



**THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN SESOTHO LITERATURE WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO SOUTH AFRICAN NOVELS, POEMS AND PROVERBS**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Seabata Ambrose Mohatle, declare that this dissertation titled, “**The Portrayal of Women in Sesotho Literature With Special Reference to South African Novels, Poems and Proverbs**” submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the MTech degree at Central University of Technology, Free State, is my own original work and independent work and it has not been previously submitted to any other University or faculty for degree purpose. I further declare that all sources cited or quoted are indicated and acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references.

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SA MOHATLE

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DATE



This study is dedicated to:

- My parents, Ntate Ramosamo Edwin Mohatle and Mme Malehloa Arcilia Mohatle for bringing me up, shaping my future and helping me realise my potentials and goals.
- My wife Motlalepula Lillian Mohatle and my brother Moteaphala Ephraim Mohatle for their love, support and encouragement during my study at Central University of Technology, Free State.



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the portrayal of women in Sesotho literature, with more emphasis on the novels, poetry and proverbs genres. The depiction of women is needed in sociological view to see whether what that depiction reflects reality. A major focus of the study is to investigate how to bring new perspectives on writing a book from a different view point. To also promote women's liberty and encourage equality. Since literature depicts social life, people should be able to treat others in a humane manner. Literature should also change the tradition of human inequality and to promote justice for all. New authors should avoid the stereotypes about women in society.

The study employs African feminist literary criticism as a tool in critically analysing the various literary genres. It also adopts purposive sampling of Sesotho novels, poetry and proverbs that have women characters in them and analyse how these women characters have been portrayed. The naming of female characters is examined in relation to their roles in the texts and the titles of the texts are also investigated and critically analysed to establish whether they portray any gender stereotypes. The themes of the selected texts are also examined to establish if there is any gender biasness.

The study concludes that there is gender-biasness in the manner in which women characters are depicted that do not reflect the current political and social order. However, some women authors, unlike their male counterparts do not reflect gender-biasness in their depiction of female characters.



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CHAPTER ONE: ORIENTATION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Kalu (2001: 14) is of the opinion that the role of women has constantly been questioned in many societies, as women have struggled to find their place for many years, in a predominantly male orientated/dominated world. This is because most literature around the world, African literature in particular, initially portrayed women poorly.

Inaccurate and incomplete portrayals of female characters littered early African works. This may be due to the fact that African literature was first written by men because of the superior education they received, which was put above that of women. It was not only that they came from patriarchal societies, but were made by the missionaries and colonizers who came from patriarchal societies (Kalu, 2001:14).

This study, seeks to investigate how representation or portrayal of women, especially in Sesotho literature, with special reference to various genres such as drama, poetry and proverbs, is manifested. The images of African women will be reassessed and redefined, and how women have control over their own lives and are therefore the architects of their future.

Some researchers like Ralph Linton (1936:131) are concerned about the usage of the concept *status*. He asserts that the status of women is often used in two conceptual meanings that it has in social science. The term can refer to a particular position itself as opposed to the term 'role', which refers to the behavior appropriate to the given status (1936:131). On the other hand, the status of women can also refer to the placement of females relative to males in dual- level hierarchy (Linton, 1936:131).

However, according to Ancestry 24, the status of women is greatly affected by sociological and economic factors. It has to a large but decreasing extent been influenced, if not determined by law itself. Social evolution in South Africa was stimulated by education, promotive efforts of women's organizations and by the demands of labor markets, have led to the disappearance of disabilities of women. Few remain, but there are still certain vestiges of inequality of sexes, as well as certain legal rules which, owing to the nature of sexes, apply only to women.

It is for this reason policies in South Africa regarding women's dignity have been formulated. In South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, prepared by the office on the status of Women, the Presidency in accordance with jurisdiction over the national gender programme, proposed that the Cabinet adopt the policy framework. This framework is now referred to as the Gender Policy Framework. It outlines South Africa's vision for gender equality and how it intends to realize the ideal.

The focus on Women's Empowerment in this document, affirms the satisfaction of basic needs (practical needs) as a necessary precondition towards the identification and attainment of strategic needs (Adams and Byrnes, 1999:34).

The women's statistics in South Africa can be demonstrated by the table below (Gender Statistics in South Africa, 2011:4)

Urban Females	Non-Urban Females	Total
0-14=(25,00)	33,2	28,1
15-64=(69,1)	59,3	65,4
65—=(5,9)	7,5	6,5

According to these statistics, it becomes apparent that between the ages of 15 to 64 the number of women is higher in urban areas as compared to rural areas. The reason

might be because of employment opportunities which are available in urban areas as well urbanization in general (Gender Statistics in South Africa, 2011:4).

Regarding employment issues, differential access to employment opportunities exist. Theoretically women are currently having access to a broader scope of positions in the labor markets. These new opportunities are accessible to a narrow pool of women who have access to skills development, education and training. To large extend, women's employment remains either within the traditional female occupations or within the domestic and farming sectors all often as casual workers. They are concentrated within positions that are paying minimum wages and which have high rates of turnover. It will however, be important to briefly show employment population ratios of women for the past three years.

In 2010 the employment population ratio of women stood at 34.7, while in 2011 it stood at 34.6. In 2012 this population ratio slightly increased by 34.9 (Gender Statistics South Africa, 2011:4).

With reference to the unemployment population ratio of women, in 2010 it was 27.5, whereas in 2011 it was 27.8 which was followed by the same figure of 27.8 in 2012(Gender Statistics in South Africa, 2011: 4).

Millennium Development Goals (MDG) is of the view that rural women play a key role in supporting their households and communities in achieving food and nutrition security as their responsibilities. They improve rural livelihood by generating income and overall-well-being. They also contribute to agriculture and rural enterprises as well as fuel to local global economies. Yet, they face persistent structural constraints that prevent them from fully enjoying their human rights and hamper efforts to improve their lives as well as those of others around them.

Furthermore, women spend more time than urban women in reproductive and household work, including time spent in obtaining water and fuel, caring for children and

the sick, and processing food. This is as a result of poor rural infrastructure and services as well as culturally assigned roles that severely limit their participation in employment opportunities (Gender Statistics in South Africa, 2011:4).

Regarding women in general, more particularly in the South African context, it will be of utmost important to focus on the Sesotho culture regarding Basotho women, as this study seeks to investigate the portrayal of women in Sesotho Literature.

Among the Basotho, marriage gives both men and women new status in society with concomitant rights and privileges (Ashton, 1967:77). Their marriages were arranged between families and a girl could be trothed in childhood. Nowadays most people choose their mates (Mahome, 1972:182).

According to the Basotho culture, women are defined as farmers and bearers of children and they are expected to leave their families in order to live with the families of their husbands. It is for this reason men are considered the heads of the households. Women work as farm labourers, but work in domestic service which is valued high, while men are employed in the city as mineworkers. (Carpenter, 1975:28)

As culture is determined by language, it is important to highlight some important issues relating to the origins of Sesotho, (language in particular). The language is spoken in the Kingdom of Lesotho as well as throughout the Republic of South Africa. In South Africa, this language is concentrated in the Free State, northern part of the Eastern Cape and south of Gauteng. It is also spoken in the vicinity of Pretoria and Brits (Sesotho web, 2009:29).

The language varieties of this language include *Sekwena*, *Sephuri*, *Setlokwa* and *Setaung* in the central region. *Sekgolokwe* is found in north-eastern regions of Free State as well as Serotse (Sesotho web, 2009:29).

According to the 1996 census, Sesotho has approximately 3 555 186 speakers as Home Language in South Africa (2001 census) which is 7.9 of the whole population (Sesotho web, 2009:29).

The table below shows the number of Sesotho speakers as well as the percentage from each province

Province	Number of Speakers	Percentage
Eastern Cape	152 340	2.4%
Free State	1 742 9390	64.4%
Gauteng	1 159 589	13.1%
Kwazulu Natal	66 925	0.7%
Limpopo	69 925	1.3%
Mpumalanga	114 169	3.7%
Northern Cape	9 101	1.1%
Northwest	209 315	5.7%
Western Cape	31 438	0.7%

(Gender Statistics in South Africa, 2011: 4)

On the issue of marriage, more especially in the absence of our antinuptial contract, the woman is the subject to the husband’s marital powers. The husband assumes complete power over the common assets of the marriage partner and the woman is virtually reduced to the legal position of a minor. However, there are certain safeguards especially against extreme conduct on the part of the husband, and certain limitations on his actions (Ancestry 24, 2013).

However, from 1994 women’s rights in South Africa reached a turning point like never before. For many years, the primary struggle in South Africa was a social struggle and liberation movements focused on this as a primary concern. Despite this, women made some great change in as far as equity is concerned. A change which is commemorated each year on the 9th of August as Women’s Day. In addition, women’s rights in South Africa made a turning point like never before, as they make up the majority of the South

African population. They are the worst affected by poverty, gender based violence, HIV infection and climate change (Thorpe, 2013:1).

During the past eighteen years Parliament has passed a number of laws that have improved women's legislative access to sexual and reproductive health, land, employment and their recourse against discrimination and violence. Specific pieces of legislation and legal precedents can be seen as examples of the improving progressive nature of legislation. Some of those pieces of legislation ensure that they are applied in a manner that is beneficial to women's freedom are:

- the choice of termination of pregnancy Act No. 92 of 1996, and Amendment Act of 2008
- recognition of Customary Marriages Act No. 120 of 1998
- the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Act No. 32 of 2007
- domestic Violence Act No. 116 of 1998
- the promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act No. 4 of 2000 and Amendment Act No. 52 of 2007(Thorpe, 2013:1)

As the focus is primarily on women and their rights, some people are of the opinion that men and women have been caught in gender warfare from the beginning of time. Women might be from Mars and men could be from Venus, but one thing is for sure, men and women are different. The result has always been a power struggle of between men and women. In addition, there have always been jobs designated more for men or for women.

In South Africa a growing number of women are becoming leaders in different sectors of society, which usually makes it difficult for men to accept that to happen. Bell Claire in her article from Time World in 2010 June 07, titled *The Great Place of Chief Nokgakga Jumba* in the Eastern Cape, wrote how *Nokhakha* assumed power after the death of her late husband in 2005. She was however the regent of her young son. In 2009, her male cousin together with his supporters, came to a head and surrounded her home after sunset and declared that she would

rule over their dead bodies. She has since been afraid to sleep in her home, and spends her nights in the nearby towns of *Mthatha*. This raises a poignant issue that women will always find it difficult according to African culture to rule men in some sectors of our society (Bell: Time World, 07 June 2010).

From the issues raised in the aforementioned paragraph/s, it is astonishing that the laborious efforts that African writers in Sesotho Literature went through before they made their mark in the literary world. Even in the seventies and the eighties, Merriam Tladi, who is the first Black female writer to publish a novel in South Africa, went through difficult times to get her book published. Mme says “everywhere where black women used to work, their masters would lose their temper if they could see them reading, not to talk of writing” (Lechesa at the workshop in Bloemfontein on 27th September 2012).

She pointed out that Black women do not have time to think and analyse things properly. To write a novel, one has to be able to analyze the situation or circumstances they are living under. Another problem which still prevails in this new dispensation is that most women do not have confidence in themselves. Recognition should be given to Sesotho female writers such as Mme Albertina Makgokolotso Makhomo, Mamothibeli Sehlabo and Susan Sefatsa (Excerpts from a speech delivered by Lechesa Pule at the Workshop in Bloemfontein on 27th September 2012).

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the portrayal of women in Sesotho literature, with more emphasis on the novels, poetry and proverbs genre. The depiction of women is needed in sociological view to see whether that depiction reflects social reality, on the political view, and that change needs to be seen.

1.3 Significance of the study

The significance of this investigation is to bring new view points on writing a book from a different perspective, and also to promote women's liberty; encourage equality; since literature depicts social life, people should be able to treat others in a humane manner. To change the tradition of human inequality. To promote justice for all. New authors should avoid the stereotypes about women in society.

1.4 Statement of the problem

Socially, politically and economically women are still fighting for their rightful places. Literature perpetuates and portrays a particular view of reality as seen by the writer. In other words, writers promote norms, values and customs they consider important. Similarly, norms and values they do not consider valuable or necessary may be downplayed. The World conference on women (says more regarding issues affecting women). What are proverbs saying? This is the context that led to the investigation of women portrayal in Sesotho literature. The images of Basotho women have implications on how they view themselves and how others view them.

1.5 Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of the study is to examine the portrayal of women in Sesotho literature. Against this background, the following question can be asked:

Is it a fact or an oversimplification to say that male Sesotho authors are biased in their depiction of female characters?

The objectives of this study will be as follows:

- To examine the way female characters are depicted by male authors in their works.
- To determine whether the portrayal of women in Sesotho literature approximate reality.
- To assess whether it does change to reflect changing social and political order.

1.6 Research Questions

In examining the image of women in Sesotho literature, this study will also investigate whether there is a link between the expected cultural roles of Basotho women and their roles as characters in Sesotho literature; or whether there is a shift in the way women characters are portrayed to represent the current political order.

To achieve the aim of this research as outlined above, the following questions will guide the study:

- Are Basotho male authors biased in the way they depict characters in their works?
- Does the portrayal of women in Sesotho literature approximate reality?
- Does portrayal of women change to reflect the changing social and political order?

1.7 Definition of Terms/Concepts

The following definitions are provided to ensure the uniformity and understanding of these terms throughout the study.

- **Feminism:** A struggle for recognition of women's cultural roles and achievements, and women's social and political rights (Abram, 1971:88).
According to Boyce-Davies's definition, feminism is a politics of possible transformation that resists the objectification of women (1994, 28).
- **Womanism:** A social change perspective based upon the everyday problems and experiences of black woman and other women of color, but more broadly seeks to eradicate inequalities not just for black women, but for all people (WIKIPEDIA for Macmillan Dictionary, 2013).
- **Motherism:** Prejudice against mothers who stay at home instead of working after the birth of their child (WIKIPEDIA for Macmillan Dictionary, 2013).
- **Patriarchy:** A rule of father or male-centred and controlled, and organized and conducted in a way as to subordinate women to men in all cultural domains, that

is, familial, religious, political, economical, social, legal and artistic (Abrams, 1971:89).

- **Stereotypes:** These are characteristics ascribed to groups of people involving gender, race, national origin and other factors. These characteristics tend to be oversimplifications of the groups involved. For an example, someone who meets a few individuals from a particular country and finds them to be quiet and reserved may spread the word that all citizens from that country in question are quiet and reserved (WIKIPEDIA for Macmillan Dictionary, 2013).
- **Gender:** One's sex as a man or woman as determined by anatomy of traits that are conceived to constitute what is masculine and what is feminine in temperament and behaviour (Abrams, 2009:149).
- **Drama:** The form of composition designed for performance in the theatre, in which actors take roles of the characters, perform the indicated action, and to utter the written dialogue (Abrams, 1971:69).
- **Poetry:** It is an imitation of human actions which imitates by taking an instance of human actions and re-presenting it in a new 'medium' that is of words (Abrams, 2009:153).
- **Proverbs:** Short, pithy statements of widely accepted truths about everyday life, are allegorical in that the explicit statement is meant to have by analogy or by extended reference, a general application (Abrams, 2009:10).
- **Sesotho culture:** A group of people who share common norms and values, same language such as Sesotho and also inhabit the kingdom of Lesotho, whose territory today is an enclave within South Africa's borders (Internet Africa Ltd Lesotho.<http://www.africanet.com>, 199).

1.8 The layout and overview of chapters

The chapter one outlined the introduction, background of the study, rationale and significance of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research aims, research objectives, research questions, definitions of terms, the layout and overview of chapters and conclusion.

Chapter two focuses on the theoretical framework that informs the study, namely, feminist literary criticism and African feminist literary criticism. This chapter also shows that feminism as a theory is broad and explains the rationale behind the choice of the African feminist theoretical approach from among many approaches. Finally, it outlines the research methodology of the study, defines the term 'literature', lists the literature that will be analysed and discusses the limitations of the study.

Chapter three deal with the depiction of female characters in the novels. In this chapter, female characters are analysed in the works of male as well as female authors. The naming of female characters is examined in relation to their roles in the texts, and the text titles are also critically analysed to establish the presence of gender stereotypes

Chapter four covers the depiction of female characters in poetry. The themes of selected poems, the naming of female characters and the roles linked to these characters are analysed in female-authored as well as male-authored poems. The poems are also analysed to establish the possible presence of gender stereotypes.

Chapter five analyses the portrayal of women in oral literature that is in the proverbs. A proverb is defined, and selected proverbs that have a bearing on women are examined to establish the possible presence of gender biasness in the way women and their roles are portrayed.

Chapter six contains the conclusion, observations, findings and suggestions for further research.

1.9 Conclusion

This introductory chapter outlined the background and relevance of the study as well as its aim, objectives, research questions, significance and the purpose of the study. It briefly indicated the challenges that women are currently faced with. The link between culture and literature as explained in the chapter confirms the need to examine the depiction of women in literature in general and in Sesotho in particular.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this literature review is to establish how other scholars have theorised and conceptualised about the issues of Feminism and what approaches they have used and what effect will it help to achieve the goals of this study. In this case, this chapter reviews the portrayal of women in African literature broadly, African literature in South Africa and finally in Sesotho literature. Furthermore, it (this chapter) contains the following sections: 2.2 Portrayal of Women in African literature, 2.3 Portrayal of Women in African literature in South Africa, 2.4 Feminism in Sesotho literature, 2.5 Research methodology, 2.6 Western Feminist theory, 2.6.1 Liberal Feminist theory, 2.6.2 Socialist/Marxist Feminist theory, 2.7 African Feminist theory, 2.8 Sampling, 2.8.1 Novels, 2.8.2 Poetry, 2.8.3 Proverbs and 2.9 Limitations of study.

Although African writers did not exclude women from the emerging culture that impressed African experience for a largely external readership, their (women) portrayal became problematic in the contemporary setting which devised rules for their participation in the new dispensation (Kalu, 2001:1).

As time went by, in post-independence, Nigerian novels, stereotyped female representation were in fashion, whereby new images of woman emerged. The woman is now referred to as “*free woman*”. This new image is different from the “*girlfriend*” or “*good-time girl*” image, in that this kind of a woman dogged the mind of her own albeit not so developed through formal training as it is from adaptation in the fast growing cities of the time(Muhammed, 2007:2).

Muhammed (2007) further makes reference to Cyprian Ekwensi’s novel, *People of the City*, where the character, Beatrice, wants to fulfill her desires and enjoy her life to its full, chooses her men from the lot at given time, even though she is bonded by native-law to her husband, Grunnings. She is attracted to the world of glamour and seduction.

In this way a new dimension to the new image of the female, is added by Ekwensi, a woman who is bonded in marriage and yet chooses to play the man's game by *moon-lighting* outside. In this way, Ekwensi presents graphic details to degrade the female as a *courtesan* or *prostitute* (Muhammed, 2007:3).

The *courtesan* or *the prostitute* differs from the "free woman" in the sense that the "free woman" can be kept and provided for by a man whom she owes her loyalty, whereas the "courtesan or prostitute" prefers her 'liberty' or 'freedom' to glide as it were, from one man to another who is ready to pay her fee (Muhammed, 2007:3).

Women were later positively represented more especially in the Hausa novels of Abubakar Iman and Magana Jari Ce, where the story of Queen Amina is retold with flavour that gladdens the heart just as other women are seen as agents of social change, political control, moral guides and communal counsellors (Muhammed, 2007:4).

Furthermore, Zainab Alkali's *The Descendants* (2005) portrays *Seytu* as rising from a humble background to become a medical doctor and *Chukwuemeka* Ike's *Sunset at Dawn*, presented a female as a radiographer. However, it became evident upon these writings by men that more women began in earnest, to write about their unending problems, and their awakening have spurred the conscience of male writers to represent the female gender in a more realistic manner (Muhammed, 2007:4).

Gendered identity in Africa has for centuries been a hotbed of ideological narrative contestations. While colonial constructions of the female were generally essentialist and negative in character, early postcolonial African literature also ironically deployed essentialism and rigid gender binaries to portray African womanhood, thus prompting a challenge of both by female writers of the first generation. However, in a significant twist, second generation of Nigerian women writers were to restore the related tropes of wifehood and motherhood to the front burner (Tydskrif vir Letterkunde, 2013:1)

The issue of motherhood in African women's writings has transcended the facade of binary oppositions created by radical "Western" feminists who pitch women against men in their campaign for gender equality or, belittle or show disdain for the men-folk. The approach of African women writers takes the issue with collapse of social inequalities and its potentially disastrous implications (Olowonmi, 2013:141)

The dearth of African literary genres that supports the African woman's participation in (re)creation and maintenance of societal vision provides evidence of her silencing and apparent invisibility in Africa's encounter with the West. Her participation is more overt in the postcolonial arena. Although African writers did not exclude her from the emerging culture that impressed African experience for a largely external readership, her portrayal became problematic in the contemporary setting which devised rules for her participation in the new dispensation. This seems a minor problem except that the task of reasserting the African woman's presence was left to western educated African men who, themselves, were inadequately inscribed in the new dispensation (Kalu, 2001:1).

Nnaemeka (1997:3), holds the view that the essays articulate the complexities and ambiguities of African literature, in general, and creative writing by African women in particular, thereby calling into question some of the existing feminist studies of African literature that insist on straitjacketing the complex web of issues raised in literary works into oppositional binaries, such as traditional/modern, male/female, agent/victim, when the works themselves and the reality from which they evolve disrupt such binaries; when the central arguments of the works and their appeal rest on the authors' insistence on border crossings, gray areas and the ambiguous interstices of binaries where woman is both benevolent and malevolent with powers that are healing and lethal, both traditional and modern, both victim and agent, both goddess and whore, "soft but stern".

Therefore, the African woman has become the subject who declares and asserts her identity as a rational woman, with human consciousness, caught in the reductionist web of patriarchal ideology (Olowonmi, 2013:5).

It becomes apparent that the African experience has long been presented from a masculine perspective, which tends either to neglect or to overglorify the female presence. To achieve a balance of perspective, critics argue, the African woman presence must be appropriated and reconstructed from the female point of view (Nnoromele, 2002:179)

Nnoromele (2002:181) further asserts that many scholars, both natives and non-natives, who have studied traditional African culture present women not as breeders, slaves, beasts or burden, or commodities to be sold, but as human beings living vibrant, fulfilling lives and playing essential roles in the political, social and economic lives of their communities. She (Nnoromele) even makes mention of African female writers such as Margaret Green, Sylvia Leith-Ross, Kanene Okonjo, Denise Paulme, Emma Nina Mba, and many others who have written about the dual-sex political and social systems of precolonial of Igbo society that gave women the freedom to organize themselves, manage their own affairs, and participate actively in decision-making processes within their families and the greater community.

Tucked away in the inner fold of both African cultural and traditional embroidery, the African traditional view of womanhood configures the social construction of African woman and the role-participant carved for her society. In view of this, in virtually every place and time, two words have been employed to denote and qualify the African woman. These are; *marriage and martenity*. This is to say, womanhood in Africa can only be attained through motherhood (Olowonmi, 2013:142).

Therefore, Adebayo (1996:178) opines that "the myth of the omnipresent nurturing mother is everywhere pervasive of reproduction service a woman performs in the society".

In many African societies, motherhood defines womanhood. Motherhood, then, is crucial to woman's status in African society. To marry and mother a child (a son

preferably), entitles a woman to more respect from her husband's kinsmen for she can now be addressed as mother (Eviwehoma, 2007:318).

Oloruntoba (1998:117), is of the view that the entrenchment of a cultural view of "woman" from a bio-essential lens was a standard staple of early male authored Nigerian literature. It manifested largely in three relation forms. Firstly, in the absence of any grand representation of the female character in the literature. Secondly, in the portrayal of female characters only in the domestic spheres and only in relation to nurturing and mothering roles. Thirdly, in the negative portrayal of women.

Ohale (2010:1) in her view makes mention of some of the prominent African literature authors such as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Cyprian Ekwensi, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and others who invariably became favorites of the Western academic discourse on modern literature. In spite of their critical success they enjoyed as male authors, the dearth of strong female presence is apparent in their and present an unbalanced picture of African life, ignoring the important roles that women have played and continue to play in African society. As a result, feminist critics have denounced the patriarchal bent in their novels, citing that women have been cast in marginal roles and depicted as mere objects of sexual gratification, procreation and idle gossips. Therefore, the dearth of female presence in the early novels has been taken up the feminist critics for the obvious disparity in the delineation of male-female relations.

Chukwuma (2002:219) as quoted by Ohale (2010:1), "The female character in African fiction is a facile lack-lustre human beings, the quiet member of a household, content only to bear children, unfulfilled if she does not, and handicapped if she does bears only daughters. In home, she was not part of decision-making both as a daughter, wife and mother even when the decisions affected her directly".

In many African texts, the female gender is stereotyped as either the fertile and nurturing earth mother or lazy, disastrous beauty. French (2008:4) regarded this perception as the African women's identity-the mother, the caretaker, not the provider or independent

woman known in today's society. The difference in the gender roles is a division determined by different functions performed by African and women, whereby men were generally responsible for war and long distance trade, helping to clear land, hunting and running political affairs, while women took care of agriculture, household chores, such as supplying water and gathering fire wood, gardening and small scale subsistence and neighbourhood trading.

Fonchingong (2006:136) contends that male writers who examine women also assist in endorsing an "institutionalized and one-sided vision of female heroism in African fiction". This point endorses the fact that the presentation of the female gender is mostly sloppy and biased.

The point that needs to be made is that although precolonial Africa was not a paradise for women, it was not "hell on earth". African women were neither chattels pounded like yams of the Igbos nor ignorant of their own bodies until the whites came. When the final balance sheet of Western imperialism has been assessed, it should be obvious that African women have tried to survive not because of the benefits of imperialism but of its belligerent and devaluing ideologies. The legacy of imperialism, in its many facets, is that in its attempt to "civilize" or rather Westernize African cultures, it took away the rights that African women had in precolonial society (Nnoromele, 2010:189).

2.2 Portrayal of women in African literature in South Africa

Pule Lechesa, from a speech he delivered at the workshop in Bloemfontein on the 12th September 2012, makes a very a strong reference regarding the portrayal of women by some of the first recognised African female writers in South Africa, such as Mirriam Tladi, Albertina Makgokolotso Mokhomo, Mothibedi Sehlabo and Suzan Sefatsa.

Lechesa refers Suzan Sefatsa, in one of her short stories books called *Makomo*, in a short story, *Joo nna, bohlohadi wee!*, as one of African writers who can portray a woman differently in our society. She chronicles how widows used to be discriminated

against in the society. In another one she laments the lack of respect for grannies in our community.

Maake, (1993:121), further highlights the same feeling, on the very same short story of Sefatsa, in which he describes the life of widows in our society as the ones who struggle more than the widowers. This is as a result of other women who put a strain to other widows so as to how the author tries to show that not only men can discriminate against and ridicule women, but women are also capable of discriminating against each other.

However, African Literature is replete with write-ups that project male dominance and inadequately pleads the case of the African woman. It becomes imperative to trace the genesis of gender inequality in African Literature (Fonchingong, 2006:135).

Fonchingong, (2006:135) cites with Kalowe Mary E. Modupe that most African male writers encouraged the marginalisation of women. For instance in Mokhele's drama *Diphetoho* (2009) that focuses on policemen, who do not want to accept change in their work environment when a new female supervisor enforces new regulations. The result is heartache and pain.

In this context, female characters are made marginal to the plot of fiction, while only a few emerge as powerful and credible protagonists. From this portrayal, affirms that the ideal female character created by male writers often acts within the framework of her traditional roles as wife and mother as opposed to roles women execute as professionals (Finchingong, 2006:135).

2.3 Feminism in Sesotho Literature

In recent years, the postulation of separate, non-hierarchially related and therefore, complementary domains for women and men has been disputed by anthropologists who argue that women occupied the “domestic domain” and men the “public domain”. That is

because the domestic authority was vested in the public domain, women had de facto lower status than men (Rosaldo and Lamphere, 1974:68-87).

Mafata in his novel *Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha* (2006), explores the dynamics of contemporary African literature in the expression of the new, scripto-centric legacy, whereby the colonial education system excluded the woman resulting in her social, cultural and political dislocation in the new dispensation (Kalu, 2001:1).

According to Fonchingong (2006:141), Thabo Mafata like Chinua Achebe, presents the woman as a victim of a society regulated by cultural norms and traditional values. *Dipuo*, because of her status as a woman in the Basotho culture, is denied education as opposed to her brothers, *Kgama* and *Theko* for a better future.

When we look at *Mafikeng*, this is an attempt to recapture the strength of the African past, motivated by a desire to restore the dignity and pride of the black person in his culture (Kalu, 2001:14).

Kalu's observation (2001:14) is that the role of a woman has constantly been questioned in many societies as women have struggled to find their place for centuries in a predominantly male orientated world.

Mafata (2006:12) in '*Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha*', further presents a situation where female children are bound by tradition to assume the role of domestic servants. Girls were introduced to domestic duties very early in life. They learn from their mothers how to cook and keep the house clean. In addition, *Dipuo* is brought up to believe that "as a *girl*" she would not go to school (Fonchingong, 2006:139).

Ogundipe Leslie (1994:137) identifies traditional structures as some of the mountains on the back of an African woman. It is fostered through the gender socialization process which connects macho strength and heroism to males and associates roles of wife and mother to females.

[“Connected to anachronistic traditions, beliefs and cultural practices is the gender socialization process. Concretely, the educational process both in the traditional pre-colonial and post- colonial eras in Africa all bear traces to the subjugation of the female gender. A testament, par excellence to this fact can be diagnosed through an analysis of male and female access to education, climaxed through *Dipuo* in *Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha (2006)*”] (Fonchingong, 2006:141).

This misrepresentation of women internalized through the gender socialization process have lowered women and led to a backwash in the ladder, relegating them to the margins (Fonchingong, 2006:141).

According to Basotho, the best destination for a woman is to get married rather than obtaining a better education. According to Hadjithedorou (1999:76), the experiences of marriage and womanhood traditionally dominated the lives and identity of women in Africa, that is, it was expected of every girl or a woman to marry and have children where she would have a family and enjoys the benefits of motherhood.

2.4 Research methodology

To achieve the aims and objectives of the study, the feminist literary criticism will be the tool employed to analyse the female characters as portrayed in Sesotho literature. Women have been at the centre of various disciplines such as, developmental studies, gender studies, literature etc. and the study on the role or portrayal of women in any discipline is a very daunting task. This is observed in the lack of universally accepted definition for ‘feminism’ which forms the basis of all studies regarding women.

Evans (1994:10) illustrates this complication in her introductory part of analysing the term 'feminist literary criticism' by indicating that: The researcher shall not begin, as he probably should, by offering to define his terms. Instead the researcher shall acknowledge that he has brought together three concepts admitted on all sides to be

well-nigh indefinable. Or if they definable, they are so only by reference to a particular thinker's usage.

Adding to the complexity of the term, Ruthven (1984:4) maintains that: 'Feminist literary criticism' is familiar enough term: we use it all the time, but what does it mean? Each of its constituent words is highly problematic, for instance, to which of the many feminisms, ancient and modern, does 'feminist' refer? What does the word 'literary' mean, now that literature is said to be no longer the generic term for a diversity of texts bonded onto a canon by an elusive property called 'literariness'... And for 'criticism', is the word being used in the older sense of a variety of discursive practices subservient to the elucidation and evaluation of works of literature? Or is it used in a newer sense...'

Ruthven's view is supported by Mitchel and Oakley (1986:9) who shy away from giving a precise definition of feminism indicating that offering a definition of the concept has become an obstacle to understanding feminism in its diversity and its differences. They, however, suggest what they call a 'base-line' definition which they believe can be shared by feminists. In this regard, they suggest that:

'Many would agree that at the very least a feminist is someone who holds that women suffer discrimination because of their sex, that the satisfaction of needs would require a radical change in a social, economic and political order'.

These authors conclude by saying that beyond this definition, issues pertaining to feminism become increasingly complex.

The above discussion reveals that feminist theory covers a wide field of research. There are numerous disciplines covering women studies and also numerous scholars of feminism and literary criticism. Accordingly, this study did not attempt an exhaustive examination of feminism but, rather, synoptically reviewed the literature on Western and African literary. It employed a feminist literary criticism approach that focused on the analysis of female characters and how their roles in society are portrayed in literature.

Kolodny in Brown and Olson (1978:37) offers the following broad definition of feminist literary criticism:

'Feminist literary criticism covers various contexts and a variety of activities, including any criticism written by a woman, no matter what the subject; any criticism written by a woman about a man's book from a "feminist" perspective; and any criticism written by a woman about a woman's book or about female authors in general'.

The definition encompasses the scope of this study as analysis of women's images was done looking at male as well *Sesotho* authors. Donovan (1984:14) maintains that feminist literary criticism has three distinct subdivisions, each with its own target. (1) analyses of the "image of women"; (2) an examination of existing criticism of female authors; (3) a "prescriptive" criticism that attempts to set standards for literature that "good" from a feminist point of view. The first subdivision (above) was the focus of this study.

As mentioned earlier Western as well as African feminist literary criticisms were used in the study to analyse the image of women in *Sesotho* literature. However, it should be pointed out that while Western feminist critical thought was useful in analysing some of the more universal female myths, not everything found in the *Sesotho* context fitted into the Western mould. Accordingly, African feminist critical thought was applied as a way of taking cognisance of the contextual dynamics.

2.5 Western feminist theory

The previous section outlined the methodology adopted for the present study. In the following section, various approaches to feminist theories are considered. Jagger (1994:2) equates feminism with the different social movements dedicated to ending the subordination of women; whereas Jagger and Rothenberg (1993:xvii) see feminist theories as tools designed for the purpose of understanding women's subordination in order to end it. These differing views highlight the difficulty of reaching a united definition of feminist theory. The focus should therefore be shifted from a fixed stable

entity called feminism to a possibility of a multiple feminisms. This suggestion is summed up by Ryan (1988:1) who maintains that: Such a suggestion arises from a number of sources; the difficulty experienced in summarizing feminist critical theory; the inability to find a definition which encompasses feminism's diversities and divergences; the reluctance to limit feminism to a single category; an unwillingness to confine it to a totalizing theory; and finally a tendency to regard women as having a multiple rather than a single identities.

Three broad theories of feminism can thus be identified: liberal, socialist/marxist and radical feminist theories.

Pauline (1963:5) asserts that Western observers have focused the burden of labour on women, submissiveness to men who lack intimacy in marriages concludes that women are oppressed. This image, “expresses a fondly entertained masculine ideal which does not tally with the realities of everyday life”. In her counter-narrative response, she spells out that women have a wide arena in which to exercise authority that lack of their participation in public life is as much about absorption in their own roles as anything else and that polygamy does not in itself lower women’s status as wives.

2.5.1 Liberal Feminist theory

These theorists looked at the deterioration in the participation of women in public political and economic spheres. (Cornwell, 2005:3). They want to free women from oppressive gender roles and focus on a similarity to the existentialist view, which seeks equality of rights and freedom between women and men. However, this theory is concerned with prostitution in which Liberal Feminists regard it as being a private business transaction. They argue that a woman is free to get into a contract as it is her choice as an inherent political right; which does not necessarily mean that they (Liberal feminists), all approve of prostitution in a moral sense (Abrams , 1999:23).

They also believe that personal “rights” should dominate over concerns for social good.

This view was also echoed by John Stuart, who believes that government should not interfere in the private affairs of its citizens (Abrams, 1999:23).

2.5.2 Socialist/Marxist feminist theory

In this theory, evidence for women's subordination in the penetration of capital and shifting modes of production and reproduction is sought (Cornwell, 2005:3).

Simone de Beauvoir (1989:31), is of the view that the keys to a woman's liberation is economic, a point she stressed in her discussion of the independent woman.

This is in line with the Socialist feminists who appear to adopt some of the same tenets of Marxism, but who focus on economic determination of women. It views the oppression of women as having psychological and social implications. Their focus is on people, not profits. On the issue of prostitution, the woman is a victim of a corrupt society which accompanies class distinction. In both the Socialist feminism and Marxist feminism perspectives, prostitution is discouraged; neither of them seeks a legal remedy for it to be eradicated. They believe that the cause of prostitution is in the structuring of society. However, Marxist feminist regards prostitution as a replacement of corruption of wage labour and therefore degrading and oppressive (Tong, 1989:211).

2.5.3 Radical feminist theory

This theory seizes on instances of women's autonomy and rebellion (Cornwell, 2005:3). According to the Radical feminist view," men are socialized to have sexual desires and to feel entitled to have those desires met, whereas women are socialized to meet those desires and to internalize accepted definitions of femininity and objectification" (Tong, 1989:47).

On the other hand, Radical feminists point out that "almost every man or woman encounter has sexual overtones and is typically designed to reinforce the sexual dominance of men". According to this statement, prostitution and pornography as

factors in male experience only exacerbate his self-serving belief in the primacy of his sexuality. His role as the “dormant” sex is reinforced in his mind as something very real, when in fact it is not. In this sense, influences such as prostitution and pornography can be viewed as degrading to women as weak and submissive (Tong, 1989:46).

However, from a Radical feminist point of view, prostitution is regarded as a reduction of a human to a piece of merchandise. This theory does not believe that prostitutes desire to enter into such a “contract”, is done of her own free will. They view prostitution as a form of an exploitative relationship in which the client is interested only in the prostitute’s services and not her personally (Tong, 1989:46).

They also believe that prostitution is a harmless private transaction that reinforces and perpetuates the objectification, subordination and exploitation of women (Tong, 1989:45).

2.6 African feminist theory

This theory explores the African woman’s inscription on the continent and dispensation of women from their traditional homelands. It emphasizes the need for an extension of boundaries in order to facilitate validation of her participation as woman-as-woman (Kalu, 2001:10).

African feminism insists on concepts that are continually applied to maintain a system of knowledge that assumed her visibility needed for effective participation. This will result in refusing to be relegated to the position of a congenial ‘other’ who endorses her own subjugation. The theory also asserts that the current self-expression reinvigorates a sense of wholeness embedded in a viable past (Kalu, 2001:10).

Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth agree with African feminism theory in that they see women as resisting and fighting disabling paradigms through the use of creative application of African traditional assertions of women’s inherent freedoms (Kalu,

2001:11).

It becomes apparent that this school seeks validation of the African woman through an in-depth exploration of other exclusionary traditions. “African feminist theory is definitely engaged criticism in much the same way as a progressive African literary criticism grapples with decolonization and feminism criticism with the politics of male literary dominance (Davies, 1986:12).

In Nnnaemeka’s (1998:31-32) assertion, [“To speak of feminism in Africa is to speak of feminism in the plural within Africa and other continents in recognition of multiplicity of perspectives. Such perspective is the power of African women to work with patriarchal/cultural structures that are liberating and ennobling while challenging those that are limiting and debilitating”.]

Nnnaemeka further stresses the resistance that African feminism has as opposed to Western feminist theories in different dimensions. These are:

- “African feminism is not radical feminism.
- It is directed toward radical feminism’s stridency against motherhood. Therefore, African feminism neither demotes or abandons motherhood nor dismisses maternal politics as non-feminist or un-feminist politics.
- The language of feminist engagement in Africa runs counter to the language of Western feminist scholarship and engagement (challenge disrupt, deconstruct blow apart, etc.). African feminism challenges through negotiation and comprise.
- African feminism resists the Western feminism’s inordinate and unrelenting emphasis on sexuality that determines the nature, tone, spectacle, and modus operandi of Western feminist insurgency against female circumcision in Africa and the Arab world.
- There is disagreement between African feminism and Western feminism over priorities. They are much bandied about intersection of class, race, sexual

orientation, and so forth; in Western feminist discourse does not ring the same urgency most African women for whom other basic issues of everyday life are intersecting in most oppressive ways.

- The resistance to the universalization of Western notion and concepts” (Nnnaemeka, 1998:32).

On the other hand Masheane (1996:103) posits a strong viewpoint, that an act of resistance is quite different than ordinary talk. She makes reference to South African context, [“where as a woman, the idea of finding a voice risks being romanticized in the rhetoric of those who advocate a shallow feminist politics, which privileges acts of speaking the content of speech. She strongly feels to see the day when black women can either be feminist, womanist or revolutionist, and can be appreciated and looked at as people with opinion, dreams, plans and ideas. African women are intelligent, strong, sensitive, giving, loving and talented. Silencing women should never be glittering gold”.]

Aina (1998) in (Nnaemeka, 1998:35) asserts that 'feminism' is still in its infancy in the continent due to the contradictions and complexities of African cultures, cultural allegiances, and overall resistance to the extreme radicalism of Western feminism with, among other things, its insurgency against motherhood and emphasis on sexuality. She also ascribes the slow pace of feminism on the continent to the lack of "feminist consciousness" among most of African women, and worse still, their lack of '[consciousness]' of social situation".

Cornwell (2005:3) concludes that more or less all took a unitary “ category woman” for granted, which left little scope for ambiguity for attempts to make sense of other dimensions of women's lives and relationships. It also left men's gender 'roles' and 'identities' are 'unquestioned' and largely under-scribed. The ironies of Western feminist preoccupation are more evident, and at times the presentation of African women in their work echo those of colonial administrators and missionaries for whom women were indeed miserable victims in need of their interventions.

2.7 Scope

Some scholars define literature as 'everything in print', namely (Allan 1991:692) (Hunks 1979:858). However, Shipley (1970:20) argues that the traditional definitions of literature are misleading as they limit the term to written or printed literature. The present study used the term to encompass both oral and written works of art. The concept is applied in a broader way, similarly to the way that Roberts (2003:9) describes it, when he says: "Technically, anything spoken or written down is literature". He thus illustrates this broader meaning by including both written (modern) and oral (traditional) literature.

Finnegan (1970:375-376) also distinguishes between literature that is written down and oral literature: "The written African literature is correctly defined as modern written literature in recognition that Africa has long and distinguished oral literary tradition referred to as oral literature." This present study adopted purposive sampling method in respect of *Sesotho novels*, poetry and proverbs containing female characters and analysed the portrayal of these characters.

According to Majchrzak (1984:15) "Purposive sampling is a non-probability method which is based on the judgement of the researcher regarding the characteristics of a sample." However, in order to clarify the image of these female characters, it was necessary in the study also to investigate how they are portrayed in relation to their male counterparts in the selected texts. In the African tradition in general and the Sesotho tradition in particular, ideal woman is expected to marry and bear children. Thus a woman is generally defined in terms of her relationship with her husband *and* other men.

Tables 1, 2 and 3 below illustrate respectively the sampled novels, poems and sources from which the proverbs were selected.

2.7.1 Novels

Table 1: Sampled novels

Novel Title	Translation	Author	Year of Publication
Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha	When beautiful flowers are shaken	T. Mafata	2006
Masoabi Ngwana Mosotho wa kajeno	Masoabi the child of the modern Mosotho	K.E Ntsane	1987
Nna Sajene Kokobela. C.I.D	Myself Sergeant Kokobela	K.E Ntsane	1986
Mosali a nkholo	The woman lands me into a trouble	B.M Khaketla	1996

2.7.2 Poetry

Table 2: Sampled Poems

Poem	Translation	Author	Year of Publication
Baradi ba Efa	Daughters of Eva	T. Selepe	1994
Moloi	A witch	K.P Mokoena	1989
Ba mo jesitse phehla	They made him to eat potion	K.P Mokoena	1989
Ngwetsi	Daughter-in-law	C.T.D Molatoli	1992
Kgarebe	Girlfriend	T. Selepe	1994

2.7.3 Proverbs

Table 3: Sources of Sampled Proverbs

Title	Translation	Author	Year of Publication
Ng'oana ke oa likhomo	The child belongs to the cattle	M.I Mokitimi	1997
Se-rata ng'oana ke se-rata 'ma'e	The person who loves a child loves its mother	M.I Mokitimi	1997
Ho nyala ka dirope	He married with his thighs only	M.I Mokitimi	1997
Mokgatjhane ho ima ya ratang	One becomes pregnant out of one's free will	M. I Mokitimi	1991
Le letle letsopa	A beautiful clay	K.E Ntsane	1992
Tsopa le boreletsana ba sesepa	A smooth clay like a soap	T. Selepe	1994
Letheka la hae eka ke la mmamodukulle	Her waist is like that a basin used to relieve oneself	L.P Nakeli	2009
Sehole se setle ho mma sona	A disabled person is beautiful to her mother	D.J.M Ngcangca	1990
Mosadi ke tshwene o jewa matsoho	A woman is a baboon, she is eaten hands	L.P Nakeli	2009
Basali ke tau li mesana	Women are lionesses in small	M.I Mokitimi	1997

	dresses		
Mosadi ke morena	A woman is a chief	M.I Mokitimi	1997
Mabele ke ngwetsi ya malapa ohle	Sorghum is the daughter-in-law of all homesteads	L.P Nakeli	2009
Mosadi ha a na morena	A woman does not have a chief	M.I Mokitimi	1997
Mosadi ha a rata ho hlala motho, o kuka lehlohlokwa a le menahanye	If a woman wants to divorce someone,	L.P Nakeli	2009
Mosadi o ngalla motsh'eo	A woman sulks towards the innermost of a house	M.I Mokitimi	1997
Mosadi ha a sa alla monna	The wife no longer prepares the bed for the husband	J.P Hlalele	1972
Mohlolohadi wa mosadi h'a bonahale	A widow is not recognisable	A. Sekese	1972
Ngoana o tsamaya le 'm'ae, o tsamaya ka lekeke joalo ka 'm'ae	The child walks like his mother, he walks sideways like his mother	M.M Motebele	1997
Mosadi ke pudi, monna ke nku o llela teng	A woman is a goat and a man is a sheep that bleats inwardly	A. Sekese	1972

2.8 Limitations of the study

The texts were selected purposively. In other words, the researcher, in this selection of works that he considered relevant to the study, might have missed some works that contained female characters. Another limitation is that this study was confined to South Africa, although *Sesotho* is a cross-border language spoken also in Lesotho. It would be interesting to compare how the authors in this country portray women. However, because of space constraints and its main aim, this study could not compare the depiction of women in all the countries where *Sesotho* is spoken.

CHAPTER 3: PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN SESOTHO NOVELS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the portrayal of women in novels, namely, *Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha*, *Masoabi*, *Nna Sajene Kokobela*, *C.I.D.* and *Mosadi a nkgola*, focusing on how females characters are depicted. Each novel will be briefly summarised followed by the analysis and summary of the depiction of women characters which will also be highlighted.

3.2 Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha

(i) Summary of the novel

The novel begins with the discussion between two brothers, *Mafikeng* and *Mofifi* regarding the future of their children, *Kgama*, *Theko* and their sister, *Dipuo*. *Mofifi* suggested that both boys should be sent to school to get a better a education which will ease any hardship in their lives as opposed to what they themselves, have gone through in their lives, when they were forced to go and work at mines because of lack of education.

Mafikeng opposes that idea, citing the fact that Western education produces cowards and *maqai* (uninitiated men) who will lack traditional values in their society.

After long deliberations, these two men came to a conclusion that these boys can be sent to school with the exception of their sister, *Dipuo*. *Mafikeng* believes that a Mosotho *girl* is not supposed to get education as this will hamper her readiness to be a good wife when she gets married in future. *Mafata* (2006:2-3) in this regard, presents a situation where female children are bound by tradition to assume the role of domestic servants. Girls were introduced to domestic duties very early in life. They learn from their mothers how to cook and keep the house clean. This becomes evident when *Mafikeng* objects the idea of including *Dipuo* to be sent to school together with her

brothers: [*"E tla ba mosadi wa mofuta ofe ka moso? O tla ithuta mesebetsi ya lelapa le ya masimo neng ha re ka mo kenya sekolo? O tla re senyehela mme a yo re tlotlolla metseng ya batho mohla a nyalwang. Dikgomo tsa bohadi ba hae re tla di ja re kotsometse, re tshohile ha beng ba tsona ba tliilo re pepeta tsona, hobane re tla be tseba hantle na re ba nehile hlama e jwang ya motho"* (Mafata, 2006:2).]

[*"What type of a woman will she be in future? How will she learn domestic and field duties if we send her to school? She will be a spoiled brat and let us down when she gets married. We shall not enjoy the lobola paid for her, knowing that people who married her will come and take it back (lobola), because we will know exactly what a useless person we have given them".*]

It however becomes imperative that *Dipuo* is brought up to believe that *"as a girl"* she would not go to school. She is presented as a victim of a society regulated by cultural norms traditional values (Fonchingong, 2006:141).

Furthermore, *Mafata* explores the dynamics of contemporary African literature in the expression of the new, scripto-centric legacy, whereby the colonial education system excluded the woman resulting in her social, cultural and political dislocation in the new dispensation (Kalu, 2001:1).

When our main character, *Kgama*, has grown up and attends a missionary school, he begins to change from his traditional way of life, hence the title *"Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha"* ("when beautiful flowers are being shaken by the strong winds") to the Western type of life. He is no longer interested in local girls like *Dibakiso* whom he now regards her as illiterate and unromantic.

(ii) Analysis of the novel

In this novel six female characters have been introduced, namely, *Dipuo*, *MmaKgama*, *MmaTheko*, *Dibakiso*, *MmaMpholane* and *Sentebaleng*. All these female characters are presented as *flat* characters, in the sense that they both belong to one of the two types, that is, some represent *evil* while some represent *good*. This is as a result that they are both predictable display one-sided personal traits throughout the novel.

MmaKgama and *MmaTheko*, represent good and positive intensions by being obedient to their husbands, *Mafikeng* and *Mofifi*. They eagerly awaited the outcomes of meeting held by their husbands regarding the sending to school of their children. By so doing it was obvious that they were not part of decision making for deciding the future of their children. [*"MmaKgama le MmaTheko ba tlalwa ke thabo e kgaphatsehang ha ba utlwa ka qeto ya banna ba bona. Ba ipotsa na Mofifi ebe o ne a potile Mafikeng ka kae hore a qetelle a mo kgodisitse ka bohlokwa ba thuto ya sekolo. Ba tsota maqiti a Mofifi esita le malebana le ho kenyeletsa Dipuo nakong eo a buisanang le Mafikeng, mme ba kgathala ha e e le moo e ne eka le yena ngwananyana enwa wa bona taba ya hae e lokisitswe."* (Mafata, 2006:5).]

[*MmaKgama* and *MmaTheko* were overwhelmed with excitement after hearing the news about their husbands' agreement. They asked themselves how *Mofifi* managed to convince *Mafikeng* to allow the children to go to school. They praised *Mofifi's* cleverness by including *Dipuo* in their discussion, which made them to be more satisfied that the girl's issue has been resolved."]

MmaMpholane on the other hand, is represented as *flat* and *bad* character who always displays hateful and disrespectful attitudes towards her neighbours. She does not like to see other people prosper in life, more especially by seeing *Kgama* and *Theko* attending school. [*Ba bona hore tabakgolo e ne e le ho kena sekolo ha boKgama, jwalo ka ha a ne a buile ka bohlaledi ba bona. Ha e le tse ding tsona, ba bona hore o ne a mpa a di kentse feela molemong wa ho ba kgopisa* (Mafata, 2006:43).]

[They realised the main reason was that of school attendance by *Kgama* and his brother, as she already talked about their education. Among others, they realised that she was just only including other issues as a result of jealous, for a mere fact of disturbing them.]

She made *Theko* to abandon school as a result of her witchcrafts acts which included sending him "*tikoloshe*". *Theko* had a terrible headache which kept him from going to school. [*Ngaka ya bolela hore Theko o tsamaisetswa thokolosi le kokwana, ebile ba lopilwe ka dintho tsena bobedi ba bona le Kgama (Mafata, 2006:44).*]

[The witchdoctor said *Theko* was sent a *thokolosi* and *sejeso (tapeworm)*, and he and *Kgama* have been bewitched].

Furtthermore, *MmaMpholane* shows her evil deeds when she tried to arrange a love affair between *Dibakiso* and *Kgauwane* for the sake of hurting *Kgama* and his family. This was totally rejected by *Dibakiso* after *Kgauwane* wanted to marry her by force. [*"Ke a bona hore ha o ntsebe hantle, ngwana ka; ke tla o nyala o rata kapa o sa rate"* (Mafata, 2006:78)].

["I can see that you don't me better, I'll marry you whether you like it or not"]

This clearly shows that this woman *Mmampholane* is portrayed as a *flat* and *bad* character throughout the novel until she became paralysed as a result of her evil deeds.

[*Tlisa maemo ana a tjena, ha be ho se ho etsahala hore Dibakiso a fumane molaetsa o mo batlang ha MmaMpholane, eo ka nako eo a neng a se a tumme ponong ka ho nyoketsa (Mafata, 2006:76).*]

[Under such circumstances, *Dibakiso* got the message that she is wanted at *MmaMpholane*'s place, who by that time was limping when she walks.]

In doing so, Mafata tries to show that witchcraft activities are always performed by women who are sometimes referred to as "*Baloy*" (witches) in the culture of Basotho. *Kgama* starts to realise the difference between the romantic touches between his two girlfriends, whereby he starts to get bored with *Dibakiso* as a result that she does not have those romantic skills which *Sentebaleng* has.

Firstly, the first time *Kgama* met and proposed love to *Dibakiso*, Mafata uses the animal, "*pokola*" (donkey) as a starting point. [*"Ekaba ha o so bone pokola e moo eso ha o ntse o le moo?"* (Mafata, 2006:32)].

[Didn't see our donkey whilst you were still here]?

From this point one will understand that a donkey is an animal which carry a lot of load on its back. Look at the treatment *Dibakiso* got from *Kgama* during their love affair. She carried the burden of being fooled by *Kgama*, who later saw her as unromantic and not up modern standards as compared to *Sentebaleng*. *Dibakiso* even went to the extent of helping *Kgama's* mother and his sister *Dipuo*, to carry the brooms which were to be sold to the community. This was done to assist *Kgama* so that he could be able to pay his school fees. *Dibakiso* in this instance is depicted as someone who like donkey, can carry all the problems she has with *Kgama*.

Secondly, when *Kgauwane* was proposing *Dibakiso*, the animal horse came into the picture.

[*Ka ntle ha MmaMpholane a fumana dipere tse pedi, tse emeng ka diqhana di holehilwe difateng. Ha a di tadimisisa, a bona ka bobedi ba tsona e le tse qhanehilweng ka qhana tsehlakotsweng hantle; merahao e phatsima ha e utlwa mahlasedi a letsatsi; ditleleki e le tse mebala e mefubedu le e mesweu, tse tshwanang jwalo ka ha eka di ne di lohilwe motho a le mong; ditomo e le tse marapo a mangatangata, a bosootho bo lefifi, a kgabisitsweng ka diipone* (Mafata, 2006:76).]

[As she arrived at *MmaMpholane's* place she found two horses tied to the tree. As she inspected them, she realised that they were tied with neatly brushed ropes; their back

parts were shining because of sun rays; their red and white mats were the same as if they were knitted by the same person; with dark-brown multiple ropes decorated with mirrors]

The horse can be ridden by everyone who wants to be on its back. According to Basotho, a woman who sleeps with different men is referred to as "*pere*" (a horse). According to Mafata, *Dibakiso* because of lack of educational background, she can be associated with those things that illiterate women can be subjected to. It can be concluded that *Dibakiso*, in this case was symbolised with the horse.

However, *Dibakiso* as a real Mosotho *girl* who knew what was wrong and right in her society. She respected elders by not standing in public with *Kgama* where anyone could see them. In other words, she is a well-behaved and *traditional girl* who understood what was expected of her according to the norms and values of Basotho.

Sentebaleng on the other hand, is the girl who does not care what other people are saying about her. She is the opposite of what *Dibakiso* is, in as far as moral values are concerned. She does not respect the elders by hugging and kissing *Kgama* in public.

Kgama falls in love with *Sentebaleng* who sees other people as *uneducated* and calls them "*dikwata*". This is what she has to say along the way while they coming back from the school with *Kgama* and other schoolmates:

["Kwata ke motho ya sa rutehang, ya bolotseng, ya sebetsang morafong mme a etsang dintho ka kgang" (Mafata, 2006: 51)].

["A savage is an illiterate, who initiated, who works at mines that do things by force"]. By this she was referring to men.

[Kwata ke ntho e ntseng e inyeperetsa ka dibaseline hara lena; e otlolang moriri ka lejwe; e tshereselang ha e tsamaya; e nkgang meso ya dihalahala; e ratang ho iphahamisa- o morao rona re ke re o jwetse!"] (Mafata, 2006: 52)].

In this instance she was referring women.

[A savage is *something* which smears itself with Vaseline today; which stretches hair with a stone; which staggers when it walks; which smells plant's smoke; which likes to boast-you are backward to tell you].

These utterances by *Sentebaleng* really show how immoral, uncultured and misbehaving she is. Does Mafata in so doing try justify the point that educated women lack all the qualities needed in a Basotho culture such as a whore like *Sentebaleng*?

As time went by *Kgama* started to forget about his childhood lover, *Dibakakiso*, whom he started to see her as illiterate and unromantic. These included things like *Dibakiso* does not know how to dress well, does not kiss romantically and all other bad pictures he painted her with as compared to *Sentebaleng*.

It becomes apparent that Mafata in this novel, created two female characters, with the intension of trying to make a distinction between bad and good. This is illustrated by non- educational background of *Dibakiso* and the enlightenment and influence of Western education demonstrated by *Sentebaleng*.

(iii) Summary of the depiction of women characters

As the events unfold, we realise how the female character, *Sentebaleng*, is depicted. She is depicted as a "free woman, courtesan or prostitute", who does not have moral values. She can also be referred as a "moonlighting woman" whosometimes goes to the hotels and attracts married men with her beautiful and attractive body, who in turn pay her for services she has rendered to them.

[*Yare ka Labohlano ha letsatsi le dikela, shwalane e qeta ho tshwara, a be a llisa ditlhako a le seterateng se lebang hoteleng. O ne a tseba hantle hore ka Labohlano la mafelo a kgwedi boholo ba batho bo amohetse, mme moo a neng a leba teng ho ne ho nyeunya.*

[Ha se ke ha feta nako e telele a eme tlasa mabone, monyako wa Mmankebalane, a e so tshwase "mohlankana". Etswe o ne a apere ka tsela e bapatsang masihlasihla a borwetsana ba hae, a ka palesa ha ikemiseditse ho hohela mabobolane, e peketlile mebala ya yona, esita le e ka harehare. Ba kena ka hoteleng ho ya itlhahisa e le balekane ho motho ya abang diphaposi tsa boroko Mafata, 2006:54-55)].

[It was on Friday towards before the sun sets, after dawn, when she made the sound of her shoes to be heard in the street leading to the hotel. She knew very well that on Friday at the end of the month most of the people got their wages, and where she was going there will be many people. She did not take a long time standing under the lights, at *Mmankebalane*' door before she could get the "guy." She was even dressing in a way that shows her attractive body parts as a girl, like a flower which intends to attract the bees, displaying its colours even to its inner parts. They got into the hotel looking as if they were couple at the receptionist.]

She makes *Kgama* to start telling lies to his parents when he goes out to stay with her as a man and wife in their shack.

[Kgama a tswa habo a jere mokotlana lehetleng. O ne a qeta ho re mmae a sale hantle, o sa leba kwana Phatlhatshweu ho ya tlatsa diforomo tseo ho itsweng ba yo di tlatsa. O ne a itse o tla kgutla ka letsatsi la boraro a tlohile hae (Mafata, 2006:90).]

[*Kgama* was carrying a bag on his shoulder. He has just greeted his mother saying he is going to *Phatlhatshweu* to fill some forms they told to complete. He promised that he will be back after three days.]

She falls in love with married men who ultimately attack and assault *Kgama* in their shack. During the attack she managed to escape whereby she fell in a hole full of (shit). *[A itshohlemetsa kgetsheng sa bobedi, a iphumana a wetse ka ntlwaneng e siilweng e ntse e ahlame, a kgamathisitse ka molala hara moraha... (Mafata, 2006:93).*

[She jumped into the second hole and found herself falling into an open toilet full of shit] In the long run she loses her eye and *Kgama* is hospitalised and lost the chance to complete his studies during that academic year. It becomes clear from this point that *Sentebaleng* is symbolised with shit in these circumstances.

Mafata however, presents a situation where Basotho women are bound by the tradition to assume the role of domestic servants. As the case of *Dipuo and Dibakiso*, they were introduced to domestic duties very early in life. They were made to believe that "as girls" they were not supposed to be educated and help *Kgama's* mother to make and sell brooms (*mafielo*) to the community so that *Kgama* can be able to pay and further his studies at school.

[Dibakiso ha a ntse a tlwaela tshebetso, mme a ithuta menyetla e meng ya yona, a sebedisa Dipuo ho etsa ditlhaliso ho MmaKgama. A hlahisa hore ho louwe le meseme le metlhotlo, ka ha batho ba ne ba batla ntho tsena haholo. Ha se ke ha eba le mathata, mme le tsona tsa etswa. Tsena tsa eketsa tjehelete eo ba neng ba e fumana pele ho moo (Mafata, 2006:75).]

[When *Dibakiso* got used to work, and learned about some of its opportunities, she used *Dipuo* to make these proposals to *MmaKgama*. She suggested that the mats and sieves should be made as there was a high demand for these commodities from the community. It appeared as if there were no difficulties in this project, as these commodities were immediately made. All these started to generate more income than before.]

In as far as the relationship of *Kgama* and *Sentebaleng* was concerned; it is unacceptable for people who are still very young at their ages to live together as a couple. This affair really shows how *Kgama* and *Sentebaleng* did care about the culture of Basotho as a result of the influence of Western education.

Look at what happened to *Kgama* and *Sentebaleng* when they living together in their rented shack. They were both attacked by unknown people suspected to be former boyfriends of *Sentebaleng*. *Sentebaleng* ended up losing her eye while *Kgama* was admitted to the hospital as a result of injuries he sustained during the attack.

[*Yaba Tomase o qala ka hore, "Bana beso, ditaba tse etsahetseng ke tse bohloko, mme tse re swabisang re le batswadi ba bana bana (Mafata, 2006:94).*

[Then Tomas started by saying, "My brothers and sisters, what happened is very painful, and disappointing as the parents of these children.

It stands to reason that what *Kgama and Sentebaleng* did was totally unacceptable to Basotho that is why their parents had to intervene resulting in separating them.

3.3 Masoabi

(i) Summary of the novel

The story begins with the events that took place the day Masoabi was born, on the day when his grandfather had died. Hence the name *Masoabi* (sorrow), which is associated with these events.

On that day, while other people were mourning his grandfather's death, '*Manonyana*, *Masoabi's* aunt, stood outside and started ululating as an indication of happiness for the birth of *Masoabi*.

This seemed to be abnormal to some people who had gathered to mourn the passing away of his grandfather. Because of the strain and anxiety which accompany the birth of a child, women normally burst out and ululate as a sigh of relief. Therefore, that ululation became a spontaneous reaction from '*Manonyana*.

Masoabi stays with his aunt until he passes standard six, during the time in which he experiences problems with his aunt who always ill-treated him. However, *Masoabi* endures all these hardships. His father, in spite of these hardships, motivates and encourages him to study very hard at school.

After completing his standard six, *Masoabi* proceeds to Bensonvale College where he associated himself with the Johannesburg "bright" boys and causes conflict between him and the authorities. Later he is summoned by the police to come and account for a fight that took place between his girlfriends whereby was strongly reprimanded. *Masoabi* changes his attitude and behaviour and works very hard until he obtains his teachers' certificate.

His first teaching post was at the Intermediate School under the leadership of Mr *Rapatsi*. He is liked by both learners and their parents as he is very diligent in his work.

Rapatsi becomes so jealous of *Masoabi's* progress and his post (*Masoabi*) is in jeopardy. Despite all the difficulties he experiences at work, he stands firm and eventually resigns and marries *Lineo*.

(ii) Analysis of the novel

In this novel the author introduces three female characters, '*Manonyana*, who is *Masoabi's* aunt, '*Mamasoabi*, the real mother to *Masoabi*, and *Lineo*, *Masoabi's* girlfriend.

It must be born in mind that Ntsane portrays female characters that are submissive, stubborn, cruel and ill-mannered, but there are times where he shows the positive side of a woman.

In this instance, Ntsane introduces us to the birth of *Masoabi*. On that day the family and the community were mourning the death *Masoabi's* grandfather. People were

gathering to console the bereaved family. After a while the message arrives that *Masoabi* is born and one of the women stands up and starts ululating as a sign of joy.

[Eka e mong wa basadi, eitse ha a utlwa hore ha moholwane wa hae ho hlahile ngwana moshanyana a hlaba moduduetsane. Batho ba ne ba dutse lebaleng, mme ba dutse ba hlomohile, ba lla, ba llela qheku la bona le shweleng lefu le sehloho la ho ya le noka (Ntsane, 1987:12).

[It so happened that when one of the women heard that at her brother's place a son was born, she ululated. People were gathered at the courtyard being mournful, mourning the death of their old man who had drowned tragically.]

Ntsane describes this woman in a very sarcastic manner because this is the old man's daughter, hence *Rakgadi*, and she is supposed to be mourning the death of her father. Instead, she does something that borders on embarrassment, not only to herself but to the society at large.

Ntsane does not explicitly reveal the name of the ululating woman as the daughter of the deceased. He says, "*eka e mong wa basadi...*" (it looks as if one of the women...). This is done with the intention of juxtaposing the two occurrences, namely, death as opposed to birth and joy and sorrow.

According to norms and standards of Basotho such behaviour would be viewed critically. The saying in Sesotho, "*Lefu leholo ke ditsheho*" (Laughter often occurs under great strife), fits well in these circumstances as indirectly put by Ntsane.

Earlier *Ntsane* refers to a woman who ululated, while at the later stages reveals that she is the aunt to *Masoabi*, who is the daughter to the deceased. This *Ntsane* does it years later when *Masoabi* is already in the pre-school age and has to go and live with his aunt.

[Rakgadiae eo, ke yena wa ho hlaba modidietsane mohla Masoabi a hlahileng, moduduetsane o ne batle hore batho ba tshawarane ka matsoho (Ntsane, 1987:17).]

[That aunt is the one who ululated the day *Masoabi* was born, the ululation that nearly caused conflict.]

Masoabi's life becomes unbearable when he stays with his aunt '*Manoyana*. She is very cruel to him, but studies very hard and passes standard six very well. He bids farewell to his aunt when he leaves. '*Manonyana* becomes very disappointed to realise that *Masoabi* is not angry with her but is grateful for what she did for him.

[Rakgadi, ke a tsamaya kajeno, mme ke leboha paballo ya hao eo o nketseditseng yona nakong eo ke e dutseng hahao mona. O sale hantle... (Ntsane, 1987:25).]

[Aunt, I am leaving and I thank you for the care you have given me while I was staying with you. Goodbye...]

Although *Masoabi* sounds grateful when he bids farewell, it appears as if there is bitterness behind these words.

[Tsamaya, o yo mpua hampe ho nnake kwana, o hle o di phete kaofela, o ntshenye lebitso, molotsana towe! le ho o batla ha ke sa o batla (Ntsane, 1987:25)]

[You can go, and talk ill about me to my younger brother, tell him everything, and spoil my name, you little devil, I do not want to see here again.]

The above quotation reveals the conflict between *Masoabi* and his aunt during his stay there. It becomes clear that they were always at loggerheads. Her response about the examination results really exposes the animosity that existed between the two.

His aunt was not happy after the standard six results that *Masoabi* has passed. She however, writes a letter to *Masoabi's* father informing him that *Masoabi* has passed. The contents of letter clearly contain a lot of bitterness.

[Ke a dumedisa. Ho thwe ke o bolelle hore Masoabi o fetile buka ya hae, mme ke wa lekgolo ho bohle kaofela ba Lesotho. O batlile a tshwara setono! Kwana ke hlile ka mmona nna ngwana nna ngwaneno wa hao hore ha a ithute hantle, ho hoholo ke papadi feela ha a etswa sekolong. Ka moo a neng a se a ntenne kateng ngwana eno, ke ne ke sa kgolwe hore leha a ka hlolwa ho feta, nka hlola ke mo amohela mona lapeng ha ka. Ha ke so bone moleko o kang ono (Ntsane, 1987:29).]

[I greet you. It is said that I should inform you that *Masoabi* has passed and obtained position hundred among all in Lesotho. He was almost last in his class! I have realised that child of yours was not studying hard; he plays most of the time after school. I have had enough of that child and I don't think I would take him back if failed. I have never seen such a devil.]

The manner in which Ntsane portrays '*Manonyana*' is yet another example of how he generally views the womenfolk. He always paints a negative picture of them.

When we look at how '*Mamasoabi*' is portrayed, it can be concluded that Ntsane is inclined to bring out the negative side of a woman. We are not convinced that '*Mamasoabi*' can send her baby of between two to three years old away from her, simply because she fears that the child would be influenced by bad children in her village. During this period the child needs motherly care and love. It is likely that *Ntsane* tries to bring in the Sesotho culture where a child was normally sent to his grandparents, but in this case this is done for a different reason.

[Ya fihla nako ya Masoabi hore a titime. Ka hanong a ba hakaalo. Ditaba tsa hae e le tse ngatanyana, tse sa feleng, tse qabolang ka mehla. Mmae o ne a sa jewe ke bodutu leha bana ba bang ba le siyo, kapa ntatae a le sekolong.]

[The the time arrived that *Masoabi* should start running. He enjoys talking too much. He always had many endless and interesting things to say. His mother was never lonely in the absence of other children or when his father was at school.]

From the passage above, the idea and disbelief that *Masoabi's* mother could have dreamt of sending her baby away at that tender age with all the joy she derived from the baby's company is underlined. It is amazing that she did not shoulder the responsibility of staying with her son of shifting this responsibility to *Masoabi's* aunt. This contradicts The Sesotho saying which goes, "*Mmangwana o tshwara thipa ka bohaleng*". (The mother of the child holds the knife with its blade.)

Lineo is another character in *Masoabi*, who is attracted to *Masoabi*. During the closing party at school, many are excited and are paired with their loved ones. As it was arranged, *Lineo* is allocated a seat next to *Masoabi*.

The author describes the beauty of *Lineo* and how her beauty electrifies the body of *Masoabi* in this fashion:

[Botle ba hae motho a ka bua bona ho sa..! E ne e re ha a re mahlo phatsi, e ke a phatsima kahare ka kwana ho Masoabi, ntho e nyolohe sefubeng mona, e mo karape, e mo sehe, e mo ngwathe, ha e qeta, e mathele hloohong kwana e yo letsa dtshepe teng, e di siye di entse modumo o moholo, e theose e yo kena maotong. Teng e ikarole, e iketse dikokwanyana tse ngata, di mathe hohle mmeleng, mme botsikinyane ba tsona bo mo fufuletse. Ngwana a fufulelwe, ngwana a hatsele, ngwana a kgohleditse bohata, a qetelle hobotse mahlo, eka moloji a tshwerwe ke dithakgisa (Ntsane, 1987:57).]

[Her beauty one can talk about it until the next day... When she raised her eyes, it seemed as if they shone deep in *Masoabi*, then something would move up in his chest, scrape him, cut him, and dig him up, when it finished, it would run to the head to ring the bells therein, and leave them making loud noise, then it would descend and enter the feet. There it would divide itself into a lot of insects which would run everywhere in

the body, and the itching they caused would make him sweat. The young man would feel cold, the young man would pretend to cough and end up with staring eyes like a witch caught up in a trap]

Although *Ntsane* is inclined to be negative in portraying a woman, there are moments where he marvels in showing the positive of a woman. From the extract above, He uses poetic narrative prose, characterised by repetition of syncractic slots and concords: *mahlo phatsi, a phatsima: e mo karape, e mo seye, e mo ngwathe.*

The passage further abounds in imagery: *ntho e nyolose, dikokwanyana, botsikinyane, a fufulelwe, a hatsele, e ka moloji a tshwerwe ke dithakgisa*

(iii) Summary of the depiction of women characters

It can be concluded that Ntsane's of style of characterising female characters is associated with satire.

For an example, in this novel, *Masoabi*, two main female characters, '*Manonyana* and '*Mamasoabi*, are negatively portrayed. '*Manonyana*, *Masoabi's* aunt, is put in a bad light from the day *Masoabi* is born. She ululates while the rest of the community is mourning the death of her father. When *Masoabi* goes back to his parents' home after spending few years at her home, she sends him off with the most unpleasant words to her brother, *Masoabi's* father.

This clearly indicates that there was animosity between *Masoabi* and his aunt, '*Manonyana*, during his stay with her. The conversation also foreshadows what might occur between *Masoabi* and '*Manonyana* when the boy reaches home. She says, "*tsamaya o yo mpuahampe*" (go and talk ill about me), she is trying to forestall a possible conflict that could develop between herself and her brother.

In so doing, Ntsane portrays his female character in a negative manner on how cruel, hateful, bitter and not peaceful as she is, as in the case of *'Manonyana*. *'Manoyana* should have acted like a second parent or a mother to *Masoabi* hence "*rakgadi*" (the sister to the father), as it the norm in Basotho culture, but here it is not the case. She acts contradictory to what she was doing, by ululating, when *Masoabi* was born and at the same time when people were mourning the death of her father.

That is why Ntsane took a long time to tell the readers what her name was in the introductory parts of the novel. The reason is that there was already some negativity stance in Ntsane' mind, in relation to the creation of this female character, *'Manonyana*. She can be regarded as a round character who does not stick to what it is expected of her as real sister to *Masoabi's* father in the Basotho.

'Mamasoabi on the other hand, is portrayed as a grossly negligent mother. She sends her baby away from home for fear that he will be influenced badly by the local children. At a tender age of two to three years, it is not expected of the mother to part with her first child in a marriage on such flimsy reasons.

It is amazing that she did not shoulder the responsibility of staying with her son instead of shifting this responsibility to the aunt.

There is a Sesotho saying which goes, "*Mmangwana o tshwara thipa ka bohaleng*" (The mother of the child holds the knife with its blade.)

But this was not the case with *'Mamasoabi*, who allowed her child to endure such hardships at the hands of his aunt, without taking measures to protect him as her blood child.

Its stands to reason once more that Ntsane's negative portrayal of female characters, goes beyond any reasonable doubt that women are weak in decision making as in the case of *'Mamasoabi*, who fails to take responsibility of bringing up her own child. Also

we look at her reaction towards *'Manonyana*, after hearing how her son was treated during his stay with her, (*'Manonyana*).

3.4 Nna Sajene Kokobela. C.I.D

(i) Summary of the novel

The story is about the clerk, *Kokobela*, who wishes to become a policeman. In the first place *Kokobela* wishes to become a police in order to be famous around *Lesotho*. Secondly, he is encouraged by injustices perpetrated by some of the police members in the society. To remedy these wrong doings, he decided to join the police force. He joins and becomes a good and intelligent policeman. Eventually he is promoted to the rank of detective and later becomes a detective-sergeant.

Thereafter he is assigned the task of investigating a callous ritual murder in Berea accompanied by *Lentswe* and *Tabola*. They arrived and stayed at *Rapotlaki's* home in the evening.

They realise the only way of arresting the murderers is to disguise themselves in order to gather more information regarding this murder case.

Late that evening, they visit the wife of *Topisi*, who at that time was arguing with *Mafethe* over the payment which was part of the deal. It looks as if *Mafethe* promised this woman a certain amount after *Topisi* was murdered. *Kokobela* then realises that these two are involved in the murder. The following day, *Kokobela* tries to find the truth from *Topisi's* wife regarding the death of her husband, but in vain. He threatens to charge her if he finds evidence implicating her to the murder of her husband.

Mafethe is the most fearsome man in Berea, even the surrounding chiefs in Berea are afraid of him. *Mafethe* becomes suspicious of *Kokobela* and his friends because he sees them on several occasions been disguised. One night *Mafethe* sends *Sankwela* to

call *Kokobela* who unfortunately gets captured and tortured by *Kokobela* and his colleagues until he reveals the truth. At that time *Mafethe* was standing outside and threatened *Kokobela* and his accomplices.

The following morning *Mafethe*, *Langwane* and *Topisi's* wife are seen leaving in the direction of the mountains. *Kokobela*, *Langwane*, *Tabola* and *Sankwela* follow them but are unfortunately kidnapped and kept hostage in cave by *Mafethe*. *Mafethe* gets a chance to show his bitterness. He relates to *Kokobela* that during the war it was said that they were fighting for justice and were given promises which were not fulfilled. According to him, there is no justice in this country; instead, he is prepared to kill, to hurt people because people like *Kokobela* taught him to do so.

Miraculously *Kokobela* escapes and was able to release the others. *Mafethe* is arrested and charged. *Kokobela* believes that crime does not pay whereas *Mafethe* believes it pays.

(ii) Analysis of the novel

In this novel, focus will be based on two female characters, namely, *Mmaletswai*, *Kokobela's* wife, and *Topisi's* wife, whom Ntsane does not have a name for her. It is a known fact Ntsane always portrays his female characters in a negative way. For this reason it becomes apparent that these women are portrayed as subservient and as perpetual minors whose power ends up in the kitchen, and also as murderers for the sake of wealth.

Whenever *Mmaletswai* tries to advise her husband, *Kokobela*, he dismisses everything she suggests because he claims that he does not believe that a woman can talk sense.

[*O bile o tseba hantle hore maikutlo a ka ha a dumele hore basadi ba kenakene ditaba tse sa ba tshwanelang. Borena boo Modimo a bo fileng basadi bo fella lelapeng mme ha se borenanyana hle* (Ntsane, 1986:14).]

[You know my feelings very well. I do not want women to interfere in the affairs not meant for them. The power that God has given to a woman ends in the house and it is a mighty power.]

According to Ntsane's portrayal of female characters, women are undermined even if they are capable of solving problems, or contributing towards nation building.

With regard to *Topisi's* wife, Ntsane paints her with a beautiful picture accompanied by negative aspects in her beauty.

[E, o ne a bopehile enwa motho, a le mosoothwana a le boreledi sefahleho, mahlo a le maphatshwana-phatshwana, ao e reng ha a tadima motho a tjhatjhametse a yo kena pelong mme teng a bake moferefere, mokutu, motho a lahlehelwe ke mohopolo (Ntsane, 1986:20).]

[Yes, this woman was well built, her face was dark brown, and very smooth, her eyes were round, big and very sharp, when she looked at a person, they pierced into his heart and created great confusion and made one lose one's senses]

In contrast to the above described beauty, *Ntsane* puts it in the negative side of this woman.

[Mosadi ha se hangata a bang motle sebopeho le pelo. Jwale ka ha ke hlola ke bolela, basadi bongata bo kgwahlehetse hampe, mme ha se ba babe feela ba pelo di kgubedu, le tsona diponono tse na tsa lona di pelo di tletseng boloi (Ntsane, 1986:28).]

[It is very rare that a woman can be beautiful and good natured. As I usually say, in most cases women are very wicked, and it not only the ugly ones who are cruel, even these beauties of yours are very wicked.]

Kokobela, albeit admires *Topisi's* wife, has a deep rooted feelings of mistrust towards her. To him, her beauty covers up the wickedness embedded in her heart and becomes suspicious that the woman had a hand in the murder of her husband.

However, *Ntsane's* negative elements towards women can be further realised by not giving *Topisi's* wife a name, she is simply '*mohatsa Topisi*' (*Topisi's* wife). Her beauty is used as an introduction to highlight his negative attitudes towards beautiful women, for instance, [*"Mosadi ha se hangata a bang motle sebopelo le pelo"*]. [It is not always that a woman can be beautiful and good natured.] Throughout the story, images of *Topisi's* wife are continually presented and in the end *Kokobela's* suspicion is confirmed because indeed *Topisi's* wife took part in the murder of her husband.

It is surprising that this woman took part in the murder of her husband, because when *Kokobela* asks her whether *Topisi* had friends, she responded by saying:

[*Topisi e ne e le motho ya sa tlwaelanang le ba bang. Ha ho ya neng a ka re ke motswalle wa hae e moholo. Ha e le ho ba dira teng ha ke hopole a ne a kile a qhwedisana le motho mona motseng kapa hona metseng e ka mathoko* (*Ntsane*, 1986:53).]

[*Topisi* was not used to other people. There is no one who could claim to be his friend. Having enemies, I do not remember him clashing with anyone in this village or surrounding villages to us.]

From what *Topisi's* wife was saying to *Mafethe* when they were arguing about the money, it becomes evident that she still loves her husband.

[*"Eseng o hopola hore Topisi hore ke ne ke sa mo rate ka hoo ka mo tela feela-feela tjee ke sa fumane seo wena o ntshepitseng sona* (*Ntsane*, 1986:40).

[Do you think that I did not love *Topisi* that I can forget about him so easily without receiving what you promised me?]

Ntsane in his portrayal of *Topisi's* wife does not convince the reader that she is capable to plot against her husband. It is also indicated that *Topisi* was very young when he was murdered. He was only thirty-eight years old and had no children. He was also not poor as he had few goats and sheep. It is therefore, totally unacceptable that a woman can plot against her husband without any valid reasons.

(iii) Summary of the depiction of women characters

In this novel, *Nna Sajene Kokobela*, only two women are portrayed, namely *Mmaletswai* and *Topisi's* wife. To this woman, *Mmaletswai*, *Ntsane* displays the common superiority complex of a Mosotho man to his wife.

The second female character, *Mohatsa Topisi*, is portrayed in a way that both the positive and negative attributes are brought out. On the positive side *Ntsane* portrays her physical appearance which is very attractive. The negative side is once more the suspicious nature *Ntsane* displays towards women. He views *Topisi's* wife as suspect number one in the murder of her husband. This suspicion seems baseless without factual evidence. Her mere facial appearance makes him to suspect her.

Topisi's wife is beautiful and well built, but her actions are similar to that of the devil. She is wicked, cruel and bad. Although *Kokobela* suspects that this woman is involved in the murder of her husband, *Topisi*, he does not offer any clues to support his suspicion; instead, he monitors her movements.

After *Kokobela's* fight with *Mafethe* at night next to *Topisi's* house, he decides to visit *Topisi's* wife the following day. After arriving he accuses of the murder of her husband. He reveals to her that he heard her conversation with *Mafethe* the previous night. When

she realises that *Kokobela* had heard everything, she suddenly changes her attitude in this manner:

[*"Jwale mosadi a hlakola meokgo a lesa ho nna hlwephetsa mamina, a nkgobolela mahlo jwale ka ntho e sa tlang. Ka fumana jwale mahlo ana ao pele a neng a le maphatswa, a tletse lerato le lengata, jwale a tletse disuwa, bora, ditshila, dihele le meleko ka ho fapana ha yona. Ka ba ka tshoha ka re esebe ke ntse ke tadimane le motho athe ke tadimane le Satane a ikentse motho"* (Ntsane, 1986:62).]

[Then the woman wiped off her tears and stopped sobbing, she starred at me like a stupid fool. I then discovered that those eyes which were earlier were bright, full of abundant love, had turned into hatred, enmity, dirt, death, hell and various turbulences. I even felt that I had mistakenly felt that I was dealing with a human being and yet it was the devil pretending to be a human being.]

This is gross exaggeration of a woman's character and personality. Despite the fact that *Topisi's* wife is demonised, *Ntsane* still makes her the winner who would not allow herself to be taken for a ride. She is tough and can stand and fight back against all abuses from the men she comes across with.

3.5 *Mosadi a nkholo*

(i) Summary of the novel

The story is about *Mosito* who arrives from Lovedale High School in Cape town. He is supposed to succeed his father when he dies as he is the only son of the chief. His father, Chief *Lekaota*, decides that his son should marry before he (*Lekaota*) dies.

In this case *Mosito* is allowed to marry a woman either chosen by his father or of his choice. He decides to marry a beautiful girl by the name of *Sebolelo*. She was 'a standard four dropout'. After the death of *Mosito's* father, he is crowned Chief of his tribe.

During his reign a few changes are implemented his district, with regard to the powers of the chiefs, salaries, taxes and land issues. *Mosito* and his advisors, who happened to have been his school mates, understand how things are supposed to work, but his wife, who is now known as *Mmathabo* and his late father's advisors think differently. They insist that *Mosito* should protest and fight against the new regulations. This leads to *Mosito* committing ritual murder of *Tlelima* to stabilise his chieftaincy, through the influence of his wife. He was arrested, convicted and executed by hanging.

(ii) Analysis of the novel

In this novel, more focus will be based on the female character, *Mathabo*, who can also be regarded as a flat character who sticks to everything she wants to achieve irrespective of what circumstances are.

["Ke 'ne ke re ekaba ua ntseba athe ha u ntsebe! Hojane u ntseba hantle u ka b'u tseba hore ke na le sebopeho se le seng, se sa fetoheng. Ha ke rerile ho phetha ntho, ha ke lumele hore litsitikoe li nkeme pele. Ke sebopeho sa ka seo. Esita le lithaba ha li ka kena pakeng tsa ka le morero oa ka nka li thuakanya" (Khaketla, 1996:105).]

[I thought you know me only to find you do not know me! If you know me well you should have known what my personality is, it does not change. If I aimed to accomplish something, I do not allow obstacles to stand on my way. That is my personality. Even mountains will not stand between me and my objectives I can break them into pieces]

This implies that she is given a wicked character as a person who is nurtured in the Sesotho traditional system, as if that tradition was essentially evil. It is *Mathabo's* traditionalism that drives *Mosito* to murder *Tlelima* for his liver, which is to be mixed with medicine for "*lenaka le borena*" (horn of chieftainship).

Yet a deeper look at this situation gives the impression that *Mathabo's* wickedness does not seem to come essentially from the fact that she is less educated and therefore a

traditionalist. Her wickedness seems to emanate from her distorted philosophy about human beings as the subject of their king.

[*"Ntho li peli feela tseo u lokelang ho khetha: bophelo ba Tlelima kapa bophelo ba ka"* (Khaketla, 1996:107)].

[There are only two things to choose from: *Tlelima's* life or mine.]

Mathabo's action is seen to be a huge impact on *Mosito's* character as he transforms from a decent being into an overly bitter creature, as a result of *Mathabo's* constant excretion of heartless information into his mind.

[*"Haeba 'na mosadi, ntho e tenang mose nka ba le sebete se se kaalo, eka ba uena, monna u ka sitwa ke eng ho ba le sebete se fetang se sa ka ha sekete?"* (Khaketla, 1996:105).]

[*"If I, a woman, something which wears a dress, could have that much courage, what about you, a man, what can prevent you from having that bravery which is thousand (times) more than mine."*]

Mathabo manipulates her husband by questioning his manhood and wishes she herself could be unsexed. She says fear is for femininity and is not found on men's lips. She uses these quotes to push her husband beyond limits and is therefore responsible for his dramatic change in attitude. She constantly feeds his thoughts with negative comments and later on *Mosito* realises that he has another side of him. As he moves along to discover the concealed side of him, *Mosito* falls in love with himself and begins to be drawn towards his evil desire.

Because of *Mmathabo's* wicked behaviour which resulted in *Mosito's* evil transition, he was led to become a murderer.

(iii) Summary of the depiction of woman characters

In the beginning, *Mathabo* is depicted as the more strong willed and a more steadfast of the couple, while *Mosito* is kinder but less decisive. That is why he relied more on his friends, *Pokane* and *Khosi*, for their opinions.

Mathabo's temptation to commit evil is very similar to that of Lady Macbeth and Eve's temptation by the serpent that was able to seduce Eve because she was a the weaker vessel. Hence the author uses imagery of the snake in the Garden Eden.

Khaketla concurs with this when Mosito says: [*"Ha ke reke koala fensetere ena, ke bona noha e ikharile ho yona!"*]

[*"When I was about to close the window, I saw a snake tied to it!"*]

It goes without saying that *Khaketla* depicts *Mathabo* as a snake, hence there is a saying in Basotho: "*Mosadi ke noha*". [A woman is a snake]. The author indirectly creates a scenario which took place in Garden of Eden. *Mosito* kills a snake in his house while they were asleep with *Mathabo* who at the time was not aware that it (snake) was already under their bed.

[*Ha a rialo a inama, a bonesa tlas'a bethe, letsoho la hae la tla le mosoballahali wa masumo. "Ha u bone!" A phahamisa noha. Mosadi a tlolela holimo mane betheng ea hae, a itlhotlhora, a re tla, tla, ka lentswe le hlabang haholo, eaka ke motho ea tla akheha. Mosito a lahla noha, a khorohela ho mosali, a 'molella hore a se a tshoha, noha eo o se a e bolaile (Khaketla, 1996:84).*]

[As he says that, he bended, lit under the bed, his hand pulled out a big and long cobra. "Don't you see it?" He lifted the snake. The wife jumped up there in her bed, dusted herself off, and cried in a very painful voice, like a person who was about to faint. *Mosito*

threw the snake away, hugged his wife, he told her not to be afraid, he has already killed that snake.]

The negative representation of *Mmathabo* does not come out to revolt against any social system (cultural, illiteracy, social class, and so on). *Mathabo* chose this path because she wanted to protect her family and stabilise her husband's chieftaincy. It was so unfortunate that her choice was not the right one. The title of the novel itself '*Mosali a nkholo*' ('The woman lands me into trouble') can be considered the androcentric bias of the text in which the male protagonist blames his wife for his misfortunes and his downfall.

Khaketla is again warning his readers against unsupportive women; that one needs to take one's conscience into consideration before heeding someone's advice. However, he (*Khaketla*) represented this character, *Mathabo*, as liberated, irrespective of how uneducated she is. She desires equality and choices as she is not represented as a victim of society, but a victim of her own actions.

On the other hand *Tlelima's* wife is depicted as a fearless and brave woman who is not afraid to confront her chief regarding the disappearance her husband. *Khaketla* (1996:129) describes this by saying (*Pelo ea mosali ke ea mosadi*), (A woman's heart is a woma's heart), which shows that if a woman feels something is wrong, nothing can easily change her feelings to make what is right for her. She confronts *Mosito* to send his men to go and look for her husband who has long disappeared for days. *Mosito* seems to be reluctant to do that and even goes to the extent of threatening her.

[*"Haeba u hana ho laela banna ho ea batla Tlelima ke ea mapoleseng, 'me tla ke u a boelle hore na ekaba u bilietsang'ng". A realo roetsoe ke pelo, a s'a se ne taba hore na o bua le Morena kapa che*] (*Khaketla*, 1996:133)

[If you refuse to instruct men to go and look for *Tlelima* I will go the police and tell them what are you intending to do". She said so being so furious, not caring whether she was talking to a Chief or not].

This alludes to the Sesotho saying, (*'mosadi ha a na morena'*) ('a woman does not have a chief'). This reflects a traditional association of women with the extreme courage, dominance and strength, its explanation reflects contemporary concerns that women are unjustly viewed in negative terms of viciousness and weakness.

To compound this, *Mosito* wants to beat *Lipuo* because of her insistence that he must send men to go and look for her husband.

[*"U lehlanyanatsana la mosali, kea u bona! Ha ke na molisa oa monna oa hao. Ke 'na ke itseng u nyaloe ke monna oa letahoa, ea tsamayang a robala malopo-lopo, a be a lebale hore o na le bana! Ke tla u shapa u t!u tšabe batho!" A raoha, a kena ka tlung, a tsoa a s'a nkile kubu*] (*Khaketla*, 1996:133)

["You are small mad woman, I can see you! I do not have a shepherd for your husband. Did I say you should be married to a drunkard man, who sleeps everywhere, and forgetting he has children! I will beat you so that you must fear people!" He stood up and entered into the house, and came out holding a sjambok]

The other woman, *mohatsa Papiso*, (*Papiso's* wife) is not mentioned by her name as it the case of some Sesotho authors to undermine female characters, also appears before *Mosito* with a similar case to that of *Lipuo*. She is also courageous to confront *Mosito* about the problem of not knowing the where-about of her husband.

[*Le eena a kena a se a hlahlile mahlo, eka a kgomo e hlabang*] (*Khaketla*, 1996:133).

[She also entered opening her eyes like a gorging cow].

By this *Khaketla* was trying to show us that even women can challenge the king if circumstances are not good on their side. That is why *Sesotho* proverb once more says

'*Basadi ke tau li mesana*' (Women are lionesses in small dresses), to tell us that they are vicious and fearless even though they are physically weak.

After *Mosito* realised that these women were really serious about what they talking about, he became furious to show that he was beginning to panic.

[*Mahlo Mosito a phatsima malakabe (Khaketla, 1996:133)*].

[*Mosito's eyes became pale like flames*].

It stands to reason that *Khaketla* was trying to tell us that what these women were doing was wrong to confront their Chief instead of sending other men on their behalf, making them subservient and minors. That is reflected by the responses *Mosito* displays when he fails to help these women.

[*"Banna ba lona ba jeloe ke n'a, moo nka netoang ke seretse?Ke tseba moo ba leng teng?"*]

[Were your husbands eaten by me, to the extent of being smeared with a mud? Do I know where they are?

3.6 Conclusion

From the novel, *Mosali a nkholo*, the female character, *Mathabo* can be associated with view held by the Liberal Feminist theory which focuses on women's ability to maintain their equality through their own actions and choices. At the same time her actions, according to Radical Feminist theory, can be autonomous and rebellious. This becomes evident when she convinces her husband, *Mosito*, to commit murder for the sake of strengthening his power for chieftainship. Her actions and choices end up leading *Mosito* into a big trouble by getting death sentence for murdering one of his subjects, *Tlelima*.

From a Radical Feminist perspective, *Mathabo* calls for a radical reordering of society in which male supremacy is eliminated in all social and economic contexts, in which patriarchy is sought to be abolished by challenging existing social norms and institutions, rather than through a purely political process.

On the other hand, in the novel, *Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha*, our female character, *Sentebaleng*, is depicted as a social misfit by being a prostitute, which is highly defended by the Liberal Feminist theory. They believe that female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that block women's entrance to and success in the so-called public world. *Sentebaleng* goes to the places like hotels where she attracts men especially at the end of month by displaying her beautiful body at the main entrance of the hotel. This is regarded as a pure prostitution when the author describes her body and her actions when she is with the men in the hotel rooms.

Liberal Feminist theory strives for sexual equality as is the case with *Sentebaleng* who sometimes sleeps with married men and at the same time sleeps with *Kgama* who survives the assault meted out by her (*Sentebaleng's*) other boyfriends when they were living together in a shack.

The novels studied in this chapter dealt mainly with female characters in which another dimension was attempted to be added to the looming question of inequality in African literature in gender lens. Male writers have not been spared the criticism of being androcentric based on their amplified presentation of their male gender. The tendency has been to draw hasty conclusions on the dilemma of the African woman. The study shows that women have not been terribly trivialised, for their instrumental roles in family and community building are hailed everywhere by their male counterparts.

The response that these texts present has little to do with cultural expectations; it is basically about what went wrong with the identified female characters. Their experiences to the world cannot be perceived as ideal representations of African

women's existence and as indictment of culture in which women have little control over their lives. In this case we have to agree that the literary genres should emphasise depiction of social values of individuals and how those values and morals contribute towards the development of people in general. Practices that are often considered inimical to the development like widowhood, polygamy, incest, tribal conflict, forced marriages, and so on warrant a stronger interrogation without biases and prejudices.

CHAPTER 4: THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN POETRY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the portrayal of women in poetry, focusing on the themes of the poems and the way the female characters are depicted. In the introduction, definitions of 'poetry' is given and analysed. The poems are then presented and translated and following which the themes of each poem outlined and poems analysed to examine how women are presented.

4.2 Definition of poetry

Poetry is a language sung, chanted, spoken, or written according to some pattern of recurrence that emphasizes the relationships between words on the basis of sound as well as sense: this pattern is almost always a rhythm or metre, which may be supplemented by rhyme or alliteration or both (Baldick, 2001:198).

Baldick, (2001:198), further stresses that poetry is a type of literature that emphasizes metaphor and other figures of speech in lines which are arranged for emotional effect, usually according to meter. It is one of the two most basic types of Literature.

According to Futhwa (2011:127), poetry is a form of literary art in which language is used for its aesthetic and evocative qualities in addition to, or in lieu of, its apparent meaning. It may be written independently, as discrete poems, or may occur in conjunction with other arts, as in drama, hymns, lyrics, or prose poetry. In the context of African customs and norms, poetry extends to every aspect of life. From the greetings, rituals, songs, praise, appeal to morning. In fact, African languages are deeply rooted in the art form of poetry. Or rather, poetry is deeply entrenched in African society.

4.3 Analysis of selected poems

4.3.1 Ngwetsi

*Hara ditjhaba ho teng melao,
Ba ikgantsha ka yona hara matjhaba.
E tsejwa ke bona e ratwa ke bao,
Empa wona ke wa sehlooho,
Tela tseno o be wa ka.*

*Wa nna kgomarela mohlankana,
Tshepiso ya nyalo ya bonahala.
Malakabe a rato a tshajwe,
A tepeletsa a bakisa,
Ka ba ka timellwa ke tsa ka.*

*Ba thethetswa bohadi,
Ba ikotla difuba;
Ba hodisitse thope e se ho rateha,
Ke Motlokoa hlokwa la marena.
Tse dinaka tsa kena ka tebello,
Kgomo Modimo o nko e metsi.*

*Athe o di etsa o di tshaba,
Habo ke matlakaleng;
Matsale ke tjhobolo ya kgale.
O tsosa ka matjeke o sebetse,
Bongwetsi ha se papadi ngwanana.*

*Ra hlollwa ho bona,
Wa Taole mosadi ha se sebakallwa.*

*O sheba dinala kgafetsa,
Seipone ke motswalle ho moeka.
Tseo ke dinyane ka ngwetsi.*

*Ngwana a nkgola basadi!
Ka tshepa ngwetsi pitsa tsa thoga,
Kajeno ke sesomo, a kae masutsa?
Mohaisane mmanyeo o babatsa sehau.
Kgomo ha di kgutle o botswa!*

*Ba laya jwang bakgotsi?
O kgantsha marikgwe ka dinako.
Tsa sengwetsi o re ke mekotla.
O hanne moseme, a kgetha sofa.
Ka kgathala a fihla!*

*Mora namela ditletlebo tsa ka.
Ena ngwetsi ha se yona,
Jwale wena o fetile kae?
Ba laile ba qetile.
Nna ha ke rate ditaba!*

*Tlohela wa motho mosadi,
O qhala motse o le motjha;
Tsa hao di fetile le mehla.
Boha o fete, o tla hola
Ke ngwana ke ngwetsi*

(Molatoli, 1992:20-21).

Ngwetsi (Daughter-in-law)

(They are proud of them in those nations.
They are known by them and loved by these,
But it is at the top,
Forget about yours to be mine.

You keep running after boys,
Wedding promise is evident.
Flames of love to be feared,
They put you down
I even forgot mine.

Lobola was delivered,
They were so proud;
They natured a very beautiful girl,
She is Motlokoa the stick of the chiefs
Cows with horns entered with expectation
The cow God with nose filled with water.

You do them being afraid of them,
She is from a family full of trash,
Her mother-in-law is an old untouchable lady.
She wakes you up early to work,
To be a daughter-in-law is not fun girl.

We were surprised to see,
Taole's wife is not a toy.
She frequently looks at her nails,
A mirror is her friend to this person

The child landed me into trouble woman
I trusted the daughter-in-law as pots dried water,
Today I am a fool, where are the delicious food?
My neighbour praises the smell of a burning pot,
Let the cows be brought back because of laziness!

How will the in-laws advise?
She wears slacks at times,
She says those worn by daughter-in-laws are just bags.
She refused the mat, and chose sofa
I was tired when she arrived!

Son listen to my complaints.
This is not a daughter-in-law,
Now where did you pass?
They advised they have finished.
I do not want troubles!

Leave someone's wife,
You will destroy a very new home;
Yours have long passed by.
Just look, she will grow
She is a child she is a daughter-in-law)

4.3.1.1 Theme of the poem

The poem, *ngwetsi* (Daughter-in-law), was written by C.T.D Molatoli. It exposes a daughter-in-law who does not obey rules and regulations of her husband's family. These rules and regulations include, waking up early in the morning, to clean and sweep the

house grounds and cook for the entire family so that when everyone wakes up they should get breakfast, as it was the practice of Basotho.

In contrast, this lady does not do all the above-mentioned duties, but only to beautify herself by always using the mirror to look at herself.

She does not know how to cook whereby the pots always left to dry on the stove leaving a bad smell on the house after burning. Instead of wearing the dresses prepared for her by the husband's family, she prefers to wear slacks and likes to sit on coaches or sofas rather than sitting on the mat (moseme).

It becomes apparent that this lady was not properly advised by her family before getting married as it the norm in Sesotho culture to do that.

4.3.1.2 Depiction of women in the poem

In the first stanza the poet tries to highlight the point that a woman can have an influence on her husband by making him to forget about his family background and concentrates on his family. In other words, the husband should forget about his mother and focus on his wife alone, (*Tela tseno o be wa ka*). (Forget about yours and be mine). It stands to reason that the poet portrays how powerful and influential is this woman to her husband.

In the third stanza *Molatoli* uses pun to describe her beauty that made this guy to marry her. (*Ba hodisitse thope e se ho rateha*), (They nurtured a very beautiful girl), which makes her to deserve to be married with good and reasonable lobola.

Ba thethetswa bohadi,
(Lobola was delivered),

The fourth stanza now depicts her as a lazy woman who does not know how to clean the house. The reason for this is that she is from a dirty family full of trash

Habo ke matlakaleng;

(She is from a family full of trash;)

In the fifth stanza she is presented as a *modern lady* who always looks after herself to maintain her beauty all the time.

*O sheba dinala kgafetsa,
Seipone ke motswalle ho moeka.*

(She frequently looks at her nails,
A mirror is a friend to this person).

In the sixth stanza the poet portrays women as oppressors for themselves. The mother-in-law wants to make a point that she is better than her daughter-in-law. She is expecting the daughter-in-law to cook delicious food for her, only to find after gossiping with her neighbour that she (daughter-in-law), cannot cook as a result her laziness

*Kajeno ke sesomo, a kae masutsa?
Mohaisane mmanyeo a babatsa sehau.*

(Today I am a fool, where are the delicious food?
My neighbour praises the smell of a burning pot).

The seventh stanza the woman is portrayed as a : "*free and modern woman*" who wears fashionable clothes, such as slacks and ignores the traditional dresses. She also prefers to sit on the couches (sofas), and not on traditional mats (meseme). She does her things according to she feels and thinks, without considering what other people may think about her.

*(O kgantsha marikgwe ka dinako,
O hanne moseme, a kgetha sofa).*(She wears slacks at times,

She refused to sit on mats, and chose sofa).

In the eighth stanza, the mother-in-law is depicted as a destroyer to her son's marriage but at the same time contradicts herself as a builder for this family.

Mora mamela ditletlebo tsa ka.

Ena ngwetsi ha se yona),

Nna ha ke rate ditaba!

(Son listen to my complaints

This is not a daughter-in-law

I do not want troubles!).

In the last stanza the poet gives a strong advice to women not to interfere into their sons' marriage affairs.

Tlohela wa motho mosadi,

Oqhala motse o le motjha;

Tsa di fetile le mehla.

Boha o fete, o tla hola

Ke ngwana ke ngwetsi.

(Leave someone's wife,

You will destroy a very new home;

Yours have has just passed by.

Just look, she will grow

She is a child she is a daughter-in-law).

In so doing Molatoli tells us that the traditional marriage is no more important in the modern world, where in-laws always interfered with their children's marriages

4.3.2 Moloji

*Mosadi e mosehlana ha se moloji,
Le ha a tsofetse ha a fofe,
Jo, ya motshwana ho hlouwa!
A ka tsofala, a ka ba motjha;
Tshonyana ba hae ho roneha,
Bo lokela le hona ho rehellwa,
Ka bitso le lebe la moloji.*

*Athe botlaila ba leleme bo jwang?
Hana matlo a matle diotlwana,
Ka hare o ka tshaba ho nyarela,
Ke seo nkileng ka se bona,
Ka kgolwa a monate maele.*

*Motsaneng wa horeng ho hahilwe;
Batho ba eshwa lenyelenyele,
Eka kgomo di eshwa lebuba ke mokaka;
Pelaelo tsa batho motse ho pota,
Di supa mmanyero setshwana;
Athe mahodi a patile maeba.*

*Wa horeng le ho di tseba ha di tsebe;
Tshonyana ba hae ke tlokotsi
Bo nyalana le ketso tsa bofifi,
Tsa ho phethwa mehleng ya kgale
Ke wa ho tshwana le yena ka botshwana.
Ntho ya sala e iphetotse tlwaelo,
Hore ya motshwana mosadi,
Tsho ba hae bo bakwa ke eng.*

*Ha ba bang ba kganya kgafetsa,
Yena eka o tlotse pilo.
Mariha ha botsho bo pudufetse,
Ba tshabe le ho mo dumedisa.*

*Sedibeng ha ho kguwa metsi,
Ba hlabana ka mahlo ba bapile.
Mosadi a le bona a sa le tjamela;
Ha tseba le ngwana wa lesea;
Eo mosadi ha a loye o nka fatshe,
Bana ba ka mmona ba nka ka saole.*

*Pehi ya ba ya utlwahala Bokone;
Ka mona tjabana sa Basotho se a fela,
Moloi o bapala ka ditlhare bohlaswa,
Thokolosi e matha le tjabile letsatsi;
Tladimothwana e toulda mototo
Monna wa Mokone a jara kgetsisi.*

*A bua ka pelong: "nna ke ngaka;
Ha ke ngakana ke a feta."
Tsa mmolella tsela tsa bohoholo,
Tsa masapo a tse shweleng dikoloti;
A hlwe mekalaba a theose diphula.
Hore mona setoto ha se jewe ka lere.*

*Ke ha meritshana swee!
Yare a tsubella ka phuleng;
Mahlo a a akgela motsaneng,
A utlwa ka madi ho bela;
Meritshana e ntse e baleha,*

*Ho teng koeyoko ya sejabatho,
E ba romela ha molete-ha-o-tlale;
Ba bang ba robatswe sebakana,
Bosiu e be dithotsela ba poke.*

*Ka thokonyana ho motse;
Makgerengkgwa a tshwerwe ke letsetse,
A pakelwa ke motshwetshwe wa metsi
Hore moo ho kolla sediba,
Tjwang le mosadi wa mohlolohadi!
Ya bolaetsweng monna ke mmantshilotshilo.*

*Ba re o a ikgantsha, o a iketla;
O lokela ho shwelwa hore a tle tsebe
Molao wa bolaodi ba batho,
Motho o bolla habedi ha a le manganga.*

*Mokone a metha Sesotho a bua,
A botsa mabaka a mosadi;
Ya itshela ka tsona kgomohadi;
Monna wa Mokane a lahla kgetsii,
A bona ditaba hole mosenekeng.*

*Hae ba le bonela hole ke ho potlaka,
Tsa boela kgetsing ke papaela,
A fihla ha mosadi ha dubeha,
Tjhoba le lesweu la fokaela,
Yare a qeta a thakgisa.*

*Ba makala ba bangata batho;
Enwa o tswa kae tsebanyane!*

*Ha kgoma di fedile ke bokeatseba;
Ba jela mpa di sasametse;
Sefi sa pitle ho bonwe.*

*Ke mang monga ditaba, moferekanyi
Wa pelo tsa batho di thabile;
La mohlang oo le bosiu ba lona,
Raba la tjheha motjheng wa ditweba,
Ha tshwarwa e mosehlana mosadi.*

*Hoseng batho ba utlwa mehoo;
Ka mona ho wele lewa lesele,
Mmelaella ha se yena basadi;
Ke e mosehlana seja-a-bonya!
Tshwarelo e iswe ho setshwana*

(Mokoena, 1989:29-31)

Moloi (A Witch)

(A light skinned woman is not a witch,
Even if she is old she does not fly,
By the way, a dark skinned one is so hated,
She can be old, she can be young;
Her darkness is suitable,
It has to be named
The bad name is for the witch.

How is the sleep of the tongue?
Houses can look beautiful,
But you will be afraid to enter in them,
That is what I have seen,

I believed now in good proverbs.

In one of the villages there were buildings,
People were dying in large numbers,
As if the cows were dying because of their sickness;
Suspicion all over the village by people,
Pointing someone with dark skin
Only the vultures hid the doves.

Someone did not know anything;
Her dark skin is a danger
It matches events done in dark,
To be related in the old days
By the one with the same dark skin.
The whole thing turned itself into a habit,
That a dark skinned woman,
What caused her dark skin colour.
While others are frequently bright,
As if she has smeared herself with a cream.
In winter when darkness turned grey,
Being afraid to greet her.

At fountain when water is been fetched,
They looked at each other at close range.
It was a shame to that woman without any wrongdoing
Even a young baby was able to know;
That woman is a witch by all means,
Children on the other hand ran away.

The message reached Bokone;
Basotho nation on this side is perishing,

A witch is playing with witchcraft medicine dangerously
Tikoloshe is running during daylight;
Lightning is striking continuously
A Mokone man carried bag.

He talked to himself: "i'm the witchdoctor;
I'm not minor witchdoctor I'm moving forward."
They told him old ways,
Of the bones of the dead;
He climbed the mountains and moved across streams.

When he reached the stream;
He threw his eyes at the village,
He felt as his blood was boiling;
His hairs were not stable,
That porridge is eaten by a stick.

His hairs became very irritating!
There is a monster which eats people,
It sends them to the unfilled whole;
Some are made to sleep far away,
During the night they become the ghosts.

By the side of the village;
The great witchdoctor is caught by the ant,
He witnessed by flow of the water
That there is fountain with water,
Suddenly he met widow!
Whose husband was killed by another woman.

They said she is proud, she lives a better life;

She must lose someone through death so that she can be able to know
The law of people's lawmakers
A person can be initiated twice if stubborn.

Mokone did not speak Sesotho properly,
He asked the reasons a woman has,
Then the woman cried,
Mokone man dropped the bag,
And saw bad news.

At home they could see a far reaching object running fast,
They went back into the bag very fast.
Things were very bad when he arrived at that woman,
A white horse tail was flying,
After finishing he sprinkled his medicines all over the place.

Many people were surprised;
Where does this clever person come from!
When there are no cows because of these people who think they know;
They enrich themselves;
A trap catches without been realised.

Who is a newsmaker, troublemaker
When people are happy;
Even at that time together with its night,
The trap was placed on where the mice move,
A light skinned woman was caught.

In the morning people heard screams,
On this side it was a different plan,
It was not the suspected woman;

It is the one who is light skinned ever smiling person!
Apology to be directed to the dark skinned woman.

4.3.2.1 Theme of the poem

The poem, *Moloi* (Witch), was written by K.P. Mokoena. It highlights the perceptions people have regarding the witchcrafts practices which are believed to be normally performed by women, especially the older women. Mokoena in this instance tries to show us that not only the age of a woman, as it is always the case, can make people to believe she is a witch. The skin colour of person, more so older women, can be used as a tool to identify them as witches.

In most cases the dark skinned grannies always fall victims in many Black communities. The myth will be created to the extent where even children are being instilled that fear when they come across such people who are dark in complexion, especially older woman.

The poem however, tries to tell us that not only dark skinned old women can be regarded as witches, but also the light skinned ones are also involved this witchcraft practice. It stands to reason that discrimination of colour is not only based on race, but people of the same race can practice it, for an example, take the case of albinos in most of our communities. In thi discussion our focal point is based on discrimination and identification women based on their skin colour.

4.3.2.1 Depiction of women in the poem

In the first stanza, the woman is depicted as a witch, based on her skin colour which is black, irrespective of whether she is young or old, whereas the other one, whose skin is light is not regarded as a witch although she is old.

Mosadi e mosehlana ha se moloj,

Le ha a tsofetse ha a fofe,

Jo, ya motshwana ho hlouwa!

A ka tsofala, a ka ba motjha;

(A light skinned woman is not a witch,

Even if she is old she does not fly,

By the way, a dark skinned is so hated!

She can be old, she can be young)

Stanza three talks about how a dark skinned woman is blamed for the death of many people in the village. Suspicion grew that, as a witch, she was responsible for all these to happen. Therefore, she is depicted as a murderer at the same time.

Batho ba eshwa lenyelenyele,

(People were dying in large numbers)

In the fourth stanza, the woman is portrayed as a devil and a danger to the society, as a result of her skin colour, which dark. The devil is associated with sin and darkness as bad and dangerous things happen in the darkness. There is a hymn in Sesotho, ("*Baetsadibe ba batsho*"), ("Sinners who are black"), which agrees with the fact that people who commit evil things are dark skinned ones.

Tshonyana ba hae ke tlokotsi

Bonyalana le ketso tsa bofifi

Tsa ho phetwa mehleng ya kgale

Ke wa ho tshwana le yena ka botshwana,
(Her dark skin is a danger
It matches events done in the dark,
To be related in the old days
By the one with the same dark skin,)

The pronoun "yena" ("him") refers to "devil" who is regarded as black and doing bad things in people's live.

In stanza six, metaphor such as, "thokolosi" ("*tikoloshe*") and imagery, ("*tladimothwana*") ("lightning"), have been used. These are associated with the woman as a result of her skin colour, which is dark. Thokolose is a creature created by the so called witches to torment peoples' lives in their homes, especially during the night. Tladimothwana is a lightning purposefully made to strike at targeted victims by the witches.

In the fifteenth stanza, the witchdoctor reveals the light skinned woman as the one who does all these evil things instead of the dark skinned one who was previously blamed for many things she did not do.

(Raba la tjheha motjheng wa ditweba,
Ha tshwaswa e mosehlana mosadi.)

(The trap was set on where the mice move,
A light skinned woman was caught.)

In the last stanza, an apology from the community is directed to a woman suspected of being a witch.

Mmelaella ha se yena basadi;
Ke e mosehlana seja-a-boja
Tshwarelo e iswe ho setshwana.

(It was not the suspected woman;
It is the is light skinned ever smiling person
Apology to be directed to the dark skinned woman)

However, Mokoena, is of the view that women in our culture, will always be associated with witchcraft activities in their respective communities, irrespective of which colour of their skins they possess.

4.3.3 Ba mo jesitse phehla

*Tsatsi la lenyalo le ketekwa ka menyakwe
Morao ho moo lebella mehlolo:
Tlhompho ya mosadi e a nyamela,
Monna a rutheha,
Ba ntse ba supana ka menwana ha ba qala;
Ba kgothatsa baahelani, "ntwa ke ya madulammoho."
Bokwata ba pholo ya letlaka ba tloka,
A imenya a sa tswa imenya ka Diako,
Ho esa fahleho le molomo di rephile;
Ngwana Mosotho pelo le yona ya tlala;
A leka ho ithiba, ya mo hlola.*

*Setswalle se hlokwa ke mang bophelong?
Eo shano la hae le baba sa leshokgwa.
Diako a ba thola ba popota,
Komo ba tshohla la wa hae monna;
Yena ya iphetotseng mokgokakgwale hara ntlo,
Mafatsheng kwana ngaka ke ya tidima;
Tumo sa yona se tsejwa kgakala,
Mokitlane le ha e le kgoho di a amohelwa;*

*Ha ho itela bomme basadi ho nkgokgo;
Moeka o ithatela tsona dithetana.*

*A thola mosetsana shwahla ya ditlhare;
Taelo tsa tsona tse thata sa tshepe;
Pelo e kgubedu ya basadi e thabela sebe,
Tloholo sa Eva se a phedisa se a bolaya;
Kgopo se bo kgotse tshimolohong.
Tsatsi la thero la kgetheha ho a mang.
Mohau wa hae wa ba senyekgenyekge,
Jana sa hlohlobala ke kgoho lehlakore,
Thena ya ithorisa ka kgotso ya morao ka Lapeng;
Athe ha se kgotso; ke babole sa papisi.*

*Ena eo ba reng ba ntsha banna nkane,
Seo ba se etsang ha ba botswa o utlwe:
Motho wa teng a ntse a re: "ha o a bua ratu,"
Wa Ramatsetse o e ramuketse kgoho le masapo a yona,
Ke qaleho ya jase ha e reneketswa,
O sala le mmela mosadi o ile lekanting,
Bana o ba hlatswa le tsa bona dituku,
Dijo o pheha thahameso ya dingwetsana,
Moputsong wa hae o thola pene,
Marikgwe a beilwe o qatiswa moqato.*

*O kgutletse bongwaneng a ne a fete;
Ha a iketse ntho di a mo laola,
Tsa ho kena ka kgoho e monate,
Di mo hlokisa baka sa sa ho thola;
Le ha e le se senyenyane sa ho fola,
Ntho ena ke lefu le ja banna,*

*Basadi le dingaka ba le emetse ka lepaketla;
Wa Adama moloko o a sotlwa,
Bomme le banana sokolohang,
Hlare sa jase le se lahle lewatleng*

(Mokoena, 1989:20-21).

Ba mo jesitse phehla (They made him to eat potion)

(A wedding day was celebrated with joyful events

Thereafter expect miracles:

Woman's respect disappears,

A man falls down,

Still pointing each other with fingers when they start;

Consoling the neighbours, "conflict can bring about peace and togetherness."

Savagery wild bull exploded,

She repeatedly smeared herself with Diako (face cream),

The following day the face and the lips will be loose;

Mosotho child's emotions will be high;

Trying to control himself, but to no avail.

Who needs friendship in life?

That one's lie is very bitter,

Diako kept quiet for a long time,

Komo talked to her husband;

Who turned to nuisance in the house,

There is strong witchdoctor somewhere in the world,

His fame is known far away,

Even a chicken account is accepted,

Even women sacrifice to this great witchdoctor,

The man likes women too much.

The woman got a bundle of medicine,

With tough instructions like as iron;
E red heart of a woman likes a sin,
Eva's grandchild gives life and can kill;
She found cruelty from the beginning.
Preaching day was chosen from the other days.
Her mercy became very excessive,
A utensil was filled with chicken portion,
The guy was boasting about peace lately at home;
It is not peace, but more problems to follow.

This one they say it removes men's stubbornness,
What they do when asked you will them say:
A person always says: "you did not talk dear,"
That one of Ramatsetse has already eaten that chicken with its bones,
This is the beginning of praised coat,
He is left with sieved sorghum while the wife has gone to the shebeen,
Washes kids with their head garnets,
He cooks early morning food of young daughters-in-law,
Fro his salary he gets pen,
His pairs of trousers are patched with different cloths.

He has gone back to his past youthful days,
He is controlled by many things,
They affected him through that delicious chicken he ate,
They give him much time to keep quiet;
Even a little time to heal,
This thing is a decease that affects men,
The generation of Adam is abused,
Women and witchdoctors are waiting for you in large numbers;
Women and girls get your acts together,
Throw the coat medicine into the sea.

4.3.3.1 Theme of the poem

The poem, *Ba mo jesitse phehla* (They made him to eat potion), was written by K.P. Mokoena. It exposes women who want to exercise dominance over their husbands in their homes. To achieve this, they will go to the traditional doctors or witchdoctors who will provide them with a mixture of traditional herbs (potions), which will be mixed with food that will be eaten by the husbands. These medicines will make their husbands to abide by all the instructions given by their wives, whether they are acceptable or not.

The end result will be that the man will lose his powers as a head of the family or they will change their attitudes toward their wives in a very unacceptable respectful manner.

4.3.3.2 Depiction of women in the poem

In the first stanza, the poet presents the woman as disrespectful towards her husband after a short period they got married.

Tsatsi la lenyalo la ketekwa ka menyakwe

Morao ho moo lebella mehlolo:

Tlhompho ho mosadi ya nyamela,

(A wedding was celebrated with joyful events

Thereafter expect the miracles:

Woman's respect disappears,)

In the second stanza, women are portrayed as people who are liars and prefer witchcrafts whenever they encounter problems in their families, especially with their husbands. This becomes evident from the following lines:

Eo shano la hae le baba sa leshokgwa.

Ha ho itela bomme basadi ho nkgokgo;

(That one's lie is very bitter

Even women mothers sacrifice to this great witchdoctor ;)

The third stanza, the poet provides us with the belief that women are cruel and sinners as the grand children of Eva from the beginning.

Pelo e kgubedu ya basadi e thabela sebe
(A red heart of a woman likes a sin)

Also in the same stanza, women are depicted as murderers who are capable of giving life at the same time.

Tloholo sa Eva se a phedisa se a bolaya
(Eva's grandchild gives life and kills)

The fourth stanza shows how the poet portrays women as manipulative and dominant to their husbands. In this regard, the husband does all the household duties which were supposed to be done by a woman. The husband has to bring all his salary to her without getting anything from it.

*(O sala le mmela mosadi a ile lekanting,
Bana o ba hlatswa le tsa dituku,
Dijo o pheha thahameso ya dingwetsana,
Moputsong wa hae o thola pene,
Marikgwe a beilwe o qatiswa moqato.)*

(He is left with sieved sorghum while the wife has gone to the shebeen,
Washes kids and their head garnets,
He cooks early morning food of young daughters-in-law,
From his salary he gets a pen,
His pairs of trousers are patched with different cloths.)

In the last stanza the poet tells how women abuse men through the assistance of witchdoctors and also appeals to both women and girls to get their act together by not abusing their husbands. The use of traditional medicine or potion must stop.

(Basadi le dingaka ba le emeletse ka lepaketla;

Wa Adama moloko o a sotlwa,

Bomme le banana sokolohang,

Hlare sa jase le se lahle lewatleng.)

(Women and witchdoctors are busy abusing you,

The generation of Adam is abused,

Women and girls get your act together,

Throw that coat medicine into the sea.

4.3.4 Baradi ba Efa

Ke bona ba tshwereng lefatshe,

Phelo bohle bo se bo laolwa ke bona,

Tse ntse le tle mpe di hlaha ka bona,

Kgotso le dintwa di hlaha ka bona.

Basadi ke tau di mesana ke o jwetse,

Banna ba a hlobaela ha ba ba hopola,

Ba hopola bobele bona botle ba bona,

O sale o le e mobe ya qabanyang.

Malapeng a rona ke bona ba renang,

Mebusong seeta ho lla sa bona,

Tsohle di etswa ka ho hauhela bona,

Hoba e se ele bana bomma rona.

*Ke baqhekanyetsi o tlo ba lemohe,
O tla iphumana o le ka hare ho kgabu,
O lweba o hloka le yena ya o thusang;
Ba tla o sotla ho isa lefung la hao.*

*Bana ba Efa ba a hlompheha ba a rateha,
Ntle le bona bophelo bo ka ba bodutu,
Ntle le bona kgotso e ke se be teng,
Bohle re kwenyeletsa madi le mathe*

*Taba tsa fatshe lena di tsejwa ke bona,
Moo di qadileng le moo di fellelseng;
Ba ka o neha tsona tsohle ha o di hloka,
O be o utlwe le tse sa o tshwaneleng (Selepe, 1994:13)*

Baradi ba Eva (Daughters of Eva)

(They are the ones, who are holding the world,
The whole life is controlled by them,
The good and the bad are from them,
Peace and war are from them.

Women are lionesses in small dresses to tell you,
Men do not sleep when they remember them,
They remember the ugly and the beauty of them,
When the sun rises and sets
Daughters of Eva our sisters,
They have a tongue which is sweet and attractive,
They know how to construct their words;
You will be left being a bad and a trouble maker.

At our homes they are the ones who rule,
In the governments they rule,
All is done for sake of them,
Because they are now our mothers.

They are crooks you must watch them,
You will find yourself in trouble,
You will struggle without anyone helping you,
They will frustrate you till your death.

Children of Eva are respectable and lovely,
Without them life will be boring,
Without them there will never be peace,
All of us swallow blood and saliva.

The news of this world is known by them,
Where they started and where they ended;
They can give you all of them if you need them,
You will even hear those which were not meant for you.

4.3.4.1 Theme of the poem

The poem, Baradi ba Efa (Daughters of Eva), was written by T. Selepe. It exposes the good and the bad side of women in life. On the good part of the poem, women are capable of ruling life either by creating beauty, respect or peace, depending on the circumstances they may find themselves in.

On the other hand, women are basically creators of many bad things in man's life. They can cause wars, be crooks, spread news that can cause problems, frustration and death.

However, it can be concluded that according to the poet's point of view, women are not trustworthy in Basotho culture.

4.3.4.2 Depiction of women the poem

In the first stanza, women are associated with both good and bad things in life. The good things can be ascribed to peace. This means they are capable of creating peace when things are not going well on either side. On the other hand bad things can be ascribed to war. This means they are capable of creating war, maybe between two men who will be fighting over a woman.

Tse ntle le tse mpe di hlaha ka bona,

Kgotso le ntwana di hlaha ka bona.

(The good and the bad are from them,
Peace and war are from them).

The second stanza uses metaphor, equating women with lionesses with short dresses (*Basadi ke tau di mesana ke o jwetse*). This metaphor is the same as the Basotho proverb, which describes women as vicious and fearless even though they are physically weak. That is why diminutive form ("*mesana*") has been used.

In the third stanza, women are defined as good negotiators when they speak or talk to men. They are capable of convincing men easily hence imagery, "leleme" ("tongue") has been used, (*ba leleme le monate le hohelang*) (they have tongue which is sweet and attractive). If you are not wise enough from what they are saying, you will find yourself in many troubles.

In the fourth stanza, the rule of women is highlighted. They rule in the homes which were supposed to be ruled by men. They also occupy high positions in different government sectors which were supposed to be occupied by men.

The fifth stanza makes us aware that women are a cause of frustration that can lead to death through their crookedly acts to most men.

Ba tla o sotla ho isa lefung la hao

(They will frustrate you till your death).

The sixth stanza tells us how respectful and lovely women are. This is as a result that when women appear men become crazy and excited when admiring their beauty.

Bana ba Efa ba a hlompheha ba a rateha,

(Children of Eva are respectable and lovely),

Imagery in this stanza is also used, "*bophelo*" ("life") which refers to men who after looking at women, become so pleased and excited.

Ntle le bona bophelo bo ka ba bodutu,

(Without them life will be boring)

The seventh stanza describes women as gossipers who always spread news which can be false at times.

(Taba tsa fatshe lena di tsejwa ke bona),

(The news of this world is known by them),

Selepe, in this poem tells us that all evil doings are done by women, who are supposed to be minors and always dominated their men. Nothing has to be initiated by women, but should always be at the fore front.

4.3.5 Kgarebe

*O na b'a iketlile Mmopi wa tsohle,
Tsopa e le le boreletsana ba sesepa,
Disebediswa e le tsa motlaotutswe,
A bopa kgarebe lelokong la motho.*

*Letlalo a ipotsa lebala Mohlodi,
Lebala le letle le sa tlo e rona,
A hla a kgetha wona wa mangeloi,
A bona hore o tla hle o e lokele.*

*Moriri a hla a o bapala Mmopi,
A e etsetsa o bonojana o makgethe;
O thata wona ya eba o makatsang,
O dumelang mekgabiso ka mefuta.*

*Phatla pele a wela ho yona,
A batla tsa mefuta dilekanyi,
Bopehong sa tshwenemakop'a tloha,
Hoba nth'o etsa palesa ya lefatshe.*

*Mahlo ke a maphatshwana ba lehodi,
Ha a maholo ha manyenyane haholo,
Boholo ke bo mahareng a tshwanela;
A panya kgafetsa ho hapa NtjHEME.*

*Nko le yona ya se ke ya pharelwa,
Ya behwa hantle ka wona makgethe,
A iketlile Mmopi a phunya masoba,
E seng mahahahadi a mona a mafaro.*

*Ako bohe molomo kgarebe ha e bua,
O bohe bonyane ba wona e bososela,
Tadima meno kgarebe ha e tsheha,
Ke a masweu sa phophi ya lebese*

*Letheka le lona ka morero la botjwa,
Mmeleng le phetha ditaelo ha le ngange,
Ha le lebiswa kwana ha le hane ho ya,
Ha le kgutliswa le a dumela ho kgutla.*

*Ha e tsamaya thokwana mane o ka kgahlwa,
Hlooho e ketaketwa ha monatjana kgafetsa,
Ntho e hata kwekwe sa nwabo la dithota,
Ntho ha e tshwanelwe e baka mahlomola.*

*Hlakoreng la kgarebe ha se moferefere,
Bahlankana ho a lwantshwana ha ho kgotso;
Ho tsekisanwa ena naletsana e hadimang,
E ba hohetse ba lahlehelwa ke mehopolo,*

*Mohlankana ya tjhaelwang monwana
Koloti o ntsha tsa senona le tlhako,
Lenyalo ka ho panya ha leihlo le eme,
Kgarebe ba e kentseng mahlo ba nyahame (Selepe, 1994:21-22).*

Kgarebe (Girlfriend)

(The Creator of them all was relaxed,
The clay was smooth like soap,
Tools were genuine,

HE created a girlfriend from human generation.

The skin colour HE asked himself the Creator,
Beautiful skin that will fit,
HE chose that of the angels,
And saw that it will fit her.

The hair was even played by the Creator,
HE made the soft one with its cleanliness for it;
The hard one became a surprise,
Which suits its different decorations.

HE went to the front part of the forehead,
HE looked at different comparisons,
In the shape like that of a baboon from the start,
Because a thing can make a flower of the world.

Eyes are blue like a bird,
They are neither big nor small,
The greater part is just moderate and suit
They blink frequently to attract Ntjhome.

Even the nose was not thrown,
It was placed in good position with cleanliness,
Relaxed as HE was the Creator when HE bore its holes,
Not these big caves with big holes.

Look at the beauty of the mouth of the girlfriend when she talks,
Look at its smallness when she smiles,
Look at her teeth when she laughs,
They are white like a cup of milk).

Even her waist was created with an aim,
In the body it abides by the instructions without been cheeky,
When it is directed to different directions,
When it is brought back it agrees to come back.

When she walks at a distance you will be attracted,
Her head moving sideways frequently,
That thing takes steps cautiously like a bush lizard,
That thing is so mercifully beautiful.

Beside her there is a commotion,
Boyfriends are fighting each other there is no peace,
They are fighting over this shining star,
That attracted them till they lost their minds.

A boyfriend whose proposal was accepted,
Took out fat cows,
A wedding in just a blink of an eye is standing,
Those who are watching the girlfriend lost hope).

4.3.5.1 Theme of the poem

The poem, *Kgarebe* (Girlfriend), was written by T. Selepe. It describes the beauty of this young woman through the creation of God. This beauty was derived from the images of His angels when God was relaxing.

The most beautiful woman always causes conflict between the men who are always behind her and attracted to her beauty, but at the end of the day one man among the others, will succeed in marrying her.

4.3.5.2 Depiction of women in the poem

In this poem the poet describes the beauty of the woman from her facial outlooks to her body parts in different stanzas.

In the first stanza, the metaphor, *letsopa* (clay), has been used to refer to this beautiful woman when the Creator (God), was creating her, as HE was relaxed by that time. Normally when people are dealing with the clay, they are always not in a hurry, especially children when they are playing with it. That is, this woman is associated with clay.

O na b'a iketlile Mmopi wa tsohle,
Tsopa e le le boreletsana ba sesepa,
Disebediswa e le tsa motlaotutswe,
A bopa kgarebe lelokong la motho,
(The Creator of them all was relaxed,
The clay was smooth like soap,
Tools were genuine,
He created a girlfriend from human generation).

In the second stanza the poet describes the beautiful skin colour of the woman which resembles that of the angels.

A hla kgetha wona wa mangeloi,
(He even chose that of the angels)

The third stanza the poet talks about her soft beautiful hair which was nicely arranged according to how God created it.

Moriri a hla a o bapala Mmopi,
A e etsetsa o bonojana o makgetha;
(The hair was even played by the Creator,
He made the soft one the clean one);

Simile is used in the fourth stanza to describe her forehead which resembles that of a baboon from evolution perspective. According to evolutionist theory, man was an ape before he became a complete human being he is today. Therefore God chose the forehead of an ape to create that of man.

Phatla pele a wela ho yona,
A batla tsa mefuta dilekanyetsi,
(He went to front part of the forehead,
He looked at different comparisons,
In the shape like that of a baboon from the start),

The fifth stanza describes her beautiful eyes which end up attracting a fool when they blink. A fool in this instance is referred to as NtjHEME according to Basotho. Her eyes were neither big nor small but were just ordinary, she used to attract men, as it is the case of women when they want to draw the attention of men.

Mahlo ke a maphatswana ba lehodi,

*Ha a maholo ha manyenyane haholo,
Boholo ke bo mahareng a tshwanela;
A panya kgafetsa ho hapa Ntjheme.*
(Eyes are blue like a bird,
They are neither big nor small,
The greater part is just moderate and suit
They blink frequently to attract Ntjheme).

In the sixth stanza her nose is also described as beautifully placed.

*Nko le yona ya se ke ya pharelwa,
Ya behwa hantle ka wona makgethe,*
(Even the nose was not thrown,
It places in good position with cleanliness),

The seventh stanza tells us about her mouth which exposes all qualities of her beauty when she talks and shows her white teeth when she smiles.

*Ako bohe molomo kgarebe ha e bua,
O bohe bonyane ba wona e bososela,
Tadima meno kgarebe ha e tsheha,*
(Look at the beauty of the mouth of the girlfriend when she talks,
Look at its smallness when she smiles,
Look at her teeth when she laughs),

Simile has also been used to describe the beauty and whiteness of her teeth.

Ke a masweu sa phophi ya lebese.
(They are white like a cup of milk)

The eighth stanza describes her figure which makes body movements to be attractive.

*Letheka le lona ka morero la botjwa,
Mmeleng le phetha ditaelo ha le ngange,
Ha le lebiswa kwana ha le hane ho ya,
Ha le kgutliswa le a dumela ho kgutla.*

(Even her waist was created with an aim,
In the body it abides by the instructions without been cheeky,
When it is directed to different directions,
When it is brought back it agrees to come back).

In the ninth stanza simile (*Ntho e hata kwekwe sa lenwabo la dithota*) (That thing takes steps cautiously like a bush lizard), which describes the movement of her head when she walks.

The tenth stanza talks about the trouble caused by beauty of this woman. When she appears the conflict starts to take place among men. Everyone wants to win her resulting in the diminishing and disappearance of peace which was existing.

*Hlakoreng la kgarebe ha se moferefere,
Bahlankana ho a lwantshwana ha ho kgotso;
Ho tsekisanwa ena naletsana e hadimang,
E ba hohetse ba lahlehelwa ke mehopolo,*

(Beside her there is a commotion,
Boyfriends are fighting each other there is no peace,
They are fighting over this shining star,
That attracted them till they lost their minds.

The last stanza talks about the survival of the fittest, whereby one man wins this beautiful woman by marrying her after paying a substantial lobola for her. The poet uses the word "koloti" ("cow"), he describes the fat cow as a symbol of wealth from man's side. Usually beautiful women are married to rich and wealthy people. This man did not

want to delay time in marry this woman, fearing he will lose her to other men who were after her beauty.

Mohlankana ya tjhaelwang monwana

Koloti o ntsha tsa senona le tlhako,

Lenyalo ka ho panya ha leihlo le eme,

Kgarebe ba e kentseng mahlo ba nyahame.

(A boyfriend whose proposal was accepted,

Took out fat cows,

A wedding in just a blink of an eye is standing,

Those who watching the girlfriend lost hope).

4.4 Conclusion

The poems analysed in this chapter show that male poets are indeed biased in their depiction women. This seems to be one the categories into which African women are slotted when represented by their male counterparts. The poems analysed above, women are depicted as alluring and dangerous, an anarchic force to be disciplined by the assertion of male authority.

In many instances, female characters are portrayed in a negative manner. In the poem, *Ngwetsi* (Daughter-in-law), for instance, the author creates the impression that even women themselves are still oppressing each other. Mothers-in-law are always trying to show their superiority and dominance over their daughters-in-law as expected and practiced in Basotho culture. The daughter-in-law is expected to wake up very early in morning to do chores that will be acceptable in that family; otherwise she will be subjected to different forms of abuse by the women living in the house and the neighbours where she is married.

In poems, *Moloi* (A Witch), and *Ba mo jestitse phehla* (They made him to eat potion), women are portrayed as causing social ills in the society. Dark skinned women are regarded as witches in most cases as opposed to light skinned women, whereas in latter poem men are made to suffer as a result of women who seek power and dominance over their husbands. It stands to reason that these poets highlight the fact that women's positions should be submissive in our society.

It stands to reason that the analysis of portrayal allows the distinction between physical and moral representation of female characters. Physical delineation of female characters sometimes tends to convey images of women reflecting male stereotypes, especially in situations where the woman's appearance becomes the central interest of the poet, neglecting other aspects of women's lives. The psychological description of female characters, on the other hand, reveals the depicted woman's mindset (her perception of society as well as her own position with regard to social and cultural values), determining the degree of such a woman's commitment to social change.

CHAPTER 5: THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN PROVERBS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a critical analysis of the images of women in proverbs with the aim of determining whether any gender bias exists in the way women and their roles are portrayed in this literary genre. The study of proverbs helps us understand how culture and gender roles are dynamic and not static. The selected twenty proverbs were sourced from Mokitimi, 1997. *The voice of the people: Proverbs of the Basotho*, Ntsane, 1983: *Mmusapelo II*, Ngcangca, 1990: *Diqatjwa tsa Basotho*, Sekese 1972: *Mekhoa le Maele a Sesotho*, Hlalele, 1972: *Masokotso*, Nakeli, 2009: *Re ya le Methati*, Selepe, 1994: *Marathai II*. The selected proverbs are grouped under four themes, namely marriage and procreation; beauty; power and authority; and morality.

However, it will be vital to start by defining a proverb which regarded as a powerful vehicle for the transmission of the culture, mores, manners and ideas of the people from one generation to another. This implies that in order to determine the view or attitude of the people to an object, event or phenomenon, one can study or look into their proverbs. Proverbs are closely linked to the society in which they are used.

Mokitimi, (1997: xi), stresses the role of proverbs in shaping a given society's worldview: 'Proverbs are a rich source of African religion and philosophy. They contain and a point to a deep spirituality, as well as theological and philosophical insights'.

Similarly, Shipley (1970:174) maintains that proverbs are rich with societal values and social cohesion. She adds that proverbs are community-based and seldom individualistic and that it is derived from shared experiences, interests and vision. In Sesotho, proverbs are also used to propagate norms and values by encouraging what is deemed acceptable in society and condemning what is not.

On the other hand, Machobane (1996:34), contends that 'cultural background' is 'enshrined in proverbs which reflect the community's attitude to other people as well as

its sense of justice' and that 'the role of language in reinforcing the male-female dichotomy can best be understood from the cultural background as enshrined in the proverbs'.

According to Finnegan (1970:389), in most African cultures, a feeling for language, for imagery, and for the expression of abstract ideas through compressed and illusive phraseology comes out particularly clear in proverbs.

Guma (1993:81), defines a proverb as a pithy sentence with a general bearing of life. It serves to express some homely truth or moral lesson in such an appropriate manner as to make one feel that no better words could have been used to describe the particular situation.

On the other hand, Mieder (1993:5), regards a proverb as a short, generally sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorization form and which is handed down from generation to generation.

In the definitions above, it becomes clear that proverbs are regarded as a summary of the experiences of a given people. They contain the fundamental truth about life in general and human nature in particular, which people have observed

It can also be seen from the definitions, that proverbs are meant to teach moral lessons and to shape society. This means they are used on various experiences as a means of social control. Some of them are used to approve socially accepted behaviour, while others are used to disapprove or ridicule the actions of those who deviate from prescribed social norms.

The theoretical framework used here, namely, African feminist criticism is therefore appropriate for the contextual analysis of Sesotho proverbs.

5.2 Analysis of selected proverbs

As indicated in the introduction, the selected proverbs are divided into themes, namely, marriage and procreation; beauty and sexuality; power and authority; and morality

5.2.1 Proverbs related to marriage and procreation

5.2.1.1 *Ng'oana ke oa likhomo.*

(A child belongs to the cattle).

Explanation: A child whose mother was married customarily with cattle does not belong to the biological father from outside the family which married the mother (Mokitimi, 1997:5).

This proverb reflects the idea in Sesotho of the sanctity and inviolability of the family unit, such that even in cases of infidelity and disputed paternity, the ruling will favour the family where the woman concerned is ngo'etsi (daughter-in-law). Prominent in the proverb is the discourse of motherhood reflected in the theme of ngo'ana (child). Motherhood is conceptualised in terms of the child's identity. The text gives prominence to echoes of modern legal and forensic scientific discourses reflected in the concept of customary marriage and biological paternity respectively.

5.2.1.2 *Se-rata ngoana ke se-rata 'ma'e.*

(The person who loves a child also loves its mother).

Explanation: One cannot love a child without loving its mother (Mokitimi, 1997:21).

5.2.1.3 *Khomo e kopanya batho.*

(Cattle unites people)

Explanation: People become related because of intermarriage which involves cultural paying of cattle for a bride. Therefore, a metaphor, *kgomo* (a cow), is used to refer to a woman who is married to a particular family (Mokitimi, 1997:46).

5.2.1.4 *Ho nyala ka dirope.*

(He has married with his thighs only).

Explanation: He has not paid lobola (bride-price) for his wife. Mokitimi in this case talk about a woman who agrees to be in a sexual relationship with her partner before she is engaged in a legitimate marriage. Dirope (thighs), however, are associated with woman who is not yet married and be able to sleep with her husband (Mokitimi, 1997:59).

5.2.1.5 *Mokgatjhane ho ima ya ratang.*

(One becomes pregnant out of one's free will).

Explanation: People are free to do what they want to do. This goes with the notion that if a does not want to conceive children, she will be ridiculed by her in-laws not how prepared she is, but she is expected to conceive at any time after marriage (Mokitimi, 1991:175).

5.2.2. Proverbs related to women's beauty.

5.2.2.1 *Le letle letsopa*

(The beautiful clay)

Explanation: The proverb describes the beauty of the woman in a metaphorical way, using "*letsopa*" (clay) which can be shaped in different forms to create a very attractive and valuable item. (Ntsane, 1992:3).

5.2.2.2 *Tsopa le boreletsana ba sesepa*

(A smooth clay like a soap)

Explanation: A simile and a metaphor in this case have been employed to compare the beauty of the woman as that of clay which is smooth after been into shaped into a beautiful creature (Selepe, 1994:21).

5.2.2.3 *Letheka la hae eka ke la mmamodukulle.*

(Her waist is like basin used to relieve oneself)

Explanation: The shape of the basin which is normally put under the bed and by used women to relieve themselves during the night, is compared to the slender figure which this woman has. It generally depicts the woman as beautiful with a figure that is attractive to men (Nakeli, 2009:48).

5.2.2.4 *Sehole se setle ho mma sona*

(A disabled person is beautiful to her mother)

Explanation: A woman always sees beauty to her disabled child, even if other people dislike him or her. The proverb can also imply that women are always protective to their children (Ngcangca, 1990:83).

5.2.2.5 *Mosadi ke tshwene, o jewa matoho*

(A woman is a baboon, she is eaten hands)

Explanation: The beauty of a woman is not judged by her facial outlook, but is judged on she cooks, cleaning the house and keeps the family in good health. This how Basotho expect every woman to perform especially to her in-laws during the marriage (Nakeli, 2009:48).

5.2.3 Proverbs related to power and authority

5.2.3.1 *Basadi ke tau li mesana.*

(Women are lionesses in small dresses)

Explanation: Women are vicious and fearless even though they are physically weak hence the use of the diminutive form of a dress (*mesana*) (Mokitimi, 1997:27).

5.2.3.2 *Mosadi ke morena*

(A woman is a chief)

Explanation: A woman is respectable even in the eyes of a chief who is respected by all (Mokitimi, 1997:17).

5.2.3.3 *Mabele ke ngwetsi ya malapa ohle.*

(Sorghum is the daughter-in-law of all homesteads.

Explanation: *Mabele* (sorghum) is given a human character of *ngwetsi* (daughter-in-law), to evoke the image that similar occurrences happen in all homes as it is expected that every home must have a daughter-in-law (Nakeli, 2009:42).

5.2.3.4 *Mosadi ha a na morena.*

(A woman does not have a chief).

Explanation: A woman married to a chief treats him like a husband and like a chief. Like a chief, culturally, a woman cannot be taken to court but can be represented by her husband (Mokitimi, 1997:18).

5.2.3.5 *Mosadi ha a rata ho hlala motho, o kuka lehlokwa a le menahanye.*)

(If a woman wants to divorce someone, she takes a stick and folds it).

Explanation: If a woman wants to divorce her husbands, she makes impossible things that will end up creating bigger issue. This shows that women are capable of building a family and at same are capable of destroying it (Nakeli, 2009:48).

5.2.4 Proverbs related to morality

5.2.4.1 *Mosadi o ngalla mots'eo*

(A woman sulks towards the innermost of a house).

Explanation: A woman is not expected to abandon her home no matter how tough it is; if she has problems she has to solve them (Mokitimi, 1997:18).

5.2.4.2 *Mosadi ha a sa alla monna*

(The wife no longer prepares the bed for the husband)

Explanation: If a woman refuses to sleep and have sex with her husband, she is blamed for this as Basotho believe that man as the head of family, is always right without considering the side of the story of the woman concerned. (Hlalele, 1972:50).

5.2.4.3 *Mohlolohadi wa mosali h'a bonahale*

(A widow is not recognisable)

Explanation: This proverb credits women for their ability to take care of the family despite their husbands' death. Sekese comments that although not noticeable as far as retaining their homes, widows are weak as far as accomplishing requirements such as clothing themselves and children. This proverb encourages widowed men to be irresponsible (Sekese, 1972:185).

5.2.4.4 *Ngoana o tsamaya le 'm'ae, o tsamaya ka lekeke joaloka 'm'ae*

(The child walks with his mother, he walks sideways like his mother).

Explanation: The word "'m'ae" (his mother) is based on the belief among Basotho that the mother knows who fathered the child and that the child biologically belongs to its

mother. This is the reason, in this proverb; children are associated with their mothers and their fathers (Motebele, 1997:94).

5.2.4.5 *Mosadi ke pudi, monna ke nku o llela teng.*

(A woman is a goat and man is a sheep that bleats inwardly)

Explanation: A woman always weeps while a man endures pain silently. Just like a goat which makes a loud noise when slaughtered, a woman is expected to cry even when she is beaten by her husband. If she does not cry she is regarded as stubborn and disrespectful to her husband, especially women beaters as it was case with some Basotho men (Sekese, 1972:135).

5.3 Conclusion

The study of proverbs in this chapter has revealed images of women that assert the African Feminist theory that more or less took for granted a unitary "woman", which left little scope for ambiguity or indeed for attempts to make sense of other dimensions of women's lives and relationships.

It is worth noting that, in most of the proverbs examined here, there seems to be no womanhood outside of married womanhood, thus underscoring the importance of the notion of "*ngwetsi*" in Sesotho traditional worldview. Thus, traditional wisdom characterises women's identities first and foremost in terms of marriage and motherhood. Once these conditions are satisfied, the woman is seen as virtually omnipotent according to the proverbs examined in this study. These proverbs, however, seem to suggest that this inevitable traditional space for the actualisation of womanhood has mutated into vicious trap into which women inevitably fall to lives of disenfranchisement, abuse and oppression.

Consequently, while the traditional wisdom of many proverbs locates women at the heart of a power cycle based on sanctity of motherhood, contemporary thinking on

womanhood, generally reflects a dominant concern with an abusive patriarchal and materialistic worldview that disenfranchises women and regards them as inferior to men.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter answers the research question posed in the beginning of the study, namely, is it a fact that male Sesotho authors are biased in the depiction of female characters and that it is only women writers who present an objective treatment of womanhood and problems in their texts? Does the depiction of women by Sesotho authors change to reflect the new social and political dispensation with its dynamics and finally, a proposal for research is given.

6.2 Research findings

The Basotho male authors are biased on the way they depict women characters in their works. This becomes evident in the Sesotho novels, poems and proverbs discussed in this study, in which women characters are put on two opposing forces in which one stands for the good side (*Dipuo*) as a well-mannered girl, whereas Sentebaleng is depicted as an ill-mannered and a whore girl in the society. Mafata (2006) makes the reader to make his or her own judgement as to who between the two is socially and culturally acceptable in the Sesotho culture.

On the other hand, Ntsane in his novels, *Bao Batho*, *Nna Sajene Kokobela*, and Khaketla's *Mosali a nkholo*, on the other hand, portray the kind of female characters who are submissive, stubborn, cruel and ill-mannered.

It becomes imperative that these authors display a negative attitude towards women characters in line with the Sesotho culture where a woman is restricted by most men and entire society to be engaged in menial duties that concern the household. This attitude usually denies a woman the right to make simple decisions which do not require the man's sanctioning.

The same can be said about Sesotho poems, whereby physical delineation of female characters sometimes tends to convey images of women reflecting stereotypes, especially in situations where the appearance of a woman becomes a focal point of the poet, reflecting other aspects of women's lives.

Sesotho proverbs also reveal the images of women which left little scope for ambiguity or indeed for attempts to make sense of other dimensions of women's lives and relationships. They generally place women at the centre of motherhood and womanhood that reflect a dominant concern with an abusive patriarchal and materialistic worldview that disenfranchise women and regard them as inferior to men.

It is for this reason that presentation of the female gender is mostly sloppy and biased. Male writers who examine women also assist in endorsing and institutionalised and one-sided vision of female heroism in African fiction (Fonchingong, 2006:136).

It will be however, to the best interest of the Sesotho literature to have contemporary Sesotho women authors who will put the dignity and liberation of women to the fore. By this the researcher specifically calls upon Basotho women to start engaging themselves in writing Sesotho literary genres to counter act what most of their male counterparts have achieved in presenting women stereotypically in many ways.

Male authors do also assume a feminist approach in depicting female characters in those literary genres. The notion that male authors discriminate and discredit female characters is merely a generality or a trend that needs to be challenged as this work has already probed.

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