cries out: "Sethoto!", which is the Sesotho word for "fool", and later calls Leo a "mosadimoholo", which means "old woman". As Leo does not understand what Leko is saying, Leko explains the meaning of the word "mosadimoholo". The language barrier between Leko and Leo also alludes to the invisible barrier between them, which prevents Leo from taking Leko's plans seriously.

Like Anya in *The Cherry Orchard*, Anna in *The Free State* does not experience the loss of the orchard as a defeat – unlike her mother and uncle. However, other than her Russian counterpart, she is also more disillusioned about the fate of the orchard from the start of the play. When she asks Maria if the interest on the mortgage has been paid off and Maria states that it has not, Anna replies: "Of course – silly me" (2000:8) in contrast with Anya's reply in this regard: "Oh God, oh God ..." (1996:20). Anna's reply shows a confirmation of what she expected, despite her hoping that – against all odds – the interest has been paid off. Anya, on the other hand is shocked and disillusioned by this answer, revealing Anna as more realistic than Chekhov's Anya.

3.3.3. Political change

Because of the political intent of the play, and the fact that most of the characters have a specific political agenda, most of the discourses in the play are also interpreted from a political angle. According to Suzman (2000:xxvi), she felt the need to make Lulu more politically adventurous than her Russian counterpart. And so, Lulu cherishes very evident anti-apartheid sentiments. Young and Walen (2000:570) describe Lulu's politics as "exemplarily progressive" which seems to be "identical to Suzman's". These political sentiments of Lulu emerge in a few instances.

Leo explains that Lulu's marriage to a penniless Afrikaans lawyer and anti-apartheid activist is the reason why Great-Aunt Newlands is opposed to the family (and as a result might not give them the money to save the estate). Her engagement with the Struggle is thus already implied. Lulu furthermore adopted the illegitimate baby of her husband and a Sotho woman. As Leko tells her in Act Two: "[t]here's not many who'd do what you've done, Lulu." (2000:36.) Lulu thus also negated the norms observed during the apartheid era by adopting the coloured baby, despite the gossip it triggered. In Act One, after Leko states that the tables have been turned, concerning the imbalance between white and black due to apartheid, Lulu says: "Oh, thank God for it, and none too soon." (2000:13.) She is thus also very relieved that democracy has replaced apartheid, despite her nostalgia and longing for her childhood.

Yet, Dikeledi, the maid, describes the people in the "big house" as "always feeling guilty about who they are" (2000:30). Nyatso then encourages her to use these feelings of guilt to her advantage: "Look, Kele, get smart; the guilt is because they're liberals. Play on it." (2000:31.) Lulu's guilt about her privileged past then provides Nyatso with an advantage.

Lulu further reprimands Pitso for using a derogatory racial term, even if he only uses the term to describe the racist point of view of others:

PITSO	:	A Boer shooting at black babies is maybe nothing new, but some of your limousine lefties, so-called, still bellow at blacks – even call them 'kaffirs'.
LULU	:	Pitso, no! I simply won't have that word! Who still does that? (2000:40.)

Lulu instantly reacts to the derogatory term, and forbids it. She then reprehensibly asks who still uses such terms. Ironically, the point Pitso was trying to illustrate is that some people – who consider themselves liberal – still use derogatory racial terms. Lulu is so intent on being perceived as politically correct that she bans derogatory terms without investigating their cause or significance first. Lulu is politically progressive, but her guilt about her privileged life makes her so intent on being perceived as politically correct that she allows people like Nyatso to exploit her.

Like in *The Cherry Orchard*, the adversarial stances are also shown among the liberal characters so that Leko and Pitso also represent the counterpoint of a worker/materialist versus a thinker/spiritualist respectively. Suzman (2000:xxxi) described Pitso as the "opposing spirit" to Leko. According to Suzman, Pitso was born on the estate, he was supported by Johan Rademeyer in studying law, sent to Russia by the ANC for training and became an underground activist.

Due to Pitso's consequent link with Russia, certain intertextual references to the text and setting of *The Cherry Orchard* can be made. The poem Trofimov recites at seeing Anya again in Act Four of *The Cherry Orchard* – adapted by Pam Gems (1996:35) as "Light! Life! First flower of spring!" – is retained in its original Russian in *The Free State*: "*Solnyshko mayó, moy vesényi tsvetóchek...*" (2000:27.)

Instead of Trofimov's galoshes, Pitso rather searches for a Russian hat he bought on a trip to Russia, and which reminds him of a certain sexual conquest, Varya: "This brings back memories – her name was Varya." (2000:63.) These allusions to *The Cherry Orchard* – references to Russia, and a girl with the same name as one of Chekhov's characters, as well as the direct quotation of the poem for Anya – draw attention to the intertextuality of *The Free State*. By evoking Chekhov's setting and text, the reader/audience is reminded that originally the events on stage happened in another time and place. The mention of a sexual conquest also highlights the difference between Pitso and Trofimov, showing Pitso as less stoic in romantic matters than Trofimov. Through Pitso's visits to Russia, a parallel is also drawn between contemporary Russia and contemporary South Africa – a parallel which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Leko, the businessman, is also noticeably politically aware as he refers to the relationship he had with Johan Rademeyer – the anti-apartheid lawyer – in Act One, and recalls the political discussions that they had. When Leko reads *Hamlet* at the start of the play, in an attempt to impress Lulu, he also quotes from it and applies the quotation to contemporary South Africa – where all indeed has not been well: "'Something rotten in the State...' hey? Sounds familiar." (2000:3.)

Thus, because of the fact that Pitso is represented as less stoic than Trofimov, and that Leko is more politically aware than Lopakhin, the conflict between them in *The Free State* will differ from that in *The Cherry Orchard*. As in *The Cherry Orchard,* the two are in conflict for the first time in the play in Act Two.

LEKO	:	I see our wandering radical is a bit of a ladykiller.
PITSO	:	Get off my case, Masopha.
LEKO	:	Grey hairs and still a student?
PITSO	:	Very funny – at least I've earned them.
LEKO	:	Losing our cool are we, Professor Politics?
PITSO	:	And what did you do for the Struggle Mr Wheeler-Dealer?
LEKO	:	What d'you think I did, twiddle my thumbs? OK, then, what do you make of me exactly?

PITSO : You're a mystery to me – the car, the gear, the fat-cat air. How did you do it? You're black but you're white. Frankly, I don't know where you stand.
LEKO : You're behind the times, bra' – money doesn't equal white any more. Where've you been?
ANNA : (*protective*) Moscow, actually.
LEKO : (*a twinkle*) Making bombs, was it, or surveillance?
PITSO : (*angry*) A bit of both, if you want to know. (2000:38.)

Like Trofimov, Pitso hereafter continues with a discussion on pride and social conditions – similar to Trofimov. When Leko states that science will reveal the answers to the questions on death, Pitso states that science will reveal these answers only in due course. When he confirms his trust in politics, he again refers to Russia:

PITSO : Science has most of the answers, but not all – not the mysteries – one day even those may be clear. Politics, though, that's in our grasp. Leo's not wrong, that old virus of democracy seems to have had a field day – first Russia, then us. And lo! the phoenix of freedom rises up and beats its wings... (2000:39.)

Pitso continues to describe the social imbalances in the country: the black people crave education while the white people crave nothing. He also laments the fact that there are people who turn a blind eye to the suffering of black people. The adverse views between them continue:

LEKO : No jobs, even more murderous crime – I'm afraid investment is the answer.
PITSO : No, education is the answer! Oh, there's so much to be done – better to stop talking and just get the hell on with it. (2000:41.)

Therefore, the tension between Leko and Pitso seems to be because Leko is seen by Pitso as a self-centred materialist – as he describes him as a "Wheeler-Dealer" with a "fat-cat air". Pitso does not see material wealth, but the upliftment of the people as the number one priority. Leko, on the other hand, resents Pitso's denial that black people can achieve economic success.

Pitso further compares South Africa to Russia, regarding politics. However, he does not refer to the change in Russia which is seen in *The Cherry Orchard*: the emancipation of the serfs in 1861. Nor does he refer to the revolution in 1917, which was pending at the time of *The Cherry Orchard*. Pitso refers to the fall of communism in 1989. Thus, a political parallel can be drawn between South Africa and Russia, referring to the advent of democracy in both countries. Yet, the references to Russia also allude to the intertextuality between *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Free State*.

Although Leko and Pitso respectively state that investment and education are the answers to the social problems in South Africa, the binary opposition of materialism versus upliftment is concretely juxtaposed by these two characters. Pitso is shown to have worked hard and is still

willing to work hard for the cause of the people in South Africa – although he has not completed his degree. However, he is not shown to be as hypocritical as Trofimov, and the barrier between him and Leko appears to be Leko's supposed inactive status in the Struggle. According to Pitso, while he worked hard and risked his life, Leko was only interested in how he could materially gain from the situation.

However, when the adversaries part in Act Four, Leko's own history is revealed. Leko and Pitso discuss the fact that Leko will demolish the house, and how Pitso's studies will be continued at the University of the Witwatersrand. Leko tries to persuade Pitso to consider a career in business:

LEKO	:	A chap like you should be in business; got a good head on you. You've studied enough.
PITSO	:	All your talk about building weekend hideaways for the tired businessman. Shu! Holidays are for laanies – you don't get holidays until you get jobs. Where are you? On Mars?
LEKO	:	No, OK, Pitso, hold it, hold it. Of course I'm with you – the RDP takes precedence. I'm giving first refusal to the local authority, you know, in case they want the land for their housing programme.
PITSO	:	(*still suspicious*) Viva.
LEKO	:	If they do, I'll put in for the contracts, see, and build ten houses where there might just have been one. Neat, hey? Lay on water, electricity – the works.
PITSO	:	Kwa-Masophaville, hey? Look bra', I don't object to profit per se, because sure as hell the country needs risk takers, but first things first, the homeless must be housed. Still, I take off my hat to you – if I had it. [...] Beneath it all you're a good soul, bra'. Even if your hands do flop about.
LEKO	:	Ah, my hands... yes. Look here, in case you need it, here's something to smooth your way a bit. *LEKO waves a wadge of notes from his briefcase; PITSO declines.*
PITSO	:	Don't need it, thanks. Russian speakers are in demand these days. [...]
LEKO	:	Who you fooling? Take the bread, man.
PITSO	:	It wasn't our pockets, Masopha, but our veins we emptied as we toyi-toyi'd our way to freedom.
LEKO	:	That's history, Pitso. Now we have to make that freedom work for us. Money helps.
PITSO	:	Look, we share the same beginnings, but there our ways part: you value your riches, I value my ideals. We each go our own road, that's all. [...] *Pause. LEKO walks towards PITSO.*
LEKO	:	I'd say our ideals are closer to each other than you appear to think. *LEKO holds out his left hand in front of PITSO's eyes, fingers up, palm towards his own face. PITSO is puzzled.*

LEKO : See? While you were in Moscow, the bastards had fun with my fingernails.
PITSO is silenced. LEKO puts the money away; looks out of the window. The rain has stopped. Brilliant sunshine breaks through the window. The sound of a chainsaw on wood is heard in the distance.

LEKO : Work is the only dignity, Pitso. When I work long hours my thoughts move easily and I seem to know why I exist. But I'm always aware that there are millions who must spend the day hoping only to see the next sunrise and that's possibly where I come in... Still, anyway, we'll call it quits.
LEKO holds out his hand and they shake, African style.

PITSO : You devil, why didn't you say before? (2000:62-64.)

In this rather lengthy extract, we see how Leko initially defends himself against Pitso, who blames him for not doing enough for the upliftment of the community. Leko then suddenly reveals his plans to uplift the community, by giving precedence to the housing programme of the new government. This suggests that, despite Leko's appearance as a "fat cat", he also cares about his community. Furthermore, Pitso is also shown to be more practical than Trofimov, which is illustrated when Leko offers Pitso money and he declines it – not because he has renounced material things, but because he has an income as a Russian translator. Yet, he still maintains that his ideals are more important to him than money. When Pitso states that their opposing viewpoints about money versus ideals are the reason that they will never see eye to eye, Leko reveals his mutilated fingernails as political credentials for his supposed opposition to apartheid.

The sunshine which breaks through the window at this point in their discussion signifies that Leko's past which was obscured before – has now become clear to both to Pitso and the reader/audience. They decide to make an end to their hostility towards each other and shake hands in an African way, and before they finally take leave of each other, hug warmly. With these actions they do not call a truce, but rather indicate that they have resolved their differences, which were biased in the first place.

Thus, both Leko and Pitso are shown to be less radical. Pitso has not renounced materialism completely, and has also not negated romantic matters completely (like Trofimov). Leko is shown to be more profound than a mere materialist, because he supports his community and underwent torture in the Struggle against apartheid. The initial opposition between them as the worker versus the thinker, or the materialist versus the spiritualist, is therefore less important than the differences between Lopakhin and Trofimov.

Yet, Leko is still clearly presented as a businessman through his language: he sees things in economic terms. He states, for instance, that Pitso should make the advent of democracy work for him and he also refers to money as something which can "smooth over" problems. Like Lopakhin, Leko's hands 'flop about' when he does not work, revealing how uneasy he is when idle.

It also alludes to his lack of tact and refinement, as he tends to fidget. Yet, Leko's hands also bear the signs of mutilation, which, to Pitso, reveal Leko's political credentials and resolve the tension between them. Despite the fact that Leko's political credentials and his plans to uplift the community are introduced very suddenly at the end of the play, they completely resolve the tension between him and Pitso. His plans and credentials might simply be convenient excuses to rid him of his "fat cat" image, now that the Struggle against apartheid has been won.

The easy resolution of the conflict between Leko and Pitso contrasts with the political antagonism between Leo Guyver and Johan Rademeyer, Lulu's deceased – and therefore unseen – husband. Since Rademeyer is deceased, a picture of him must be formed by what the other characters say about him. It has already been established that Johan Rademeyer was a liberal Afrikaans lawyer who helped Pitso with his law degree and funded Leko's MBA degree. Great-Aunt Newlands never accepted Johan into the family, as she never forgave Lulu for marrying an anti-apartheid Afrikaner, as Leo says to Maria at the end of Act One when he speaks of Great-Aunt Newlands:

> She's never forgiven Luly for falling for a penniless dutchman instead of some chinless aristo – an advocate and, worse still, a Commie, and there's nothing more liberal [...] than a lapsed Afrikaner. Big mistake, Auntie cut the phone wires. (2000:24.)

The word "dutchman" used to describe Johan Rademeyer is a term which refers derogatorily to Afrikaners. Although Leo uses it ironically in this extract, it still suggests antagonism between himself and Rademeyer. Furthermore, Leko and Pitso speak fondly of Rademeyer and his political ideals. Leko tells Lulu in Act Two how much he misses her husband, as he contrasts him with her brother:

LEKO	:	*(teasing)* That brother of yours, old Guyver there, still can't get the hang of a black man with brains. Makes him uneasy.
LULU	:	He's a terrible old stick-in-the-mud, Leko. What's one to do?
LEKO	:	Such talks we had in this room during the dark days – politics, politics, every breath was politics. Now it's all money – gravy-trains and money...
PIK	:	And crime...
LEKO	:	Hell! I miss him, your old man.
LULU	:	Ah, Leko – don't. (2000:13.)

In this extract, the sharp contrast between Leo the more conservative English-speaking character and Johan Rademeyer the liberal Afrikaner, becomes clear. Suzman thus inverts the usual stereotype of a liberal English character versus a conservative Afrikaans character in the characterisation of Leo and Johan Rademeyer.

Although Leko and Lulu see Leo as conservative, he tries to come across as liberal. In Leo's speech to celebrate the centenary of the bookcases in Act One, he refers positively to the political change in the country:

LEO : [...] Honoured bookshelves, revered bookshelves – you've stood here for generations offering up to curious minds your myriad treasures. Your constant plea for open minds silently beckons us. Your unflagging call for fruitful labours, for a social conscience, for faith in a brighter future, have at last been answered. We salute the new democracy. How does it go? Amandhla! (*He raises his fist awkwardly in the freedom salute.*)

LEKO : (*Raising his in reply*) Ngawethu! In truth, those bookcases helped me to change my life. Bayete, bookcase! (2000:18.)

Like Gayev, Leo salutes the bookcases for inspiring the family to cultivate an open mind and strive for freedom. Lulu and Maria giggle during this speech, discrediting Leo's attempt to sound liberal. Still, Leko joins in Leo's salutation and states that the bookcases have helped him achieve his goals. The situation is thus slightly less embarrassing for Leo, although Lulu afterwards ask him: "Since when did you give a fig about democracy?" (2000:18.) The speech is thus shown to contrast with Leo's general convictions. And although Leo praises the bookcases for their inspiration to freedom, it is ironical that Johan Rademeyer's legal volumes fill them.

Yet, Leo is still adamant to proclaim himself as open-minded. At the end of Act One, he tells Maria and Anna of the role he played in protesting against apartheid:

LEO : Yes, a child of the fifties, that's me. Not a decade held in much esteem 'cept for Elvis, but I can tell you I've done my fair share of protest.
Hoots of derision.

LEO : No, believe me, girls, letting Rademeyer live here, carrying on with his bloody Commie activities, putting us all in danger, is nothing to sniff at. Which is why the staff all trust me. Yup, you have to know how to deal with your Affs...

ANNA : Uncle Leo, you can't speak like that! It's bloody insulting, is what!

MARIA : And Putswa here – it's just awful! (2000:26.)

When Leo states that he has done his share of protest, Maria and Anna do not take him seriously. In his attempt to show his liberalism, he starts to denigrate Johan Rademeyer, whom he regarded as a threat, and now claims that by tolerating him he also upheld a form of protest against apartheid. However, when he then also denigrates black people by using the derogatory term "Affs", and claiming that you have to know how to deal with them, he clearly voices his racism, which upsets Maria and Anya. Ironically, in his attempt to appear more open-minded, Leo actually shows his conservatism.

In the text, there is a clear polarity between the conservative Leo and the open-minded Johan Rademeyer. Although they cannot engage in direct discourse, the contrast between them is clear through what other characters say about them, and also through what Leo says about Rademeyer. In Leo's accounts of Johan Rademeyer, a tension between mask and face is also

evident as he tries to come across as liberal, but is revealed to be conservative through these attempts.

The political views expressed by Putswa, the butler, reveal another politically ambivalent perspective. His character is based on the Russian footman, Firs, in *The Cherry Orchard*, but – unlike Firs, who adamantly opposes the freedom of the serfs, Putswa is rather ambivalent about the end of apartheid. Putswa is also shown to be more politically aware than Firs. In Act One, Putswa reveals his association with Paris as he ponders on the place from which his mistress has just arrived:

> Paris, hey? The master had many many friends in that place – all exiles. Now they can come home, it's safe. (2000:11.)

As Putswa describes South Africa as safe after the advent of democracy, it appears that he saw the end of apartheid as a positive thing, at least to an extent. As Johan Rademeyer – Putswa's deceased master – is presented as noticeably liberal, it would make sense that the loyal servant shares his master's sentiments. Yet, when the sound of the breaking string is heard in Act Two, Putswa refers to the advent of democracy as a disaster – as Firs does in *The Cherry Orchard*:

PUTSWA	:	I could tell the disaster was coming; a leopard coughed and the phone wires kept humming like this ... (*He makes the sound.*)
LEO	:	What disaster?
PUTSWA	:	The Freedom. (2000:42.)

Unlike Firs, Putswa does not link this observation to the sound of the breaking string, but merely states the circumstances of the end of apartheid. In *The Cherry Orchard*, Firs recalls the freedom of the serfs – which happened 40 years before the time of the play – and links it to the sound of the breaking string. In Putswa's case, the end of apartheid happened a few months prior to the time of the play. As he is not the only character who remembers that day – as was the case with Firs – Putswa does not have to inform the other characters about events in his past, but merely makes an observation. However, his attitude contradicts his professed happiness about the fact that exiles could now return to South Africa. His attitude is therefore shown to be ambivalent. Although he is loyal to his master's legacy, he also resents the end of apartheid. His language, English interspersed with Sesotho, also reveals two influences in his life: the language of his master and the language of his origins. Putswa's ambivalence thus also shows the tension between his own culture and origins and his master's convictions, which he mimics.

Like Firs, Putswa is also shown to be incapable of making his own decisions. He had been suppressed for such a long time that he is incapable of being independent – which could explain why he resents the end of apartheid. When Nyatso tells him that he should stop working and return to the place of his birth, he answers: "Hayi suka! This is my home." (2000:54.) Lulu later asks him where he will go if the estate is sold, whereupon he answers: "Where you tell me to go, my

mosadinyana, that's where I'll go." (2000:55.) Thus, Putswa is unable to adjust after apartheid and cannot take responsibility for his own life as a result. In the spirit of celebration of the play, Putswa also celebrates democracy to an extent, even if it is only out of loyalty to Rademeyer. In the end, he is still forgotten in the house, unable to adapt anywhere else – almost like a piece of furniture with no further use.

All these political discussions in *The Free State* create a better understanding between the characters and an overall more positive perception of democracy is seen when compared with the reaction to social change in *The Cherry Orchard*. This positive engagement between the characters is also evident in the toast they make in Act Four.

Whereas, when Lopakhin buys a bottle of champagne as a farewell gesture to the family in *The Cherry Orchard*, all the characters except Yasha refuse to drink a toast with him, which emphasises his misjudgement of the situation and his lack of tact for not realising that the characters do not wish to celebrate. This emphasises the general failure of communication between the characters.

In *The Free State*, it also initially seems as if no one wants to drink of the champagne Leko has bought, except for Nyatso. However, later in the scene, Lulu, Leo, Anna, Karlotta and Nyatso drink a toast – in Leko's absence. They toast Great-Aunt Newlands as she did send the family money in the end. Whilst it was too little to save the estate, it is enough to support Lulu for a while as she returns to Paris. This toast, although it does not include Leko, is in accordance with the celebratory theme of Suzman's text, and may also signify a toast to the new South Africa.

Despite the spirit of agreement and celebration in the text, there is still one argument – transposed from *The Cherry Orchard* – in which the conflict has not been weakened in *The Free State*. The argument between Maria and Khokoloho in Act Three, when Maria confronts Khokoloho for behaving like a guest instead of an employee, shows the conflict and confusion after social change.

In an argument with Dikeledi, Khokoloho laughs wildly, upon which Maria enters:

MARIA	:	Making scenes in public, Khokoloho – have you no shame? [...]
MARIA	:	Khokoloho, first you play billiards, which you have no right to do, and then you go and bust a cue of Mr Leo's!
KHOKO	:	Ha-ha!
MARIA	:	He'll be very upset, I can tell you. And now here you are lounging about as if you were one of the guests!
KHOKO	:	Excuse me, *Miss* Maria, but you have no right to tell me things like this.
MARIA	:	Why we employ you I just don't know.
KHOKO	:	Hé la! I work in the day; at night I do what I like, and only my elders can say that I must not do this and I must not do that, not you. Who are you? You're not black and you're not white. What are you? Maybe nothing, I say!

MARIA	:	I don't believe my ears! What did you say?
KHOKO	:	Hey, hey, hey, OK, OK. We both say strong things...
MARIA	:	This is my father's house! Out of here! Get out of here this instant! (*Chases him round the tables.*) Out of my sight! Out! Out!
		She grabs PUTSWA's stick from his hands as he sits quietly, and chases KHOKOLOHO, who runs out to the garden and then pops back.
KHOKO	:	I'm going to tell about you! (2000:57.)

In this extract, Maria reprimands Khokoloho for his audacity as he refuses her authority. He, however, resents her authority, as he is no longer oppressed by apartheid. According to him, he works during the day, and since he is off-duty in the evening, Maria has no right to tell him what to do. He furthermore resents and insults her because of her mixed race. Since she is neither black nor white, he regards her as inferior, and not in a position to give him orders. After she loses her temper when he insults her race, he tries to calm her down, but runs off when she chases him away. Although Khokoloho does not use an inappropriate register to argue with Maria, like Yepichodov in *The Cherry Orchard*, the direct contrast and conflict between the two characters have remained. Khokoloho resents Maria's authority, as she does not belong to the previous white order, nor to the current black order. To Khokoloho, because of her mixed race, she is not representative of a specific ethnic or cultural group. Despite the positive, celebratory tone of the play, and the debased political arguments between most of the characters, Maria, as a coloured character, remains a victim of racial discrimination.

3.3.4. Personal relationships

In *The Free State* – in contrast to *The Cherry Orchard* – there also seems to be a better understanding between characters with regard to their personal relationships. The misunderstandings about the supposed engagement of Leko and Maria are less severe. As in *The Cherry Orchard*, Leko interrupts Maria and Anna's conversation by sticking his head through the window and trumpeting like an elephant, instead of bleating like a sheep. The reference to an indigenous African animal instead of a sheep acculturises the play to the exotic setting of Africa. Their conversation then turns to the situation between Leko and Maria:

MARIA	:	Ooh, he makes me so mad sometimes!
ANNA	:	But he fancies you, I swear. Pretend it's Leap Year and propose to him – go on, I dare you.
MARIA	:	He keeps popping in to see us on his travels, but he just looks at me like I'm not really there. Too busy to notice me, I expect. Maybe he's shy, maybe he likes his bachelor life, maybe my colour...

ANNA	:	Ja well, I think he's maybe just an old traditionalist at heart, for all it's the new South Africa and Rainbow Nation and silly elephants and stuff.
MARIA	:	Well, to hell with him! Ma didn't give a hoot about gossip when they adopted me. Though I guess she loved Pa so much she'd do anything for his sake.
		ANNA gets up and hugs MARIA.
ANNA	:	No, Marietjie, no. She loved you for *you.*
MARIA	:	And when you were born, I got a baby sister en daar is ons. Same father different skin. So what?
ANNA	:	(*gently*) So what?
MARIA	:	I miss Pa often... did you miss me in Paris? Your brooch looks like a little bee.
ANNA	:	We found it in a flea market.
		MARIA looks at the pictures in her new book, concentrating. ANNA sits next to her.
MARIA	:	The colour thing doesn't just go away like overnight, you know. Yiss, look at that! Looks just like me. (2000:9.)

By stating that Maria should pretend that it is Leap Year, to be able to ask Leko to marry her, Anna shows that she is aware of the fact that Maria is not the inactive party in the possible relationship between her and Leko. She thus encourages Maria to take the matter into her own hands – by imagining a situation in which it would be legitimate for her to reverse the given gender roles and ask Leko to marry her. Maria is thus not completely emancipated from previous gender norms.

Maria thinks that her mixed race is the reason that Leko is reluctant to propose to her. She then states that it would be unreasonable for Leko to reject her because of such a reason, as Lulu ignored the gossip generated by adopting the coloured baby of her husband's extramarital affair during the difficult time of apartheid. She then doubts whether Lulu loved her for who she is, or if she only adopted her to please Rademeyer, her and Anna's father. These doubts are immediately refuted by Anna. Yet, Maria returns to the topic of her insecurities about her race by comparing herself to a gargoyle in a picture book of Paris. Between Maria and Anna there are no misunderstandings about the supposed relationship between Maria and Leko. Both Anna's and Maria's dialogues are interspersed with Afrikaans words. The influence of their father, the Afrikaans Johan Rademeyer, can be seen in their language. These characters are of different cultural origin, Anna being Afrikaans-English and Maria Afrikaans-Sesotho, and this is also revealed in their language.

By the end of Act One, when Leo teases Maria about the supposedly intended relationship between her and Leko, Lulu hears about this possible union for the first time:

LEO	:	Oops! Pardon – Maria's got her eye on him.
MARIA	:	Who says? Uncle, you are terrible.
LULU	:	Have you now? Wonderful! He's a good man. (2000:20.)

Lulu's interest in the possible union is now sparked, and in Act Two, Lulu suggests Maria as a wife to Leko, after they account how they met, years ago.

LEKO	:	My father [...] took his anger out on me...
LULU	:	Ah, that thin little boy with the bloody nose...
LEKO	:	'Boy'. Just so, that's what I was when I met you. Life is all chance, isn't it?
LULU	:	It is, it is. And now my world is upside down and yours is right side up.
LEKO	:	I think I fell for you, Lulu, yes I think I did. In another world, who knows...? My handwriting's still very piggy, though.
LULU	:	Silly, I was far too old for you, Leko, and always will be. You need a wife now, my friend – a younger one. You've got everything but.
LEKO	:	True.
[...]		
LULU	:	[...] So, how's about our Maria, then? She's a good girl.
LEKO	:	Yes.
LULU	:	God, when I think what she's had to cope with! Her mother was gone the next morning poor little thing. [...] Her mother was called Maria – we gave her the same name. She was a Sotho, like you, Leko.
LEKO	:	I know.
LULU	:	[...] So you see you share a bloodline, Leko.
LEKO	:	Not quite. Her father...
LULU	:	'Was white' you would say? Oh yes, but a good man and a brave.
LEKO	:	The best.
LULU	:	[...] Does her colour matter, I ask you? No, no and no! She's ready for another life – she's modest, she's efficient – and you like her well enough, don't you?
LEKO	:	She's a good girl...
LULU	:	...But?
LEKO	:	There's not many who'd do what you've done, Lulu. (2000:35-36.)

Although Leko confesses his infatuation with Lulu, she does not take it seriously and continues to encourage him to marry Maria. The excuse Lulu gives for brushing aside Leko's confession, is that she is – and will always be – too old for him. Yet, in the dramatis personae, Leko and Lulu are both listed as in their fifties. The racial divide between them is emphasised as the abolishment of apartheid has turned Lulu's world "upside down" and Leko's "right side up", revealing how Lulu was advantaged in the previous social hierarchy and Leko is advantaged in the overturned hierarchy. When Lulu states that Leko was only a boy when his father beat him up, Leko emphasises the word "boy". Black men are sometimes derogatorily referred to as "boys", implying that they will always remain inferior to white men. Leko also refers to his handwriting which is "piggy" and therefore also a sign that he is less refined. Thus, despite the overturn of the social hierarchy which separated Lulu from Leko, there is still a racial divide between them.

As Lulu continues to persuade Leko to marry Maria, her turns of speech become longer, while his are reduced to one-line utterances. Lulu is thus ignorant of Leko's reluctance and continues to provide more and more supporting arguments for their union. She tries to gain sympathy by recounting Maria's mother's disappearance after giving birth, and emphasises the Sotho bloodline that Leko and Maria share on her mother's side. Leko, however, remains reluctant throughout their conversation and insensitively refers to Maria's mixed race. Maria's suspicion that her race is the reason that Leko fails to propose to her thus proves to be true.

Lulu ignores Leko's infatuation with her and continues to pressure him to marry Maria, despite his reluctance. The failure of communication of Chekhov's characters in the corresponding situation in *The Cherry Orchard* is thus retained to an extent in this conversation between Lulu and Leko.

In Act Four, as Lulu is settling the last affairs before leaving the estate, she refers to Maria's unsettled marital situation as one of the things still bothering her. She is worried about what will become of Maria now that the household is broken up, and again proposes that Leko marry her:

LULU	:	[...] My other sadness is Maria – she's like a fish out of water with nothing to do. Leko, was I wrong to hope you might get together, you and Maria? (*To ANNA – sotto.*) Can we steal another five minutes? *She signs to ANNA who takes out KARLOTTA.*
LULU	:	She's been fond of you since ever – she'd suit you, I think.
LEKO	:	Hum...
LULU	:	It doesn't always have to be for love, you know – children, partnership, help through this life, whatever. She's damned efficient you know, and so sweet.
LEKO	:	What the heck, let's go for it. (*He dives for the* Hamlet *in his briefcase, waves it at LULU.*) 'The readiness is all', hey? (*LULU laughs.*) I'd never get round to it if it weren't for you.
LULU	:	*Formidable!* I'll call her. (2000:69.)

As in *The Cherry Orchard*, Lulu ignores Leko's reluctance yet again. However, she does consider the possibility that Leko might not love Maria. Lulu suggests that Leko and Maria might marry for reasons other than love, such as children or partnership. The lack of communication is thus less in this extract, as Lulu does sense Leko's reluctance as she proposes reasons for marriage aside from love. As soon as Leko agrees to propose, although he states Lulu's encouragement as the only reason he will, Lulu blatantly ignores his uncertain motives for marriage and calls Maria.

The opportunity to propose passes, but not before another reference is made to Maria's colour. In the uncomfortable conversation in which Maria in vain expects a proposal from Leko, she tells him that she is on her way to Muizenberg to temporarily look after a house there. Leko's reply again insults Maria's mixed race:

LEKO	:	The Cape, eh? Well, you'll like it there, I'd say. It's where you should be...

MARIA : (*a sharp look*) With my own people, you mean? (2000:70.)

Leko insults Maria by implying that she belongs in the Cape as she is coloured. According to Leko, Maria is thus an outsider in either a white or a black society, as Khokoloho also noted earlier. Leko's suggestion that Maria belongs in the Cape is unfounded, as Maria cannot be representative of all coloured people in South Africa. Her parents are not coloured, and she did not grow up in a coloured community. Her insulted reaction to Leko's suggestion shows how unfounded it is. This situation further shows how in the new, enlightened South Africa, there are still people who are discriminated against and marginalised because of their race.

Yet, Maria is shown as slightly more emancipated than Varya in *The Cherry Orchard*. When she awaits Leko's proposal in Act Four, and it becomes clear that he is not very keen to propose, Maria "*stops still and looks at him squarely*" (2000:70). Through this subtle action, Maria thus demands an answer from Leko, who – seemingly intimidated – leaves right afterwards without making a proposal.

In Pitso's and Anna's relationship there are also significant differences from Trofimov's and Anya's. Suzman (2000:xxxi) states that these two characters "represent a sort of ideal, however unrealistic – the possibility of cross-racial harmony in an integrated modern South Africa". It would then be fitting that Pitso and Anna take Rademeyer's portrait which represents the ideals fought for in the Struggle. When this intention of Suzman's is taken into account, it follows that the relationship between Pitso and Anna should be healthy, solid and successful – unlike the relationship between Trofimov and Anya (or any other romantic relationship in *The Cherry Orchard*).

At the end of Act Two, the two are left behind after the picnic – as in *The Cherry Orchard*. Unlike the situation in the original text, they kiss after a long discussion about the orchard and its significance:

PITSO : The moon, yes. I feel good, Anna. I feel anything is possible now, with the two of us.
They kiss gently as MARIA's voice calls again. They start laughing and tumble apart.
ANNA : 'Above all that stuff', eh?
He laughs, takes her face in his hands.
PITSO : Maria will hate this. D'you think your mother will too?
ANNA : She doesn't *see* colour – in this country that's a blind spot. She loves Maria, she'll love you too.
PITSO : Nobody doesn't see colour.
ANNA : You wanna bet?
She gently takes his head and they kiss for real. MARIA's voice is heard again.
PITSO : Wow, she's persistent!
ANNA : Come on, let's verneuk her, we'll go back along the river bed.
PITSO : Great, let's go.
They run off past the wind pump, hand in hand. (2000:46.)

Also unlike the awkward Trofimov, Pitso does kiss Anna. She teases him as he is now contradicting his "above love" policy. They discuss Lulu's reaction to their relationship, and Anna assures Pitso that – because of Lulu's liberal political views – they will have her blessing. Their cross-racial relationship is thus shown to be supported and conclusive as they run off past the windmill, hand in hand. This image is presented as rather sentimental, as the slightly unrealistic dream Suzman has of cross-racial relations in South Africa.

Another point in which Pitso's and Anna's relationship differs from Trofimov's and Anya's, is Anna's opinions – which are presented as much stronger than Anya's. Just before the above-mentioned scene where Pitso and Anna kiss, Pitso philosophises while Anna listens to him. She praises him for his oration, and states that he is the cause of her detachment from the orchard. Anna further accounts how she has become politically aware:

> D'you know, Pitso, when you were teaching things to Gerrie, I used to watch you and I envied him, but I was too shy to break in. You were a little pair, you two. And when I went up to Wits I saw that all these years I'd felt bad about the way we lived, deurmekaar [*alternative: rackety*] as it is. I guess I needed to get away to see it clearly. I sort of know this place is not really ours any more, and so – I shall leave. I'm ready. (2000:45.)

The Afrikaans influence in Anna's language is again clear in her use of the word "deurmekaar". From the extract, it is clear that Anna has had an interest in Pitso since he taught her little brother Sesotho, but was too shy to approach him. When she went to university, she realised that she had always felt guilty because of her parents' liberal political conventions which caused them to socially associate inter-racially. It was only when she was removed from these surroundings that she realised the wrongs of apartheid, and that luxuries acquired because of it – such as the cherry orchard – should be given up.

Unlike the demure Anya who just listens while Trofimov talks, Anna has thought about the orchard and its significance, and has come to her political awareness without Pitso's influence. She can form her own opinions, and voices them too. Earlier in Act Two, Anna also joins in the political discussion among the family, Pitso, Leko and Firs:

PITSO	:	[...] there are too many whites who are chary of change. Does your DNA have an extra gene, you whites, a racist gene?
ANNA	:	Hey Pietie, hang on – you know that's crap.
		[...]
PITSO	:	[...] Liberation has come, but the real revolution hasn't even begun!
LEKO	:	Give it time...
ANNA	:	Well, I think it's amazing – for forty-four years the Nats grabbed everything for only five million people and now those same resources belong to forty million. To us all! Of course the butter is spread thinner!
PITSO	:	Just don't say the word 'miracle'.

ANNA : It bloody well is! No civil war? That's a miracle. So there! (2000:40.)

Anna has her own opinions and is not afraid to confront Pitso when she disagrees with him, as when he states that all white people are racists. She is also not intimidated by his cynical views, and voices her optimistic views about the new democracy. Furthermore, their relationship assumes a physical dimension, as Pitso is presented as a less stoic character than Trofimov when he kisses Anna. Their relationship is thus shown to be more feasible than that of Trofimov and Anya, as they represent the possible future of race-relations in South Africa.

In these relationships, the communication between the characters is much clearer and their conflicts are sometimes successfully resolved. This causes a lack of ironic detachment in the play, which Young and Walen (2000:571) note. One of the most prominent sources of ironic detachment in Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* is the detached observations of Charlotta, the governess. With trickery and mimicking, she comments on the situation of the Gayevs. Consequently, in *The Free State*, Karlotta is shown in her five appearances as less detached from the family than Charlotta.

In Act One, instead of merely crossing the stage and refusing to do a trick when she is asked, Karlotta sits in the window seat and smokes while watching Pik swallow Lulu's beta-blockers. When she helps herself to the melktert, Leko tries to kiss her hand and asks her to do a trick. Sitting in the same room as the characters and moving closer to eat with them – without having to be invited – shows that Karlotta sees herself as part of the family. Karlotta's engagement with the family extends to her behaviour in Act Two. In her soliloquy, Karlotta says that she has no one to talk to since Anna is at university and Maria is a big cry-baby. Although she criticises Maria, she suggests that Anna might have been a suitable companion. By indulging the characters in a mock-trick – sashaying to the door with the cake tin on her fingertips – her exit is more amiable than that of Charlotta who merely states that she has no one to talk to – implying that her present company is ill-suited and refusing to do a trick in passing, when she goes to bed.

A further sign of Karlotta's engagement with the other characters is her association with Khokoloho. While Charlotta criticises Yepichodov's and Yasha's singing, Karlotta joins Khokoloho in his singing and self-deprecatingly states that they both sing like a jackal. She and Khokoloho thus share the embarrassment of their bad singing. Later in the same scene, Karlotta limits her insults to Nyatso. To Khokoloho's melancholy musings, Karlotta replies:

> I hear you, Khokoloho. You're a deep one, jy weet, and very smart. Not like him (*indicating NYATSO.*) who jus' thinks he's clever. 'Slim Jannie', nê [*sic*]? (2000:30.)

Thereby, Karlotta establishes her bond with Khokoloho, and takes a stand against Nyatso. She calls Nyatso 'Slim Jannie', an Afrikaans expression which originally referred to former Prime Minister Jan Smuts. The expression implies that someone is shrewd or thinks that he or she is

clever. Hence, Karlotta engages with the characters – and chooses sides – whereby she loses her objective stance.

It is thus unsure what Karlotta's motive is when, in the last act, she picks up a bundle and pretends that it is a baby – like Charlotta does in *The Cherry Orchard*. As Karlotta has lost her objective stance, she might only emphasise the difficulty of the situation, and the fact that Lulu now has to say goodbye to her childhood and youth. Charlotta's sharp criticism thus becomes blunted in *The Free State*.

Karlotta's Afrikaans translation of Charlotta's German saying is also contextualised differently. According to Suzman (2000:xxxv), the original German saying *Guter Mensch aber schlechter Musikant* was so temptingly near to the Afrikaans *Goeie mens, maar'n slegte musikant*, that she decided to make Karlotta Afrikaans. However, in *The Free State*, the translated saying takes on a different meaning. Karlotta uses the German saying to tell Pik that he is a good man, but would make a lousy lover. As there is no such saying as *goeie mens maar slegte musikant* in Afrikaans, the idiomatic meaning is lost. To compensate, Suzman has Pik flirtatiously sing to Karlotta after which she replies that he is a good man but a bad musician. Karlotta merely ridicules Pik's singing and does not directly reject him. Her commentary on Pik is not as harsh as Charlotta's is on Pishchik. The translation of Charlotta's original saying is thus used as a dialogic intertextual reference to the original text.

Although Karlotta is seen as isolated and displaced as she complains about her loneliness, the detachment and objective stance which Charlotta had in *The Cherry Orchard* has been lost in the transposition.

3.3.5. Assessment

In Suzman's adaptation of Chekhov's dialogue in *The Free State*, she rewrote the dialogue in a South African idiom, which aims to reflect the multilingual setting of South Africa. Suzman's positive political intention with the transposition further influenced its dialogue. Although each character has a specific political stance, most incidents of conflict are shown to be either weakened or resolved in order to be more politically correct. Specific political cases are made for each character. Pitso was, for instance, an underground activist against apartheid, while Leo is seen as a stereotypical white racist. Continual intertextual references to either Russia or *The Cherry Orchard* throughout the play remind the reader/audience that the play is a transposition and further encourages a comparison between the two texts.

The failure of communication between Leko and the Guyver siblings is represented as less severe than in *The Cherry Orchard*, as Lulu acknowledges her foolishness, but is too afraid of drastic change to take heed of Leko's plan. Although Lulu ignores Leko's reluctance to propose to

Maria, and relentlessly encourages him, the failure in communication between them is also less, because she realises that Leko might not love Maria.

The hostility between Leko and Pitso disappears as soon as Leko shows his political credentials, but an unresolved binary opposition is created when Leo is compared to the liberal-minded and deceased Johan Rademeyer.

The only incidence of conflict in the play which is not resolved or debased, is the argument between Maria and Khokoloho. Because of Maria's mixed race, Khokoloho sees her as inferior to the other characters. These negative allusions to Maria's race are seen throughout the play. She feels insecure about it, and it is a reason why Leko is reluctant to propose to her.

The celebratory tone of the play can also be seen in the relationship between Anna and Pitso. As Suzman wishes this relationship to represent racial harmony in South Africa, it is represented as more successful than in *The Cherry Orchard.* The characters also drink a toast at the end of the play, in contrast to the situation in *The Cherry Orchard* where no character – except for Yasha – drinks the champagne Lopakhin has bought.

In general, the characters are also shown to be more realistic and less illusioned. Anna is represented as more realistic about the sale of the orchard from the start of the play. Lulu's views are shown to be very politically correct, to the point where she may be taken advantage of, and Putswa is not shown as being completely pro-apartheid.

Yet, within these optimistic and realistic portrayals of the characters, Maria is not shown to be quite as emancipated as the outspoken Anna. The fact that she has to imagine a situation in which it would be socially acceptable to ask Leko to marry her, shows how – although she looks him squarely in the eye at the end of the play – Maria still does not have complete control over her own life and decisions. The fact that Lulu finds it unacceptable that Maria must leave the house unmarried shows an inability to break from the traditional gender norms.

Thus, the dialogue in *The Free State* shows an overall avoidance of any severe conflict, with the exception of the references to Maria's mixed race. Lulu is shown to be liberal to a fault, as she discourages an investigation and discussion on race and politics which is not clearly politically correct. Thus, although the dialogue in the play appears to be heteroglossic as the characters use various languages representing different cultural contexts as is characteristic of postcolonial literature, the discourse fails to be dialogic. Suzman admits in her introduction that her optimistic vision for South Africa presented by the play may still be unrealistic. This idealised version of the play also minimises the ironic detachment in *The Cherry Orchard,* which results in humour and accounts of the use of the carnivalesque.

3.4. The carnivalesque in *The Free State*: an inversion of hierarchy

As stated above, both the chronotopic attachment to land and the heteroglossic utterances of *The Cherry Orchard* have been transposed to Suzman's response text. However, the prevalence of carnivalesque aspects of *The Cherry Orchard*, are diminished to a great extent in Suzman's transposition.

As in *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Free State* is also set in a time in which the social structures of the past have become obsolete and new social structures and ways of conduct need to be found. Yet, where *The Cherry Orchard* carnivalises the need for new social structures – showing these as ambivalent – *The Free State* shows the social change as unequivocally positive. Keuris (2007:10) ascribes the lack of irony, humour and puns to Suzman's positive intention with the play. She did not want to risk compromising her positive, celebratory vision of South Africa with humorous ambiguities.

Chekhov's comedy, especially the comedy of subversion found in the characters of Yepichodov, Dunyasha and Yasha must then be greatly altered in *The Free State* as they ridicule both their masters and themselves. This then raises the questions of the extent to which these characters were altered and what their new function in *The Free State* is. To answer these questions, the main incidents of parody in *The Cherry Orchard* will be compared to the corresponding incidents in *The Free State* in order to establish the alteration of each character.

3.4.1. Suzman's transposition of Chekhov's comedy

In contrast to Chekhov, who left the judgement of the situation in his plays up to his reader/audience, Suzman takes a more noticeable stance in her transposition. Young and Walen (2000:570-571) lament the loss of comedy in Suzman's target text and ascribe it to laugh lines being lost since they are delivered in Sotho, Afrikaans, French or German as well as to Suzman's indulgent attitude towards her characters. Suzman's target text is thus less comic and more determined than Chekhov's source text.

The diminished comedy in *The Free State* become apparent when the three types of comedy described by Pitcher (1985:90-91) in *The Cherry Orchard* are compared to Suzman's transposition thereof. Suzman preserves Chekhov's comedy of character or situation more or less directly in her transposition. The comic relief created by Yepichodov and Pishchik's behaviour is transposed by attributing the same preconceptions of a clumsy and an irrelevant character to Khokoloho and Pik. The sole of Khokoloho's shoe has come loose and flaps, he drops things and also blunders in his attempts to win Dikeledi's heart. Pik suffers from narcolepsy and his turns of speech about Caligula's horse at the start of Act Three have been more or less directly transposed.

He also digresses into irrelevancies about money, but his attacks of narcolepsy are not as comically timed as Pishchik's, as they do not happen in mid-sentence. In Act One, for instance, Pishchik's attack of narcolepsy happens as follows. After Lopakhin leaves, the characters discuss him.

PISHCHIK	:	No use denying it ... very good fellow – Dashenka says so. Mind you, she says he's a... well, she says different things. [*He drops off, snores, wakes himself up.*] Oh, by the way... could I have the loan of two hundred and forty roubles, dear lady? The interest on my mortgage is due – (1996:28.)

Suzman transposed the event as follows:

PIK	:	Daphne I must admit, holds a candle for him too. She says – she also says – well, lots of things. Neewat [*sic.*], horses for courses... [*He drops off for a second in his chair.*]
LULU	:	[*Quietly to MARIA.*] Darling, they're too old to adjust.
MARIA	:	[*Furious.*] But how can he even think like that?
LULU	:	He does his best. Lord, what a world!
PIK	:	[*Wakes.*] Oh damn! Tomorrow the interest on my bond must be paid. You couldn't, dear lady, loan me...? (2000:20.)

By having the narcoleptic episode happen mid-sentence, Chekhov draws more attention to it than Suzman. As other characters are discussing Pik's racist ways while he is asleep, his narcolepsy could remain unnoticed by the reader/audience. Furthermore, Pik is startled when he wakes up, and as the interest on his bond is due, he asks Lulu for money. Pishchik, on the other hand, merely continues his conversation by asking Lyubov for money, as he often does.

Thus, although slightly diminished in the case of Pishchik and Pik, Suzman transposes Chekhov's humorous characters of Pishchik and Khokoloho. These characters serve as continual comic relief throughout the play. Yet, Suzman has diminished Chekhov's comedy of the absurd to a large extent. As was seen by the diminished heteroglossia in *The Free State*, Suzman largely reduced the failure in communication. Thus, the absurdity in the miscommunication of Chekhov's characters are lost and, regrettably, the comic value of Suzman's text is to a great extent reduced. The more effective communication in *The Free State* fulfils Suzman's positive intention with her transposition, but differs from Chekhov's objective detachment in the portrayal of his characters.

Furthermore, instead of using the transposed versions of Yepichodov, Dunyasha and Yasha to ambiguously subvert the status quo, Suzman only uses the character of Leo to subvert the ideology of apartheid. Chekhov's Gayev subverts the ignorance of the gentry with his conservative sentiments. After Gayev has convinced Anya and Varya of his own plan to save the orchard, he tells them of his own convictions:

GAYEV	:	[...] You know, you're talking to a man of the eighties – oh, I've had to suffer for my convictions ... the peasants don't love me for nothing. It's all in the point of view, d'you see? You've got to know your peasant ... know how to –

ANYA	:	Uncle, you're doing it again!
VARYA	:	Uncle dear, do stop!
FIRS	:	Leonid Andreyevich!
GAYEV	:	All right, I'm going ... (1996:34.)

Suzman transposes Gayev's speech as follows:

LEO	:	Yes, a child of the fifties, that's me. Not a decade held in much esteem 'cept for Elvis, but I can tell you I've done my fair share of protest.
[*Hoots of derision.*]		
LEO	:	No, believe me, girls, letting Rademeyer live here, carrying on with his bloody Commie activities, putting us all in danger, is nothing to sniff at. Which is why the staff all trust me. Yup, you have to know how to deal with your Affs...
ANNA	:	Uncle Leo, you can't speak like that! It's bloody insulting, is what!
MARIA	:	And Putswa here – it's just awful! (2000:26.)

In these extracts, Gayev/Leo tries to convince Anya/Anna and Varya/Maria that he is liberal and that he has fought for these liberal convictions. The attempt is ironic as Gayev/Leo's conservative convictions shine through his liberal façade. While Anya and Varya reprimand Gayev for his senseless speechifying, Anna and Maria are horrified at Leo's obvious stereotyping of black people. Thus, Suzman's characters are once again shown to be more politically aware and offended by politically incorrect behaviour.

Suzman furthermore subverts the apartheid ideology of the supremacy of the Afrikaner race by having Leo sing the national anthem of the old South Africa and being ridiculed because of it. Suzman's alterations to Chekhov's source text ridicules mainly the white dominance in the social hierarchy. In contrast to Chekhov who indicts both the masters and their servants, Suzman indicts only some of the white characters. Suzman's indulgent view of her characters serves to portray harmonious race relations between black and white South Africans; therefore, the characters whose views differ from Suzman's positive intention with the play are clearly ridiculed.

In the examples mentioned above, Leo and Pik are isolated by the politically liberal characters such as Lulu, Anna, Pitso and Maria because of their conservative and racist sentiments. Leo's counterproductive attempts to sound politically aware as well as his singing of the outdated national anthem of South Africa create what Abrams (2005:340-341) refers to as "tendency comedy". In contrast to harmless comedy described earlier, tendency comedy is comedy which is usually used in satire and in which one is made to laugh at a person, not merely because he or she is ridiculous, but because he or she "is being ridiculed". While the author of a text consciously ridicules a specific character or view with tendency comedy, it is furthermore derisive and contains "some element of contempt or malice, and serves as a weapon against its subject".

As Suzman aims to represent her ideal of a racially harmonious South Africa, she ridicules the politically conservative characters and represents the politically liberal characters in a positive light. While tendency comedy serves Suzman's purpose, her text seems much less textured than Chekhov's when the use of comedy of subversion is compared. Where Chekhov undermines and sympathises with all his characters, Suzman divides her characters into a conservative camp and a liberal camp, sympathising with the latter.

3.4.2. The relationship between white employers and their black employees

As was seen in Khokoloho's argument with Maria in Act Three, his speech is not as stilted as Yepichodov's in *The Cherry Orchard*. Khokoloho resents Maria's authority and discriminates against her mixed race, but he does not ridicule himself with an inappropriate register. His portrayal in Act Two, when strumming his guitar in order to win Dikeledi's heart, is also less ridiculous. The scene opens with Khokoloho sitting alone in the field. He is then joined by Karlotta who sings and engages with him as was previously discussed:

KHOKOLOHO mockingly sings an Afrikaans love song, and after a bit she [Karlotta] joins in with a quavering contralto:

KHOKO : *O my Sarie Marais is so ver van my hart*
[...]
KELE and NYATSO run on from the dam, he in trunks. The mood is broken.

KARLOTTA : [*to KHOKO.*] Ons sing net soos 'n jakals [*sic*], awoo, awoo.

KHOKO : Some days I'm like a tree in a storm and pah! – the lightning strikes me. No reason, why not another tree? I could be wrong, but then why, when I woke up this morning, do I see on my chest a huge great baboon-spider sitting there? Big like this! Just looking at me. Or when I drink some beer, why does a gogga always fly in for a swim? [*Pause.*] Karlotta, tell me, have you read all of the Bible?
No reply; she moves to a deckchair. KELE only has eyes for NYATSO as she sits on the rug, watching him while he pulls on his clothes. Upset by this, KHOKOLOHO changes tune to something harsher, slowly advancing on NYATSO as he sings. (The last line of the song means: 'Take your things and go'.)

KHOKO : *Vat jou goed en trek, Ferreira* [...]

KHOKO : [*To NYATSO – a threat.*] Disasters come at any time, don't you find?

KELE : 'Specially when they sing. More stories, Nyatso, go on, more, more. I wish I could go overseas too, lucky you.

NYATSO : Yeah, well, you guys live in the dark ages.

KHOKO : So. But they have had time to work things out over there. Africa takes her own time.

NYATSO : Don't I know it. I choose to speak only English now – the world language. French when I'm in France, of course, but English here and everywhere.

KARLOTTA	:	Get him!
KHOKO	:	So. Well, I speak maybe four languages. I can read [*KELE hoots.*] ... I can! Standard Three was enough to teach me to...
KELE	:	It is not, Khokoloho, our schooling was kak.
KHOKO	:	... but no books can tell me what I *really* want to know; like, do I go on like I am now, or must I go somewhere far, far away and find another life? So, I just play my tunes and I sing my songs. *He nearly sits on KARLOTTA's gun. They all scream. She grabs it.*
KARLOTTA	:	I hear you, Khokoloho. You're a deep one, jy weet, and very smart. [...] *Exit KARLOTTA* [...].
KHOKO	:	Dikeledi, please, can you and me have a little talk?
KELE	:	Go on, then.
KHOKO	:	Can it be just the two of us?
KELE	:	OK, then. But first, can you get me my sweater? It's in the cupboard in my room – it'll be cold in a bit.
KHOKO	:	There you are – lightning! Pa-pham! *Exit KHOKOLOHO mournfully singing.* (1996:28-30.)

After Karlotta and Khokoloho have sung an old Afrikaans love song jokingly, Dikeledi and Nyatso, who went for a swim, enter. As Dikeledi and Nyatso enter together, the dynamics of the scene thus differs from the corresponding scene in *The Cherry Orchard*. Their entry implies that they already have a relationship at this point in the play, and thus Khokoloho's vying with Nyatso is only a desperate attempt to lure her back to him.

Khokoloho's appropriate speech register makes him less ridiculous, but his unfortunate clumsiness is still emphasised. He muses on his bad luck, but less melodramatically than Yepichodov. Yepichodov's query to Yasha and Dunyasha if they have read the works of Buckle is transposed in *The Free State* as Khokoloho asking Karlotta if she has read the entire Bible. According to Suzman (2000:xxxv), she wanted to allude to the missionary schooling that Khokoloho must have had with this reference to the Bible, as well as a spiritual inclination. Thus, unlike Yepichodov, Khokoloho does not try to impress anybody with this reference, but genuinely wants to discuss spiritual matters with somebody. Karlotta does not answer his question, but his attention is in any case drawn to Dikeledi who watches Nyatso as he is getting dressed. Out of jealousy he then sings another Afrikaans song to Nyatso, attempting to chase him away indirectly. Dikeledi neutralises Khokoloho's threat to Nyatso when he states that disasters can happen at any time, implying that Khokoloho's singing is a disaster.

Dikeledi then begs Nyatso to tell her more about his time in Paris but his account is coloured with affectation, criticism and arrogance about Africa as a primitive and behind-the-times country; he also says that he refuses to speak his mother tongue, as he speaks only English and French now. In response to this critique, Khokoloho defends Africa, by replying that the continent takes its own time and when he brags that his education had taught him to speak and read four

languages, he is corrected by Dikeledi, who refutes his allegations by claiming that their education was inadequate.

Khokoloho then begins to doubt that the answers to the questions he is asking can be found in books. He wants to know if he should continue his life as it is now, or start a new life in a new place. Khokoloho is thus questioning the impact that the end of apartheid should have on his own life. Democracy has arrived, and yet his life continues as it has under apartheid. As he cannot find an answer to his question, he will just continue to play his guitar and sing his songs in the meantime. Preoccupied with his thoughts, Khokoloho almost sits on Karlotta's gun, causing pandemonium. However, Karlotta understands Khokoloho's doubts about his life and openly expresses her resentment about Nyatso's arrogance. She then leaves. Hereafter, Khokoloho asks Dikeledi if he could speak with her in private, whereupon she sends him to fetch her sweater. He recognises this as another stroke of bad luck and exists, admitting defeat by singing mournfully.

The extract thus differs considerably from the corresponding passage in *The Cherry Orchard* as Khokoloho is shown as less melodramatic and stilted in his philosophies; his intellectual aspirations are also less worldly and more conventional when he seeks spiritual guidance from the Bible and he is also less pretentious and ambitious than Nyatso. Khokoloho also questions the impact that democracy will have on his life, because democracy still has not relieved the poverty of most South Africans living under the breadline.

Khokoloho's language shows an Afrikaans influence, as he was most likely educated in Afrikaans. He sings the Afrikaans folk songs *Sarie Marais* and *Vat jou goed en trek, Ferreira* in a joking way, appropriating them to his own purposes.

The love triangle between Khokoloho, Dikeledi and Nyatso becomes a territorial battle between the two males. Nyatso represents the refined culture of Europe, while Khokoloho defends Africa's unique concept of time. Dikeledi, however, supports Nyatso's argument in each instance, much impressed by his stories about Europe. The scene neither functions as a carnivalisation of Khokoloho's ambition nor as a parody of the philosophies of Pitso Thekiso. The scene shows a love triangle between a plain country girl, a country boy who questions the direction of his life and a worldly intruder.

Unlike Khokoloho, who does not share Yepichodov's ambitions concerning status, Dikeledi appears to be slightly more ambitious. Nyatso's arrogance and impression of worldly flair has made a clear impact on the world of the simple country girl, Dikeledi. Yet – Dunyasha's preposterous imitation of ladylike behaviour is diffused in *The Free State*. This is evident as she and Leko wait for Lulu at the start of the play. The scene opens on Leko asleep in a chair in the nursery. He then wakes.

DIKELEDI (KELE) opens the door; light shines in from the lit passage. Her face is hidden by the enormous bunch of cherry blossom [sic.] *she is carrying and she's wearing yellow kitchen gloves.*

LEKO peeks round the chair and changes his yawn to a ghostly sound, waving his arms about above the chairback.

LEKO : Woo! Woo! 'Ek is jou pappie se spook!' [*i.e.: 'I am your daddy's ghost'*] *or:* I am the Spirit of Afrika!
KELE stops stock-still squealing with fright, the blossoms trembling. LEKO gets up, laughing, and goes to switch on the light by the door.

LEKO : Sorry, Kele, it's only me... sorry.

KELE : Hé la! You scared me, Masopha man! U nkentse letswalo!
A stream of invective in Sotho as she comes back into the room.

KELE : What're you doing in here anyway? Why're you up so early? It's only half-four.

LEKO : I'm not up – I slept here all bloody night. [...] What an idiot, you should've kicked me out. (2000:1-2.)

After Dikeledi states that she did not know Leko was asleep in the nursery, and thus could not wake him, Leko starts to reminisce on his first meeting with Lulu and how she told him that the world would belong to him one day.

LEKO : [...] She wasn't wrong – here I am now with a BiMa 7 and Guccis.

KELE : Wa-ikgantsha! [*'Show-off!'*]

LEKO : Man, I *like* making money – I've got a knack for it. But I wonder sometimes if it's changed me? No, one thing's for sure I haven't forgotten my roots – oh no. [...]
[*The dogs bark again.*]

KELE : The dogs were whining all night, like they know Miss Lulu is coming. You didn't hear them?
[*She sits suddenly on the sofa, peeling off her gloves.*]

LEKO : You OK, Dikeledi?

KELE : Heh, Masopha, look at my hands – all trembling. I think I'm going to faint.

LEKO : Now, Kele, don't you go all 'white' on me. And look at your nails, child, look at your shoes. Don't get any funny ideas...

KELE : Hé la, look who's talking – Mr Gucci shoes! (2000:3.)

Khokoloho enters with flowers from the garden, trips and falls in the process. Leko then asks Dikeledi for coffee:

LEKO : Any chance of a coffee, Kele? [*Teasing.*] Black and strong like me.

KELE : [*returning the tease with a little mock curtsy.*] Eya, ntate!
Exit DIKELEDI with the hydrangeas. KHOKOLOHO watches her go.

LEKO : Mosetsana u stout... cheh ... [*under his breath as he sits near the heater.*] [alt: 'Little madam'] (2000:3-4.)

Khokoloho and Leko now have a conversation about Khokoloho's old shoes and his unluckiness, after which Dikeledi returns with Leko's coffee. After Khokoloho leaves, sounds are heard which announces Lulu's return:

LEKO	:	Listen! They've come!
KELE	:	I've got goose pimples. Look here!
LEKO	:	Cool it, Kele, calm down. (2000:5.)

As they wait for Lulu, Leko and Dikeledi converse, much as Lopakhin and Dunyasha do in *The Cherry Orchard*, Leko frightens Dikeledi by pretending to be the ghost of one of her ancestors (her father) which could be an allusion to the play of *Hamlet*, which he has been reading. However, Leko is also alluding to the African belief that deceased ancestors watch over the living. This African belief would explain why Dikeledi is genuinely frightened by Leko's prank. The stream of invective in Sotho, which the prank inspires, exposes Dikeledi as an unpretentious young country girl, at least at her core (Suzman quoted in Walder, 1999:261).

The way Dikeledi and Leko speak to each other is, in contrast to the conversation between Lopakhin and Dunyasha, relaxed. They address each other as equals although they criticise each other for their fashionable appearances. Their relationship indicates that they accept each other as persons, despite Leko's German car (or BiMa7) and his Gucci designer shoes and Dikeledi's fashionable shoes and manicured nails. Whereas Leko exhibits signs of his materialistic streak, which Dikeledi is quick to criticise, he also notes her affected "white" mannerisms and her mock curtsy, and remarks under his breath that she is a "little madam". Dikeledi retaliates against Leko's mockery by pointing out that he is a hypocrite, because despite his claim that he has not forgotten his origins as a black farm boy, his material success is evident when he refers to his car by its city slang name: a BiMa. Consequently, they have both been influenced by Western cultures.

In contrast to the master/servant relationship between Lopakhin and Dunyasha, the rapport between Leko and Dikeledi reminds one of a sibling-like bond between an elder brother and his younger sister. Dikeledi retaliates when Leko reprimands her, and is not afraid to criticise him. Her fashion consciousness and trembling could also be ascribed to her youth, and influence from the media rather than to an imitation of her employers. Thus, while Dunyasha mimics her masters in reconceptualising her identity, Dikeledi mimics the media.

When Dunyasha tries to establish a friendship with the noble Anya in *The Cherry Orchard*, her attempts are ignored. Dikeledi, on the other hand, is on much friendlier terms with Anna. After Lulu has handed out presents to the household in Act One, Dikeledi asks Anna to fasten the clasp of the necklace she has received:

KELE	:	Can you do this up for me? [*ANNA does up the clasp of the necklace as KELE perches on the arm of the chair.*]
ANNA	:	Pretty.

[...]

KELE : Anna, hey! I thought you'd never get here.

ANNA : On the move for two days and two nights, and not a wink. Hell, this is arctic! [*She decides to keep her coat on.*]

KELE : Not so cold as when you left last July – they had to close the mountain road the snow was so bad. Anna, I've got to tell you a big secret.

ANNA : [*Yawning.*] Now what?

KELE : Khokoloho had the cheek to speak to my father; he wants me for his wife. It's just so embarrassing.

ANNA : So what's new, Kele? Where's my fags?

KELE : So what do I do? He loves me, he just loves me so much... [*ANNA lights up and wanders into her room.*]

ANNA : [*from O/S*] My own room, my own windows, my very own view, like I'd never left. [*She wanders back in, smoking, and perches on the window seat gazing outside.*] I can't wait to go outside. Wish I could sleep on planes – too excited I guess. [*KELE is riffling through the plastic bags and finds a T-shirt with 'I love Paris', which she puts on.*]

KELE : Hey, I forgot! Pitso Thekiso showed up two days ago. Just like that – out of the blue.

ANNA : Never! Professor Pitso! I've not seen him since the day Gerrie... (2000:6-7.)

After Anna has fastened Dikeledi's necklace, they talk about the weather and Anna's trip. The fact that Khokoloho had to ask Dikeledi's father for permission to marry her, alludes to the traditional patriarchal African culture. Dikeledi then tells Anna her supposed secret: that Khokoloho asked her father's permission to marry her. Anna's reply of: "So what's new, Kele?" seems to be more amiable than Anya's ignoring of Dunyasha in *The Cherry Orchard.* Her remark implies that Khokoloho has been interested in Dikeledi for a while, in contrast to Anya's reaction, which suggests that Dunyasha is always running away with some story.

Anna still fails to give Dikeledi the attention that she wants; however, this can be ascribed to her fatigue from travelling. Dikeledi busies herself by riffling through Lulu's shopping bags while Anna wanders into her room. Dikeledi then suddenly remembers that Pitso Thekiso has arrived on the estate earlier. Instead of Anya who only asks for information about Trofimov, Anna shares with Dikeledi that she had not seen Pitso since the day her little brother died. Pitso's arrival thus reminds the family of the boy's death. Anna seems more considerate towards Dikeledi than Anya has been to Dunyasha, as she fastens Dikeledi's necklace and also commiserates with her that she has not seen Pitso since her brother's death. The friendship between Anna and Dikeledi thus seems more genuine than the attempt at friendship which Dunyasha makes towards Anya in *The Cherry Orchard.*

Apart from the amiable way in which the other characters behave towards Dikeledi, she is also shown be more confident about her heritage than Dunyasha in *The Cherry Orchard.* When

Khokoloho leaves Dikeledi and Nyatso alone in Act Two, she draws attention to her other suitor, Khokoloho, most likely in an attempt to make Nyatso jealous:

KELE	:	Am I too hard on him? He's a sweet guy, but...
NYATSO	:	[*lighting his cigar*] Disaster City.
KELE	:	I've become such a worrier – too much time in the big house, maybe. Nothing is straight with them; they're always feeling guilty about who they are. Me, I *know* who I am, but also, I want – 'things'. And Nyatso, I'm telling you, if ever you lie to me I don't know what I'll do, I swear!
NYATSO	:	Little cherrie! [*A perfunctory kiss.*] Look, Kele, get smart; the guilt is because they're liberals. Play on it.
KELE	:	Nyatso, you know lots, don't you? You make me see things clearer.
NYATSO	:	For sure, I'm sorted out. Tell you what else I think – don't go and lose your head. Stay cool, like me. I don't go for loose women. [*KELE gives a small cry; hides her face in her hands.*] Mmm, cigars in the open air taste so good... [*Sound of voices O/S.*]
NYATSO	:	Sh! Eya, it's them. Run! Or she'll find us together and get funny ideas. [*NYATSO pulls her to her feet.*] Run! That way, by the dam.
KELE	:	[*He puffs smoke at her.*] Your cigar *stinks*! (2000:30-31.)

Dikeledi explains that since she spends a significant amount of time in Lulu's house, she has become preoccupied and worried about issues such as Khokoloho's interest in her. Like Dunyasha she states that she has adapted to the life in the "big house". Yet, unlike Dunyasha, she wishes to retain her own identity and sees her adaptation to that life as negative. She feels that the white characters are unsure of their identity as a result of their feelings of guilt, while she, on the other hand, is confident about her own identity, despite her attachment to the consumerism that she has encountered in the house. A tension can be perceived in Dikeledi's discourse between her African origins and the discourse of consumerism she has been exposed to in the house. Like Leko, Dikeledi experiences tension between her origins and her present lifestyle.

Despite her worldly pretence, Dikeledi is vulnerable to critique and listens to Nyatso's advice to use Lulu's feelings of guilt in order to manipulate her. Dikeledi shows herself open to Nyatso's influence and perspective. Yet he seems quite unaffected by their relationship, he gives her a casual kiss and sends her away, because he does not want Lulu to see them together. Nyatso is also not above trickery when he advises Dikeledi to use Lulu's feelings of guilt. Dikeledi's comment about his cigar smoking once more draws the audience/reader's attention to the fake European image he wishes to portray. Dikeledi finds his smoking rude, and tells him that his cigar "stinks", implying that it smells and that she disapproves.

Although Dikeledi is much prouder of her African roots than Dunyasha is of her peasant roots, she is still influenced by Lulu's materialistic lifestyle and Nyatso's influence. Throughout the play, two influences can thus be discerned in her discourse. In her relationship with Nyatso, she

shows the naivety of a young girl. Her naivety prevents her from questioning his prescriptive attitude towards her. The fact that he hides their relationship from Lulu, also implies that he is not serious about her. His aloof pursuit of her is much less sincere than her impetuous fondness of him.

Dikeledi's dancing at the party in Act Three is not represented as a special favour, but as accepted by all of the characters. Thus, Dikeledi's appearance in this scene differs from Dunyasha's experience of a glamorous dream-like night. During the party, Dikeledi enters from the garden:

KELE	:	My head's up here... dancing, dancing, dancing. Ntate, one of the band boys just told me something which made me lose my breath.
PUTSWA	:	What did the tsotsi say to you, huh?
KELE	:	Your eyes, he said, shine like a sweet young baby calf. [*PUTSWA clicks his tongue in disapproval.*]
NYATSO	:	Oh, *dis donc*! [*Exit NYATSO into the garden.*]
KELE	:	I wish *he'd* say poetry to me. (2000:56.)

At the party, Dikeledi is not imitating ladylike behaviour as Dunyasha did, but she does try to make Nyatso jealous. She probably noticed that Nyatso was losing interest in her and therefore tells Putswa about a compliment she received just when Nyatso is within earshot. Yet Nyatso appears bored and leaves, thereby leaving Dikeledi without complimenting her as well. The language used by the different characters in this extract again shows different influences. Kele addresses Putswa as "Ntate", which is a respectful form of address in Sesotho for an older person. She also recounts a compliment she received – that her eyes shine like a baby calf's. Thus, Dikeledi's discourse again alludes to her African origins. Nyatso prefers to reply in French, again portraying a fake European image.

When Khokoloho demands to speak with Dikeledi later in this scene, she refuses to speak to him, as she is preoccupied. In contrast to Dunyasha who does not want to be disturbed from her dream-like experience at the ball, Dikeledi seems genuinely preoccupied by Nyatso's neglect of her. Nyatso's lack of respect for Dikeledi is seen again in Act Four. When he takes leave of her, he shows no regret and only says that he cannot wait to get back to Paris. He reprimands Dikeledi by telling her to show some self-control. She then asks him to send her a postcard, and when he does not reply, she leaves. Nyatso comments on her departure by saying: "Well, I had a good time..." (2000:66) which would imply that Dikeledi had served as a sexual conquest to Nyatso on his visit to South Africa.

However, unlike Dunyasha, Dikeledi responds to Nyatso's disrespectful treatment of her. Just before the family leaves, Khokoloho swallows an insect. When Nyatso giggles at this, Dikeledi suddenly "*marches up to him and slaps NYATSO's face hard. Then marches back to near the door and just looks proudly at him*" (2000:72). Karlotta applauds Dikeledi, while Anna and Maria hug her

as a sign of solidarity. Dikeledi is then also accepted and liked by the other characters. Her main motivation throughout the play is to spark Nyatso's interest rather than to appear ladylike and rise in social status. She is portrayed as a young, naïve girl who is taken advantage of by the seemingly worldly Nyatso. However, she is not completely reduced to being a victim at his hands, as her actions above testify that she retains some sense of self-respect. The hugs that Anna and Maria give her after this slap, show their support and indicate genuine friendship.

The Parisian pretence with which Nyatso is represented is already evident before his first appearance on stage. When Maria and Anna discuss Lulu's spendthrift ways, they also complain about Nyatso's arrogance:

ANNA	:	Even though she'd sold the villa at Menton, she still had nothing over – mentioned daylight robbery. [...] She's hopeless – she insists on the most expensive restaurants and then tips everyone in sight, way over the odds. And Nyatso's become a total pain – he expects three-course meals three times a day. He and Lottie both. God, can she eat – she hoovers it up!
MARIA	:	They've got a nasty surprise coming.
ANNA	:	Ma's gone all posh and says he's her 'valet' can you believe? He's got 'idées au-dessous de son gare', that one.
MARIA	:	I saw him – all dressed up and nowhere to go. (2000:8.)

Anna complains about the employees of the family's demands on their living standards, upon which Maria replies that the family cannot maintain such demands any longer. They then comment on Nyatso's arrogance and inappropriate pretentiousness. In Anna's language, a European influence can also be seen as she uses French phrases to describe Nyatso's pretentiousness.

Yet, Lulu is shown to be equally pretentious. She insists on travelling with a valet – a very decadent luxury. Thus, Lulu is shown to be even more hedonistic and foolish than Lyubov – and Nyatso is happy to play along. The reader/audience sees Nyatso for the first time when he notices Dikeledi. However, the flirtation is less humorous than the corresponding scene in *The Cherry Orchard*, because it is less dramatic. As in *The Cherry Orchard*, Nyatso enters, and pretends not to recognise Dikeledi:

NYATSO	:	OK to go through here?
KELE	:	Heh, Nyatso – I didn't know who you were for a sec. You've changed a lot.
NYATSO	:	[*dumps down the suitcase and approaches her.*] And who exactly are you?
KELE	:	I'm the daughter of Thabo Moletsane – Dikeledi. When you left I was so high. You won't remember me.
NYATSO	:	What a lekker little cherry, *chérie.* [*He laughs at his pun and pinches her on the butt; KELE screams and drops a saucer. Enter MARIA. Exit NYATSO quickly.*] (2000:10.)

This extract shows an overly ambitious, seemingly worldly – yet sexist – man, who sees the opportunity to take advantage of a young country girl. By pretending not to know who Dikeledi is, Nyatso adds to his important air. As both Lulu and Nyatso uphold a pretentious lifestyle, his behaviour which imitates a Parisian beau, alludes also to a vulgarised version of Lulu's life in Paris. Yet, as Dikeledi is not shown to be as conscious of social class as Dunyasha, the characters are not completely reduced to caricatures. Although Nyatso is thus represented as an arrogant opportunist, Suzman (quoted in Walder, 1999:261) compares him to those South Africans who have gone abroad and find it impossible to return. In her introduction to the play, Suzman (2000:xxxiv) further states that Nyatso becomes a personification for "those exiles who return and cannot adjust. He has learned certain skills and imbibed a certain lifestyle in the ambience of Paris and can no longer 'go back'. [...] In his favour, he suffers from the realisation that he has grown out of his roots, but cannot unlearn what he has learned."

Yet, Nyatso is not a character who evokes much sympathy. He is represented as an arrogant man who shamelessly takes advantage of Dikeledi. Yet he also creates some sense of comedy, because of his inappropriate Parisian outfits and flair paraded on a Free State cherry farm. The conflicting discourses of France and South Africa are clear in his wordplay on cherry, as he refers to Dikeledi as "a lekker little cherry, chérie". While the first "cherry" immediately evokes an image of the fruit – as the play centres on the fate of a cherry orchard – it is also a rather coarse colloquial term for a woman. The second "chérie" is the French word for girlfriend, and therefore the conflicting influences in Nyatso's language are revealed in this pun.

3.4.3. Inversion of hierarchy

As the subversion of hierarchy practised by Yepichodov, Dunyasha and Khokoloho becomes weaker in *The Free State* to the extent that it fails to become carnivalised, the criticism of this inversion in *The Cherry Orchard* is diminished in *The Free State*. Here, the inversion of hierarchy is more readily accepted by characters such as Lulu and Putswa – although they still experience nostalgia and trauma as a result. The lack of ambivalence in the inversion of hierarchy might thus suggest that the social change is regarded as positive and permanent. At the end of the play, Karlotta realises that she is unemployed, and asks Leko for a job:

KARLOTTA	:	[...] [...*speaks to LEKO.*] You'll give me a job, nê [*sic*]? I can't manage without.
LEKO	:	No problem, we'll find one for you. Shu! – life is so weird.
KARLOTTA	:	Thank you, geagte Meneer. (2000:67.)

In this extract, a white woman asks a black man for a job, which shows a definite and concrete inversion of power from the social structures of apartheid. When Karlotta then addresses Leko as

"geagte Meneer", the shift in respect is also ironically accentuated. Suzman (2000:xxxvi) comments on this inversion by explaining that in the aftermath of apartheid, Karlotta as an Afrikaner woman and Leko as a black man form a clear social antithesis. She continues to point out that Karlotta's "begging for a job from a black man is a poetic irony that will, I hope, not be lost on us". Although the inversion of power in *The Free State* might imply sexism, it is shown to be accepted and seen as a positive occurrence by the characters. The inversion of hierarchy restores the harmony that has been disturbed by apartheid.

3.4.4. Assessment

The above-mentioned discussion concludes that the carnivalesque aspects in *The Cherry Orchard* have been diluted in *The Free State*. Instead of carnivalising the social change in the play, Suzman represents the social change with more optimism. Although Suzman more or less directly transposes Chekhov's comedy of character or situation, she diminishes his comedy of the absurd as well as his comedy of subversion. Where Chekhov uses (among others) Gayev, Yepichodov, Dunyasha and Yasha to subvert social hierarchies, Suzman only uses the character of Leo. The carnivalised characters of Yepichodov, Dunyasha and Yasha in *The Cherry Orchard* are thus accordingly altered in *The Free State*.

Khokoloho is portrayed as less ridiculous – both in his speech register and his intellectual and social aspirations. An antithesis of Africa versus Europe is created between him and Nyatso. In order to make an impression on him, Dunyasha supports Nyatso in this antithesis, and Khokoloho is thus defeated.

Dikeledi's superstition about her ancestors and uncouth language when frightened emphasises her innocence as a young country girl. Her vain, teenage aspirations are accepted in good humour by Leko. Anna is also less rude to her than Anya has been to Dunyasha in *The Cherry Orchard*. Dikeledi is more amiably accepted by the other characters, and her vanity is thus perceived as less ridiculous. She is also shown to be proud of her African identity, and yet she is influenced by Lulu's lifestyle of consumerism. Dikeledi is also at ease at the ball in Act Three, and her main motivation in this Act is her preoccupation with the dwindling interest of Nyatso. At the end of the play, Dikeledi is also shown as more emancipated than Dunyasha, as she slaps Nyatso's face after his disrespectful treatment of her.

Lulu's valet, Nyatso, is represented as having pretensions which resonate with her own. As Lulu continues to live above her means, Nyatso is happily using the opportunity to join in this lifestyle. When Dikeledi seems impressed by his Parisian appearance, he also makes use of the opportunity to seduce her. Suzman, however, still sympathises with Nyatso in claiming that he can no longer adapt to his home country after his stay in Paris, and compares him to South Africans

who lived in exile during apartheid. However, his arrogance and snobbery expose him as insecure and selfish in his overtly progressive ambitions.

These three characters then do not invert the social order of *The Free State*. The humour in their scenes has been diluted as they are represented in a more positive light than Chekhov's source characters. Aside from providing a little comic relief, Khokoloho and Dikeledi are represented as a country boy and girl who question the influence that democracy should have on their lives. Nyatso is shown to be an uprooted South African who has become insecure in the process. As Dikeledi's response to Nyatso's pretensions is more out of naivety than her own pretentiousness, they do not act as a parody of other social types. Chekhov's comedy of subversion is simplified by Suzman as she uses it only to indict the white, previously dominant characters, and not also the black or servant characters. In her transposition, Suzman did not include the comedy of the absurd, which Chekhov amply uses in *The Cherry Orchard* to indicate the failure of communication between the characters. As Suzman is more indulgent in the depiction of her characters and hesitates to laugh at them, the ironic detachment in Chekhov's text is lost. In the transposition of Charlotta to Karlotta, the character also loses her objective detachment and her behaviour and language seem forced at times. However, Suzman does achieve dramatic irony (for instance, with Nyatso) by illustrating the effect of changing circumstances on identity formation. The characters appear to be uncertain about what should be retained from the past and what should be rejected, with regard to materialist possessions and cultural values.

However, through their dialogue, the multiple lines of discourse representative of the different cultures which influence these characters become clear. There is a tension in the discourse of these young black South Africans between their African origins and the Western culture with which they have come into contact. When the social structure is shown to be inverted at the end of the play – when Karlotta asks Leko for a job – the inversion is accepted by the other characters. The inversion of social structure is thus not shown to be less ambivalent than the carnivalised subversion in *The Cherry Orchard* implies. Suzman is intent on celebrating her dream of a South Africa free from racial discrimination, and – with the exception of Maria – shows the characters in her play to co-exist in an atmosphere of racial harmony.

3.5. Conclusion

The analysis of the chronotope, heteroglossia and the carnivalesque results in a comparison between *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Free State* and their contexts. A similar chronotopic engagement between past and present is evident in *The Free State*, and yet some of the chronotopes in *The Cherry Orchard* have been adapted to accommodate the South African context.

The multilingual situation in the South African setting can also be seen in the language of the characters which is interspersed with the language of cultures that have influenced them. Incidents of political heteroglossia can also be seen as some of the characters have very definite conflicting political views. However, these incidents of conflict are easily resolved by a politically correct authoritative voice, which suggests that there are no real heteroglossia in the text, despite the multilingual utterances by the characters. The scenes which are carnivalised in *The Cherry Orchard* in *The Free State* show the influence from various languages and cultures. The overthrow of hierarchy in the social context of the play is not temporary, but permanent, and is not subverted or parodied. Yet, comedy is created in these scenes by the love triangles that exist among the characters.

Thus, although *The Free State* fails to be dialogic, and thereby more engaging to the reader/audience, it portrays the multicultural context of South Africa. The characters' surroundings are influenced by various cultures, and their languages are shown to be hybridised as a result.

As Suzman wanted to represent a possible racially harmonious South Africa, much of the tension that exists in Chekhov's original play has been diluted. Therefore, on account of the positive intention, the play has lost its dialogism. Instead, questions about the identity of contemporary South Africans are asked and the influence of multiple cultures and discourses is explored.

In the analyses of both *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Free State*, certain similarities and differences have become evident. These similarities and differences need to be assessed in order to establish the significance of Suzman's adaptation.

Chapter 4:
Assessment of the adaptation

4.1. Introduction

In Chapter Two, the analysis of *The Cherry Orchard*, it became evident that there is a dialogic engagement between various binary oppositions in the play. These oppositions include the past versus the present and nostalgia versus optimism about the future. Lyubov's nostalgia and resistance to the sale of the orchard form a binary opposition to Trofimov's visions of the future and his opinion that the orchard should be cut down in order to redeem the past. In this example, Lyubov prefers the past to the present, and is nostalgic rather than optimistic about the future. Trofimov, on the other hand, prefers the present to the past and cannot understand Lyubov's nostalgia as he looks forward to the future. Lyubov and Trofimov furthermore oppose each other in matters of love and money as Lyubov is decadent in her attitude towards these things while Trofimov is stoic. Materialism versus spiritualism is another binary opposition which is embodied in the characters of Lopakhin and Trofimov. Each character's ideals and values are prioritised according to one of the oppositions. This results in a debate and tension between the two characters.

These engagements or binaries suggest a comparison between the contrasting positions, but no judgements of these contrasting views are expressed as there appears to be no authoritative or dominant voice in the discourses. When Suzman's transposition of *The Free State* was compared with these dialogic discourses from Chekhov's original text, various similarities and differences between these texts appeared.

According to Keuris (2007:2), Suzman acknowledges that her version of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* will not be a faithful rendition of the text as she refers to it as a "response" in the full title of the play: *The Free State: A South African response to Chekhov's* The Cherry Orchard. Suzman uses Chekhov's play as the source for an intertextual version of the play set in South Africa. The term "intertextuality" derives from the concept of dialogism as used by Bakhtin (Dentith, 1995:94). By quoting or alluding to a source text, the author of the target text engages in dialogue with it and either appropriates or subverts the source text (Badenhorst-Roux, 2006:32).

Keuris (2004:150) states that the transposition of a drama entails a cultural exchange, because the target text continually reminds the reader/audience of the source text, which leads to a comparison between the two texts and contexts. Within this comparison, certain similarities and differences between the two texts and contexts have become evident through the analysis of the chronotope, heteroglossia and the carnivalesque aspect of the two texts. Yet, the concept of

change with relation to time, space, place and culture is dealt with differently in the two contexts on account of the ostensible similarities and divergences between the texts.

4.2 Similarities and divergences

4.2.1 Ostensible similarities

In a comparison between the contexts of *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Free State*, certain similarities become clear. Between the contexts, there is a historical parallel as well as a geographical similarity. Historically, both contexts are set in a time of social change concerning the reinterpretation of social hierarchy. Both contexts have a long history of oppression, where an elite minority dominated the majority of the population. Both texts are set in a state of transition, as the laws of oppression have been abolished, but complete social reform has not yet taken place.

As a result of the social change in these contexts which is, to a large extent, still pending, some of the characters in both plays experience a nostalgic longing for the time before the respective systems of oppression were abolished. Therefore, a chronotopic engagement ensues between the cherry orchard – which in each text signifies the affluence, dignity and innocence of the past – and the characters who experience a nostalgic longing for the past.

The geographical similarity between the two contexts further enables the transposition of *The Cherry Orchard* to a South African context. Despite an obvious contrast between the two settings with regard to climate – Russia being known for its exceptionally low temperatures and South Africa for its warm climate and sunshine – there are still certain geographical similarities between the contexts. Both the Russian steppe and the South African Free State Province are large rural areas used for farming (Van der Spoel, 1997:35). Although the Free State Province is known as a dry, warm place, its winters are also reasonably cold, with night temperatures often below freezing point. Thus, cherry orchards are quite common in the eastern parts of the Free State Province, where *The Free State* is set. These geographical similarities between the texts thus enable a transposition of *The Cherry Orchard* to the Free State Province.

Apart from the similarities in the contexts of *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Free State*, the texts also resemble each other closely in structure. Suzman meticulously preserves the dialogue and the plot of *The Cherry Orchard* in *The Free State* and manipulates the context of the dialogue in some instances to make sense of Chekhov's original dialogue. An example of this manipulation of the context is the direct translation of Charlotta's German saying into Afrikaans, discussed earlier. Suzman thereby implies that the Russian and South African contexts resemble each other sufficiently in order to allow and enable this direct transposition. And yet, despite these ostensible

similarities between the two contexts and texts, Suzman's transposition of Chekhov's text diverges from its source to a large extent.

4.2.2. Divergences

Although a historical parallel can be drawn between the Russian and South African contexts – because of a state of transition after social change – the social contexts of the respective texts differ with regard to their respective timelines. While Chekhov's play is set a few decades after the official date of change and in anticipation of still greater change in the Russian context, Suzman's text is set right after the official date of change in the context. The text is set too close to the date of change to evoke a significant debate about the change or to anticipate any further change. Lulu's attachment to the orchard and her resistance to cut it down, although it is no longer of use, shows how the process of change is traumatic for her. Yet, because of her liberal political views, Lulu is positive about the social change and does not question it – preventing a significant debate.

Moreover, the dialogue, although preserved from Chekhov's text to a great extent, has lost much of its dialogism. The ostensible heteroglossia in the text is diminished as each incidence of conflict in the dialogue is smoothed over, giving precedence to the authoritative voice of Suzman's political convictions. The antithesis between the practical Lopakhin and the philosophical Trofimov is diminished in Suzman's transposed Leko and Pitso. At the end of the play, the antagonism between them disappears as Leko shows Pitso supposed evidence of his political credentials. Moreover, Lyubov and Lopakhin's inability to understand each other's viewpoints have been diminished as Lulu admits her own inertia in *The Free State*.

The class differences which create tension in *The Cherry Orchard*, have been diminished. The instances of racism between black and white characters are isolated and ridiculed. However, the argument between Yepichodov and Varya in which Yepichodov challenges Varya's authority over him is transposed to an incident of racial conflict in *The Free State*. This argument, as well as Leko's treatment of Maria throughout the play, shows discrimination against a character of mixed race. Although the play resolves the antagonism between the obvious black/white dichotomy, other forms of discrimination are still evident. Consequently, although the play appears to have an optimistic tone, it is not shown to be utopian.

These differences appear to arise from a difference in aim between the two authors. Chekhov wanted his reader/audience first to identify with the characters in the play and subsequently realise that they can indeed create a better life for themselves. Suzman, on the other hand, is writing against the colonial power of apartheid and wants to celebrate the fact that the struggle against apartheid has been won and portray her idealistic vision of racial harmony in South Africa.

The two issues and central themes that have the most impact in both of these plays are change and perceptions of identity as a result of that change.

4.3. Change

The dynamic of Chekhov's source text , appropriated by Suzman, stems from a state of change experienced by the characters in the play as a result of serious social changes that influence their lives directly and affect their lifestyles. An old order is vanishing in both plays, and nostalgia for the life lived under the old order is evident in both *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Free State*. In both plays the past is still a very evident force on stage, despite the social change that has taken place. Yet, the situation of the respective plays in relation to the social change of these contexts differs from each other. The way in which the characters experience the changes in time as well as the change in their respective cultures yields a better understanding of the dialectic between these characters and their contexts.

4.3.1. Time, space and place

From the discussion on the chronotope in both plays, it became evident that *Cherry Orchard* and *The Free State* are both set in states of transition. Because a strong dialectic exists between a person's identity and landownership in the contexts of both *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Free State*, a character's sense of identity becomes destabilised when social change influences his or her landownership. In the text, the cycles of the past have become obsolete, while a new cycle has not yet replaced the old in the present. The characters thus act in ways which would have been appropriate in the past, but would no longer be valid in the present. Consequently, Lyubov, Gayev and Firs feel nostalgic about the past and lament the effects of change, especially the decline in social status. Because of these characters' inability to accept the social changes which have happened, the past becomes a continual force with which the characters interact dialogically on stage.

The Free State – although also set in a state of transition – shows its characters to accept the social change in their context more readily. Lulu and Leo still speak nostalgically about the past – and Leo specifically refers to the political past of South Africa in a nostalgic manner. Still, most characters are liberal in their political views and thus prefer the present to the past and look forward to the immediate future. The two plays both juxtapose the past to the present, but with different aims. Chekhov's characters are unable to cope with the present and therefore indulge themselves in nostalgic references to the supposedly glorious past. Suzman's characters are also nostalgic about the past, but accept their present situation with more ease.

Yet, the juxtaposition between past and present also differs as the situation of the two plays with relation to the social changes in their respective contexts differs. Suzman, in contrast to Chekhov, focuses on the changes that have already taken place in the context of the play and refers to their immediate effects, instead of on changes that are still anticipated (Keuris, 2007:12). This difference between perceptions of the past and the present represents the central force that determines the meanings of both plays.

As Chekhov's play was written and situated in 1904, its historic context refers to about 43 years after the abolition of serfdom in 1861, but still anticipates the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. Suzman's text, on the other hand, is set a few months after the first democratic election in South Africa in 1994, the official date of change in this context. In Act Two of *The Free State*, Pitso acknowledges that more change must still take place when he says: "Liberation has come, but the real revolution hasn't even begun!" (2000:40). However, enough time has not yet elapsed since April 1994 for any further change to be defined in the South African context.

When the incidents of the breaking strings in both texts are compared to each other, the respective treatment of change in relation to time is especially significant. In *The Cherry Orchard*, the sound of the breaking string is heard twice: once in Act Two when the characters are sitting in the open field, and once again at the end of the play while Firs left alone in the house and the sound of axes on the cherry trees is heard. Because the sound is heard more than once, it cannot suggest one final break with the past. However, the essential shift needed for complete social change has already taken place, and the strings that were holding the previous order in place are coming undone, one after the other.

When the sound is heard for the first time in *The Cherry Orchard*, the characters speculate on its origin. The only character to connect the sound to social change is the senile Firs. He recalls hearing a similar sound in 1861, when the serfs were freed. According to Firs, "[a]n owl hooted and the samovar[8] never stopped singing" right before the abolition of serfdom (1996:48). Firs implies that these ominous occurrences were a foreboding of the freedom of the serfs – which he views as a disaster. Firs is the only character who was an adult at the time of the abolition of serfdom and thus has first-hand knowledge about it. He accounts the omens which predict the social change as though conveying a legend or a myth.

In *The Free State,* the sound of the breaking string is heard only once: near the end of Act Two. Although Putswa starts speaking of the time of social change right after the sound is heard, he never directly links the sound to the time of change. He thus does not claim to have heard it before. Thus, the perception is created that only one string held the previous order in place, and that string breaks in Act Two. When Putswa refers to the time of social change – after the sound of

[8] A decorated Russian tea urn, heated with charcoal (Woolland, 1996:123).

the breaking string is heard – he refers to it as a "disaster" (2000:42). The signs which foreboded this "disaster" are the humming of phone lines and the cough of a leopard. According to Vansina (1955:138), the Bushong tribe in central Africa regards the noises of a leopard as a foreboding of initiation and therefore, when these noises are heard, the women and children of the tribe are frightened by the men and may not go outside. Whether or not Putswa is influenced by similar traditional beliefs, he regards the cough of a leopard as an ominous sign which forebodes a possible danger. Yet, as the date of change happened only a few months earlier, all of the characters should have a clear recollection of that date, and Putswa thus does not have privileged knowledge about it like Firs has in *The Cherry Orchard*. Suzman's transposition of the omens that forebode the change in *The Free State* to an African setting fails to convince as references to legends or myths and their meaning are unclear.

The Free State thus shows a less complex staging of a more recent change, in contrast to *The Cherry Orchard* which shows a process of change which happened over several decades. The characters in *The Free State* are still too close to the official date of change to critically debate the change that has taken place or the consequent changes that should happen further. As Suzman's interpretation of Chekhov's text is refracted first through the prism of politics (Suzman, 2000:xxii) and a second time through the rose-coloured glasses of her ideal vision of harmonious race relations in South Africa (Suzman, 2000:xxi), a celebration rather than a critical debate of change ensues. Young and Walen (2000:570) observe that a production of Suzman's text "ended not with the enigmatic sound of a breaking string dying away 'sadly', but with the triumphant, amplified roar of chainsaws razing the orchard". The play does thus not open a debate about the change happening in the context, but rather celebrates the change which has happened.

Thus, because these characters' identity formation depends on a process of interaction between them and specific places, the social change which happened in their contexts destabilises their sense of identity and belonging. The end of the previous order and the uncertainty of the new create an unstable, liminal space. According to Viljoen, Lewis and Van der Merwe (2004:18), such a liminal space is a zone of playful transformation and is thus ambiguous and creative as new social norms still need to be established in this unstable state. Chekhov and Suzman, because of the divergences in their contexts and their own intentions, represent these liminal spaces in distinct ways.

4.3.2 Culture: social context and identity

In order to transpose Chekhov's source text to contemporary South Africa, Suzman had to emphasise the similarities between the two contexts while obscuring the differences by a process of acculturation (Keuris, 2004:157). According to Aaltonen (quoted in Keuris, 2004:157), the

process of acculturation implies the blurring of the borderline between the familiar and unfamiliar and may also use the process of naturalisation in which recognisable signs of the Self replace foreign signs. By replacing the geographical setting, language and race of the characters in *The Cherry Orchard* with details relevant to the South African setting, Suzman acculturised the text. However, continual allusions to the source context and text also remind the reader that *The Free State* is indeed a transposition.

One of the ways in which Suzman blurred the borderline between the Russian and South African contexts is by replacing the class division in *The Cherry Orchard* with a division on grounds of race and ethnic origin in *The Free State*. Due to the apartheid regime, which classified people according to their race, class was largely determined by ethnic origin in South Africa before the advent of democracy. However, class, race and ethnicity are distinct concepts and this replacement implies an investigation into the distinction between the terms. Arthur (2007:3731) defines race as a "system of stratification based on physical differences which are seen as essential and permanent". These physical differences may be either real or imagined. Thus, although race is based on physical distinctions, it is also a social construct. Ethnicity, on the other hand, is a classification of human beings based on cultural difference, or a personal identity which is collectively ratified and publicly expressed (Jenkins, 2007:1475). Lastly, according to Vitt (2007:533), class is "a stratification system that divides a society into a hierarchy of social positions". These positions can be based on money, power, culture, taste, identity, access or exclusion. Yet, class is only perceptible to people who are "class conscious", others "barely notice it or refuse to concede its existence despite living with its effects". In pre-revolutionary Russia, class was largely determined by landownership. In apartheid South Africa, most landowners were white. Thus, class and affluence were associated with being white.

Consequently, Leko's reference to his origins in Act One of *The Free State* correlates, but also differs, from Lopakhin's in *The Cherry Orchard*. Lopakhin refers negatively to his peasant origins and alcoholic father. He feels that his smart clothing cannot hide these origins and that his social status will always be that of a peasant. His social class will remain with him although it is something with which he has negative associations. However, when Lopakhin's treatment of Dunyasha as his inferior is taken into account, it is clear that he must have risen in social status by being a successful businessman. Lopakhin reprimands Dunyasha and gives her orders, thereby negating her attempts to renounce her peasant status and rise above her class.

In *The Free State*, on the other hand, Leko states that although he has become successful, he will always remember the unfortunate circumstances in which he grew up. Therefore, Leko will not ignore the hardships still endured by some, although he has risen above them. While Lopakhin views his peasant class as a negative association which will remain with him, Leko merely remembers the discrimination and suffering he endured as a child. When Pitso later remarks to

Leko: "You're black but you're white" (2000:38), implying that Leko acts like a white person although he is black, Leko replies that "money doesn't equal white any more" (2000:38). Leko thus makes a clear distinction between ethnicity and material success, and aims to develop himself economically as a black man without any constraints regarding his social status. Where Lopakhin apologises for his peasant origins, Leko is proud of his ethnic origin.

Furthermore, the social relations of characters across the racial divide in *The Free State* seem more amiable than the relations across the class division in *The Cherry Orchard*. The friendship between Anna and Dikeledi seems more sincere than Anya's dismissal of Dunyasha in *The Cherry Orchard*. Lulu's progressive political views, which are noted by Young and Walen (2000:570), and Johan Rademeyer's emphasised anti-apartheid sentiments sketch the general consensus about race relations in the play as positive and harmonious. The white characters who are portrayed as racists, Leo and Pik, are isolated and ridiculed. As they are not taken seriously by any of the other characters, these accounts of racism are distanced from the main characters who are taken seriously by one another, such as Pitso, Leko, Anna and Lulu.

Despite the harmonious race relations between black and white characters, the coloured character, Maria, endures social discrimination and disrespect on account of her mixed race from both Khokoloho (because she is neither white nor black) and Leko (who refrains from proposing to her because of the fact that her father was white). Yet, Leko admits being infatuated with Lulu, who is white. Leko's discrimination against Maria thus rests on the fact that she is of mixed race: neither black nor white. Leko is also shown to be ignorant, as he suggests that because of her race Maria should move to a specific geographical area and community in which she was not born and that she has never belonged to.

In spite of the personal sacrifices Leko has apparently made in the struggle against racial discrimination, he discriminates against Maria because of her race. Thus, in the face of Suzman's idealistic vision for contemporary South Africa, she shows that Maria is repeatedly victimised from a racial point of view. Thus, the harmonious race relations in *The Free State* are shown to be somewhat superficial as they involve reconciliation between black and white characters only, negating any other race. A hidden scepticism might thus shine through Suzman's overtly positive intentions with her play.

Suzman furthermore acculturised *The Cherry Orchard* by rewriting Chekhov's dialogue into a South African idiom. Although Suzman preserved the structure of Chekhov's dialogue meticulously, she changed the language of the characters to fit their ethnic and cultural origins, accounting for the various languages that have influenced the setting. The transposition of this dialogue required a manipulation of the text in a few instances. An example of the manipulation of Chekhov's text in order to preserve the dialogue is the Afrikaans version of Charlotta's German saying which Karlotta utters at the start of Act Three. Charlotta uses the German saying "Guter

Mensch aber schlechter Musikant" (1996:55) to imply that Pishchik is a nice man, but would be an inadequate lover. Suzman translated the saying into Afrikaans as "Hy's 'n goeie mens maar 'n slegte musikant" (2000:50). Suzman (2000:xxxv) states that as the translation from German to Afrikaans was so "temptingly near" she decided to transpose the German Charlotta to the Afrikaans Karlotta. By translating the saying directly into Afrikaans, the semantic value of the saying is transposed into a familiar language within the context. However, as no such idiomatic expression exists in Afrikaans, Suzman had to manipulate the context for the saying to be literally applicable.

Suzman's manipulation of the text in order to translate Karlotta's saying, shows her priority for preserving the dialogue of the source text. By preserving Chekhov's dialogue as far as possible, Suzman proposes that the two contexts can be linked to the extent that the source text's dialogue is still appropriate in the target text's setting. Yet, as the context of the saying needs to be manipulated in order for it to make sense, the differences between the two contexts are also accentuated.

Keuris (2007:5-6) questions Karlotta's authenticity as an Afrikaans character. Despite her Afrikaans utterances, Keuris does not feel that she convinces as an Afrikaner, due, in part, to numerous spelling errors in the Afrikaans in the text. The name "Karlotta" is also not a typical Afrikaans name. The manipulation of the text in order to accommodate Karlotta's acculturation into an Afrikaans character thus seems forced at times. As Karlotta's role has changed from a detached voice to an isolated, displaced Afrikaner, the objective commentary which Charlotta makes in the text in *The Cherry Orchard* is lost in *The Free State*.

Suzman also establishes a connection between the two contexts by continually reminding the reader/audience of the original context of the play. According to Mondry (1991:73-76), Goncharov describes the dichotomy between the Afrikaners and the British in the South African War in his *Frigate Pallas*. In this description, the Afrikaner (or Boer) is represented as traditional, static, attached to the old ways and patriarchal, like the stereotypical Slavophile. The British, on the other hand, are depicted as progressive, dynamic, seeking the new ways and modern. Goncharov expresses sympathy for the Afrikaners rather than the British. He can identify with the nostalgia for the "old ways" that is experienced by the Afrikaners (Mondry, 1991:77). The link between Russia and South Africa is thus based on more than just a similarity in social change between the two contexts. Goncharev's link between South Africa and Russia focuses mainly on the similarities between Russians and Afrikaners. Although Suzman's characters (Lulu, Leo and Pik) are descended from the English, all the characters are influenced by Afrikaans culture through (*inter alia*) Lulu's marriage to an Afrikaner man, as discussed in Chapter Three.

In addition, Suzman emphasises the link between South Africa and Russia by referring to the collaboration between the African National Congress and Russia in the struggle against apartheid. This motivates Pitso's visits to the source country of the text and gives contemporary relevance to

the link between South Africa and Russia. For example, in Act Two, Pitso compares the South African situation shortly after 1994 with the fall of the Berlin Wall, which marked the end of Communism in Europe in 1989. In the last act, Trofimov's missing galoshes are replaced with a Russian hat Pitso has acquired on a visit to Russia. When Leko asks him about the hat, Pitso elaborates on his stay in Russia and brags about a romantic conquest during his time there. The name of the woman in question is Varya, the same as Maria's source character's name in *The Cherry Orchard*. Trofimov's and Pitso's attitudes towards romance are contrasted to each other when Pitso refers to his romantic conquest. Unlike the prudish Trofimov, Pitso is more decadent in romantic matters. By naming Trofimov's romantic conquest 'Varya', Maria's source character is evoked, which suggests an unlikely match between Pitso and the spinster Varya. Pitso also recites a Russian poem to Anna in Act One – the same poem that Trofimov recites to Anya in the source text. These allusions to Russia not only evoke the source setting of the play, but also Chekhov's text specifically.

4.4 Conclusion

Through Suzman's intertextual response to Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, she opens up a dialogue between 20th century Russia, Chekhov's original context, and contemporary South Africa. Despite the ostensible similarities in the two contexts and texts, Suzman's target text diverges from Chekhov's source text to a large extent.

Both texts show a society in a state of change. And yet, while Chekhov's text anticipates further change, Suzman's text is less complex in its staging of change. Where Chekhov's characters yearn for the past as a time and place of safety, Suzman's characters accept the social change in their context with more ease. The social change in the respective contexts also differs as the overturned hierarchy, which causes the social change, is based on class in *The Cherry Orchard,* whereas in *The Free State* it is based on race. The conflict between characters within this hierarchy is resolved with more ease in *The Free State* than in *The Cherry Orchard*, although *The Free State* still contains accounts of racism.

Lastly, Suzman manipulates her text in order to establish some kind of link between the two texts and contexts. She also draws a comparison between the two contexts through intertextual references in *The Free State* to the context and characters of *The Cherry Orchard*. This emphasises the intertextuality of the play, and also extends the comparison between Russia and South Africa to include the contemporary Russian context.

Thus, despite the historical, geographical and textual similarities between the two texts and contexts, the two texts diverge from each other regarding the anticipation of change and the dialogism in their debates. These divergences are mainly due to the respective dramatists'

intentions with their plays. Chekhov aims to indict all levels of the social hierarchy in his context and urge them to create a better life for themselves. Suzman, on the other hand, appropriates Chekhov's text to the South African context, but manipulates the text in accordance with her own optimistic intentions. Suzman's text is thus a political interpretation of Chekhov's source text, depicting the racial harmony she wishes would become a reality in the South African context, as she directs it against the apartheid regime.

Chapter 5
Conclusion

Suzman wrote her text, *The Free State,* as a response to Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* and thereby started a dialogue not only between these two texts, but also between their contexts. Although Bakhtin claimed that drama texts fail to be dialogic, Chekhov's text proved to be suitable for a dialogic analysis, while Suzman's text proved to be suitable to a certain extent. Thus, the dialogue between the two texts and their contexts was analysed according to the concepts of the chronotope, heteroglossia and the carnivalesque.

Chronotopes prevail in both texts and become a manifestation of the memories, nostalgia and anxiety about the past experienced by the respective characters. The primary chronotopes in the two texts are the respective cherry orchards, which represent the past to the characters. The social change in the respective contexts results in the loss of the orchard, and it is this change that forces the characters to confront their pasts and make new decisions about their inherited lifestyle. In *The Cherry Orchard*, the different characters have different stances about the past, the orchard and the social change which is taking place in their context. Open-ended heteroglossic discourses thus ensue between these characters and the audience can judge the various effects of these discourses. Although Suzman's text contains apparent heteroglossia as different ethnic languages are represented in her dialogue, it fails to be truly dialogic. In contrast to Chekhov's text, the tension in most of her characters' dialogue is resolved by a shared liberal political view. The characters who do not share this view are isolated and denigrated through comedy. Thereby, the different stances voiced in the text are constructed to support a specific political view, and are not truly heteroglossic. Suzman's text furthermore deviates from Chekhov's in the use of carnivalesque elements. Where Chekhov used the carnivalesque to indict the former nobility as well as the peasant characters' aspirations, Suzman chose only to ridicule the white, politically conservative characters. Consequently, Suzman's text unfortunately loses the ambiguous nuances that Chekhov's text is celebrated for.

Although the heteroglossic and carnivalesque elements in *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Free State* differ from each other, the chronotopic elements in the texts strongly correlate. In both texts, the characters' concept of their identity is formed by the place they inhabit. In both plays, the social context determines the distribution of land. In twentieth-century Russia, a person's "place" in the social hierarchy determined his or her landownership, while in apartheid South Africa, a person's prospects of land ownership was determined by his or her race. When social change happens, the norms that dictate landownership also change, and, as a character's identity is formed and established through the place he or she occupies, his or her concept of identity also

becomes destabilised. This change can affect a character either positively or negatively. They could either decide to ignore the social change, like Gayev/Leo does, or be incapable of change, like Firs/Putswa. Other characters, like Anya/Anna and Trofimov/Pitso, embrace the change and yearn to create a better future.

Suzman succeeds in portraying the traumatic reaction to social change and the consequent loss of land as evident in both the contemporary South African context and the twentieth-century Russian context. Yet, where Chekhov used his text, and especially its comedy of the absurd, to urge the reader/audience to re-evaluate their lifestyle and decisions, Suzman urges her reader/audience to support her specific political views. Although Suzman meticulously preserved the structure of Chekhov's text in order to also urge her readers/audience to re-evaluate their lifestyle, she did not preserve Chekhov's ambiguous and absurd comedy. Therefore, the resolution of tension between the characters in her transposition seems contrived.

Still, *The Free State* proves an interesting text as it compares the Russian and South African contexts. Apart from a similar experience of trauma because of social change in both contexts, a continuing and long-standing link exists between Russia and South Africa. As Chekhov's works have been staged in South Africa ever since the 1930s, it is clearly not only recently that South African authors became interested in his work. Goncharov's interest in the Afrikaners during the South African War shows that, apart from the correlating social change in the countries, a sustained link exists between these two contexts. This link also becomes evident in Suzman's text through various references to Russia, and through a comparison between the contemporary political aspects in the two countries.

Therefore, although the multi-layered texture of Chekhov's text has been diminished by Suzman's specific political interpretation thereof, *The Free State* still proves to be an interesting dialogue between South Africa, Russia and Chekhov. As a South African play, *The Free State* evokes a better understanding not only of its own context, but also of the Russian context and *The Cherry Orchard*. New meanings and insights are gained through the dialogue between the two plays and contexts.

This study has furthermore raised questions which could be investigated in further research. Space and identity still remain relevant topics in South African literature, as several recent publications such as *Beyond the threshold* (Viljoen & Van der Merwe, 2007) and *Storyscapes* (Viljoen & Van der Merwe, 2004) indicate. The contributions in these volumes focus primarily on the representation of space and identity in the novel and poetry, with minimal focus on drama. Yet, as this study shows, the unique role that space plays in drama – as space is not only described, but also shown in theatre – lends itself to an investigation thereof. The interesting use of space by Chekhov in his simultaneous depiction of past and present on stage, is an example of innovative use of space in theatre. However, as this study was limited to a textual analysis, the physical use of

space in theatre could not be fully investigated. A performance analysis of these texts might prove to uncover even more aspects on the use of space and identity in theatre.

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