

A Dissertation on

**ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER PORTRAYAL
OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN SELECTED
SESOTHO LITERARY TEXTS BY FEMALE
AUTHORS**

BY
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**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTERS OF ARTS**

IN THE

**DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND
LITERATURE**

**AT
THE**

National University of Lesotho

June 2007

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, **THABO PAUL MARTINS**, hereby declare that **ANALYSIS OF CHATRACTER PORTRAYAL OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN SELECTED SESOTHO TEXTS** is my own original work and that part of it or its entirety has not been submitted at any university; and sources that I have used have been acknowledged by means of complete reference.



Signature

Date

SUPERVISORS' RECOMMENDATION

Approved and recommended for acceptance as a partial fulfillment of the requirement of M.A. degree.

Supervisors

Date_____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my appreciation and heart-felt gratitude to people as well as organs that aided in diverse ways in the completion of this dissertation who ensue in the lines below. I thank my supervisors Professor M.I.P. Mokitimi and Mr. L.S. Phafoli who guided me with informative and constructive criticism. To Professor Mokitimi; I say, **nkhono**: you played your role like a real grandmother to me. Mr. Phafoli, I thank you for making me thick skinned to stand storms in the completion of this study. Your support could not be expressed in any better terms.

I also pass my indebtedness to all members of Staff of the Department of African Languages and Literature who were of auxiliary importance in this study. If it were not because of your support, this study could have been a nightmare. My special thanks in particular, go to Mr. K. C. Maimane who acted not only as my teacher but also as a friend and counsellor during the trying times. **Ntate!** The echoes of your voice cannot escape my mind.

I cannot forget my colleagues: **Bo-'m`e** 'Mafumane, 'Mamasithela, 'Malisema, 'Masehloho and 'Malira who motivated, supported and encouraged me all the time. In fact, this study came as a result of their hard work. Most importantly, thank you **bo-'m`e** for always soothing my heart and lending me a shoulder to lean on.

I also owe a lot of thanks to Mrs. M. Ramaili, Mrs. M. Tšephe, **Ausi** 'Matselane Keta and Mr. P. A. Thakhisi. Mrs. Ramaili was not only a supervisory advisor but also a counsellor. She was always there whenever I needed her. Mrs. Tšephe helped a great deal in editing the entire thesis and

also checking the English translations of Sesotho extracts. **Ausi** 'Matselane helped massively in the printing of this paper, that is why I feel entitled to pass my indebtedness to her. Mr. Thakhisi also devoted his precious time to read and edit the paper.

It is my wish also, to extend my thanks to Lesotho government for sponsoring my studies. Library staff, in particular Mrs. Lefuma in the Interlibrary Loan section, thank you for your cooperation in accessing the library resources. My gratitude also goes to **ntate** Nkoale who provided help in the use of the Academic Development Centre even after hours.

Of utter most importance, I owe special and heart-felt thanks to my wife, **'Mamonyane Martins**. Thanks for the love, support, encouragement, and endless list of positive attributes that you geared into me during my study. You showed beyond doubt **Letebele le letle hore u mosali oa sebele**. My daughter Tumisang: Oh! You were so amazing to me. I thank you for the unreadable inscriptions that you made on my books every time you came across them. That showed you were willing to lend a hand Mokoena. My son Tlotliso: That you were born while I was in the middle of my studies motivated me. You were such a blessing in my academic life. My mother, brothers and sisters - thank you for always standing by my side and assuring me of my potentials, importance and sense of belonging while it was tough.

I thank you all who helped in one way or the other in the completion of this study; be it morally, physically or psychologically.

My praises also go to Almighty God for helping me out with His powers in my study, also for His powers that He shed on those who helped in various ways. Praise be unto You!

ABSTRACT

The study makes a critical analysis of portrayal of female characters in selected Sesotho contemporary texts by women authors. The study's main thrust is to show how contemporary Basotho women writers portray female characters. The study has five chapters.

Chapter one is an introduction. It gives the problem that prompted the undertaking of this study, the purpose, research question and hypotheses, review of related literature, theoretical framework, and methodology, organisation of the thesis, study scope and significance.

Chapter two makes a critical analysis of how girl characters are portrayed. Explanation of terms such as characterisation and character are also provided. The names of the selected girl characters are provided. A synopsis of each text is given before discussing the characters that are present in it.

Chapter three focuses on analysis of character portrayal of women. The names of the selected characters and the titles of the novel and short story books in which they are found are given. The character traits that the women characters have are also provided and analysed accordingly.

Chapter four makes a critique of how the selected Basotho women authors portray female characters. The chapter is divided such we deal with the female characters as portrayed by a single author.

Chapter five gives the conclusion, research findings, remarks and recommendations.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a brief background of Basotho female writers' input in the development of written Sesotho literature. The problem that triggered the undertaking of this research is dealt with also. A review of related literature forms part of this chapter as well. Additionally, the study provides the conceptual framework that will be adopted throughout the analysis.

1.1 Background information

The study of portrayal of female characters in a recorded or unrecorded literature can reveal the socio-cultural codes present in that society. Such study will not only reflect certain conventional traits but will also give a reflection of underlying social relations specific to the studied literature of that society. In support of this, Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:44) argues:

...literature can be said to mirror or reflect society, providing a reliable image of a number of hard social facts...literature can be viewed as a social document, a record of existing facts of life in the society.

What the above quotation implies is that literature can reveal some (not all) realities taking place in the society within which it is written. This study is directed at establishing how female writers portray some of the 'hard social facts' present in Lesotho today. This will be achieved by looking at the most recently published Sesotho literary texts.

We are interested in women's literature because our belief is that; women write from the feminine perspective aiming at eradicating female stereotyping and patriarchy. It is in this vein that Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) believes that the woman writer has two major responsibilities in writing, she

writes to tell about being a woman, and to describe reality from a woman's point of view. It is with the above light that we intend looking at the contemporary women writers to see whether they adhere to the words given above. Before one gets to the crux of the matter, a brief summary of contribution of Basotho female predecessors in written Sesotho literature is discussed in the following paragraphs.

Lesotho possesses huge volumes of written literary works under which the novel and short story texts have attracted a vast majority of earlier scholars as well as the contemporary ones. The emergence of written Sesotho literature came with the Paris missionaries who arrived in Lesotho in 1833 (Gerard 1971 and Andrzejewski et al 1985). Andrzejewski et al (1985:610) observe:

The foreign missionaries produced sizable number of translation, first, of course, of the New testament and then also the Old testament. In order to make their translations fully meaningful to their readers they wrote commentaries and bible stories, which are well adapted to the culture of Southern Sotho speakers; Christian hymns were also composed. There is no doubt that these translations laid foundations upon which Sotho literature was built and developed.

Moleleki (1993:96) also has a similar opinion on how Sesotho literature came into existence. His views are put thus:

Ke ka hona basokollwa ba ileng ba rutwa ho bala le ho ngola. Sena e bile yona tlhase ya mathomo ya ho kunketsa tjhesehelo ya bongodi.

(This is why the converts were taught how to read and write. This was the major spark that ignited the writing interest).

The above citations imply that for written Sesotho literature to develop, the missionaries introduced written and read versions of Sesotho language to make their ministerial task easy. That innovation accorded Sesotho with status of literary language around the 1800s and early 1900s. The majority of early Sesotho literary works were mainly allegorical, folkloric and historical (Gerard 1971 and Ntuli and Swanepoel 1989).

The first Sesotho creative work by a male author, Thomas Mofolo emerged around this period (1900s) in a form of novel text (Gerard 1971). Many other male writers such as E. Segoete, A. Sekese, and Z. Mangoaela to mention but a few, also contributed in the development of written Sesotho. Thus, male Basotho authors predominantly wrote early Sesotho literary publications from the 1800s to the 1950s. However, with time, thematic scope advanced to new and emergent themes that were earlier on not addressed. This motif saw not only the multiplication and development of Sesotho written literature but also saw the emergence of female authors in Sesotho literature. The period after the World War II was marked with an increase in the output of Sesotho literary works (Gerard 1971). It is around this period that the influx of authors of Sesotho literature comprised female authors as well.

Among the mob of writers, the first Sesotho female writer literature made her appearance around the 1950s. This was Selemeng S.A. Mkorosi with her collection of poems in *Bolebali*. As Ngcanga (1989) and Ambrose (2003) aver, the first Sesotho female writer and poetess appeared in 1951.

Ngcangca (1989) shows that the author set out to write to break a dead lock of female author's absenteeism in Sesotho literature. As a result, she volunteered to represent females in as far as written Sesotho literature was concerned.

The second female predecessor in written Sesotho literature is 'Masechele Khaketla who published her first book of drama in 1954, titled *Mosali eo u 'Neileng eena*. We however note that, according to Gerard (1971), this writer is classified as the first female Mosotho writer.

A year afterwards, Makhokolotso A. Mokhomo made her contribution in the poetry section with her collection titled *Sebatso*. Ambrose (2003) gives the publication date of the text as 1954 while Ngcangca (1989) gives it as 1955. This discrepancy might be brought about by the fact that the text is undated and sources put it that it was compiled five years earlier than this date. Mokhomo's main source of inspiration is said to be J.P. Mohapeloa, who arrived with her in the same year at Basutoland High School. Makhokolotso even dedicated some pieces of poetry specifically to Mohapeloa in her collection (Kunene 1996 and Ambrose 2003). Still, in his publication of 1971, Kunene rates Makhokolotso Mokhomo's poetry as one of the best so far.

After a remarkable break of silence in the Basotho female output to Sesotho literature, an influx of works appeared around the 1970s. In particular a prolific author, 'Mabasiea Mahalefele published her collection of poems under the title, *Lireneketo* in 1971 (Ngcangca 1989).

'Masechele Khaketla re-appeared with great force and stamina around the 1970s. She contributed tremendously in the development of Sesotho literature and represented females with an influx of drama publications. Between 1976 and 1986, she had eight books published, with the output of five plays between 1976 and 1978. Her drama are *Ka o lotha* and *Pelo ea monna* both 1976, *Mahlopha-a-senya* and *Ho isa lefung* both in 1977, and *Molekane ea Tšoanang le eena* of 1978.

Another author of the 1970s is 'Malebusa E. M. Lebusa. She contributed positively in Sesotho literature in various ways. In 1979, her novel titled *Lithuto tsa Sek'hona sa Joala* was published (Ngcangca 1989). Even beyond the 1970s to date, women writers became steadily productive and positive in the growth of Sesotho written literature.

Proportionally, as evidenced by Gerard (1971) and Ntuli and Swanepoel (1989), the majority of Sesotho literary writers comprise higher percentage of male authors than female ones. The majority of female writers featured in great numbers beyond the 1970s, for example, M. J. Mahalefele, M. M. Makara and M. N. Matobako. Their contributions since that period up to the present one are mostly high in the drama than in other genres, for example, the afore-cited authors wrote, *Lefa la ntate*, *Pelo e ja Serati* and *Lekoko le e-so ome* respectively.

A number of new themes ranging from urbanization and industrialization, polygamy and modern education versus tradition, to mention just a few, attracted much authorship in the Sesotho literary development around the 1940/50s, for example, A. Nqheku's *Arola Naheng ea Maburu*-1942, S.

Matlosa *Molahlehi*-1946, and B.M. Khaketla's *Mosali a Nkhola* -1945 and *Meokho ea Thabo*-1951 (Gerard 1971).

1.2 Statement of the problem

This research is triggered by the fact that the contribution of female writers to literature has not captured much interest to many Sesotho literary critics. Their literature is overlooked, either by intention or by error. Furthermore, Sesotho literary criticism and appreciation focuses mostly on dated Sesotho texts with dated themes that are mostly male-authored.

In the evaluation and review of such works, the notion of Feminist Literary Criticism has seemingly not been dealt with broadly. Zulu (2001) and (2004) makes an effort to adopt the technique based on Sesotho novels in his two separate articles. Incidentally, his analyses are too brief and focus on male-authored texts.

Most of the analyses made on the notion mentioned above are made on the texts that date earlier than the year 1996. None whatsoever, Sesotho literary critics have made a critical analysis of Basotho female texts published from the year 1996 and beyond; specifically those that are the subject of this study. It is therefore, the task of this research to critically analyse the contemporarily female-authored Sesotho texts to see how they portray female characters. This effort is essential in compensating the lack of attention that has been transpiring in the literary field concerning Basotho female literary output in general.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to critically analyse two selected novels and two short stories published between 1996 and 2003 by four different Basotho female authors to unravel how women writers of this period portray their female characters. To accomplish the task successfully the study aims to:

- find out how today's Basotho female writers perceive other women as shall be projected through their literature.
- find out the contribution of Basotho female writers in trying to dispel the fallacy and distortions made about females in Sesotho literature and in Lesotho.
- see how Basotho female authors commit themselves in Sesotho literature to claim their rights and cut the strings of patriarchal discrimination held over them by the Basotho society.
- evaluate how far Basotho women writers are aware of their rights, their nature and their roles.

1.4 Hypothesis

The contemporary Basotho female writers' portrayal of female characters is predicted to be multi-faceted. On the one hand, women's writing will serve as a mouthpiece through which women writers speak for women's emancipation. Thus, women writes will refute some factors and stereotypes that enhance the oppression of women. On the other, women writes will promote women's subordination and stereotyping.

1.5 Literature Review

This section first reviews works undertaken on Sesotho novel and short stories using the feminist perspective. Second, it looks at publications made

on other African Languages using the feminist perspective. Third, by looking at the general work done on Sesotho novel, such review is necessary in showing how Sesotho literature accumulated critical interest in the literary spheres.

1.5.1 Feminist Reading of the Sesotho Novel

Of primary importance are the works by Ngcangca (1987) and Zulu (2001), (2004). Although Ngcangca (1987) does not indicate which theory he has adopted in handling his analysis, he devotes his task in discussing the image of women in selected Sesotho novel texts. His study is titled: “The image of women in selected Sesotho novels: *Meokho ea Thabo*: B.M. Khaketla, *Moshemane oa ho li bona*: T. Ramakhula, *Chaka*: T. Mofolo.” His task is embodied in the categorization of the roles of Basotho women. He focuses his attention on the developmental stages that women acquire with time passage. His categorization would appear thus: ‘**Girl-Wife-Mother**’. He embarks on making comparisons of modern and traditionally nurtured girls. He discusses the marriage custom that demarcates the two types of girls’ groups. His findings are that traditional Basotho girls show much respect to their elders and offer little or no resistance when their parents choose marriage partners for them, whereas the modern oriented girls strongly object to that customary habit.

Another category that he refers to is that of a wife, however, he does not give any clearer distinction between a wife and the mother except for the roles that according to him are performed differently. He compares traditional Basotho women with those that are agents of modernism. Upon his findings, these groups of women are those that observe and obey the *hlonipha* custom. This custom subjects women to offering due respect to

their husbands and their in-laws in all ways possible while modern women would only object if their dignity is being reduced by customary ties. The last category that he discusses is the image of a woman as a mother.

Although Ngcangca's study is based on the image of women in the mentioned texts, there are major gaps left for the present researcher to fill. The texts that he analyses are the male-authored ones. Furthermore, they have been published far before the year 1990. Most importantly, he has subcategorized women into '**Girl-Wife-Mother**' as shown above. This is far from what one would want to grapple with in this project. The paper's main thrust is to analyse how female writers reflect female characters in the novel of today. His research will be used as a stepping-stone to viewing the Sesotho novel from other angles.

On the contrary, Zulu (2001) makes a feminist analysis in his article "A feminist reading of *Nna Sajene Kokobela C.I.D*". He sets out to investigate the images of women in the afore-mentioned novel from a feminist point of view. His findings are that women on the one hand, are characterized as people who are evil, murderous, have low status, voiceless, command no respect and exist only to be child-bearers and to give pleasure to men. Additionally, they are also regarded as witches and portrayed as always taking subordinate roles or regarded as incapable of the kind of heroic actions performed by men.

Adversely, he shows that men on the other hand, are the ones who deserve everything of which a woman is deprived. His study detailed as it is, is narrow in scope because it focuses only on one male-authored Sesotho novel that was published in 1954. This is a shortcoming contained in this

study that calls for one to pursue the research at hand from a different dimension and a broader scope.

Again, Zulu (2004) in his article “Culture and Gender in Mafata’s novels” explores gender relations in Mafata’s two novels. His study is aimed at establishing the attributes that are culturally ascribed to women and men as textual people. He expounds clearly on how the theme of traditionalism is contrasted with western education. Those who are inclined to modernism are considered as outcast and they fall in the route of their ‘so better’ life. The traditionally brought up and nurtured characters emerge powerful, hardworking, and respecting. He concludes that ‘traditionalists respect their cultural places and roles and live according to the dictates of patriarchally determined feminine and masculine virtues.’ Because Zulu analyses both male and female characters in his article, we feel comfortable to look at the female-authored texts to analyze how their female characters are portrayed. As a result, his article is not erected as an obstacle to impede the researcher’s task.

1.5.2 Feminist Reading and Analysis in other African Languages

The works of Mtuze 1990, Masuku 1998, Bukenya 2001 and Zondi 2005 are of great importance to our study because they deal with how women are presented in the literatures that they have explored. Mtuze, for one, focuses on how Xhosa writers depict women characters. Essentially, his article is aimed at establishing whether Xhosa traditional narrative literature has laid the foundations for the stereotyping embodied in written Xhosa fiction. He sets out by giving abstracts of Xhosa prose fiction and folktales from male and female authorship. Among other things, he shows that women characters are portrayed as “Eve who should be treated warily.” They are

also portrayed as peripheral and subservient to mention just a few. Of great importance, he boldly demonstrates that some Xhosa stories show a bias and denigration towards female characters even though elderly Xhosa women tell most.

Although such stories are told to educate through using a powerful language in their narration, he argues that such narrations highlight antisocial behaviour in as far as dominance and victimization of women is viewed. He concludes that the way Xhosa written literature is structured, it is the counterpart of the traditional narrative, thus, both literatures reveal women as being destined for marriage and child bearing, as contingent on someone else either as wives or mothers among other things. His article poses no threat for the researcher to freely pursue his aim because it is based on the correlation that exists between Xhosa traditional narrative and written Xhosa literature.

A similar study was pursued once again by Masuku (1998). Masuku makes an analysis of female stereotyping in Xhosa and Zulu folktales. She breaks her analysis into two main categories, namely: traditional background on duty division and witchcraft to expatiate on how women are perceived on these notions. Among other things, she argues that Zulu women are portrayed as doing the majority of domestic and agricultural work. Furthermore, she points out that in some tales women are portrayed as supernatural beings with supernatural powers. That is, they are depicted as the destroyers of human life. Contrarily, men are reflected as having excessive power upon women to an extent that they are at liberty to do as they please with their wives. All these behaviours confirm the idea that the woman is degraded and awarded a low status in the community. Because

Masuku's study does not focus on Sesotho literary texts, it poses no threads for the researcher to pursue his intended task freely.

Another contribution, a rather ferocious one though, is by Bukenya (2001). He makes an investigation on how women are silenced in an African society. He underlines his analysis by first arguing that an African woman is a 'silenced' being in a 'silenced' continent. His main concern is that an African woman is not given any form of freedom of speech (what he terms de-oracisation). She is made dull and dormant by the society within which she lives. Of the utmost importance, he outlines some of the oppressing subjects as tradition, socio-political organization, and techno-economic accessibility. He also gives the effects of such de-oracisation and possible action that needs to be administered to correct the error of denigration and hamstringing of women.

Lastly, Zondi (2005) outlines the problems of gender equity reflected in Stuart's folktale. Zondi makes a vital contribution to the analysis and perception of women as borne in literature. She outlines that women are subjected to subordinate roles, for example, they are only valuable as child-bearers (which would prompt a respect upon them as human beings). She further argues that women suffer language prejudice and subordination. This is reflected in the manner in which women are given derogatory names; in this case she cites an example of *inyumba*, which does not have its masculine equivalent. Above this, she points out that traditional practices and expectations also pose a limitation on the freedom that women should be allowed to exercise.

She refers to *hlonipha* and *ilobolo*, which function merely to prescribe norms and values to which a woman should conform and which allows a man to marry as many wives as he possibly can. These customs would urge the woman to respect her in-laws and the senior wives because it is expected that her human dignity have been relinquished by joining the new family. She concludes that at times, these practices may be a source of anguish to women. It is noteworthy that Zondi does not talk about the Sesotho fiction; as a result, this shortcoming calls for the presenter to undertake the research at hand.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Feminist Criticism, which is committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism. The explanation of the umbrella term feminism and other sub-theories that are auxiliary to our study will also be explained in the following sub-sections.

1.6.1 Feminism

Feminist Literary Theory mainly developed under the broader concept namely: **Feminism**. Feminism is a very wide term with multiple explanations under which a number of sub-theories or branch of feminisms developed (Stratton 1995). In a similar vein, Eagleton (1996:135) says:

There is no single feminist criticism, rather an ever-growing practice of plural, though frequently interrelating feminist criticisms. Thus, ‘feminist criticism’ should be seen as a collective term embracing many different perspectives.

What the above quotation stresses is that feminist criticism is an ever-growing approach with interrelated meanings; that arise with the advent of

other feminisms. Because of this, feminism is understood to be an umbrella term for a large number of continually growing approaches. While Eagleton observes that Feminism is a flexible discourse with a potential to develop new theories, Phillips (1987:62) sees that as a problem by arguing thus:

A central problem within feminist discourse has been our inability to either arrive at a consensus about what feminism is or accept definition(s) that could serve as points of unification.

From the above quotation, Phillips is aware that feminism has a number of sub-theories that fall under it. However, he is worried that they are not able to come up with an umbrella term that would encompass all feminisms as well as provide a single definition. What is incumbent for our purposes is the scholar's awareness that feminism is an ever-growing concept with the advent of related theories.

Consequently, Weedon (1987:1), Belsely and Moore (1989:117), and Guerin et al (1992:182) aver that feminism is a political label. It became a theoretical issue, as many scholars assert, with the advent of new women's movement initiated in the early 1960s. It started as part of international Women's Liberation Movement. It is directed at changing the existing power relations between women and men in society. The power relations existing in a society, structure all areas of life; the family, education and welfare, the worlds of work and politics, culture and leisure (Guerin et al 1992:1). Feminism therefore, advocates liberating women from the oppression imposed on them by men and the society as a whole. It has presumptions that women suffer injustices because of their sex.

1.6.2 Feminist Criticism

Feminism also gave birth to what is known as **Feminist Criticism**. As Belsely and Moore (1989:117) put it, **feminist criticism** “...is a specific kind of political discourse: a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism...” This quotation implies that feminist criticism is committed to establish women’s rights in all social circles.

Equally important, Donovan (1995:3) maintains:

Feminist criticism... deals with the reasons behind... proliferation of female stereotypes and the lack of realistic women characters; to discuss the political uses of literary stereotypes; and to describe their effects on individual consciousness.

What we gather from the above citation is that feminist criticism aims at finding reasons for female stereotyping and the misrepresentation of women. At the same time, it looks into the political importance and effects of such stereotypes per individual. This theory is not particularly concerned with literature per se. To make it applicable to literature, the advent of **Feminist Literary Criticism** came into being. We provide the explanation of Feminist Literary Criticism below.

1.6.3 Feminist Literary Criticism

Feminist Literary Criticism is a literary theory that is informed by feminist theory or the politics of feminism. It is concerned with the politics of women’s authorship and the representation of women’s condition within literature.

In addition to this statement, Ruthven (1984:14) maintains, “feminist literary criticism is the hypothesis that all writing is marked by gender...” Furthermore, Feminist literary criticism includes recovering women authors and analyzing their concerns and how they write (Stratton 1995). By implication, feminist literary criticism looks at women’s literature and examines how gender and certain societal practices shape their literary texts.

It is in line with the above words that Rooney (2006:4) maintains: “women read. They write too, of course...but it can be argued that feminist studies depend upon the premise that women read and on the conclusion that their writing makes a difference.” The dimension that Rooney’s observation takes is that women read and write to bring about change.

For the purposes of our study, Feminist Literary Criticism seems to be insufficient to handle our analysis thoroughly. To make it more viable and audible enough we propose to incorporate other feminist approaches that will be used hand-in-hand with it. Because one of our aims is to look at the characters from social, physical and emotional (psychological) viewpoint, it is incumbent on us to include socialist feminism, radical feminism and liberal feminism as auxiliary sub-theories to our study.

1.6.4 Socialist Feminism

Socialist feminism believes that acts of discrimination based on social class, race, and gender are equally wrong (Crawford 2004). Similarly, Weedon (1987) has a view that socialist feminism does not envisage a true and natural femaleness, but sees gender as socially produced and historically changing.

What the above paragraph implies is that, there are divisions among people that are socially constructed and changing from time to time. In other words, the segregations imposed on females by males and the society are a social construct and not biologically generic. The proponents of this theory argue that it is time that such ideologies were abolished.

1.6.5 Radical Feminism

Radical feminism views the control of women by men as the first and most fundamental form of oppression. It emphasizes that, women as a group are oppressed, not by their biology or their social class, but by men as a group. It seeks to look at the male control and domination of women through history (Crawford 2004).

In a similar vein, Weedon (1987:4) declares:

Radical feminism investigates a social order in which women will not be subordinated to men, and femininity and femaleness will not be debased or devalued...for radical feminists, the only way in which women can assert their autonomy from men and recover their true and natural femininity is in separation from men and the patriarchal structures of society.

The above citation implies that society has to be restructured so that women are not considered valueless and should be given equal opportunity like men. To achieve this, women have to be set aside of the patriarchal structures that the society adheres to. In short, these structures widen the gender gap and subordinate women in society.

In summary, Stratton (1995) claims that radical feminism identify women's oppression as a way that the sex/gender system of male dominance and female subordination has made women's biology enslaving, when it should

be the source of power. He further acknowledges that the basic difference between men and women as the cause of women's oppression is that men control women's bodies. By this means, it seeks solutions in reproduction freedom, celebrating women's sexuality, activism, and creation of woman spaces; sometimes promoting women's separation from men.

1.6.6 Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism aims to achieve full equality of opportunity in all spheres of life without transforming the present social and political system. It also takes the structure of nuclear family for granted (Weedon 1987). In other words, it believes that women are entitled to full legal and social equality with men and favours changes in laws, customs and values to achieve the goal of equality. In matters relating to family situation, Weedon (1987:16) continues:

...family life and decision to have children should result from free, individual choice, and those who choose to have children should be responsible for them. They stress women's rights as individuals to choice and self-determination, irrespective of biological sex...

Slightly different from Weedon, Stratton (1995:68) declares:

Liberal feminism assumes that men and women are essentially the same, but know that there are impediments to their equality. Their goal is gender justice, making the rules of the game fair so that no one is systematically disadvantaged. They seek civil rights and equal opportunity, and they want to free women and men from oppressive gender roles.

The above set of quotations implies that childbearing process should be an individual choice and those who opt for it should be responsible for children irrespective of their sex. They argue that men and women are essentially equal though there are limitations in their equality. Main stress is put on gender justice and equal opportunity in all social spheres.

1.7 Methodology

The current study is qualitative in nature. According to Neuman (1997), qualitative research method is concerned with the data in the form of text, written words, phrases, or symbols describing or representing people, actions, and events in social life. Because this study is based on written text, it is inevitable that qualitative data analysis should be used.

Additionally, all relevant sources of information relating to the study are explored. Such materials are available literature, scholarly articles, government documents, police reports, and the internet to mention but a few. A relevant theoretical framework namely: Feminist Literary Criticism and other related sub-theories of feminism (cf. section 1.7 above) are also used in this research to evaluate the state of women's authorship and how women are represented within literature.

1.8 Organisation of the thesis

The first chapter gives background information, the problem for pursuing the study, the hypothesis and review of related literature. The theoretical frame which the study adopts and significance of the study have been discussed.

The second chapter makes an analysis of character portrayal of girls. Third chapter deals with the character portrayal of women. The fourth chapter makes a critique of how Basotho female writers portray their female characters. The final chapter comprises of the conclusion, remarks, observations, findings and recommendations.

1.9 The Scope of the Study

The study is solely based on content analysis of documented works of selected contemporary Basotho female writers. This material is used as a primary source of information. The two novel and short story texts that are published in 1996 and beyond form the crux of the study. These are the following:

a) Novel Texts

- i) Makara, M.M- *Mohanuoa* 1996
- ii) Tšasanyane-Ralengau, N- *Molahluoa* 2001

b) Short Stories

- i) Machobane, M. and Mochaba M. (Eds) – *Ngoan 'a Ma-Tsoa-Thaka* 2003
 - a) “Sethoto se hlalefa ke ho utloa bohloko” (pp 56-63) by 'Mankali Moejane
 - b) “Likeleli” (pp 26-35) by Agnes Mpiki Fobo

We intend to shorten the title of the text “Sethoto se hlalefa ke ho utloa Bohloko” to “Sethoto” for the purposes of our study. Each time reference is made to it only the short form will be used.

In handling the analysis, the texts were read in depth to identify female characters whose character portrayal is analyzed. Characters have been identified and selected with respect to the prominent roles they perform in developing the plot of the text, especially the protagonist and the antagonist. Owing to the limited scope of the study, we have not discussed all the female characters present in our texts. We have confined our analysis on the chief and subsidiary ones if they shed light on the main characters. However, where such a balance was not possible other prominent female characters were sought for.

It would be going beyond the parameters of this study to analyse any male-authored text. The study does not look at how Basotho female writers portray their male characters in the selected texts. In short, the study focuses neither on how female writers portray male characters nor on how male authors portray female or male characters.

1.10 Significance

It is hoped that this study will be a necessary contribution to literary criticism because it addresses “the world’s” contemporary burning issue.

It is believed to be an eye-opener to literature students, scholars and researchers in matters regarding feminism in Sesotho literature and literatures of the world. It will empower them with a positive thinking on issues that evolve around women. In turn, this will make them consider women’s output in literary appreciation and criticism to see how they contribute to the development of Sesotho literature and how they make a public awareness of their rights.

This study will hopefully make the academics realize that it is time that literary criticism is made on emergent themes and contemporary matters that affect people at the time of analysis. This is essential because it provides solutions to the problems that affect their people, especially issues on gender relations. They will also see the importance of the diversification of literary outlook towards male and female literary publications other than just concentrating on one side of the publications.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER PORTRAYAL OF GIRLS

2.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to analyse how girl characters are portrayed in the selected texts. When embarking on the task of analysis it is incumbent on one to define concepts such as characterisation and characterisation devices used by the individual authors. These concepts are essential in directing one to choose the characters for analysis as well as their traits. The names of the characters to be analysed and a synopsis of each text will be given before analyzing the character portrayal of characters contained in it. The character traits of the girls that this analysis intends to look at among others are beauty, intelligence, and romance, dependency on marriage, malleability, aggression, rebelliousness, infidelity, flirting and authoritativeness. Definitions of character traits of girl characters will be provided before making the analysis.

2.2 Characterisation

In our study, character portrayal devices will be taken to mean the methods that an individual author uses in presenting his/her characters. In other words, it means the technique or manner in which the author reflects the attributes, deeds, speech and responses to stimuli of the characters. In support of the above opinion, Ebewo argues:

characterisation is considered from various levels: the physical- concerned with basic facts such as sex, age, size, colour- all external traits; the social – this includes economic status, profession or discipline, religion, family etc, the psychological- this involves habits, attitudes, desires, intelligence, likes and dislikes.... The

last level in characterisation is the moral level, which takes into consideration the character's ethical standards.

The above extract denotes that characterisation entails portraying the morals of human behaviour ranging from the physical and the psychological attributes, the socializing processes, as well as the ethical standards of human beings. This has a bearing that in characterisation the author tries as much as possible to create portraits that match with human nature. We cannot overlook characterisation because it is through it that we are able to identify the behaviour patterns of the chosen characters. Thus, for us to identify the character personalities we are guided by the characterisation that the author uses.

Throughout the analysis, the selection of characters will be solely based on character portrayal techniques or methods used by an individual author. To accomplish our task, we will consider the following characterisation: what the narrator says about the character or the voice of the narrating character, what the fellow characters say about the other character and what the character does, says, how she behaves or thinks or how she reacts to stimuli (or dramatic presentation). Below we give the names of the characters that we have chosen for our analysis based on characterisation techniques mentioned above.

The textual human portraits are universally referred to as characters. They are not real people but the objects that an individual author accords personal traits and human behaviour. Upon this observation, Ebewo (1997:13) observes, "a character is an imaginary creation of a person by an author to carry out roles which are typical of the individualized personality he represents." This means that characters are textual human beings with

normal human personalities. For us to identify the characters, it is not only through name giving but also through how the character has been delineated. In the following subsection, we provide the characterisation techniques that the author may use to present his/her characters.

2.3 Selected Girl Characters

This section identifies girl characters that are the outstanding characters in the selected texts. They are those that fall in the textual binary conflict of the texts: the protagonist, the antagonist categories, and the allies that enforce in each division. The characters that are looked are **'Mita** and **Senate** from *Mohanuoa*; **Molahluoa** from *Molahluoa*; **Likeleli** from "Likeleli" and **Limakatso** from "Sethoto".

2.4 ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER PORTRAYAL OF 'MITA AND SENATE IN MOHANUOA BY M.M. MAKARA

2.4.1 Synopsis of *Mohanuoa*

'Mita is raised by her grandmother after the tragic death of her parents, and she later falls pregnant by Mopeli, who is a child of a well-to-do family. When the pregnancy is reported to his parents, he denies the allegation. An arrangement is made that the birth of the child be awaited to examine whether he/she would resemble the father. Three months after the birth of the child, Mopeli embarrasses 'Mita at **khotla** by asking the little child (Mohanuoa), where it was when him and 'Mita "made it". After his uncle had scolded him seriously, he discloses that his mother said he should not agree to marry 'Mita and deny the impregnation allegation.

Regardless of his contempt and denial of the child and its mother, the chief's councillors go to where 'Mita and the baby were sitting to look at it

and confirm that he is identical with Mopeli. An unanimous conclusion is reached that Mopeli marries 'Mita. On the verge of the marriage materialization, Mopeli's parents get another report that he has impregnated another girl, Senate. Because of the impregnation blunder, Mopeli's father advises him to elope with 'Mita to his aunt's place. However, 'Mamopeli counters that by telling Mopeli to elope with Senate to his uncle's place instead. After failing to take 'Mita, he complies with his mother and elopes with Senate to Durban.

'Mita is sent back to school after this ordeal to finish her studies. She raises her own son after her grandmother's death. She sends him to school at an early age where he performs magnificently.

2.4.2 'MITA

This section critically embarks on analysis of character portrayal of 'Mita focusing on the following character traits: beauty, intelligence, dependency on marriage and malleability.

2.4.2.1 Beauty

In this study, beauty is taken to mean a combination of pleasant or attractive qualities especially of bodily or facial features that give pleasure to the mind or the looking eye. On account of this, 'Mita is portrayed as a beautiful character. The first time the narrator refers to her beauty, she puts it in a covert manner. However, readers are able to exhume an element of beauty embedded in what the narrator says about her as in the following extract:

Mahlo ane a ratehang a maphatšoana ba holi la motsoetse a itšalla lepalapaleng. (p 8)

(Those lovely black and white eyes that are similar to those of a female pied starling were left prominent.)

From the above example, we note that 'Mita's eyes intrigue the narrator. Considering the way her eyes look like, the narrator explicitly describes them as **mahlo ane a ratehang**. Evidently, if something is lovely, we deduce that it is beautiful hence 'Mita's eyes. Above this, the narrator likens her eyes with those of a female pied starling and shows that they are black and white in colour to expound on their beauty. According to Sesotho outlook of beauty, black and white is deemed beautiful.

To heighten the degree of 'Mita's beauty, the omniscient observer reveals the thoughts of Mopeli, her lover, when he met her as follows:

Mopeli ha a mo sheba a sehoa ke letsoalo. A fumana a se motle a haulana ngoan'a Khalahali. Marama e ka a perekisi ea chele e tšehla e butsoitseng, mahlo a le bolea joaloka a khomo... 'Mejana o tletse hamonate o itse rethe! (p 20)

(Mopeli looked at her with shock. He admired the child of Khalahali's extreme beauty. Her cheeks were as yellow as a ripe yellow clingstone peach; her eyes were as supple as those of a cow and her body strong.)

The quotation above shows that the beauty of 'Mita shocks Mopeli. To emphasize her beauty, the narrator uses a phrase **a se motle**. Although this is a negating statement of beauty, it is intended at showing the high degree of beauty. Equally important, her cheeks are further likened with a ripe clingstone peach. The deeper meaning of this simile is that 'Mita has a light soft skin. In addition, 'Mita's eyes become an issue again in this instance. They are pliant in nature. Pliancy to many Basotho denotes beauty. The

nature of 'Mita's eyes stir Mopeli's emotions badly. The way 'Mita is described, reveals her as an extremely beautiful person. Different people mark her beauty with various descriptions. Mpoetsi her (co-character and closest friend) uses a more general description **motho ea kang uena** (p 29) (a person like you) to define her beauty. This definition covers various aspects of beauty.

2.4.2.2 Intelligence

Intelligence refers to the power of learning, understanding and reasonable mental ability in doing something. On this account, 'Mita is portrayed as an outstandingly intelligent character. She is so bright that she passed her J.C with merit (p 8). Her intelligence is further revealed to the readers when she was at NTTC by the narrating voice as in the extract below.

... 'Mita o ne a tseba a sa tsilatsile hore o pasitse, 'me hantle le hona. Esita le mesuetsana ea hae e ne e ikotla lifuba ka eena hoba o ne a hlile a ipabola, a tsoa pele lilemo tseba tseo a li qetileng moo.... (p 26)

('Mita knew beyond doubt that she had passed well. Even her teachers were proud of her because she always appeared first in all the years that she spent there.)

The way 'Mita's intelligence is reflected in the above quotation shows that she knew beyond doubt that she was performing well at school. In other words, she is confident that she will pass because she is intelligent. Her teachers as well were always proud of her because she came first. Being a top-ranking student at school is a symbol of intelligence. Overall, 'Mita is depicted as an intelligent person in academic circles.

2.4.2.3 Dependency on Marriage

'Mita is reflected as dependent on Mopeli for marriage. Dependency (on marriage) in our case is taken to mean the situation by which a character engages him/herself in a life threatening and fatal situation in order to get what s/he is aspiring for. In short, it refers to the state of relying on somebody for marriage or needing somebody in order to survive or prosper in life. Different extracts in the ensuing lines exemplify 'Mita's dependency on marriage. On page 8, we see 'Mita yielding to Mopeli's request that they engage in sex because he promises to marry her. It is obvious that 'Mita succumbs to the act because she wants to marry Mopeli.

Similarly, after Mopeli had embarrassed and denied her publicly (pp 8 and 12), 'Mita insists on marrying him. We would have thought that Mopeli's denial of her would suffice to convince her that they are not meant to marry. Despite the obvious proves that Mopeli no longer loves 'Mita; she persists on marrying him. To us, this undoubtedly reflects her as dependent on Mopeli for marriage.

'Mita again resists her grandmother's perpetual advice that she should not give in to Mopeli. 'Matiisetso's advice is based on the fact that Mopeli is a spoiled child and that his parents detest her (p 13). For 'Mita not to heed the advice of her grandmother portrays her as dependent on marriage.

2.4.2.4 Malleability

Malleability in this study is taken to mean the habit of easily changing ones ideas or being easily influenced by someone or circumstances. This is one of 'Mita's characteristics that the author reflects. She shows her malleability in decision making when on one account she swears that she is taking

Mopeli out of her heart and does not want to get involved in love affairs with men ever again (p 7). Surprisingly, in the second encounter, she reverts to succumbing in marrying Mopeli (p 11). This attitude reflects her as a character that does not have a backbone.

Essentially, 'Mita is portrayed in a multi-faceted way. Of the utmost importance, her physical appearance is made lovely in varied ways. She has beautiful facial looks and well-built body. In addition, the author reveals her cute mental ability at school. However, having a good mental capacity as she is, the author unleashes some of her weaknesses. For instance, she is dependent on Mopeli for marriage. At the same time, she lacks a backbone in decision-making.

2.4.3 SENATE

This section deals with the analysis of character portrayal of Senate. Senate is looked at from the stage when she is a young girl until she marries Mopeli. This is essential because some of her character traits as a girl direct us to what she becomes in marriage. The character traits that will be looked at are aggression, rebelliousness and infidelity.

2.4.3.1 Aggression

Aggression means showing violent or hostile behaviour towards others or showing readiness to attack or quarrel. On this note, Senate is reflected as an aggressive character. The narrator outlines her aggression in the manner given underneath.

*Bohloko boo bo ne bo bakeleitsoe ke mahlapa ao
Senate le 'm`ae ba mo rohakileng ka oona ka nokaneng
ka la maobane. (p 22)*

(Her pain was aggravated by the insults that Senate and her mother had hurled at her in the stream the previous day.)

Senate's aggression is punctuated by her courage to attack 'Mita with insults. The state of her aggression is further manifest where she quarrels with her mother-in-law (p 25). Senate's vulgar behaviour is not condoned in Sesotho culture. The woman of such behaviour is devalued and considered hostile by the society. This attitude is regarded as aggression in its own right. Because Senate has the nerve to be at loggerheads with her mother-in-law, we consider her as an aggressive character.

2.4.3.2 Rebelliousness

Rebelliousness refers to, showing a desire to resist authority or control by somebody. This is one characteristic feature of Senate. That is, she is depicted as a rebellious character. The narrator in the excerpt below reveals her rebelliousness.

Hangata o ne a iphehela lijo tsa hae a le mong le liphahlo a itlhatsoetsa tsa hae a se na taba le motho. (p 25)

(Often, she cooked only for herself and did only her laundry without caring for others.)

Because Senate is married in traditional rural Lesotho, she is expected to obey her in-laws and live according to what society prescribes to her. Among other things, she has to be strong, clinical and perhaps industrious. In this case, however, Senate rebels against the customary expectation of a daughter-in-law. What Senate does is in line with liberal feminism in that it advocates women's independence from men and the society as a whole.

According to liberal feminists, the structure of nuclear family is taken for granted. It advocates that women should be liberated from oppressive and enslaving household work imposed by the members of the extended family.

Her rebelliousness is further indicated by her will to decide **ho tsoa motse** (to go to a newly built home) (p 29) without waiting for her in-laws to do it. According to Sesotho custom, it is the responsibility of the elders to solemnize **ho tsoa motse** of the bride and groom. Nevertheless, Senate is so rebellious that she does not follow the customary route.

2.4.3.3 Infidelity

Infidelity refers to the action or an instance of not being faithful to one's husband by having relationships with other people. Senate is reflected as an unfaithful woman to her husband. The narrator reflects her infidelity as follows:

O ne a nka ngoana le ntat`ae a ba thulanye ka lihlooho ngoanan`a joalo. A qetella a matha le lekhooa la lebenkele la motseng moo.... (p 25)

(She had love affairs with fathers and their sons. In the end, she had an affair with a white businessman in the village.)

From the above instance, Senate is portrayed as having multiple-extra marital love affairs with young and old men. This depicts her as the character that is unfaithful to her husband. She also violates the social taboos by falling in love with a white man. It is taboo for a married woman to have extra-marital relationships. Such a woman is a disgrace and looked down upon by the society.

Promiscuity and adultery is described in Sesotho culture. Nevertheless, in the light of liberal feminism, women should be given equal opportunity as men and they should be granted a chance in choosing what they like to do with their bodies. This saying accordingly licenses women to freedom of sex.

Generally, Senate's behaviour is portrayed as a bad one. She behaves badly in the eyes of all around the village. She hurls insults at others and quarrels with her mother-in-law. Subsequently, she rebels against her in-laws. In the midst of all these, she becomes adulterous. These behaviours do not only reflect her as a bad woman but also an immoral one.

2.5 ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER PORTRAYAL OF MOLAHLUOA IN *MOLAHLUOA* BY N. TŠASANYANE-RALENGAU

2.5.1 A synopsis of *Molahluoa*

An orphaned child, Molahluoa, whose mother has been given poison by her mother-in-law, is given for adoption to a distant paternal relative. The title heroin, Molahluoa, is made a shepherd at a tender age of about seven. She is also compelled to undertake several other duties including domestic chores. Later, she is sent to an animal post to look after hundreds of animals. In this place, she stays with 'Malehlohonolo's (the adopter) **thokolosi** (a mythical treacherous creature believed to have been created by human hands to perform sorcery). She is mandated to slaughter a sheep each afternoon with no apparent reason given. She has neither to salt the meat nor to worry about its disappearance in the morning.

At the posts, she meets a tidy well-dressed Talimo who, upon first meeting attracts her emotionally. Talimo asks for her hand in marriage. The request is warmly welcomed and the duo elopes to Talimo's home. Talimo's parents, especially his mother, make all efforts to transform Molahluoa into a normal woman figure.

Shortly after Molahluoa's elopement from, 'Malehlohonolo gets very upset and bitter. This is aggravated by her **thokolosi** that wants Molahluoa back by destroying the village property, mostly animals. Everybody in Matšekheng is upset by the havoc wreaked by **thokolosi** to their belongings and 'Malehlohonolo traces Molahluoa and makes efforts to bring her back.

Upon her failure, she practices the magic of witchcraft to unsettle and threaten Molahluoa and even make her unhappy. Talimo's parents seek help from a traditional doctor that aid them by getting rid of **thokolosi**. Because of this, Molahluoa becomes free of miseries and leads a very happy life in marriage.

2.5.2 MOLAHLUOA

This section focuses on the analysis of character portrayal of Mohlouoa. The analysis gives a close look at her character traits revolving round her beauty, flirting, and passion in relationship with young men and decisiveness in self-arranged marriage.

2.5.2.1 Beauty

Definition of beauty will not be provided at this time because we have already done it in section 2.4.2.1 above. Molahluoa is reflected as beautiful. On this notion, the narrator says:

...botle ba Molahluoa bo ne bo koahetse ho apara marantha hoa hae; bo bile bo hana le kahar'a likhohlo. O ne a le litho li ntle, ho tloha hlohoong ho ea tsoa leotong... (p 31)

(Molahluoa's beauty shone above the tattered clothes that she wore; she was stunning even in the gorges (the posts). She had lovely bodily parts from head to foot.)

The above instance shows that Molahluoa looked glaringly beautiful even under the rags that she wore. The author uses two intriguing expressions in the extract to expound on the high degree of Molahluoa's beauty. First, Molahluoa looked so beautiful that no one would realize that she was dressed in torn clothes. Second, one would not realize that she was in the gorges at the animal posts.

It is noteworthy from the above discussion that Molahluoa is so gorgeous that she shines above the said scenarios. Her extreme beauty sheds light on why her co-characters were amazed at her beauty (page 49). They even become skeptical about her state of oppression alluded to.

2.5.2.2 Flirting

Flirting is taken to mean the act of showing intrinsic advances towards somebody if one is attracted to him/her. On this note, Molahluoa is depicted as a flirtatious character. She is attracted to Talimo even before she could detect which route he would take. On showing how she flirts, the narrator says:

...Molahluoa le eena a se a shebile fatše e ka o soabile.
(p 30)

(Molahluoa looked down as if in shame.)

A bua a se a ntse a fata letlapa ka lejoe la lesehloa. (p 43)

(She chipped a sand stone with a small stone as she spoke.)

What Molahluoa does in the above set quotations is typical of girls during courtship in Sesotho courtship process. It is a sign that they are interested in the suitor and conform to the proposal without saying it in words. The fact that she wilts as if in shame and does not look Talimo in the eye as well as chipping the stone with another indicates that she is struck by a strong emotion of love deep in her heart.

2.5.2.3 Relationship with Young Men (Talimo)

The above title refers to the habit of showing an intense feeling of love or appreciation in the relationship with somebody. This is what Molahluoa has towards Talimo. Thus, Molahluoa is portrayed as a passionate character. She strongly values being in a love affair with young men (Talimo). This is reflected in what she says in the following extract.

...ke utloa eka ke Molahluoa e mocha! Ekare ke mocha ke tsoa lebenkeleng! Kea kholoa ha ke na ho ja kajeno ha ke fihla hae. (p 43)

(I feel like a rejuvenated Molahluoa! I feel like a new item from the shop! I believe I am not going to eat when I arrive home.)

Molahluoa says the above words after they have agreed to be in a relationship with Talimo. Because of this new relationship, Molahluoa feels as if she has been transformed from what she initially was and that she was not going to eat that evening. This new feeling that Molahluoa thinks she

has ensured that she truly favours being in a love affair. To show how invaluable her relationship with Talimo is, the narrator says ... **o fihlile a bontša thabo e kholo** (p 44) (when she arrived she showed great happiness).

2.5.2.4 Decisiveness in Self-Arranged Marriage

The title above refers to a habit of showing the ability to make a definite decision or conclusion in doing something, in our case choosing a suitor. This is what Molahluoa is endowed with. On this note, she is depicted as a decisive character in that she chooses a suitor for herself. This comes evident on page 43 where she says:

Ee kea lumela! Ke tla ba mosali oa hao....

(Yes, I agree! I will be your wife.)

What we gather from the above extract is contrary to the Sesotho traditional arrangement of marriage. Culturally, it is the responsibility of parents to choose a suitable partner for their children. In the case of our text, Molahluoa violates that custom. This is in line with liberal feminism that supports freedom of choice in humanity.

Later, Molahluoa gets into Talimo's family through the **shobela/chobeliso** (elope/ elopement) practice. This is an emergent practice that results in several marriages. It is the practice by which a boy marries a girl by force or sometimes through agreement. Although not appreciated by many Basotho, this practice is still found in rural and urban areas of Lesotho. In leaving 'Malehlohonolo's place and entering marriage, Molahluoa is reflected as having an achievement in life, that is, she is rising from the rags to the riches.

In summary, Molahluoa is portrayed as beautiful. Her beauty is so eye-catching that when she is looked at, the dilapidated state of her clothes and her state of shepherdhood become less significant. She is also an emotive character because she flirts with Talimo. Subsequently, she values being in love with Talimo and ultimately arranges to elope with him.

2.6 ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER PORTRAYAL OF LIKELELI IN “LIKELELI” BY A.M. FOBO

2.6.1 A Synopsis of “Likeleli”

A well brought up Christian girl and title heroine Likeleli falls madly in love with Mohlouoa. When they first meet, Mohlouoa is a student at the St. Augustine Seminary at Roma. Mohlouoa officially withdraws from the seminary with the intention to marry Likeleli. He requests his parents to ask Likeleli’s parents to allow him to marry their daughter.

Unfortunately, his parents do not agree with him, especially his mother, ‘Malitaba. She maintains that she would not allow her son to marry into a poor family for it would undermine her family status. Upon his failure, he intentionally impregnates Likeleli so that his parent would allow them to get married. His mother becomes aggressive and stern that such a marriage should not take place but compensation for the girl’s parents for the impregnation is sought for.

Despite his mother’s refusal to let him marry the girl of his dreams, Mohlouoa remains madly in love with Likeleli. In the midst of their heightened love, Likeleli falls pregnant for the second time. Still, Mohlouoa’s parents would not allow him to marry her. When Seretse,

Likeleli's father, urges them to compensate him, they refuse the allegation and purport that Likeleli is the one who has been running after their child. At the peak of the onslaught between the two families, Mohlouoa yields to his parents and ignores Likeleli. As Seretse gets angrier on this matter, Likeleli asks him to drop the matter and she handles it herself. She seeks some legal advice from a friend and sues Mohlouoa. The court rules that Molahluoa should pay all the maintenance expenses of the two children.

2.6.2 LIKELELI

The analysis of character portrayal of Likeleli centers on factors such as her beauty, kind-heartedness, romance, decisiveness in self-arranged marriage and self-respect.

2.6.2.1 Beauty (cf. section 2.4.2.1)

Likeleli is portrayed as beautiful. The narrator brings a number of expressions to expound on her beauty as in the following instance.

Likeleli ke...setšoana se mali-matle, se likoti marameng. Ha a motle ha motho a mo re heli, empa ha a mo sheba a mo latellisisa ke motho ea litšobotsi li ntle. Ke motho ea tšoaneloang haholo. (p 26)

(Likeleli is a beautiful darkish girl with dimples on the cheeks. She does not seem beautiful at a glance, but on closer look, she has very beautiful features. She looks smart in any clothes.)

From the above example, Likeleli is depicted as beautiful with a well-built body that makes her look nice in any outfit that she wears. Her outstanding beautiful features are embodied in her facial looks. Darkish complexion and dimples in a female person are symbols of great beauty. The way in which

Likeleli is portrayed inclines one to belief that every boy would want to be in love with her.

2.6.2.2 Kind-Heartedness

Kind-heartedness refers to the act of showing good will or concern about the happiness and feelings of others in a friendly way. This attribute is also a hallmark of Likeleli's attributes. As such, the narrator presents Likeleli as a kindhearted character as follows:

Ke motho oa khotso, ea ntseng a itšehela ka linako tsohle ha qoqa le batho.... (p 26)

(She is a peaceful person, who is always laughing when she speaks to people.)

The above extract reveals Likeleli as a sweet person. Among other things, she always laughs when she speaks with other people. The habitual traits such as laughter also foreshadow what she has in her heart for other people, perhaps goodwill. That is, her inner being of having a good heart and positive feelings towards everybody whom she chats with is a hallmark of her character. We realize that it is not beauty alone or external personal traits that mark a girl as eligible for marriage, but also her personality.

2.6.2.3 Romance

Romance refers to a feeling of intensity and pleasure associated with a love affair. This is what Likeleli is endowed with towards Mohlouoa. That is, Likeleli is reflected as a romantic character that is eager to use her romantic abilities to charm her suitor. The emotion of love drives Likeleli to agitate about her suitor during the day and to be insomniac at night (pp 27 and 28). This remembrance yields in the duo giving each other a rendezvous.

It is culturally unusual that lovers would have a rendezvous. Once parents have made a choice of a spouse, traditional steps had to be logically followed until the bride and groom are joined together in Sesotho customary marriage. In the case of our text however, the procedure is deviant from the traditional one.

On several accounts, the couple meets under the auspices of rendezvous. Assumably, Likeleli and Mohlouoa are forced by their romance to meet frequently. To charm Mohlouoa more, Likeleli marvels with her culinary skills (p 29). Beside her romantic deeds, she is portrayed as having abilities to use romantic language when she addresses Mohlouoa. This is exemplified below where she says:

Lumela abuti Mohlouoa. U fihlile neng na Mofokeng? (p 29)

(Hello brother Mohlouoa. When did you arrive Mofokeng?)

Likeleli is using a romantic language to harness Mohlouoa's heart towards her. The value of the polite address form **abuti** is more than just respect. In her usage of **abuti**, we derive tones of romance such as darling. In addition, she refers to Mohlouoa with a clan name, **Mofokeng**. This kind of address inspires and fills most Basotho with valour, righteousness and dignity. Seemingly, Likeleli is aware of the significance of this reference and so wishes to impress her suitor. The deeper meanings of the referents **abuti** and **Mofokeng** go beyond just their ordinary significance. They are romantic words in their own right. Thus, the author depicts Likeleli as a passionate lover with abilities to be emotive towards her lover.

2.6.2.4 Decisiveness in Choosing a Suitor

The above title is taken to mean a habit by which one makes his/her choice of whom to fall in love with. Likeleli is depicted as decisive in choosing whom to fall in love with. She chooses what she believes would be a suitable husband for her. This is indicated when she succumbs to Mohlouoa's proposal with ease and confidence. She submits boldly to Mohlouoa that:

Kea u rata abuti Mohlouoa. (p 28)

(I love you Mohlouoa my brother.)

Likeleli here freely agrees to be in a relationship with Mohlouoa. Upon her acceptance of the proposal, she uses a polite address form **abuti** when speaking to Mohlouoa.

Apparently, choosing a suitable suitor seems to be invaluable to her. This comes to surface where upon falling in love with Mohlouoa the narrator reveals this about her:

Tsatsi la ho tlisa thabo, nyakallo le khotso pelong ea hae. (p 27)

(That day brought pleasure, joy and peace to her heart.)

The extract implies that Likeleli had never been happier in her life before she fell in love with Mohlouoa. Her relationship with Mohlouoa is the one that clouds her with great happiness.

2.6.2.5 Self-Respect

Self-respect refers to the act of showing polite behaviour on oneself or the habit of respecting the social taboos that envisage one with a feeling of

pride. This is one of the outstanding characteristics of Likeleli. Her good personal conduct that impresses Mohlouoa surfaced while she was studying at the university where she conducted herself in a proper manner different from many girls (page 33).

Her good behaviour comes vivid again when she does not agree to Mohlouoa's request that they engage in sex. On this account, the narrator declares:

Mohlouoa a qala ho buela Likeleli lisele, eena a hana.
(p 32)

(Mohlouoa asked Likeleli to have sex with him but she refused.)

The above quotation reflects Likeleli as a well-behaved Mosotho child who understands that it is taboo for unmarried couple to have sex. To show her respect for social taboos she does not submit to the act. Unfortunately, self-respectful as she is, Mohlouoa uses her cunning habits and tricks Likeleli into a sexual deed.

To conclude, Likeleli is depicted as a cute, peaceful and romantic young woman who captures the attention of Mohlouoa towards her. She is also a character that respects the social taboos. The incarnation of modern values is heightened in the manner through which they handle their relationship, particularly, that of meeting at the private place. Equally important, she is reflected as valuing the practice of arranging her marriage that lands her in the relationship with Mohlouoa.

2.7 ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER PORTRAYAL OF LIMAKATSO IN “SETHOTO” BY M. MOEJANE

2.7.1 A Synopsis of “Sethoto”

A widowed woman 'Masehloho, heeds the advice of Limakatso (her daughter) that she should encourage Sehloho ('Masehloho's son) to marry. They do so because she and Limakatso are lazy to do the household work. Sehloho's wife is expected to relief them from the burden of household chores.

A harmonious rapport is maintained in the family in a year or so of 'Mathabo's (Sehloho's wife) arrival who is also a teacher. Later matters drift to a new route altogether. 'Mathabo is assigned many duties at a time. She is repeatedly reminded that she has been married with heads of cattle. As a result, she is expected to overwork herself. She is even forced to adopt one of many illegitimate children of Limakatso.

Matters are made worse when 'Mathabo is not allowed to go to work but rather to go to the fields one day. Working in the fields and other torturous and non-beneficial duties are prioritised by 'Masehloho over 'Mathabo. All the same, she expects 'Mathabo to maintain her family with her salary.

She is repeatedly condemned and scolded for petty and useless issues. When she goes to Mapholaneng where she teaches, she feels comfortable and relaxed from her marriage miseries. Still, 'Masehloho visits them a short while after their departure. Upon her arrival, 'Masehloho accuses 'Mathabo on minor issues. 'Mathabo gets extremely fed up, she confronts 'Masehloho about her rights and ultimately throws her clothes out of her house.

2.7.2 LIMAKATSO

Limakatso is a girl, who gave birth to illegitimate children, she also happens to be “mother’s baby”. This section dwells on analyzing how she is portrayed in the text. Factors to be taken into account are immorality, authoritativeness, laziness, and aggression.

2.7.2.1 Immorality

Immorality in the case of our study refers to the habit of not following accepted standards of sexual behaviour. This is the behaviour that Limakatso is indirectly portrayed as having by the narrator. That is, Limakatso is depicted as immoral. She has no social fear in giving birth to illegitimate children. The narrator’s words are put as follows:

...ha e mong a sa nyaloa, a ntse a etsetsa bana lapeng...
(p 56)

(The other one was not married and was giving birth to illegitimate children.)

No doubt, she is portrayed as a character with immoral and socially unacceptable behaviour. For her to have many illegitimate children prove that her sexual behaviour is below expected social standards. In other words, she is fornicating. Although in the author’s view and probably of the traditional Sesotho society illegitimate birth is considered as a taboo; liberal feminism advocates freedom in child bearing. Along this line, Limakatso’s choice to have children is viewed as a proper thing.

2.7.2.2 Authoritativeness

Authoritativeness means the attitude by which somebody likes to lead others by giving them orders to follow. That is, showing the power to give orders and making others obey. This is what Limakatso is reflected as having towards 'Mathabo. In other words, Limakatso is portrayed as an authoritative character. Her authoritativeness is revealed by the narrating character in the manner shown below.

Limakatso kaha ho ne ho laela eena, a hla a etsa ka matla ho khotaletsa'm`ae hore a re Sehloho...a nyale.
(p 56)

(Because Limakatso had authority over her mother, she told her mother to command Sehloho to marry.)

Ka letsatsi le leng Limakatso le 'Mathabo ba qoaketsana. Limakatso a belaela ka hore 'Mathabo h'a sa etsa motoho, joale ngoana o bolaoa ke tlala... (p 57)

(One day Limakatso quarreled with 'Mathabo. Limakatso was protesting that her child was very hungry because 'Mathabo did not prepare soft-porridge any more.)

The above examples indicate that Limakatso had control over her mother. She had guts to order her mother to do certain things, especially those that satisfy her, such as advising her mother to force Sehloho to marry. Next she seems to feel free to order 'Mathabo to do certain household work while she sits back and does nothing in turn. These attitudes depict Limakatso as an authoritative character. She gives commands to her mother and wants to execute some to her sister-in-law.

In Sesotho society, a daughter who commands her parents and probably her sister-in-law is given derogatory names, such as, **thope-laela** that literally translates into girl give orders. The expectation is that girls who are not yet married have no power or responsibility to give orders to others. The expectation is that a girl will only acquire power and responsibility only when she gets married. This is indeed a stereotype held over girls by the society. Obviously, the author appears to be an epitome of the society that valued such practices.

2.7.2.3 Laziness

Laziness refers to the habit of unwilling to work or of doing as little as possible work or showing lack of effort or care for work. Limakatso's laziness is conceived from the above discussion (cf. paragraph 2.7.2.2). She is lazy to prepare food for her own child and condemns her sister-in-law when there is none. To expound more on her state of laziness, the narrator says:

O ne a bone hore mosali-moholo o se a holile 'me eena ka baka la botsoa a tsoafa hore o tla tlameha ho sehla ka thata. (p 57)

(She had seen that her mother was old and because of her laziness, she was worried that she would have to work harder.)

Haele Limakatso o ne a ituletse feela ho se seo a se etsang. (p 58)

(Limakatso spends her time idling.)

The above extracts reflect Limakatso as a lazy character. All she wants is to idle and probably “to make” children. In the first example, the narrator literally says *o botsoa* (she is lazy). This is the reason why she advises her

mother to order Sehloho to marry so that the bride will relief her from household work. In the second instance, she is shown to take pleasure in idling and probably in childbearing.

2.7.2.4 Aggression (cf. section 2.4.3.1 for definition)

Limakatso is also portrayed as an aggressive character. The narrator puts her aggression in the manner below:

Limakatso le 'ma`e ba ne ba hlola ba hlabile 'Mathabo ka mantsoe. Ba mo hopotsa ka mehla hore o nyetsoe ka likhomo... (p 57)

(Limakatso and her mother always hurt 'Mathabo with words. They always reprimanded her that she was married with cattle.)

The afore-cited instance reflects Limakatso as a rude character. She has an attacking spirit towards 'Mathabo because **bohali** (bride price) has been paid for her. As a result, she unsettles her by reprimanding her time after time that **bohali** has been paid for her.

Overall, Limakatso is depicted as a wicked character. She has no social fear of giving birth to children outside marriage. Above this, she is authoritative both to her mother and to her sister-in-law. At the same time, she is lazy and aggressive. In short, Limakatso is portrayed as a bad character.

2.8 Conclusion

The chapter set out to make a critical analysis of how girl characters are portrayed. Some of the key concepts such as characterisation and character portrayal techniques were defined. A synopsis of each text was given before analyzing the character/s found in it.

Of great importance, different character traits that the girl characters have were listed and analysed in depth. With some characters, the authors managed to give the weak and strong points of the characters. However, with others only one side of their characteristics has been given. For example, for Senate and Limakatso, only the weak sides of their characteristics have been given, whereas characters such as 'Mita, Molahluoa and Likeleli are depicted as having both strong and weak character traits.

The first set of girls shares a number of similar character traits. For instance, they are portrayed as having beautiful bodily features. Next, they are depicted as either being dependent on men for marriage or being in a relationship with young men.

With regard to the second set of girls, we realize that they are infested with bad behaviour. The duo is aggressive and promiscuous. They attack those with whom they live with words. Worse enough, they are immoral in that they engage in sexual intercourse with many men. For example, Senate falls in love with fathers and their children and with a white man. As for Limakatso, she gives birth to many illegitimate children.

The way all girls are presented is such that they are all placed in a relationship with males. We note that, it is in such relationships where they are either impregnated or abandoned by their boy friends or end up in a marriage. For example, 'Mita and Likeleli were rejected by their suitors. Limakatso did not end in a marriage at all. Mopeli forsakes senate and her

marriage ends. Molahluoa is the only character whose love affair lands her in a happy marriage.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to make an analysis of character portrayal of women characters. In a similar manner with chapter two, characterisation (cf. paragraph 2.2) remain impeccable in directing us to choose the characters for analysis. This chapter also gives the names of the women characters to be analysed. To make the analysis comprehensive and concise enough, we will give the character traits of the women that rotate around their social, psychological and physical milieus. An in-depth analysis will be made on character traits derived from a close look at the aforementioned milieus. Such milieus will account for the credibility of the characters actions and behaviours.

3.2 Selected Women Characters

The women characters that appear in the four texts that are analysed and discussed are 'Mamopeli from *Mohanuoa*, 'Malehlohonolo from *Molahluoa*, 'Masehloho and 'Mathabo from "Sethoto", and 'Malitaba from "Likeleli".

3.3 ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER PORTRAYAL OF 'MAMOPELI IN MOHANUOA BY M.M.MAKARA

This section makes an analysis of character portrayal of 'Mamopeli. Her character traits that evolve around her social and psychological milieus will be analysed in the following paragraphs. This will be done to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the character's behaviour.

3.3.1 'MAMOPELI

In order to provide a contextual understanding of character portrayal of 'Mamopeli, we will look at her character traits that emanate from her social encounters with her co-characters. In doing this, we will concentrate among other things what the narrating character says about 'Mamopeli, her revelation through what she says, her actions and reactions, and descriptions by fellow characters that are revealed through characterisation (cf. paragraph 2.2) used by the author. This strategy will enable us to form a concrete picture of the character.

Character traits such as tribalism, influence of **khethela** custom, contempt, hatred, disobedience and authoritativeness will be looked at. The explanations of what these traits are taken to mean in our study will be made in each sub-section.

3.3.1.1 Tribalism

Tribalism in the case of our study refers to the behaviour and loyalties that result from belonging to a certain tribe especially in opposition to other tribes. It comprises a group in which humans are divided according to their physical characteristics, for example, a group of people who have the same culture, history and language. It results in treating others indiscriminately and the formation of arbitrary distinctions among the groups.

The formation of the afore-mentioned tribal groups is the one that influences 'Mamopeli to despise 'Mita. Thus, 'Mamopeli is portrayed as a tribalist. Because of this, she acts as an obstacle to the success of Mopeli's marriage to 'Mita. Her tribalism is revealed by her co-characters (Mopeli) as shown below.

Taba ke hore 'm`e ha a batle ha ke nyala ngoanana eo e seng Motlokoa. (p 13)

(The fact is, my mother does not want me to marry a girl who is not Motlokoa.)

This excerpt portrays 'Mamopeli as a conservatist in as far as tribal discrimination is concerned. The narrating character reveals her discrimination as follows:

A bolela ka moo mohofe oo oa Mokhalahali o se nang ho kena ka har'a ntlo ea hae. (p 14)

(She indicated that that poor Mokhalahali would not enter her house.)

From the above extract, 'Mamopeli calls 'Mita both **mohofe** and **Mokhalahali**. It is because of being **mohofe** and **Mokhalahali** that she does not like her. **Mohofe** means an extremely poor person. This is one of the reasons why 'Mamopeli does not allow Mopeli to marry her.

Another reason is that 'Mita originates from the Khalahali tribe. Batlokoa contemptuously use this word to refer to Basotho. The implication being that they are the people from the Kalahari desert, which also implies that they are the San (Damane and Sanders 1974, and Bereng and Lehloenya 1991). Batlokoa and Basotho are historical rivals. Their rivalry continued even after Batlokoa had sought protection from Letsie around the 1880s (Damane 1960 and 1993). Because of the onslaught that was between Batlokoa and Basotho, the arbitrary mutual discrimination remains inherent to date.

It is on the bases of the tribal discriminations that 'Mamopeli does not like 'Mita. This is further revealed on page 20 where she says: **ha ke 'matle ngoana eno oa Khalahali ha ka mona 'na** (I do not like that Khalahali child in my home). The fact that 'Mamopeli continually refers to 'Mita as Mokhalahali shows beyond doubt that she acts under the influence of tribal differences. Socialist feminism is against attitudes such as the abovementioned because it argues that discriminations based on class structures and divisions are wrong.

3.3.1.2 Influence of Khethela Custom

Khethela custom is a practice by which parents choose a wife for their son without consulting him about the girl he would like to marry. Sekese (1893: 3) gives this as follows: “**Baholo ba mohlankana ba...rera ka ntle ho eena ho mo batlela mosali.**” (The boy's parents arrange to find a wife for him without asking him). The reason for the parents to choose a wife for their son was to ensure that they chose a suitable wife for him who would take care of them and their son.

The implication of the quotation is that it was the responsibility of the parents to arrange marriages of their children. Apparently, this is the practice that 'Mamopeli favours. Thus, she is portrayed as the character that values the custom of **khethela** in the marriage process. Her eagerness to choose a wife for Mopeli is given by the other character ('Mita) as follows:

...ke 'm`e 'Mamopeli ea neng a rata ho mo khethela ngoanana ea ratoang ke eena. (p 31)

(It was 'm`e 'Mamopeli who wanted to choose for him the girl she would want him to marry.)

As explicitly declared by 'Mita, 'Mamopeli adores the **khethela** custom. She does not allow Mopeli to marry 'Mita because she is not the one who chose her. It suffices therefore, to conclude that 'Mamopeli is influenced by the **khethela** custom.

What 'Mamopeli does from the above discussions is not supported by liberal feminism. Although the advent of this theory is committed to the struggle of women against patriarchy, it still applies to 'Mamopeli who is the agent of patriarchal inconsistency. This is so because the custom of **khethela** in its own right favoured men than women. Habits such as these are decried by liberal feminism. Thus, liberal feminism favours changes in laws, customs and values in order to achieve the goal of equality for all. It argues that, the rules of the game should be fair so that no one is systematically disadvantaged. The implication of this being that people be given space to do what they like without being forced by the society or anybody to do what is against their will.

3.3.1.3 Contempt

Contempt refers to a feeling in a person that somebody is worthless and does not deserve respect. In short, it is a feeling that, one is much more important than other people are. This is what 'Mamopeli has towards 'Mita and her family. On this account, 'Mamopeli is depicted as a contemptuous character. The omniscient observer provides the reason for her negative attitude as follows:

A bontša kamoo monna a senyang ka teng ka ho nyalla bafutsana bano ka khomo tse ngata ha kaalo tseo ba sa tl'o tseba na ba etsang ka tsona. A bolela ka moo mohofe oo oa Mokhalahali o se nang ho kena ka har'a ntlo ea hae. (p 14)

(She told her husband that he was wasteful by paying those poor people with so many heads of cattle, which they would squander recklessly. She pointed out that such a poor Mokhalahali was not going to enter her house.)

The above extract shows that 'Mamopeli thinks that 'Mita's family does not deserve to be paid enough **bohali** (the cattle/price that is given to the parents of the bride by the groom's family) because it is wastefulness to do so. She thinks that 'Mita's family would not be able to use the **bohali** appropriately. The tribal discrimination as well as the welfare of 'Mita's family are given the upper hand in the extract. In calling 'Mita's family names as well as her wish not to pay them enough **bohali**, mark 'Mamopeli as a contemptuous woman. She reveals herself as being more important than 'Mita's family.

'Mamopeli's contempt towards 'Mita is also revealed where she prefers Senate over 'Mita because the latter's family is well off and dignified. Senate's family is opposed to 'Mita's family which 'Mamopeli refers to as **matlakala ana** (this trash) (p 19). 'Mamopeli is the character that feels comfortable when she tramples on the downtrodden. It is because of her nature that 'Mita's grandmother calls her **moikhohomosi** (a pompous person) (p 13). 'Mamopeli's disregard of 'Mita because of her poverty is not only regarded as improper in Sesotho society, but also socialist feminism strongly contests that attitude. It proposes that discrimination of people based on social class is wrong. It further, reiterates that such discriminations lead to divisions among groups of people and ultimately results in oppression.

3.3.1.4 Hatred

Hatred means a feeling of strong dislike towards other people. This is what 'Mamopeli has towards 'Mita. In other words, 'Mamopeli is depicted as having hatred towards 'Mita. This state of affairs leaves Mopeli with mixed feelings as regards his intention to marry 'Mita. The narrator reveals Mopeli's thoughts as follows:

...ha a nahana lehloeo leo 'm`ae a hloileng 'Mita a ipotse hore na ba tla phelisana... (p 20)

(When he considered the hatred that his mother has towards 'Mita he wondered whether they could live together.)

The extract shows that 'Mamopeli's hatred towards 'Mita was not hidden, her son knew about it. The word **lehloeo** which literally translates into hate, indicates beyond doubt that 'Mamopeli hates 'Mita. 'Mamopeli reveals her hatred in what she says in the extract underneath.

Ke tiile hommeng, ha ke re ha ke 'matle ngoana eno oa Khalahali ha ka mona 'na. (p 20)

(I indeed mean it when I say that I do not want that Khalahali child in my home.)

The tribal discrimination is made an issue again. Importantly, 'Mamopeli says **ha ke 'matle** (I do not want/like her). If somebody does not like the other person, she/he hates him/her. As a result, 'Mamopeli comments verbally that she hates 'Mita. 'Mamopeli's hatred towards 'Mita is regarded as a discrimination. In line with socialist feminism, what 'Mamopeli does is wrong. Thus, socialist feminism proposes that people should not be discriminated against because of their social class.

With regard to discussions made above, no apparent reason whatsoever is cited that evokes 'Mamopeli's hatred towards 'Mita. However, the words **lehloeo** and **ha ke 'matle** given in the extracts above, highlight and prove that 'Mamopeli indeed hates 'Mita. Based on the discussions in previous sections, one is able to come up with a three-pronged source of that hatred. First, it would be that 'Mamopeli hates 'Mita because she is not the one who chose her, second because 'Mita has a poor parentage, and last because she originates from the Khalahali tribe (cf. paragraph 3.3.1.1).

3.3.1.5 Disobedience

Disobedience means unwillingness to obey or not doing what one is expected to do. 'Mamopeli is portrayed as a disobedient woman. Her eagerness to choose a suitable wife for Mopeli generates disputes between her and her family. In her firmness to fulfill her intention, she becomes disobedient to her husband. She is reflected as a disobedient character by the narrating voice in the ensuing extract.

O (morena Letšoara) ne a tennoe ke sebopeho sa ngoetsi...sa ho rata ho iketsetsa boithatelo a sa mamele monna. (p 13)

(He was weary of his daughter-in-law's attitude of doing what she likes and not listening to her husband.)

This extract portrays 'Mamopeli as unruly and disobedient to her husband as borne in the phrase **a sa mamele monna** and **ho rata ho iketsetsa boithatelo**. According to Sesotho culture, the man is the head of the family (**monna ke hlooho**), as a result, he has to be respected and obeyed by his wife. That is, a woman is relegated to subordinate position in the family in

Sesotho society. A good wife is bound by custom to be obedient, passive, submissive and loyal to her husband. Such a woman is accredited for being that way and is regarded as a pride of her husband. Sekese (1893:3) supports this by reiterating:

A (mosali) leke kahohle kamoo a ka tsebang ho khahlisa monna oa hae...

(She should try her utmost to please her husband.)

This citation has a bearing that the woman has to be loyal and obedient to her husband as part of **hlonepha** custom (this custom entails a number of things to be avoided and observed by a married woman as a sign of respect to certain male relatives). Unfortunately, 'Mamopeli does not succumb to this tradition. In this case, 'Mamopeli is reflected as a character far from approving such norms. She does what she likes without doing what her husband tells her to do.

Her disobedience further surfaces when she challenges her husband by advising Mopeli to elope with Senate to Durban, an order contrary to what her husband had ordered him to do (p 19). Whereas, culture subjects women to peripheral positions, Feminist criticism declares that women should be given freedom of speech. Thus, feminist criticism is committed to the struggle of women on such gender injustices, for example, subordination. In short, it supports the attitude of 'Mamopeli's lack of passivity and insubordination.

3.3.1.6 Authoritativeness

Authoritativeness means the attitude by which somebody likes to lead others by giving them orders to follow. That is, showing the power to give orders and making others to obey. Authoritativeness differs from disobedience because the former refers to the habit of showing domineering attitude while the latter refers to unwillingness to obey others (cf. paragraph 3.3.1.5). 'Mamopeli is portrayed as having such powers. On this regard, 'Mamopeli is depicted as a domineering character. The narrator says:

*...ka mehla a ke ke a etsa qeto leha e le ntle ha feela
'Manchoabola enoa oa hae oa mosali a sa rate. (p 13)*

(All the time he could not make decisions even if they were constructive if this 'Manchoabola of his did not want them.)

It is clear from the above extract that 'Mamopeli is a domineering character. On this account, she leads her husband in decision-making. In short, for the decision to be solemnised as correct, it has to come from her. It is because of that attitude that the narrating character refers to her as '**Manchoabola**, the implication being that she is a talkative woman.

Traditionally, women are not expected to take part in decision making in Sesotho society, instead, they are only informed of the conclusions. However, 'Mamopeli does not respect that practice; she takes an active role in the marriage plan. She capitalizes on her acquired leadership and misuses it to satisfy her own desires. Her domination is further reflected where she says:

*Ngoana eo ke mo holisitseng ka mokhoa oo a tla
mamela 'na 'm`ae, a etse thato ea ka. (p 18)*

(This child I raised in the manner that he will listen to me her mother and do as I please.)

We infer from this extract that 'Mamopeli raised Mopeli in the manner such that he would listen to and respect her alone. Unfortunately, her nurturing is revealed to us as a bad one because we sense that she brought up Mopeli in a manner that he would discriminate against others.

Culturally, women who dominate their husbands are regarded as unruly in Sesotho society. With regard to the proposition of feminist criticism, women's subordination and relegation to peripheral positions is considered a patriarchal ideology. As such, feminist criticism is committed to the struggle of women on issues such as gender injustices. Thus, in the light of the discussions above, women who lack passivity and take active roles in decision-making, like 'Mamopeli are given a laudable appraisal.

Generally, 'Mamopeli holds on to tribalism as a factor that makes her reject 'Mita. She is also under a strong influence of **khethela** that she wants to administer over her son. Importantly, she is callous towards other people especially those that she considers as trash. At the same time, she becomes disobedient to her husband and finalizes matters by overpowering him in matters regarding Mopeli's marriage.

3.4 ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER PORTRAYAL OF 'MALEHLHONOLO IN *MOLAHLUOA* BY N.TŠASANYANE- RALENGAU

The objective of this section is to make a critical analysis of character portrayal of 'Malehlohonolo. We have based the choice of her outstanding

character traits on characterisation techniques (cf. paragraph 2.2) used by the author. We provide and discuss the character traits that intrigued us most in the paragraphs below.

3.4.1 'MALEHLOHONOLO

When dealing with the character portrayal of 'Malehlohonolo, the following character traits, aggression, lack of sympathy, disrespect and abuse will be taken into account.

3.4.1.1 Aggression

As shown on paragraph 2.4.3.1, aggression means showing violent or hostile behaviour towards others or showing readiness to attack or quarrel. This is the behaviour that 'Malehlohonolo displays dominantly in the text. That is, 'Malehlohonolo is depicted as aggressive. The narrator presents her aggression as follows:

A shashabetsa Mapiloko ka bohale. (P 8)

(She spoke to Mapiloko with rage.)

A bua joalo a sheshena Mapiloko ka likojoana... (p 9)

(As she spoke, she grabbed Mapiloko with his clothes.)

The narrator does not only portray 'Malehlohonolo as aggressive; but she also confirms that trait where she says:

Moo ke tlang ho mo fumana teng ke tla mo loantša ka matsoho le likoakoa! (p 50)

(If I come across her, I will fight her with my own hands as well as with weapons.)

The above set of quotations reflect 'Malehlohonolo as an aggressive character. Among other things, she speaks to Mapiloko with rage and grabs him with his clothes. One realizes that 'Malehlohonolo shows readiness to attack Mapiloko in the manner in which she speaks to him. Immediately, she attacks him by grabbing him with his clothes. This behaviour does not only present her as hostile but also as a violent character. Above all, she personally vows that should she come across Molahluoa, she would fight her with her own hands as well as with weapons.

'Malehlohonolo's display of hostile and violent behaviour is not condoned in Sesotho culture. It is even worse, when she shows that habit towards men or the king's messengers or councillors. According to Sesotho tradition, a woman has to pay due respect to all men. Upon her failure to observe that practice, she is considered a bad woman. Thus, according to Sesotho culture, 'Malehlohonolo is a bad woman. However, liberal feminism condones a habit by which women become impassive in nature and yet it does not say a word about women's aggression on men or their female counterparts.

3.4.1.2 Lack of Sympathy

Lack of sympathy means lacking the ability to share in the feelings of others or not showing pity and sorrow for somebody. It was typical of 'Malehlohonolo to show this behaviour on Molahluoa. On this note, 'Malehlohonolo is reflected as unsympathetic to Molahluoa. When Molahluoa cries to show that she is scared because she thinks that she is going to be beaten up for not looking after the animals properly, 'Malehlohonolo does not show mercy. Instead, she scares her even more by saying:

Ke seboko sa'ng ha ka moo? (p 8)

(What is all this wailing in my home about?)

This extract does not only reflect 'Malehlohonolo as an unsympathetic character, but also as an unloving one. Instead of soothing Molahluoa, she aggravates the state of her fright. To make matters worse, she declines to take the responsibility of the cattle that trespassed on the chief's fields and says:

*Lesholu le lefa ka hlooho ea lona. 'Na ke ne ke le sieo
masimong a morena...motho ea neng a lisitse ke enoa.
(p 9)*

(A thief pays with his/her own head. I was not at chief's fields. Here is the person who was herding.)

What 'Malehlohonolo means is that, she should not be held accountable for the animals that trespassed on the chief's fields; instead Molahluoa should be punished for that. According to Sesotho culture, if the animals destroy somebody else's property, the owner is made accountable for the replenishment or payment. Children are not made accountable for any damage to property whether by intend or error. In this case, 'Malehlohonolo declines that responsibility. Obviously, 'Malehlohonolo lacks motherly love.

3.4.1.3 Disrespect

Disrespect in our case is taken to mean the state of being rude or showing no respect to others. 'Malehlohonolo is portrayed as a disrespectful character. In showing her disrespect, she speaks to men as though they are children. Women are expected to be modest and to respect men even if they

are not their husbands in Sesotho society. To show her disrespect to Mapiloko, 'Malehlohonolo says:

U peraletse moo uena, u entse joang? (p 8)

(Why are you standing idle there? What is wrong?)

The use of the phrase **u peraletse** and the word **uena** are demeaning in the manner in which they are used. It is impolite for a person who is regarded as a minor to use the above-mentioned words in Sesotho culture. If someone uses them, she/he is considered disrespectful. Additionally, 'Malehlohonolo undermines the chief and his councillors as follows:

Hantle-ntle ke tletse eng...A botsa a itsoere thekeng. (p 9)

(What exactly have I come here for? As she asked, her arms were akimbo.)

When the chief asks her some questions, she does not answer them, rather she asks him her own. She makes the chief and his councillors look insane by the use of **hantle-ntle ke tletse eng**. It is as if the chief and his men are mad and do not know why they have called her. To make matters worse, she puts her arms akimbo. Women are expected to be cool and respectful in Sesotho tradition when the headmen had called them at khotla.

Contrarily, if the same deeds that 'Malehlohonolo does are done by a male it is not considered to be disrespect. This attitude undoubtedly segregates between males and females; as such, it limits women's participation in certain places. Although what 'Malehlohonolo does is against the morals of Basotho, this is the behaviour that feminist critics thoroughly encourage. It argues that women should not be subordinated because of their gender;

instead, they should be given a chance to freedom of expression and equal opportunity in matters that require their word.

3.4.1.4 Abuse

Abuse means a bad or cruel treatment of a person. 'Malehlohonolo has a harsh treatment on Molahluoa. In short, she is depicted as an abusive woman. Her abuse is revealed where the narrator says:

Ka nako e 'ngoe o ne a tloha a utloile 'mamonanyetsa, kapa a sa ja. (p 7)

(Sometimes she would be beaten up before she left or she would not be given any food.)

There are two acts of abuse that surface from the extract above. First, 'Malehlohonolo beats Molahluoa some days and second, she does not give her some food in others. These acts undoubtedly mark her as an abusive character. Her abusiveness is further revealed in the extract below.

'Malehlohonolo...a mo tsebisa hore...likhomo li mo emetse; ha a qeta ho koalla linku, a tle a tli' o hama, kaha a tsoanetse ho ea selibeng...o ile a akhelo a senkhoa sa papa. (p 13)

('Malehlohonolo notified her that she should go and milk the cows after driving the sheep to their kraal. She (Molahluoa) was also supposed to go to draw water as well. She threw a piece of bread to her.)

The above excerpt reveals 'Malehlohonolo as abusive by giving Molahluoa so many duties to perform while she does nothing. Among other things, she has to get the sheep in their kraal, milk the cows, draw water and in turn a piece of bread as thrown to her. It is unkind for a person to throw food to others when they give them. Food, bones or leftovers are only thrown to

dogs when they are fed. By throwing food to Molahluoa, 'Malehlohonolo relegates her to the position of dogs. Evidently, 'Malehlohonolo abuses Molahluoa physically, emotionally and otherwise.

It is on the guise of the discussions above that 'Malehlohonolo is concluded to be a bad woman. She is abusive and aggressive to Molahluoa and disrespects everybody that she comes across. One assumes that 'Malehlohonolo is depicted in the manner above because she is barren and wealthy.

3.5 ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER PORTRAYAL OF 'MALITABA IN "LIKELELI" BY A.M FOBO

Analysis of character portrayal of 'Malitaba centres on her attributes that come up as she socializes with other characters. Character traits that come up because of her psychological responses to what happens around her will also be discussed. The identification of 'Malitaba's character traits has been based on characterisation techniques discussed in section 2.2. The character traits that this section focuses on are provided and discussed below.

3.5.1 'MALITABA

When portraying 'Malitaba, we intend to look at the following character traits aggression, contempt, and authoritativeness.

3.5.1.1 Aggression

We will not define what aggression means because we have already done that (cf. paragraph 2.4.3.1). 'Malitaba is depicted as an aggressive character. She rebukes Mohlouoa when he asks for permission to marry. 'Malitaba,

crushes him from the spot even before he tells them who he intends to marry. 'Malitaba interrupts him and says:

U n'u tsoela tsona tsee boruting ngoana tooe! Rathana se tje ka uena mosali ke bakeng sa'ng? (p 31)

(Did you withdraw from the seminary for this child?
For what, is a woman to a baby like you?)

'Malitaba uses strong and threatening words when she addresses Mohlouoa's issue. It is noted that, for 'Malitaba to speak with rage, the issue at stake is Mohlouoa's withdrawal from the seminary on the one hand. On the other hand, his state of being too young underlines his lack of knowledge of why he should marry. To underplay his desire to marry, she calls him (se) **rathana se tje ka uena** meaning a worthless little child. The use of this phrase indicates her bitterness and disapproval of the plan.

Despite what she says, her actions reveal what is in her mind, for instance, 'Malitaba looks at Mohlouoa cruelly. This shows that she is a harsh character. The narrator gives an indirect portrayal of 'Malitaba through what she does by saying:

'Malitaba a...gekotsa mora ka ihlo le lebe. O halefa tjena hobane o tseba moroetsana oa mora. (p 31)

('Malitaba gave her son a bad glance. She is furious because she knows her son's girlfriend.)

... 'Malitaba o tla mo pepisa khoho le masiba a eona a sa rera. (p 33)

('Malitaba will scold at him harshly.)

'Malitaba is reflected as a cruel character, she gives Mohlouoa a bad look to scare him out of his intention. Above this, the narrator indicates that 'Malitaba becomes over reactive because she already knew Likeleli was her son's girlfriend. In the second example, it is inferred that 'Malitaba is a torturous character. Probably, she assaults Mohlouoa physically as in **o tla mo pepisa khoho le masiba**.

3.5.1.2 Contempt

For definition of contempt, refer to paragraph 3.3.1.3. 'Malitaba is depicted as contemptuous. This is clarified in the ensuing excerpt where she says:

Khele! Bafokeng ba ka tsoha mabitleng ha nka lumella Mohlouoa ho nyala bohofeng bo joalo. Hona metsoalle eaka e tla nkuka joang ka mafutsana a kang bo-Seretse?
(p 31)

(The Bafokeng can rise from the dead if I allow Mohlouoa to marry from such a poor family. How will my friends consider me with poor people like Seretse's family?)

The above extract indicates that 'Malitaba is prepared to stop Mohlouoa from marrying Likeleli. She says that **Bafokeng ba ka tsoha mabitleng** to show that the marriage will never materialize. She also gives her reason for the disapproval of the marriage as Likeleli's poor state of wealth.

'Malitaba is reflected as a pompous character because she despises Likeleli and her family for their poverty. Her major worry is what her friends would say if they find that, she associates with Seretse's poor family. In other words, 'Malitaba sees Seretse's family as worthless while she thinks she is more important than he is. Contrary to the customary choice of a girl, this

time we find out that the girl's economic welfare stands her a better chance to be selected for marriage. Unfortunately, in the light of the discussion above, socialist feminism argues that discriminations of people based on social class are essentially wrong.

3.5.1.3 Authoritativeness

Authoritativeness is still taken to mean what we have provided in the previous sections (cf. paragraph 3.3.1.6). 'Malitaba is reflected as authoritative. In obscuring Mohlouoa's marriage to the girl of his dreams, she dethrones her husband and takes the lead. The narrator elaborates in the ensuing extract:

Khetlong lena litaba tsa reroa ke 'Malitaba, Mofokeng a thotse e le ngoana. (p 32)

(This time the negotiations were made by 'Malitaba while Mofokeng was as quiet as a child.)

'Malitaba is depicted as a dominating character. On the one hand, she frustrates her son by not allowing him make his own choice in a marriage. On the other hand, she overpowers her husband to a peripheral position while she plans the marriage because Mofokeng did not agree with her. While Sesotho culture views women's participation in customary practices as bad, feminist criticism proposes that women should be given freedom and choice to participate actively in all spheres of life without reservations. Thus, women should not be relinquished to peripheral positions.

Generally, 'Malitaba is depicted as aggressive towards Mohlouoa. She also has contempt towards poor people like Likeleli's family and does not allow her son to marry from such a family. Additionally, she dethrones her

husband and hinders the marriage progress. She also has the nerve to confront Seretse in handling the negotiations. Active participation of women in traditional affairs in Sesotho society is not allowed. Women are expected to sit back and wait until they are invited to do their role. Thus, Sesotho culture expects women to be passive and inactive in decision-making.

Sesotho society upheld this stereotype on women for ages and thereby giving them images of unrealistic human beings. On this notion, the feminist criticism show a great commitment in the struggle of women against their oppression as well as finding the reasons for the said stereotypes posed on them. While Sesotho culture is against insubordination of women, feminist criticism strongly applaud that in that it thinks that women should be given a chance to participate in decision-making and cut the stereotype that has been lingering throughout history.

3.6 ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER PORTRAYAL OF 'MASEHLOHO AND 'MATHABO IN "SETHOTO" BY M. MOEJANE

Of utmost importance, the aim of this section is to analyse the character portrayal of 'Masehloho and 'Mathabo. In handling the analysis, we will identify the personalities of the characters that are revealed through the characterisation techniques that the author has made. The section also provides the names of the characters and discusses the outstanding character traits of each character in the ensuing paragraphs.

3.6.1 'MASEHLOHO

The analysis of character portrayal of 'Masehloho will focus on character traits such as, greed, revilement, oppression and grumbling spirit.

3.6.1.1 Greed

Greed is taken to mean an excessive desire for material things, for example, clothes and money, without considering for the needs of other people. Greed is a characteristic feature of 'Masehloho. She is concerned only with her welfare and not of others. Her greed is reflected by what the narrator says below.

'Masehloho le eena a kopa ntho 'ena le ntho 'ane. (pp 57)

('Masehloho was always asking for this and that)

The above extract reveals 'Masehloho as always asking for many things (**ntho'ena le ntho'ane**) from 'Mathabo. Her greed is put through her co-character ('Mathabo) as follows:

Etsoe u tseba hore ea ngoana hao chelete le e ja le eena, le hona joale u tlile ho eona hobane ha u khotsofale leha u ntse u romelloa chelete. (p 62)

(You know well that you share your son's money with him, you have also come for more because you are not satisfied with the money we sent you.)

The excerpts above gives specific things (**chelete**) that 'Masehloho has greed for. It is also interesting to note that 'Masehloho is a hard-to-please kind of person as in: **ha u khotsofale leha u ntse u romelloa chelete**. She always asks 'Mathabo to give her something. She is portrayed as an unloving mother because she does not want to see her children prosper. Worse still, she asks for 'Mathabo's only pair of shoes to give to

Limakatso's daughter (p 57). On this account, she is depicted as a greedy character.

3.6.1.2 Revilement

Revilement means the act of criticizing another person in an angry and insulting language to make someone feel belittled. This is what 'Masehloho has towards 'Mathabo. She is reflected a reviling character. She unsettles 'Mathabo by scorning and attacking her with heart piercing words. This attitude is reflected by what she says in the extract below.

Oho tse na tsa ka lingoetsi li iketla hampe. O bone 'Mathabo ha a tsebe hore na ho sebetsa ke'ng, o fetoa ke ngoetsi ea 'Mamohlolo. (p 57)

(My daughters-in-law live comfortably. 'Mathabo has nothing to do as opposed to 'Mamohlolo's daughter-in-law who works very hard.)

From the above extract, 'Masehloho speaks ironically that 'Mathabo is rejoicing while in fact she means that she is lazy. To make matters worse, she compares her with 'Mamohlolo's daughter-in-law. This is done to make 'Mathabo feel worthless and valueless to her family. The reviling attitude was a habitual behaviour of 'Masehloho. On this, the narrator says:

'Masehloho le morali ba mo komela joalo ka ngoan'a lesea. (p 59)

('Masehloho and her daughter reviled her like a little child.)

'Masehloho scoffed at 'Mathabo jointly with Limakatso. The phrase **ba mo komela** implies that they used angry and insulting language when they

scolded her. They also overlooked her as an adult; they scolded her as if she were a small child.

3.6.1.3 Oppression

Oppression means the state of treating somebody in a cruel or harsh way in order to make him/her feel uncomfortable and unhappy. In other words, it is the act of causing distress in a person by giving him/her a bad treatment. This is the kind of attitude that 'Masehloho shows to 'Mathabo on daily bases. Because of bad treatment, 'Masehloho is portrayed as oppressive. Her oppressiveness is revealed by what she says in the extract below.

Ana likhomo tsela tse tsoileng beno ba li jele le Limakatso? (p 58)

(Did your parents enjoy the **bohali** we paid to them with Limakatso?)

In the above extract, 'Masehloho protects Limakatso who did not do the duty that she had assigned to both her and 'Mathabo. She sees no problem when Limakatso defies her orders because she has not been married with **bohali** (cf. paragraph 2.7.2.4). As a result, 'Mathabo is bound to work without complaining because she has been married with **bohali**. **Bohali** is the cause of 'Mathabo's difficulties and bad treatment in marriage. 'Masehloho repeatedly subjects her to slavery as shown in what she says below.

Ha re ntša likhomo re le nyalisa e ee be e le hore basali ba lona ba tl'o re sebeletsa ha re tsofetse. (p 59)

(When we pay **bohali** for you to marry, it is because we want your wives to work for us during our old age.)

The above extracts show that 'Mathabo is oppressed because bohali has been paid for her. The implication of this extract is that women are married in order to relief their in-laws from work. It is improper for 'Masehloho to consider **bohali** price as a purchases price. Matšela (1990:35) gives the reason for payment of **bohali** as follows:

Lenyalong la Sesotho likhomo tsa bohali e n'e se thekiso kamoo basomi ba kajeno ba bolelang. E n'e le tumellano ea teboho ho batsoali ba moroetsana...likhomo tseo ha se (sic) theko...empa ke teboho, le thuso ho ba amohuoang mothusi oa bona.

(In Sesotho marriage, **bohali** was not purchase, as today's scoffers would say. It was a pledge given as a way of thanking the girl's parents. The cattle given are not purchase price but a way of thanking and helping those who have been deprived of their helper.)

Matšela's explanation of why **bohali** is paid shows that it is not purchases. It is therefore, unnecessary to subject married women to slavery because of **bohali**. This discussion sheds light on us, that 'Masehloho is not following the tradition of **bohali** by oppressing 'Mathabo.

In Sesotho society, the oppression of daughters-in-law is first enforced by her biological parents and later reinforced by her in-laws during **ho beka**; that Ngcangca (1987) defines as a breakthrough programme. The daughter-in-law is made duty conscious. She is highly appreciated if she is duty conscious and simultaneously exploited in the household work. Apparently, habits such as these of 'Masehloho are totally objected by feminist critics. Liberal feminism argues that duty allocation should not have a stink of bias whatsoever.

'Masehloho's oppressiveness is again revealed when she stops 'Mathabo from going to her teaching post and forces her to brew for the people who were going to harvest. The narrator says:

Mohl'a...ba tla tsoha ba tsamaea... 'Masehloho a mo laela ho ritela joala ba letsema la ho kotula. (p 58)

(The day before they left, 'Masehloho ordered her ('Mathabo) to brew for people who were going to harvest.)

This example reflects the bad treatment that 'Masehloho practiced on 'Mathabo. She coerces her to go to the fields instead of going to work. To her 'Mathabo is wasting time by dodging her duties and going to play (teach) with children at school (p 59).

3.6.1.4 Grumbling Spirit

Grumbling spirit means the habit of complaining in a bad tempered manner to show dissatisfaction with something. 'Masehloho is portrayed as having grumbling spirit on everything that 'Mathabo does. She grumbles when 'Mathabo orders Limakatso's daughter whom she stays with to do some duties. She says:

Ha nka ba ka makala ha setloholo sena sa ka se fihla se otile hae koana. Ke hlile ka tseba hore bo-'Mathabo motho oa bona o fumane borena thabeng...ha a il'a lula fatše letsatsi le likela a ngoatheloa joaloka monna. (p 60)

(My granddaughter's thinness did not surprise me when she arrived home. I knew that 'Mathabo had grabbed chieftainship in the balance. She would sit all day receiving food like a man.)

'Masehloho's grumbling habit is given a laudable significance in the above extract. When 'Mathabo gives orders to the child that she was forced to adopt, 'Masehloho complains that she oppresses her. 'Masehloho says that 'Mathabo is like a king who has servants who prepare food for her. In doing this, 'Masehloho shows dissatisfaction when 'Mathabo gives orders to her granddaughter.

'Masehloho complains even when she has visited 'Mathabo where she teaches. She grumbles when 'Mathabo uses her belongings the way she likes. On this, she says:

Haeba ngoana enoa oa ka o tla hloma ke mosali enoa ea iphetotseng lekhood! Ha metsi a itlhatsoang a sa bele ha a tlosoe ifo. Ruri Sehloho o tla ba moputsoa, likobo tsa hae li felle mahetleng haeba a sa hlokomela mosali enoa.
(p 61)

(I wonder if my child will ever prosper because of his wife who has converted herself into a white person. If the bathing water does not boil, it is not removed from the hearth. Indeed, Sehloho will be impoverished if he does not guard against her.)

'Masehloho shows her worry that 'Mathabo is extravagant. She is worried that Sehloho will be impoverished forever if he does not stop her. Over and above her habitual grumbling, an element of discrimination is revealed. On the one hand, she refers to Sehloho as **ngoana enoa oa ka** while on the other she refers to 'Mathabo as **mosali enoa**. She discriminates against 'Mathabo because she is not her biological child. At the same time, she overlooks that 'Mathabo works for herself and that they share property with Sehloho. That is, 'Masehloho speaks as if 'Mathabo is not working; it is only her son who is working.

Undoubtedly, 'Masehloho is inciting Sehloho to lock horns with 'Mathabo. In other words, she wants Sehloho to be aggressive to her which behaviour would ultimately break their family. 'Masehloho is now reflected as dissatisfied because 'Mathabo has begun to be defensive when her rights are trampled upon.

3.6.2 'MATHABO

The analysis of her portrayal centres on character traits that culminated from her physical and emotional responses to the stimuli caused by the opposing characters. The following characteristics; strength, industriousness and fighting spirit have been discussed broadly.

3.6.2.1 Strength

By strength we mean the state of being strong, being physically powerful or undertaking duties with great physical power. On this account, 'Mathabo is portrayed as a strong character. Her strength is alluded to by the narrator in this way:

O ne a le matla a kang a lihole. 'Me a sebetsa...a thabile. (p 57)

(She was extremely strong. Moreover, she always did her work happily.)

'Mathabo's strength is depicted as an extraordinary one. 'Mathabo mainly shows strength in the household work. She undertakes her domestic chores with immense power. Above all, when she does her job, she is always happy. In Sesotho culture, if a woman is strong she is praised and appreciated by the society. This gives the woman the image of an important person.

3.6.2.2 Industriousness

Industriousness is taken to mean working hard and giving material and physical help where there is a need. Being industrious differs with being strong (cf. paragraph 3.6.2.1) in that it extends beyond using physical power because it incorporates the use of material things, for example, money.

'Mathabo gives material help to her in-laws despite their bad treatment on her. Because of this, 'Mathabo is depicted as an industrious character. She shows her industriousness when she maintains the members of the household with her salary. For example, she declares having sent money for 'Masehloho (p 61) and by giving her mother-in-law most of the things that she asked from her. For instance, the narrator says:

'Masehloho le eena a kopa ntho 'ena le ntho 'ane (p 57).

('Masehloho asked for many things.)

In addition, she sent one of Limakatso's many children to school on her salary (p 60). For 'Mathabo to show responsibility in maintaining members of the household indicates that she is industrious.

3.6.2.3 Fighting Spirit

Fighting spirit is taken to mean the act struggling to resist unfair and unjust treatment in order to gain freedom and independency from oppression. 'Mathabo is depicted as a character that is envisaged with the said spirit. She is portrayed as the character that knows her rights. She is crying for independency from her sister and mother-in-law's oppression. As a result, she stands up to fight. This is borne in the ensuing extract where she says:

'Ma-ngoana ke eena ea hlokomelang hore na ngoana oa hae o ja'ng, e seng a lebelle basali ba bang. (p 57)

(It is the responsibility of the child's mother to see to it that she feeds her own child and stop looking forward to others.)

The above extract indicates that 'Mathabo is refusing to take orders from Limakatso. The strength of the words used in the above extract declare war between 'Mathabo and Limakatso should she persist to cross her. She shows that it is the mother's right to cook for her children. This attitude reflects 'Mathabo as the woman who knows her roles as well as where her rights start and end. In doing so, she shows the fighting spirit against the oppression posed by her sister-in-law. On account of this, she also plans ahead of time to act against 'Masehloho's oppression over her (p 60). Immediately, she confronts 'Masehloho and says:

Ha u ka 'na ua pheta ua bapalla ho 'na mona u tla ntseba hantle. (p 60)

(If you continue teasing me, you will be sorry.)

'Mathabo first warns 'Masehloho that she should cease her torturous and reviling attitude towards her before she stands up to fight. 'Mathabo's awareness that 'Masehloho has turned her into a playing thing is revealed. On this account, she boldly tells 'Masehloho that she will regret her deeds. Upon 'Masehloho's failure to listen to what 'Mathabo says, she shoves her out of her house saying:

Ha ke tsebe ntho eo u mpatlang eona mosali-moholo tooe! Kea u fepa, u apere hantle feela ha u na khotso le 'na. ...Ntsoele ka ntlo u na le ha hao! U tla fumana le

matha ka mor'a bara bana ba lona e ka le hlajoa ke mahae le ntse le tsamaisa bofapanyi feela. Tsamaea! (p 62)

(I do not know what you want from me old woman! I give you food and nice clothes but you are not at peace with me. Get out of my house because you have your own home. You are always running after your sons as though you are not satisfied at your home. Yours is to break up families. Go away!)

The afore-cited excerpt reflects 'Mathabo as having the right to fight because she has tried all she could to satisfy 'Masehloho but all in vain. Among other things, she gives her food and clothes to please her. She is also aware that 'Masehloho has gone to her place to break her family (cf. paragraph 3.6.1.4). She shows a fighting spirit by expelling 'Masehloho from her home. We also realize that she is fighting after being patient for a long time with a hope that 'Masehloho would change her attitude one day.

3.8 Conclusion

Most of the women characters analysed in this chapter still have an influence of the traditional custom of **khethela**. Their intention is to ensure that they choose suitable spouses for their children. However, the notion of **khethela** that they adhere to is based on the economic background of the girl's family. Because of the poor status of the girls their son's have chosen, the mother figures do their best to obscure the marriage totally, for instance, 'Mamopeli and 'Malitaba obscure and incite their sons not to marry the girls they have impregnated. This attitude is not only detested by the Sesotho tradition but also the proponents of socialist feminism. They argue that discriminations of people based on social class are wrong.

In the women's pursuit of their intention, they become rebellious and dethrone their husbands. 'Mamopeli orders Mopeli to elope with Senate while her husband had ordered him to elope with 'Mita. 'Malitaba takes the lead in settling the matters of Mohlouoa and Likeleli's marriage without the consent of her husband. It is in this regard that they exploit the power they have acquired. They misuse it in that they become negative influence to their children. They undoubtedly feature as bad women. In accordance with Sesotho tradition, women are not expected to take active role in matters such as marriage institution. Indeed, in our text women such as 'Mamopeli and 'Malitaba emerge as negative force and irresponsible women by not following the tradition marriage arrangement they seem to condone. That women should not participate in matters that are referred to as manly duties is a stereotype that the proponents of liberal feminism are against (cf. section 3.3.1.3).

Great hatred is another feature that characters like 'Mamopeli and 'Malitaba display in a dominant manner. They become callous and unsympathetic to 'Mita and Likeleli respectively when they are clouded with fate and shame of being pregnant. For instance, 'Mamopeli criticizes her husband for paying **bohali** to 'Mita's family with the saying that he is being extravagant. 'Malitaba made irregular payments of the compensation price to Seretse's family so that he would not benefit from it. Discriminations such as the ones made by 'Malitaba and 'Mamopeli class are decried by the proponents of socialist feminism.

Of all the women characters, 'Malehlohonolo is portrayed as very unruly. She shows aggression, molests Molahluoa, and lacks sympathy on her. She disrespects the chief and her councillors. She is also violent because she

grabs Mapiloko with clothes and vows that she will fight with her own hands as well as with weapons. Women who behave like 'Malehlohonolo are regarded as a disgrace in Sesotho culture. However, in the light of liberal feminism, 'Malehlohonolo is a good portrait of women who show their struggle against patriarchy.

Finally, 'Mathabo is portrayed as an ultra-modern woman who has a fighting spirit for her rights. She refuses to take orders from Limakatso and later warns 'Masehloho to back off. Although having been respectful for a long time, she expels her mother-in-law from her home.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 A CRITIQUE OF HOW WOMEN WRITERS PORTRAY THEIR FEMALE CHARACTERS IN THE SELECTED TEXTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to make a critical evaluation of how women authors portray their female characters in the selected texts. In doing this, the merits and demerits of how characters are portrayed will be dealt with. To come up with the strengths and weaknesses of the authors' depiction of characters, we have based our evaluation on discussions made in chapter two and chapter three. The chapter is divided such that the characters contained in one text by an individual writer are dealt with under one heading.

4.2 *Mohanuoa*

4.2.1 'MITA

In depicting 'Mita, Makara misleads girls into thinking that beauty is hazardous. Initially, Makara presents her as extremely beautiful. Her beauty has an appealing force to Mopeli. Because of this, Makara gives her readers the impression that if a girl beautiful she would end up falling in love with a boy. It is fallacious that if a female person is beautiful she is bound to fall in love or will fall pregnant. It is as if girls would not be normal if they were not presented in their relationship to boys. By doing this, Makara enhances the stereotype by which females are considered child-bearers and that males are in control of their bodies. While Makara promotes women's dependency on men, radical feminism strongly contests that. With regard to radical feminism, control of women's bodies is the basic form of oppression that differentiates men from women. As a result, radical feminism is committed

to the freedom of women's reproduction as well as creating women's space from men in all social spheres.

Presenting women in their relationship to men is culturally condoned in the Sesotho tradition. A woman is respected only if she is married and gives birth to children. However, the proponents of radical feminism totally contest this behaviour. They condemn the habit by which women's biology is regarded as enslavement. Rather, they seek solutions in reproduction freedom.

As if the above weak portrayal is not enough, Makara exaggerates the presentation of 'Mita by reflecting her as succumbing to sex because she has been promised marriage. She lowers the dignity of females and lowers their self-esteem as well as moral standards. To the readers, it is as if females have a strong desire for marriage to an extent that they can risk their lives to acquire it.

Makara declares to her readers that marriage is an important thing to girls. This depiction shows that Makara does not encourage girls to remain single. According to her, a girl is a girl only if she is ready to get married. Evidently, Makara misleads girls in that they will think that it is a good thing to engage in sex once marriage promise has been made. We feel that Makara promotes the stereotype of women as a channel of new life and under the control of men. By doing this, Makara still sticks women's completeness to men. In short, men still appear as powerful and masters of women's bodies. However, radical feminism is committed at eradicating social behaviours such as that. In particular, radical feminism proposes that for women to assert their autonomy from men and recover their true and

natural femininity is by being separated from men. In short, radical feminism is against women's dependency on men because that is the main form of their oppression.

Makara further condemns single parenting of girls. This is projected when 'Mita shows malleability in decision making when she had to renounce Mopeli for denying him publicly. Females who read this version would feel depressed and ashamed to procreate outside marriage. Thus, according to Makara's view, single parenting of girls is a social taboo. To Makara, acceptance of single parenting has to be circumstantial, for example, the girl can accept to be a single parent if her boyfriend denies her. On this account, Makara is perceived as doing nothing for female emancipation on issues that oppress them and take their biology for granted, for example, denial of girls to single parenting. Makara's skepticism in accepting single parent projects to the battle that upholds between the Sesotho traditional customs and the emerging/modern practices such as right to childbirth.

The proverb that reads: **se-rata-ngoana ke se-rata-'ma`e** meaning; one cannot love a child without loving its mother (Mokitimi 1997:22) is enlivened in the discussion above. On this note, 'Mita believes that the child is her only hope that would clinch her back with Mopeli hence her dependency on marriage because of the fear of what the society may consider her to be. The manner in which Makara portrays women is as if they are not entitled to claim children as their own. They would think that it is a proper thing for a girl to be at mercy of a boy who impregnated her even if circumstances do not allow, such as the situation of 'Mita. As a modern writer, Makara was expected to furnish characters like 'Mita with

life skills to outwit Mopeli. Unfortunately, she does not give the girls the life skills to combat their problems or means of resisting temptation.

In general, the author is ignorant of the women's rights; at least in as far as, their independency from men is concerned. She portrays women particularly in the interest of men in that they are viewed as eligible "properties" to curb the men's desires. As a result, Makara supports the Sesotho proverb that **ngoana ke oa likhomo** (the child belongs to the family whose father has paid **bohali**). According to the statement above, the child is his father's property and his/her mother has no right to his/her ownership. These are the wrong assumptions that feminism is against. It asserts that decision to have children should result from a free individual choice and those who choose to have them should be responsible for them. Of course, 'Mita was supposed to be presented as having a right to her child other than striving to be married by Mopeli to clear off her disgrace.

In the end, however, Makara unfurls 'Mita as a powerful woman. Makara exaggerates matters and misleads her readers by attaching 'Mita's awareness of her rights only to education. To the readers, it is as if women who are not educated are not aware of their rights. The way Makara puts her facts, is such that education licenses women to independency from men. Misleading as she is, she however, shows that women should stand up and fight when other people ignore their rights. Indeed, Makara shows her commitment where women's rights are trampled over. This is in line with radical feminism that is targeted at finding solutions, promoting activism and women's separation from men. The incarnation of modern practices is given a laudable appraisal in this regard. 'Mita does not run after Mopeli as she initially did while she had only little education. This time, the author is

reflecting that working and educated women do not depend on men either for love or material support.

4.2.2 SENATE

In depicting Senate, Makara is against girls who fall pregnant. To the readers, she conveys the message that girls who fall pregnant do so because they behave badly; which is a misleading notion. Obviously, Makara is uncommitted to dispel the fallacy that is made about the nature and roles of women by the society. By means of this, Makara ignores the importance of the rights and nature of women. The expectation is that Makara, as a modern female writer should not have bias in presenting some of her female characters. Instead, she is expected to expose the prejudice of Basotho women that culture and religion has imposed on them. She is further expected to portray female characters that are willing to fight in her text.

In addition, Makara hates wealthy people. She makes Senate appear as spoiled because she comes from a wealthy family. In Sesotho society, it is not only children from wealthy families who behave badly. Children's behaviours vary from family to family regardless of the family's state of wealth. For Makara to ill-speak, Senate, she instills hatred of children of wealthy people to her readers thereby promoting what socialist feminism proposes as wrong. In the light of socialist feminism, acts of discrimination based on social class, for example, wealth, are wrong. Absolutely, this encodes the message that people should not discriminate against one another because of their social status.

Makara is a conservatist on customs such as **ho beka**. She encourages the practice by which the daughter-in-law stays with members of the extended

family until she shall be allowed to her own home customarily. She discourages women who are crying for their freedom and independency from members of the extended family that is institutionalized in **ho beka** programme. In her promotion of the said custom, she makes readers to think that, exercising independency licenses women to infidelity, hence Senate. Makara depresses women who happen to read her text. They would think that removing the marital slavery yoke is rebelliousness and such women would sit back while their rights are trampled upon. The expectations are that Makara would have raised an alarm on matters such as these and not degrade some women characters, as it is the case with Senate. Social values such, as the above-mentioned were the ones that Makara is expected to react against firmly. By doing so, Makara does not empower women as it was expected from a modern writer like her. Although Makara appears to be ignorant of women's liberation, liberal feminism strongly approves it. It encourages women to take the structure of nuclear family for granted. That is to say, married women should be concerned about themselves and not the rest of others.

Makara presents Senate so negatively that even when she rightfully fights for her rights and exercises independency she is deemed rebellious. This is the situation by which Senate decides not to do the household work for the nuclear family and cares for herself alone, and also moves out of the shared shelter to the one where she would stay alone. In accordance with liberal feminism, what Senate does is a proper exercise that liberates her from the uncalled for marital oppression and enslavement. Unfortunately, according to Makara a daughter-in-law who ignores the importance of nuclear family is regarded as hostile. The impression that Makara gives her readers is that

daughters-in-law should be docile, modest and all-accepting people. It is time Makara as a female writer; condemned practices such as the ones mentioned above and should promote the independency and freedom of daughters-in-law from members of the extended family.

Evidently, Makara still perceives other women negatively and thereby promoting the stranglehold that men and Sesotho society holds on women. Indirectly, however, Makara is aware that if the daughter-in-law and mother-in-law stay in one house or compound unnecessary squabbles emerge. This issue is made to be as light toned as possible because it supports Makara's perception of married women.

4.2.3 'MAMOPELI

In portraying 'Mamopeli, Makara decries the habit of parents who want to choose wives for their children. In other words, she encourages the demise of some Sesotho customs such as **khethela**. Makara's deliberation as regards **khethela** custom is in line with the assumptions made by liberal feminism. It encourages full equality of opportunity in all spheres of life and favours changes in the customs that oppress women.

Makara also discourages tribal discrimination while inter-tribal marriage is encouraged. She rebukes women who discriminate against other women and those who are callous and unsympathetic to other females. She criticizes people who use their status as a form of segregation against those regarded as low in rank. This is in line with what socialist feminism (cf. section 4.2.2) proposes.

Empowering as it is, her depiction promotes the stereotype of passivity on women. This is borne where 'Mamopeli's involvement in marriage arrangement of Mopeli appears as negative. Women are thus indirectly advised to stay back in customary practices because they are a negative force. This is a misrepresentation of the roles of women in general. It is fallacious that women cannot handle marriage preparation, as would men or even more than men would. Instead of denigrating women on matters as the afore-mentioned, Makara could have empowered them more and attacked the assumption that they are trespassers of traditional lore if they participate in it.

In conclusion, we observe that Makara portrays some of her characters negatively. Such portrayals instill a sense of negativity towards female human population as a whole. In addition, the women-to-women sour relations are enhanced by her text, especially in matters relating to the institution of marriage and illegitimate pregnancy. There are still distortions and misrepresentations made about women in her text. To her, reasonable women who afford to show rationality and independency are the educated/working class. The author's commitment in the liberation of women is not given a laudable cry.

4.3 *Molahluoa*

4.3.1 MOLAHLUOA

In portraying Molahluoa, Tšasanyane-Ralengau says to her readers that practices such as gendered duty allocation are a matter of choice and not biologically transmitted. Duty allocation in Sesotho traditional way segregates between sexes. There are duties that are labeled as masculine and females are not supposed to undertake them. According to the proponents of

liberal feminism, men and women are essentially the same but there are impediments to their equality. What this theory asserts is that men and women are “made” in such a manner that they are capable of doing equal load of work. However, there are biological limitations to doing such duties.

By doing this, Tšasanyane-Ralengau is removing the discriminating labels attached to duties and calls for females’ participation in them. Women’s biology is not projected as a major form of discrimination on duty allocation but social encounters remain as the main source of oppression in our opinion. She motivates other women to undertake all duties without any reservations about their biology. The image that Tšasanyane-Ralengau gives to Molahluoa is in line with liberal feminism. Liberal feminism argues that men and women are essentially the same. It further seeks equal opportunity to all and wants to free women from oppressive and gendered roles. In fact, this is what Tšasanyane-Ralengau has successfully accomplished in presenting Molahluoa.

Although Tšasanyane-Ralengau is encouraging women to be active in handling all the duties, she appears to be an epitome of the stereotype that considers female person as destined to be a wife/mother. She makes consider Molahluoa as an incomplete character by presenting her in her relationship and marriage with Talimo. This conveys the wrong message to females; that if they are not either in a relationship or married by men they have a deficiency.

Worse enough, Tšasanyane-Ralengau gives her readers the wrong impression that marriage could be sought for as a form of asylum if one is oppressed where she/he stays. Marriage in Sesotho tradition is in no way an

exile. It is a mutual agreement between two parties (male and female). Tšasanyane-Ralengau gives marriage a wrong meaning by doing this. At the same time, she promotes the stereotype of female as wives or channel of new life and encumbers women from practicing independency from men and marriage. We would have expected Molahluoa to find other means of combating 'Malehlohonolo without seeking exile in Talimo's marriage. Although this form of presentation weakens women, Tšasanyane-Ralengau conveys the message that people should do something when they are oppressed.

Amid all these, Tšasanyane-Ralengau does not only confuse her readers, but she is also a confused author. She shows skepticism about whole-heartedly encouraging women to undertake all duties without reservations. This is evident where Molahluoa appears to be crying to learn household work instead of herding the animals. Ultimately, Tšasanyane-Ralengau eschews Molahluoa from shepherdhood and confines her in the kitchen thereby promoting the stereotype of women as destined only to household duty. That is, Tšasanyane-Ralengau is ambivalent about girls who undertake masculine duties. This is contradicting what she seemed to be appreciating in the previous paragraphs.

4.3.2 'MALEHLOHONOLO

In reflecting 'Malehlohonolo, Tšasanyane-Ralengau overlooks the nature and roles of some of her characters. With 'Malehlohonolo, she promotes the stereotype of woman as a witch. She does not encourage women to be wealthy as though wealth licenses women to treachery, wickedness and lawlessness. It is false that women who own property are disrespectful.

She does not like barren women and influences her readers to hold negative attitude towards infertile women. She depresses **linyopa** by portraying them as heartless, and unsympathetic to the children who are not their own (lack of a motherly love). 'Malehlohonolo appears to behave contrary to the Sesotho proverb: '**mangoana o jeoa ke motlopotlo oa ho tsoala** (mother's compassion or literally the pains caused by children) (Mabille and Dieterlen 1974:412). Because 'Malehlohonolo has no child-bearing experience, she is portrayed as lacking the motherly compassion that nursing mothers have.

To blackmark 'Malehlohonolo more, Tšasanyane-Ralengau presents her as loving her animals/dogs and **thokolosi** better than she does her husband and Molahluoa. She presents her as divorced from her emotional bondage with her husband to show how worthless she portrays them. In Sesotho society, a barren woman was not only disregarded by her husband but the society as a whole. This is so because she does not enhance the family genealogically. However, several rituals were made to ensure that **nyopa** was assisted to bear a child.

It is unfortunate to note that, Tšasanyane-Ralengau still enhances this stereotype in her novel. In doing this, she shows ignorance about women's biology and nature. As a modern female writer, Tšasanyane-Ralengau is expected to write about the issues that affect women most other than discrediting them as she has done with 'Malehlohonolo. The author is seen as the product of the society that looks down upon barren women (**linyopa**).

It is time that contemporary female writers dealt away with the stereotypes that society holds upon women. The above presentation still gives barren women an element of worthlessness. We expect that the female writer of

this day should be a motivator and work towards discarding patriarchy and subordination of women.

Generally, in her female character depiction, Tšasanyane-Ralengau shows an element of negativity to some of her characters. By doing this, Tšasanyane-Ralengau communicates a false message about the identity of women. Certainly, she presents her characters in a manner that has distorted reality about women in general. Besides, there is a lot of skepticism and contradictions in her text. Among other things, she fails to reconcile between a binary dichotomy that obtains between Sesotho traditional customs and the emerging/modern practices, for instance, duty allocation.

When she first portrays Molahluoa, she makes us infer that gender differences are a matter of choice of the society that upholds them. Later, the author alludes to the need for gender roles to be restricted in certain areas, for examples, she confines Molahluoa in the kitchen. This kind of portrayal is misleading because readers would take it as a proper thing to confine women in the kitchen. Perhaps, the author could have portrayed her as a flexible character that maneuvers between the kitchen life and pastoral life. In her case, she gets totally divorced from shepherdhood. In this manner, Tšasanyane-Ralengau is denigrating women. On matters like this, socialist feminism contents that it is not proper that women's biology is taken to be enslaving and used as the bases for female subordination.

Unfortunately, Tšasanyane-Ralengau enhances the disgrace that is held upon **linyopa** by the society. She portrays a barren woman as an evil person. This notion is misleading and reinforces female stereotyping and male domination over females' bodies. To her, it is as if men cannot be

barren. It is certainly depressing to find a female writer of this era still attaching elements of negativity on other women and promoting their misrepresentation.

4.4 “Likeleli”

4.4.1 LIKELELI

The way Fobo depicts Likeleli misleads and demoralizes female readers. This is so because to them she encodes the message that they should not take an action when they are impregnated. To girls, Fobo’s story does not discourage them nor give them advice on how to be cautious of falling pregnant twice. To them, it conveys the message that if they fall pregnant for the first time they should not stand up to fight for their rights, instead, they have to wait until they are impregnated for the second time. This depiction demoralizes women while at the same time it promotes men’s domination over the women’s bodies and biology. Certainly, Fobo promotes the stereotype of females as sex objects. This is projected where Mohlouoa impregnates Likeleli and leaves her. By doing this, Fobo discredits females and diminishes the importance of their nature and biology.

Fobo’s attitude towards Likeleli’s depiction is merely unrealistic. She gives us the image of a person who does not falter in life. That is, Fobo gives Likeleli the image of a sweet woman, the all-accepting creature who is self-sacrificing. Even in her falling pregnant twice, Fobo sees no problem with that. On this account, Fobo’s text emerges as an immature one. The immaturity of the depiction of Likeleli becomes evident where she is portrayed as resisting Mohlouoa’s request that they engage in sex. Next, she

is portrayed as having not known what had happened, and last by crying profusely after what she compels us to consider as an ordeal.

What Fobo reflects Likeleli to be is unbelievable and unrealistic. It is unnatural that a person who is alive can have sex and claim not to have known what had happened. In this regard, we consider Likeleli to be an abnormal character. Because the author wants to cloud Likeleli only with the good behaviour, she brings in the immature, unbelievable and unrealistic behaviour patterns in her.

Furthermore, Fobo demoralizes uneducated women. This is evident where Likeleli takes an action on her impregnation after a university education. To female readers, it is as though only educated women are aware of their rights hence fighting for them. It is wrong to present educated/working women as though they are the only class of women who know their rights. Evidently, this depiction lowers the self-esteem of uneducated women and thereby creating disparity between educated and uneducated women.

Additionally, Fobo is aware of the women's rights thus, she empowers and advocates their fight where they are oppressed or taken for granted. Although, she attaches awareness of women's rights and ability to fight to education, she however, shows the importance of women's action when their rights are trampled. To girls, Fobo communicates the message that they should sue boys who impregnate them. Of course, girls who read her text will be furnished with life skills and a right procedure of demanding their right.

Likeleli's fight for her rights is supported by liberal feminists when they say, family life and decision to have children should result from free, individual choice and "those who choose to have them should be responsible for them." We underline the phrase those who choose to have them should be responsible for them as impeccable to Likeleli's fight. It was Mohlouoa's intention to impregnate Likeleli; as a result, he is obliged by the theory at hand to care for their welfare.

Contrarily, rural and uneducated women would consider fighting for ones rights as confined and destined only to the educated women. They would detach themselves from fighting for their rights because the text does not aid them with means of combating their problems in matters such as impregnation. Thus, though a fighting spirit is unleashed of Likeleli, it does not pose her as a mature character that learns from her mistakes and does not help the downtrodden. Only the women with a good level of education are empowered by the text.

4.4.2 'MALITABA

By portraying 'Malitaba as a wicked and disloyal woman, Fobo rebukes wealthy women who segregate against others because of their class. Fobo condemns the discrimination of unwealthy people by the wealthy ones. Fobo elevates her dislike of people who despise others because of their social status. Socialist feminism is strongly against the division and segregation of other people because of their class (cf. paragraph 4.2.2 above). Importantly, Fobo criticizes the custom of **khethela** and shows how useless it is. By doing this, she encourages the extinction of dated Sesotho customs such as khethela that are no longer useful and applicable in this modern day life.

Unfortunately, she denigrates women who take part in customary activities. She ignores the importance of women and restricts them from active participation in Sesotho customs. Fobo makes women in general afraid to take active roles in Sesotho customs. While Fobo portrays 'Malitaba as a bad woman, she portrays her male counterparts as being more understanding and reasonable in matters relating to the institution of marriage. In short, the author assures us that marriage arrangement is specifically the issue of males hence their reasonability. This form of presentation limits women's participation in customary issues and reduces them to peripheral position. We would have expected Fobo to criticize habits that subordinated women other than degrading women the more. In fact, there is nothing wrong with women arranging the marriages of their children; only Fobo appears to be epitomized by customs that do not allow women to participate in them.

4.5 “Sethoto”

4.5.1. LIMAKATSO

When portraying Limakatso, Moejane criticizes girls who fall pregnant outside marriage. She does not give them skills for fighting or resisting the temptation. She does not give the solutions to females when they are faced with such problems instead she promotes their self-denial. As a result, girls who fall pregnant will consider themselves as prodigal people and ultimately continue doing much of bad things in life to resemble Limakatso. It is as if girls fall pregnant because they are wicked; which belief is false. This is in itself a misrepresentation of women that Moejane has indulged into.

Essentially, Moejane is against single parenting of unmarried girls. She is the product of the society that believes that it is taboo for an unmarried woman to have a child. By doing this, she clinches women's wholeness to men. To us, this conveys the message that for women to procreate men are responsible and in control.

4.5.2 'MASEHLOHO

In depicting 'Masehloho, Moejane shows her commitment to customs that oppress women such as **ho beka ngoetsi** (cf. paragraph 3.6.1.3 above). She advises her female counterparts to stop the habit of making a daughter-in-law and mother-in-law stay in one house or compound because unnecessary squabbles come up. Importantly, she is against the mothers-in-law who oppress their daughters-in-law during **ho beka** programme.

What Moejane has against the custom of parents staying with their daughters-in-law for a long time is also detested by liberal feminism, which avers that nuclear family structure should be taken for granted. Additionally, Moejane criticizes mothers-in-law who importune their daughters-in-law. This habit promotes the freedom and independency of daughters-in-law from members of the nuclear family.

Furthermore, she does not like when **bohali** is taken to be a purchase price. Seemingly, 'Masehloho takes **bohali** to be a purchase price. Because of this, she dehumanizes 'Mathabo and subjects her slavery. On this account, Moejane communicates the message that; it is dangerous to pay **bohali** because it subjects married women to oppression.

4.5.3 'MATHABO

In portraying 'Mathabo, Moejane gives us an image of a believable and reliable character who does not act on impulse. In this way, she encourages females to stand up against their oppression if they fail with other amicable means. This piece motivates women and encourages them to strive to acquire independency from marital ties. This gives a new form of a woman who thinks her independency from the nuclear family is healthy for her survival. Liberal feminism gives this kind of behaviour a laudable appraisal (cf. paragraph 4.2.2).

Moejane is against the habit of allowing the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law to stay in one house. By doing this, she encourages the freedom of daughters-in-law from being oppressed by marital ties and bondage to members of the nuclear family. Moejane further encourages a struggle for freedom where people are oppressed.

Moejane's depiction of 'Mathabo also has some shortcomings. Like Makara and Fobo, Moejane misleads her readers into believing that only educated women are the ones who are aware of their rights and can stand up and fight. Moejane appears to disregard uneducated women. She demoralizes them and misrepresents their true identity. Uneducated females are not given life skills to use when they are oppressed in the manner similar to 'Mathabo's. We are inclined to conclude that only working and educated women can rise up and fight for their rights. It is therefore misleading that only educated women have appropriate skills to use when fighting against oppression.

4.6 Conclusion

In the evaluation of how women writers portray female characters, we have found out that their works have a two-pronged presentation; that is, the characters are portrayed as either having bad or good attributes. On the one hand, the authors promote sexist stereotypes while on the other; they promote female emancipation and championship. It is of interest to note that, even educated/working female characters are bound to subordinate roles.

In portraying the girls, the authors present them in their relationship to young men, thereby promoting female stereotyping. In this situation, some girls either fall pregnant get married. Other girls are portrayed as immoral and adulterous.

The authors also raise alarm that girls/females should stand up and fight against their subordination and oppression. For example, 'Mita is presented as ushering the image of independency from men; and Likeleli sues Mohlouoa who had abandoned her together with the children after having exposure to tertiary education. This attitude encourages females to exercise their independency from men and equips them with skills of facing and combating their problems.

With regard to the portrayal of women, some authors challenge traditional practices such as **khethela** and **bohali**. For instance, Moejane contests that **bohali** should not be regarded as purchase price. The author supports the decadence of norms such as these. In support to this view, Zondi (2005:30) argues: “we should have the courage to re-visit our customs, to take what is

still good, but to discard what is outdated and unsuitable for modern life, and for the level of education that we have achieved.” What Zondi encourages is that there has to be a reform in our social norms due to various agents of change that affect our lives. In doing so, dated practices will be extinct.

There are however contradictions that we come across in the depiction of female characters. For example, the involvement of 'Mamopeli, and 'Malitaba in marriage arrangement is presented negatively. Such preparations are supposed to be undertaken by men. Because of this, they condone feminine passivity. It suffices to conclude that, the authors are the products of the culturally oppressive society. It would be reasonable if the authors refuted such customs instead of promoting them.

Furthermore, some authors promote stereotypes such as woman as a witch/destroyer of life. For example, sorcery acts are confined only to women. In this case, 'Malehlohonolo rears **thokolosi** that strangles people dead. This depiction accords women with low status and also promotes their denigration.

Generally, there are inconsistencies and contradictions in the manner in which women writers portray their characters. In trying to embrace the universal views of life—ranging from rural life to urban life; traditional life to modern life, they are confused by the transition between the two scenarios and fail to give the clarion of such dichotomy. As a result, they give false pictures of Basotho women. In other instances however, they succeed in elaborating the vicissitudes of life. Certainly, the women authors are hardly considered effective spokes persons for the female predicament.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Conclusion

The study set out to make a critical analysis of character portrayal of female characters in selected contemporary Sesotho texts by female Basotho authors. It is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction. Chapter two focused on analysis of character portrayal of girls. The third chapter was on analysis of character portrayal of women. Chapter four made a critique of how Basotho female writers portray their characters—the evaluation was based on the discussions made in chapter two and three. Particularly, it explored whether or not women's literature serve as a mouthpiece through which the authors express their concerns about the distortions, misrepresentations, subordination, stereotyping and oppression to mention just a few; held over them by their society. This chapter, the fifth, concludes the study.

In portraying the girls, the authors reflect attributes ranging from physical, psychological and social behaviour about them. Characters such as 'Mita, Molahluoa and Likeleli are portrayed as having similar traits, such as beauty, relationship with young men and decisiveness in choosing suitors. There are also traits that they differ in, for example, intelligence, flirting and self-respect respectively.

Similarly, Senate and Limakatso share a number of attributes, for instance aggression and immorality. Only one side of their characteristics has been alluded to, and that is, they are bad women. It is worth noting also that, there is one common feature that 'Mita, Likeleli, Senate and Limakatso share; they fall pregnant outside marriage. We have also taken note that in portraying the girls, their lives hurdle on love affairs and illegitimate

pregnancies and ultimately, marriage for two of them, for example, Senate and Molahluoa.

In depicting the women, most are presented as obscuring the marriages of their sons. The negative attitude emanates from the fact that the girls that their sons want to marry belong to poor families. Women such as 'Mamopeli and 'Malitaba show lack of sympathy to the girls. 'Mamopeli and 'Malitaba inhibit the payment of **bohali** to Mita's family and the compensation of Likeleli's parents for her impregnation respectively. At the same time, 'Mamopeli and 'Malitaba dethrone their husbands and ensure the failure of the marriages. 'Mamopeli and 'Malitaba consistently persuade their sons to reject the girls and they become successful.

A stereotypical kind of depiction also emerges in the reflection of women. 'Malehlohonolo is portrayed as a witch. 'Malehlohonolo is heartless, disrespectful, unsympathetic and oppressive. She disrespects the headman and his concillors. Furthermore, she maltreats Molahluoa. By doing this, Tšasanyane-Ralengau has not aligned herself with what feminist literary criticism expects from women writers. The afore-mentioned theory is committed at the proliferation of female stereotypes and lack of realistic women in women's output. It further holds a belief that women's writing makes a difference. Like feminism, the above theory is aimed at changing the existing power relations between men and women in society.

With 'Mathabo, Moejane brings two interesting but contradicting behaviours. First, 'Mathabo portrays tact and self-sacrifice to please her in-laws. In an attempt to be a victor in her ill treatment and victimization, she shows her strength in household work and supportive in matters that require

finance. Second, upon her failure to win the battle without causing injury, she fires a bullet. In other words, she fights with the predator, 'Masehloho and drives her out of her life.

Diverse numbers of findings were reached in evaluating the portrayal of female characters. To begin with, selected contemporary female Basotho authors still promote some stereotypes while in other instances they refute them. For instance, when they portray girls, they present them in the love affair with young men. This enhances the stereotype that women's role is to satisfy men sexually and bear children.

Likewise, the stereotype of woman as a destroyer of life is still upheld by some authors. For example, 'Malehlohonolo kills other people. Still, other authors applaud passivity. This is exemplified when 'Mamopeli's and 'Malitaba's participation in marriage arrangement is reflected as a negative force. We infer that marriage arrangement process is a manly issue. It is indeed misleading to conclude that women can act as a negative force in planning the marriages of their sons. It is a wrong assumption that women can be as wicked as the above characters appear to be. However, feminism advocates women liberation from oppression of passivity and the related issues imposed by patriarchy.

Additionally, single parenting is not supported by some of our authors. This becomes evident where 'Mita fights between love and hate towards Mopeli when she has to forget about him. Likeleli is after Molahluoa and her parents also chase his parents high and low to compensate them so that their disgrace would end. Finally, Limakatso's bearing of illegitimate children is presented with lots of negative factors; for instance, she is portrayed as lazy

and aggressive. It is on the bases of the above discussion that we conclude that authors such as Makara, Moejane and Tšasanyane-Ralengau do not accept single parenting in women. In trying to remove the mask, they vaguely support accepting single parenting only if circumstances such as denial of the child by his/her biological father comes up, as it is the case with 'Mita and Likeleli.

Equally, barrenness is considered as an omen of bad luck or a curse from the ancestors by authors such as Makara and Tšasanyane-Ralengau. This is evident where 'Malehlohonolo is portrayed as non-caring to Molahluoa. She is also divorced from the emotional bondage of her husband. In the same way, Senate is depicted as badly behaved. This is revealed after the doctor told her that she would never bear children any more. It is as if her barrenness licenses her to adultery. Her deeds also accord her a status of woman as a quitter or destroyer of marriage. These two women are blamed by the authors for the lack of harmony and failure in their marriages. It is improper to reflect women such as 'Malehlohonolo and Senate who refuse to be relegated to subservient and peripheral positions as bad women.

As indicated earlier, some authors refute female stereotyping and promote their independency. This is exemplified where 'Mita ushers an image of independency from Mopeli and other men with success. In doing this, the author empowers women and instills in them a sense of self-acceptance of their identity and biological rights. The afore-mentioned case is identical with that of Likeleli and 'Mathabo who act when their rights are being ignored. It is noteworthy however, that the abovementioned characters comprise a class of educated/working women. This notion misleads us; it is

as if women of the afore-mentioned calibre are the only ones who know their rights.

On the bases of the above discussions, it is incumbent on us to give recommendations on our study. We have noted that women are faced with many challenges in their lives not only as writers but also as members of the community. To aid them in their predicament, the cultural/traditional thinking should be revised and reformed while giving them time to acclimatize to new changes. While this is done, culture should not be totally dealt away with. This is supported by liberal feminism, which argues that women should be given equal opportunity as men; social and political system should not be transformed.

Essentially, Basotho women writers should incorporate in their literature, a two faceted mode of writing that enables them to portray females and males with equal opportunities. Leadership and power distribution should be evenly spread across the board for all sexes.

In conclusion, women writers should stand up to publish massive numbers of literary works, especially in fiction where their absenteeism and ignorance is felt. They have to strive to write about matters that affect their physical, psychological and social well-being. Finally, Sesotho literature critics are encouraged to focus their attentions on women's writings, as there is presently a lingering ignorance of their output. Potential scholars are also conscientized of the viable study on how both female and male characters are portrayed by Basotho women.

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