

**REVIEW OF THE CULTURE OF *HO KHETHELA MOLEKANE*
(PARENTAL CHOICE OF SPOUSES) IN *MEOKHO EA THABO*,
LIKETSO AND *KOTLELOA SEHONG***

By

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Declaration

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I, Nthabiseng Grace Ncheke (200300280), declare that THE REVIEW OF THE CULTURE OF *HO KHETHELA MOLEKANE* (PARENTAL CHOICE OF SPOUSES) is my independent work and it has not been previously produced by anyone for evaluation at any faculty or department. I have acknowledged all the sources that I have used in this study.

Signed *N. Ncheke*

Date *1 September 2023*

Signed 

Date 1 September 2023

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my parents: `Mathabo and Thabang Ncheke as well as my siblings, Motsieleli, Mpho and Thabo Ncheke.

Abstract

This research seeks to find out the significance of the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) in the Basotho society. The study focuses on the rationale behind the culture of *ho khethela molekane*, its merits and the impact of the Western culture on the culture of *ho khethela molekane*.

Three Sesotho novels were analysed to explore how the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) is presented as a theme in Sesotho novels. The novels under study were published in different years: *Meokho ea Thabo* by Khaketla (1979), *Liketso* by Morojele (1987) and *Kotleloa Sehong* by Ramakhula (2005). The researcher purposively selected novels from 1979 to 2005 to find out how Sesotho authors of different times portray the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses).

The study reveals that amongst the Basotho society, the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) is practiced because it is deemed a parental duty to choose spouses for their sons and daughters, and the culture of *ho khethela molekane* is also practiced to preserve the cultural norms and practices of Basotho society. Furthermore, the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) has the following merits: helping in maintaining and strengthening family friendships as well as guaranteeing the unconditional support of the internal and extended family members of the married couple in Basotho society. The culture of *ho khethela molekane* also led to sustainable marriages.

However, the study concludes that the Western culture has had a negative impact on the culture of *ho khethela molekane*. The factors of the Western culture that harm

the culture of *ho khetela molekane* are Christianity and the Western education system.

Based on the conclusions drawn from the findings of this study, the researcher recommends that more novels be published to portray the significance of the culture of *ho khetela molekane* (parental choice of spouses).

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study by providing the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, hypotheses, objectives, purpose, rationale, significance of the study, literature review, theoretical framework, organization of the study and ethical consideration. Generally, the first chapter has briefly described the core concepts of this study and highlighted how the study is organised.

The cultures surrounding the Basotho customary marriage have not received a critical focus, especially on the rationale behind their practice and their merits. This phenomenological investigation enriches the social perspective and understanding of the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) as one of the cultural practices in the Basotho marriage.

This study has, therefore, reviewed the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) in the Basotho society. The review was done by examining the three Sesotho novels which have this cultural practice as one of their themes. Those texts are: *Meokho ea Thabo* by Khaketla (1979), *Liketso* by Morojele (1987) and *Kotleloa-sehong* by Ramakhula (2005) respectively.

The study also has looked into factors that are central and significant in this cultural practice. The main focus, with the aid of the selected texts, is on the rationale behind this culture, the merits of this culture as well as the impact of Western influence on this culture.

1.1 Background

The phenomenon under inspection in this study is part of Basotho culture. Culture is defined by Sibani (2018) as a way of life of any given group of people that is transmittable from one generation to another. It incorporates issues that bother technological development, language, marriage, mode of dressing, religion and many more. Sibani (2018) further states that the existence of culture is aimed at meeting the needs of the physical and social environment in which particular society is based. Santrock (2006) also points out that culture is passed on from generation to generation, mostly by communication and imitation. Additionally, Kluchohn and Kelly (1998), Akama (2012), Skinner (2014) and, Otite and Oginwo (2016) state that culture is a totality of how people in a certain society live and behave. Furthermore, Kidd (2009) contends that culture is a way of life of a group of people, and it includes the values, traditions and rituals of a particular society. These definitions of culture may be interpreted to mean that culture is a component of a society that directs its life, incorporating the customs and values that each generation must learn. It is also reflected in these definitions that each society has its unique culture.

The Basotho society has its own culture that differentiates it from other societies. In support of this idea, Gilbert (2010) asserts that Sesotho culture is composed of customs and traditions that distinguish Basotho from other people or nations. Phafoli and Zulu (2012) add that the present-day Sesotho culture is a product of various historical and social influences because culture is not static; culture adapts to social change. One of the components incorporated in this culture, as aforementioned, is marriage as a cultural practice which is the core of the current study. Imme and Emme (2014) state that the concept of marriage is a universal phenomenon that cuts across races of all ages and cultures despite the diversity of customs. Imme *et al.*

(2014) further clarify that because of the diversity in the aspect of marriage, it is not easy to define marriage in a way that embraces all forms of marriage. Nevertheless, Sherif-Trask (2003) articulates that various marriages have existed throughout the world. Sherif-Trask (2003) illustrates that in some societies, an individual is limited to having one partner at a time while other cultures allow a male to marry more than one wife, or, less commonly, a female to have more than one husband. Some societies allow marriages between two males or females.

Other cultures have certain restrictions on marriage based on the age of participants, kinship and membership in religious or other social groups and that gives rise to different definitions of marriage. On this note, Sherif and Robert (2011) define marriage as a union between a man and a woman who makes a permanent commitment to each other and fulfill the commitment by bearing children together. This definition implies that the core of a marriage is the union of two individuals of the opposite sex to produce children. The fact that marriage has to create children might be the understanding and motive in the Basotho society, hence different forms of marriage, particularly, the polygamous form in cases where children are not born in the primary marriage. Phoofolo (2007) affirms that in Basotho marriage, women are valued for their fertility, and men acquire women through marriage.

Furthermore, Hunter (1990) states that marriage is a central feature of all human societies and an institution composed of a culturally accepted union of a man and a woman in a husband and wife relationship, as well as roles and functions of parenthood. Hunter's (1990) clarification of marriage implies that a marriage has to be influenced and directed by the cultural norms of a society. Besides, marriage is expected to bear children that will preserve the kinship. Phoofolo (ibid.) adds that marriage transfers the fertility of a woman from her family to her husband and his family. The children she bears, legally belong to their father's family. Phoofolo

(ibid.) also stresses that marriage is so central to the Basotho society that indeterminate forms of marriage were constructed to acquire the valuable resource, the woman.

In a society that values marriage so much, divorce was not included in the agenda of marital life. The provision of *bohali* (dowry) helped to secure the marriage and restricted the temptation to end it at the least taste of marital discomfort. The provision of *bohali* (dowry) put a prime value on a wife that ensured her humane treatment by her husband and her in-laws. Excessive and persistent ill-treatment of the wife by her husband; her abuse by her in-laws; and failure by the husband to provide for his wife and children could force such a wife to desert her conjugal home and stay separated from her husband. At all costs, formal divorce was avoided in the Basotho society. There would be processes of reconciliation engaged, after which the married couple would get back together. However, divorce seems currently to be trending in Basotho society due to different factors including the influence of Western cultures (Phoofolo, 2007).

In Basotho culture, marriage was not only the union of a woman and a man, but also the union of their families. Ekanjume and Kolobe (2012) indicate that in Lesotho, like in other African cultures, marriage was more than just a union between two individuals. Rather, marriage was considered the union of two big families. The concerned families had reciprocal obligations towards each other, such as, mutual respect, solidarity and caring for one another. Marriage was considered a divine institution by the Basotho and had to be respected traditionally.

In Lesotho, marriage is deemed to be completed when there is an agreement between the parties to the marriage, coupled with a parental agreement both as to the amount of *bohali* (dowry), and when part of the *bohali* (dowry) had to be provided. Initially,

the customary marriage was a formal agreement between the two families concerning the interest shown by their children in the traditional courting platforms. Poulter (1981) adds that in a customary marriage, the concerned families got into an agreement that was sealed with the family of the bride-groom providing *bohali* (dowry), which was mostly in the form of cattle. This means that, if there was no parental consent, there was no marriage customarily. Marriage amongst the Basotho used to be arranged by the parents. Arranged marriages were believed to ensure stronger and happier marriages which also took the form of economic, social and political alliances (Fatima, 2015). This proves that arranged marriages had some advantages, meaning that *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) was an important cultural practice that ensured sustainable marriages in the Basotho society.

Marriage in Basotho society was the responsibility of the parents. According to Matšela (1990), traditional marriage in Lesotho was planned by parents who would choose a wife for their son. Choosing a wife was very important. Those who were involved did so in a dedicated and honest manner so that their son would marry somebody who would make him and the rest of the family happy and proud. They considered the type of family from which the woman they were going to marry came, especially the mother, in terms of her physical strength, cleanliness and commendable behaviour. On this account, Lesitsi (1990) adds that, when choosing a wife for their son, parents looked for girls that their son showed interest in during the traditional games and dances that were performed in the presence of parents. Measures to choose a suitable wife were applied to those girls, and the girl who met the requirements of the concerned family was chosen to be the bride in that particular family. In addition, Mohatle (2015) states that amongst the Basotho, marriages were arranged between two families; and a girl could be chosen in childhood. Various reasons led to the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). This

was done in conformity to cultural practices as well as preservation of those practices for future generations.

In Sesotho marriage, terms ‘boy’ and ‘girl’ are used to refer to a fiancé and a fiancée. In a similar manner, the term ‘children’ is used to refer to both fiancé and fiancée as in Sesotho, a child is everyone to his or her parents regardless of his or her age. The Sesotho explanation of children deviates from a conventional definition of children. Therefore, this study finds it crucial to define ‘children’ as it will be dominantly used in this study. According to Louise (2002), a child is defined as a person from the time of birth until he or she is an adult. Louise’s (2002) definition implies that childhood ends when a person gets into adulthood. When defining a child in Basotho context, Matšela (1991:40) says, “*ngoana ke mora kapa morali oa motho ea itseng,*” translated as, a child is a son or daughter of a particular person. Based on Matšela (1991) and Louise (2002) the researcher uses the word *child* in this study referring to a Mosotho human being who is still under the care of parents and is not yet married. A male child in this study is referred to as a son while a female child is referred to as a daughter. Amongst the Basotho society, a child transits into adulthood through initiation. Sekese (2002) states that Basotho children were expected to undergo initiation around puberty. Initiation is a process through which boys are provided with economic knowledge, negotiation skills, and how to be good leaders in their society. Additionally, Obioha and Tšoeunyane (2012) affirm that girls were taught about the roles of women in the family and community. Following initiation, boys and girls are considered to be adults and were expected to get into marriage and start families. It was after initiation that parents chose spouses for their children.

Parents chose spouses for their children as they deemed doing so, was their parental duty. Santrock (2006) is of the view that parenting is the process of raising and

educating children from birth or before adulthood. This process includes carrying out the responsibilities of raising and relating to children in such a manner that the child is well prepared to realise their full potential as human being. This implies that parenting is a process of supporting the child from birth to adulthood involving physical, emotional, social and intellectual capabilities. Choosing a spouse for a child is one of the duties entailed in parenting.

However, modernisation and the Western cultures have changed and diluted Basotho's cultural practices so much that parental choice of spouses is rare. Nowadays children choose their partners when they think they are ready for marriage. However, children still have to be careful in the presentation process for their choice to be accepted by their parents. In other words, parents still have a very important role to play when it comes to the spouses their children choose even though things are now done differently.

Surprisingly, the boy's family is more selective than the girl's family. Generally, the girl's family is more concerned with their daughter's well-being. Thus, parents concentrate more on whether the boy will be able to cater to their daughter's needs. Santrock (2006) stresses that the African cultures are being washed away by the Western culture because Africans who have not fully experienced the indigenous culture believe that to be too culturally aware makes one backward or ancient. This is the result of a lack of knowledge of cultural values and principles.

Modernisation is described by Ronald (2007) as encompassing the progress of massive social changes that, once set in motion, tend to penetrate all domains of life from economic activities and social life to political institutions. Modernisation brings out intense awareness of change and innovation linked with the idea that human societies are progressing. This shows that most of the societies fell for

modernisation believing that it brought along positive progress and change to their societies.

Some of the characteristic features embodied in modernisation are foreign norms and traditions, as well as foreign education systems. Nwusu (1993) indicates that for an African to be a Christian, which is the Western belief system, one had to abandon his old ways, mostly his culture and religion and became a European in every way. The Western culture is a threat to the African culture. Being part of Africa, Lesotho is no exception to this situation.

The impact of Western culture on Basotho culture is reflected in a number of Sesotho literary works. This is shown by different scholars who have done studies on Sesotho modern literature. For example, Shava (2006) states that the emergence and evolution of literature in Lesotho have been closely linked to the evangelical mission of the church and the dominance of Sesotho as a sole linguistic vehicle for communication, introduction and creative imagination. Shava (2006) stresses that Sesotho modern literature was created with the arrival of missionaries in Lesotho in 1833. In addition, Gerald (1971) asserts that early works in Sesotho literature showed the converging of Sesotho beliefs and customs. Marriage is one of the cultural practices of Basotho that are conveyed in literary works.

Furthermore, the Sesotho novel, like other Sesotho art forms, serves as a creation that reflects Sesotho cultural representations (Zulu, 2012). The Sesotho novels selected for this study also reflect Sesotho cultural representations. This means that literary works reflect real-life situations in societies, and such situations are written about. The novels under inspection in this study, address the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses), which is one of the social issues addressed in Sesotho modern literature hence its review in this study.

There have been critiques surrounding the Basotho customary marriage, some of which are a result of the Western religious orientation and education system. Poulter (1981) stresses that, although the Basotho marriage was initially arranged by parents with the influence of the church, the couple had to consent to the marriage. This means that the parents have been deprived of their responsibility of choosing spouses for their children. Although Poulter's publication is outdated, the researcher found it relevant as it highlights the impact that westernisation has brought into the institution of marriage amongst the Basotho.

Some scholars and researchers such as Fatima (2015) and Ekanjume and Kolobe (2012) show that the rate of divorce in arranged marriages is less in comparison to the marriages in which children have a choice of their spouses. This might be because the parents know their children very well as they take care of them and nurture them since birth. Therefore, they know their children's needs and respond to them accordingly. That is why parents can choose the appropriate spouses for their children.

The aim of this study is, therefore, to investigate the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) looking into the rationale behind its practice, the merits of parental choice of spouses, the impact that Western culture has on it, and the effect of this practice on marriages.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The researcher has observed that, currently, children choose their spouses unlike in the past when parents were the ones choosing spouses for their sons and daughters. Since sons and daughters make their own spousal choice, marital problems and challenges seem to be escalating, leading to the high divorce rate in the Basotho society. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the culture of *ho khethela*

molekane (parental choice of spouses) by examining the rationale behind this culture, the merits of this culture on the concerned children and the impact brought by the Western culture on this cultural practice.

1.2.1 Research Question

What significance does the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) have within the Basotho society as portrayed in *Meokho ea Thabo*, *Liketso* and *Kotleloa Sehong*?

1.2.2 Sub-Questions

1. What is the rationale behind the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) as portrayed in *Meokho ea Thabo*?
2. What are the merits of the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) on the concerned children as reflected in *Liketso*?
3. What impact has the Western culture [had] has on this culture as depicted in *Kotleloa sehong*?

1.2.3 Hypotheses

In line with the research questions, the researcher assumes that:

1. The culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) was practiced because it was one of the parental duties, and it was meant to preserve cultural practices as shown in *Meokho ea Thabo*.
2. The culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) ensured that brides have the unconditional support of their in-laws as per the portrayal in *Liketso*.

3. The Western culture has brought a negative impact on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) that even threatened its existence as reflected in *Kotleloa Sehong*.

1.2.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To analyse the rationale behind the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) as portrayed in *Meokho ea Thabo*.
2. To examine the merits of the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) as reflected in *Liketso*.
3. To examine the impact that the Western culture has had on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) as demonstrated in *Kotleloa-Sehong*.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study has been the review of the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) in *Meokho ea Thabo*, *Liketso*, and *Kotleloa Sehong*; looking into the rationale behind its practice, its merits on the concerned children as well as the impact of the Western culture on it as reflected in the selected Sesotho novels analysed in this study.

1.4 Rationale

It came to the researcher's realisation that the marriage institution in the Basotho society is facing challenges in the 21st century. The norms and traditions of customary marriage seem to be fading away, leaving behind the Western culture of marriage to take over. In the past, marriage was arranged by parents and guardians. Children also had a choice of spouses that was done through traditionally designed dances of boys and girls and games such as *selia-lia*, *sephumola* and *senyamo*.

These past ways of spousal choice resulted in stable marriages as opposed to the contemporary days in which children have an absolute choice over who they want to marry without the guidance of their parents. The instability in marriage is reflected in the escalating rate of divorce and intra-family abuse cases. This situation triggered the researcher to set off and examine the culture of *ho khetela molekane* (parental choice of spouses), looking into the rationale behind this cultural practice and the merits of this culture on the concerned children as well as the impact brought by the Western culture on this cultural practice. The researcher also aimed to identify the significance of *ho khetela molekane* in contemporary Basotho society.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this research would be of great importance to different groups within the Basotho society. Firstly, it would educate the young generation to understand and value the culture of *ho khetela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). People who are yet to marry would be equipped with the advantages of parental choice of spouses. The other group that benefits are the parents or elders in the society. They will not worry about the possibility of their children divorcing because they will have chosen suitable spouses for their children, and they will have peace of mind knowing that they have performed their parental duty of choosing spouses for their children. Furthermore, law enforcement bodies within the society is also anticipated to gain from this study because stability in marriages means minimal intra-marital offenses including gender-based violence.

As this practice is said to have guaranteed sustainability in marriages, it means that the entire nation was stable since a stable marriage meant a stable family, and stable families meant stable communities which in turn meant a stable nation. Literary scholars may also use the contents of this study for their academic references and foundation to build their studies that further this investigation. Finally, the researcher

benefits from this research as it broadens her knowledge and understanding of the cultural practices in the institution of marriage in the Basotho society.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study was limited to the analysis and interpretation of the three sampled Sesotho novels that have the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) as one of their themes. The study focused on the rationale behind the culture of *ho khethela molekane*, the merits of this culture on the concerned children as well as the impact that westernisation had on this culture as outlined in the texts under study.

1.7 Literature Review

This section is a presentation of the literature related to the current study. The literature has been collected from books, both hard copies and electronic books, articles, journals, theses and dissertations. The literature was arranged thematically. The literature that was found relevant to this study was on the reasons influencing the parental choice of spouses, the merits of parental choice marriages, as well as the impact of Western culture on parental choice marriage practice. The literature review aimed to establish how other scholars have conceptualised the issue of arranged marriages as a socio-cultural practice. This section was, therefore, portioned into three theme-related sub-sections: the rationale behind the parental choice of spouses, the advantages of customary marriages and the impact of Western culture on African cultures.

1.7.1 Rationale behind Parental Choice of Spouses

Apostolou (2010) conducted a research on what parents want in a son-in-law and a daughter-in-law. Apostolou was triggered by the observation that parents are influential over mate choice; and in most human societies, they choose spouses for their children according to their preferences. In this study, Apostolou discovered that

parents desire in-law that has qualities that are beneficial to them and their kin. Such preferences are contingent upon the sex of the in-law as traits are weighed differently in a daughter-in-law and a son-in-law. In addition, the preferences vary according to the subsistence type of a given society as traits are valued differently in different societies. Apostolou's study shows that parental choice of spouses is guided by certain preferences. Apostolou's discovery have been helpful in the current study that seeks to find the rationale behind the culture of *ho khethela molekane*. Nonetheless, Apostolou focused on the preferences of the parents when choosing spouses for their children whereas the current one focuses on the reasons that lead parents to choose spouses for their children.

Similarly, Hynie, Lalondo and Lee (2006) compared the mate preferences of children with those of their parents. Hynie *et al.* found out that parents rate traits associated with traditional family values. Traits that are looked at, include amongst others, good character, social status and working ability. Hynie *et al.* also found that parents differentiate their preferences according to the sex of the in-law. For instance, traits such as working ability and social status are valued more in a son-in-law than in a daughter-in-law. Although Hynie *et al.*'s study is comparative while the current one is not, they both study the parental choice of spouse. The current study has been informed by the findings of the former concerning the traditional values that parents look for in choosing a spouse for their child. The current study was therefore aimed at identifying the reasons behind parental choice of spouses within Basotho society.

Generally, the literature reviewed in this sub-section has focused on the reasons why parents choose spouses for their children focusing only on the ethnographic communities and leaving out literary works. The study conducted by Apostolou (2010) revealed that parents prefer in-laws that would satisfy them. Additionally,

Hynie, Lalondo and Lee (2006) found out that parents have different predilections based on the gender of the in-law. The current study focuses on the rationale behind the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) as portrayed in *Meokho ea Thabo* as the novel examined in this study. However, the reviewed studies have informed the current study on the possible reasons that influence the parental choice of spouses.

1.7.2 Customary Marriages

Ekanjume and Kolobe (2012) conducted a study on the Basotho traditional marriage. Ekanjume and Kolobe(2012) examined the way the Basotho conduct their traditional marriage, with more emphasis on the language used during the marriage procedural steps. Ekanjume and Kolobe (2012) discovered that traditional marriage in Lesotho is a very important aspect of social development in the Basotho culture. They noted that it is not just an act between two individuals, but it is an extended family and community affair. Ekanjume and Kolobe's (2012) study focused on the language used during traditional marriage procedures, but the current study concentrates on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). However, Ekanjume and Kolobe have not paid attention to the benefits of the customary marriage. Nonetheless, the current study has been informed by the former study based on the finding that traditional marriage is an affair of the entire family and community. This finding has helped the researcher to establish the benefits of Basotho traditional marriage with more focus on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses).

Yu (2010) researched on arranged marriages. Yu discovered that arranged marriages build friendships between the two families involved. They, also found out that a strong filial bond is established between two families. Additionally, Yu observed that arranged marriages are generally accepted in the Indian society as they lend

credibility and social recognition for a secured conjugal life. Yu's study concentrated on the advantages and disadvantages of arranged marriages, and that is not the focus of the current study. However, Yu's study has benefitted the current study as knowing the advantages of arranged marriages has helped the current researcher examine the merits of the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) in *Liketso* as the novel under study.

Possa-Mogoera and Khotso (2021) conducted a study on the Basotho proverb *ngwana ke wa dikgomo* (the child belongs to the cow) focusing on marriage, child acceptance and inheritance. They examined the power of the mentioned proverb in protecting Basotho marriage, inheritance and child acceptance. Possa-Mogoera and Khotso found out that this proverb is popularly known and used when dealing with protection, marriage and child acceptance. In their study, they examined a Sesotho proverb *ngwana ke wa dikgomo* (the child belongs to the cowcattle) while the current study examines a novel. However, both studies focus on the Basotho marriage institution. Therefore, the notion of the protection of Basotho marriage informs the current study in exploring the merits of the culture *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses).

Manyeli (2007) studied family types amongst the Basotho. Manyeli discovered that families were formed in different ways, and the most common way was through arranged marriages. Manyeli further discovered that the selection in arranged marriages was based on several important considerations, including, kin obligations, family wealth, reputation and sheer love. Manyeli focused on the types of families in the Basotho society while the current study focused on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) portrayed in the afore-mentioned novels. Their study and the current study focus on the marriage institution in the Basotho society. However, the findings of Manyeli's study has helped the researcher in

identifying the rationale behind the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses).

In the above presented literature, no attention has been paid to the merits of customary marriage on the matched couple. Firstly, Ekanjume and Kolobe (2012) focused on the language used during the customary marriage procedural steps. Furthermore, Yu (2010) discovered that arranged marriages build friendships between the two families involved. Besides that, Possa-Mogoera and Khotso (2021) focused on the power of the Sesotho proverb “*ngwana ke wa likgomo*” (a child belongs to the cow) in the protection of marriage, inheritance and child acceptance. Lastly, Manyeli (2007) discovered that arranged marriages are a form of building families in Basotho society. The current study focuses on examining the merits of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) on the matched couple as portrayed in the novel *Liketso*. Nonetheless, the reviewed studies have informed the current study.

1.7.3 Impact of Western Culture on African Cultures

Arowolo (2010) studied the effects of the Western civilization and the culture on the African societies. In their study, Arowolo found out that the Western education and Christianity challenged the belief systems and social norms of the Africans. Since Arowolo focused on the African continent, their study informs the current one on the effects of westernisation on the African societies. The Basotho society is, therefore, not an exception to what westernisation has brought to African societies. Arowolo’s study focused on the entire continent of Africa while the current study examines the effects of westernisation on Basotho society, focusing mainly on the institution of marriage.

On the same note, Obiama (2017) investigated the effects of westernisation in Africa. Obiama observed that, to a great extent, Westernisation has affected Africa negatively. Obiama observed that westernisation, which was brought through colonisation of Africa, has led to the diminishing of the African traditional beliefs and culture. Obiama's study has brought lighter to the current researcher that westernisation has not only brought negative change to the Africans, but the change is also negative. Obiama's study is limited to the ethnography communities leaving out the literary works. Furthermore, Obiama's study is based on the culture of the African society in general while the current study focuses on a specific cultural practice which is the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses).

Njenga (2018) studied the factors of westernisation in Nigeria. They found that formal education and Christianity are the main factors of westernisation. Njenga further discovered that the Western education and Christianity, involving literacy and mastery of a European language became the condition of entry into the modern sector. Njenga's study focused on the factors of westernisation in Africa while the current study focuses on the impact that the Western culture has brought on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). The former study has shed a light on the current one on the factors of westernization. Thus, enabling the researcher to identify the impact brought by the Western culture through those factors.

Opong (2004) studied the influence of foreign religion and culture on the Basotho funeral rituals. Opong's study revealed that both Christianity and the Western culture have influenced the socio-cultural practices of the Basotho. It has been observed that Opong (2004) focused on the funeral rituals amongst the Basotho while the current study focused on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). The researcher has been able to examine the influence of the Western culture on the

culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) building on the influence of the Western culture and Christianity on the funeral rituals as both funeral rituals and *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) are socio-cultural practices in the Basotho society.

The literature presented in this sub-section has discussed the impact of Western culture on African culture focusing on socio-cultural and religious practices. Arowolo (2010) found out that the Western education and Christianity challenge the belief systems and social norms of Africans. Additionally, Obiama (2017) observed that westernisation was brought through colonisation on Africa and diminished the African traditional beliefs and culture. Furthermore, Njenga (2018) found out that formal education and Christianity are the main factors of westernisation. Lastly, Opong (2004) studied the influence of foreign religion and culture on the Basotho funeral rituals. The current study intends to examine the impact of the Western culture on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) as depicted in *Kotleloa Sehong*. However, the reviewed scholars have laid a foundation for this study.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This study has adopted the Structural-Functional Theory as its analytic tool. Ritzer (2016) states that the Structural-Functional theory is a school of thought according to which each of the institutions, relationships, roles and norms that together constitute a society serve a purpose; and each is indispensable for the continued existence of the others and of the society as a whole. The Structural-Functional theory sees society as a structure with interrelated parts designed to meet the biological and social needs of individuals in that society. The theory is concerned with large-scale social structures and social institutions.

In addition, Ritzer (2016) states that the Structural-Functional theory is an explicative theory that has been developed and redefined by various scholars. This theory is an explanatory theory primarily introduced by Talcott Parsons in the 1950s and developed by Emile Durkheim in the 1980s. Further debates and theories on the Structural-Functionalism have been articulated by scholars like Radcliffe Brown 1920s to 1950s, Kingsley Davis, Wilbert Moore and Rober Merton from 1910 to 2003.

The Structural-Functionalism grew out of the writings of English philosopher and biologist Herbert Spencer who saw similarities between society and the human body. They argue that, just as the various organs of the body work together to keep the body functioning, the various parts of society work together to keep the society functioning. The parts of society that Spencer refers to are the social institutions, patterns of beliefs and behaviours focused on meeting social needs such as governance, education, family, healthcare, religion and economy (Ritzer, 2016).

Emile Durkheim is an early sociologist who applied the Structural-Functional theory to explain how societies change over time. They believes that a society is a complete system of interrelated and interdependent parts that work together to maintain stability, and that a society is held together by shared values, language and symbols. In a healthy society, all parts work together to maintain stability (Durkheim 1933). For Durkheim, the Structural-Functional theory is significant for understanding social differentiation, social order and the social evolution of society.

Another Structural-Functionalist, Talcott Parsons, pointed out that social processes often have many functions. Some of those functions are manifest functions and latent functions. Manifest functions are consequences of a social process that are sought or anticipated while latent functions are the unsought consequences of a social process.

Latent functions, include, meeting new people, participating in activities, or even finding a spouse or partner. Parson's ideas on structure and system are based on the functional imperatives required in every social setting (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/structuralfunctionalism>)

Brown (1979) says that the Structural-Functional theory is said to have been dominant in the United States of America during the 1930's. However, in the 1960's the Structural-Functional theory was criticised for failing to relate to some basic social concerns. That is, it was unable to explain several features of the American society, such as, poverty, social change, and the continuing influence and political power of the wealthy. Another criticism against the Structural-Functional theory is that, it cannot adequately explain social change. Also, the circular nature of the theory is problematic.

Additionally, the Feminist approaches also attacked the Structural-Functionalism saying that, it provides a justification for male privilege and ignored the past and the potential contribution of women. It does not address the issue of conflict in society; instead, it projects an ideal picture of harmonious relationships. That is, the Structural-Functionalism is unable to account for social change and conflict (<http://www.en.wikibooks.org/structuralfunctionalism>)

Irrespective of criticism laid by the Feminist approaches, the study adopted the Structural-Functionalism as it deals with the social structures within the society and the current study focuses on the institution of marriage within the Basotho society. The Structural-Functional theorists that have been found relevant to the current study are Durkheim and Parsons. The current study focused on a cultural practice *ho khethela molekane* which is embodied in the culture of the Basotho society.

The basic principles of the Structural-Functional theory can be comprehended in three simple terms: maintenance of social stability, collective functioning and social evolution. In the Structural-Functionalism, social change is regarded as an adaptive response to some tension within the social change.

The following principles of the Structural-Functional theory were used to analyse selected texts:

- Conformity to cultural norms, practices and maintenance of social stability are the principles that helped the researcher to analyse the rationale behind the practice of *ho khethela molekane*. According to Kim, Ehsamul and Shamin (2015) Conformity to cultural norms and practices refers to compliance with standards, rules and laws. Conformity to cultural norms and practices refers to behaviour following socially accepted conventions.
- Collective functioning and maintenance of social stability are the principles used in the analysis of the merits of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) on the concerned children. Parsons (2017) indicate that collective functioning and social stability state that a society is a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability within a society. Each component of the structure has a specified role and altogether all these social patterns contribute to the balanced and stable functioning of the society.
- Social evolution was used to examine the impact of the Western culture on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). The researcher also looked at how the Western culture has influenced this cultural practice and the consequences of that influence. Social revolution is the sudden change in the structure and nature of a society. The changes transform society, economy, culture, philosophy and technology along with, but more than just the political systems. (Gizachen, 2014).

1.9 Methodology

This section provides the research methods and methodologies used in the collection, presentation and analysis of data in this study. The focus was on the research design, population, sampling, data collection and data analysis.

1.9.1 Research Design

The study has adopted a qualitative research design. The main focus is on the interpretation and analysis of the rationale behind the culture of *ho khethela molekane*, the merits it has on the concerned children and the impact of westernisation on this culture. This study is qualitative because it has used non-numerical data. A qualitative research is used to understand how people experience the world. Rakotsoane (2012) points out that a qualitative research is intended to assist individual researchers to understand the social settings within which people live. This means that qualitative research is subjective; it intends to assist with examining and understanding social settings.

On this note, Denzin, Anthony and Leech (2018) add that qualitative research draws from interpretive and constructivist paradigms, seeking to deeply understand a research subject rather than predict outcomes as in the positivist paradigm. Additionally, Creswell and Poth (2018) state that qualitative research helps critics answer important questions about people and their lives. This clarifies that qualitative research seeks to build knowledge from understanding an individual's unique viewpoints and the meanings attached to those viewpoints.

The features and functions of qualitative research design stated have helped the researcher to find it suitable to be used in the review of the culture of *ho khethela*

molekane as a social aspect that is portrayed in the novels under examination in this study.

1.9.2 Population

Population refers to the total number of participants used in the collection of data. Lincoln and Guba (2021) define population as the universe in which the researcher wishes to generalise. They point out that it is the totality of all observations and analysis that the researcher is concerned with. In this study, population refers to Sesotho novels under study that have the culture of *ho khethela molekane* as their thematic aspect.

1.9.3 Sampling

A sample is defined as a smaller set of data that a researcher chooses from a larger population while the process of choosing a sample is called sampling. (Thome, 1998). Sampling in this study was purposive and convenient as the researcher selected texts based on their convenience concerning the information related to the purpose of this study. Anita, Anupam and Pikee (2012) clarify that in purposive sampling, the sample is picked based on its convenience. The sampled novels are; *Meokho ea thabo*, *Liketso*, and *Kotleloa Sehong*.

1.9.4 Data collection

The researcher used a secondary research method of data collection. Thome (1998) defines this method as collecting existing data in the form of texts, images, audio or video recordings and many more. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative researchers generally collect their data through participant observations, documentation or direct interviews with participants. These researchers do normally not use instruments or questionnaires made by other researchers because they, qualitative researchers, are key to the research.

The data collection method used in this study is secondary method of data collection which according to Thome (1998: 9), "...is collecting the existing data from the texts, images, audio or video recordings." In this study, the data were drawn from three Sesotho novels: *Meokho ea Thabo*, *Liketso* and *Kotleloa Sehong*. The researcher read the mentioned novels several times to identify the content that is relevant to the topic under investigation. The texts were easily accessed as they are part of the researcher's collection of Sesotho novels.

In the analysis of the data, this study adopted content analysis. Krippendorff (2014) defines content analysis as a research method that provides a systematic and objective means to make valid inferences from verbal, visual or written data in order to describe and quantify a specific phenomenon. This study hence adopts content analysis method as it analyses written data presented in the three Sesotho novels selected for examination in this study.

The presented methods were believed to be reliable and valid to provide accurate outcomes in this study.

1.10 Organisation of the Study

This section presents the layout and overview of the chapters of this study. This study is portioned into five chapters that treat different aspects. Since the study reviews three main aspects of the culture of *ho khethela molekane*, these aspects have been treated in different and independent chapters.

The first chapter introduces the study. Its contents are the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the rationale, the scope of the study, the literature review, the theoretical framework, the methodology and the organisation of the study.

Chapter two responds to the first research question, which is locating the rationale behind the culture of *ho khethela molekane* as outlined in *Meokho ea Thabo*.

Chapter three deals with the second research question: merits of the culture of *ho khethela molekane* on the concerned children. This was done by interpreting the texts selected for this study.

Chapter four is the interpretation of the last research question: the impact of westernisation on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* as portrayed in *Kotleloa Sehong*.

Chapter five provides a general conclusion of the study. This chapter outlines the observations, recommendations, as well as suggestions, for further research based on the findings of the study.

1.11 Ethical Considerations

In this study, the researcher acknowledged all the sources of information in the form of references, both internal referencing and provision of an appropriate list of references. The researcher did not engage in any form of plagiarism. Above all, the findings of this study were provided as they are, they were not made to suit anyone. In all aspects, the findings of this study are valid and reliable. The extractions from the novels under study have been acknowledged and they have not been tempered with.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE CULTURE OF *HO KHETHELA MOLEKANE* (PARENTAL CHOICE OF SPOUSES)

2.0 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the background to the study, the objectives of the study and the methodology that was used in the collection, presentation and interpretation of the data in this study. Based on the foundation laid in chapter one, this chapter looks into the rationale behind the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) as depicted in *Meokho ea Thabo* by Khaketla (1979). Parents chose spouses for their sons and daughters for the following reasons: execution of parental duties and preservation of cultural practices. The analysis of the rationale behind the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) was done with the application of the Structural-Functional theory. The principles that the researcher has used are conformity to social norms and practices, as well as maintenance of social stability.

Chapter two has provided a brief background on the Basotho customary marriage and *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) as cultural practices in the institution of marriage in the Basotho society. This chapter has also provided a summary of *Meokho ea Thabo*. Furthermore, the researcher has provided the analysis of *Meokho ea Thabo* looking into the two reasons behind the practice of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). The reasons behind the practice of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) that the researcher focused on are: the execution of parental duties and the preservation of cultural practices.

2.1 Ho Khethela Molekane (Parental Choice of Spouses)

As indicated in chapter one, marriage amongst the Basotho used to be arranged by parents. Arranged marriages were believed to produce stronger and happier marriages. Ekanjume and Kolobe (2012) state that in the Basotho society, marriage is a union of two families not just individuals. When choosing a spouse for their son, parents considered mostly, an in-law from a family that had good morals and dignity, as well as recognised social status.

2.2 Summary of Meokho Ea Thabo

Meokho ea Thabo is a novel narrating the life of the main character named Moeketsi Thatho. Moeketsi lost his father at a very early age. He was only one year and seven months when his father passed on. Moeketsi was left with his mother, Mamoeketsi and his elder sister, Lineo. In the culture of Basotho, the younger brother to the late husband takes over as the man of the household and performs all the fatherly responsibilities (Lesitsi, 2002).

Moeketsi's uncle, Motale, took over as a father in his late brother's household. Moeketsi attended school and graduated as a teacher. After Moeketsi completed his studies, his parents informed him that they had chosen a girl for him to marry and instructed him to visit that girl's home to meet her. However, Moeketsi found it difficult to get married to someone he did not know because he already had a fiancé. Moeketsi told his elders that he had already promised a certain girl marriage, and this infuriated his uncle who swore that Moeketsi would never choose a wife for himself.

Moeketsi's heart bled as he realised that he was denied the freedom to marry the woman he loved. He then decided to flee from his home and wandered in the neighbouring country, in a town that he was not familiar with, Durban. He settled well and got employed. Everything seemed to be working out in his favour until he

was troubled by nightmares. In his dreams, his late father showed him that he had to go back home and fulfill his elders' wish of marrying the woman they had chosen for him.

After a long period of denial and suffering, Moeketsi decided to go back home and informed his elders that he was ready to meet the woman they had chosen for him to marry her. Moeketsi's parents made preparations with the parents of the woman that they wanted Moeketsi to marry for Moeketsi to visit and meet the chosen woman. Moeketsi paid a visit and met the woman that his parents wanted him to marry. Moeketsi was very happy when he met the woman that his parents wanted him to marry. He was surprised that the woman that his parents wanted him to marry was the very same woman that he loved and had promised to marry. The name of this woman was Fumane.

Fumane lived with both parents and was sent to school where she trained to be a teacher. Her father, Thabana, got into an arrangement with Thatho's family that Fumane should be their daughter-in-law. Just like Moeketsi, Fumane also denied her parents' choice. Then, her father decided to invite his sisters to come over and convince Fumane to marry the man that has been chosen for her.

Fumane's aunts tried in different ways to make her realise that she had to abide by the choice of her parents. Fumane's aunts finally managed to convince her to marry the man that her parents have chosen for her. Fumane surrendered and agreed to meet the man chosen for her by her parents. Little did she know that the man she was about to meet was the man that she was in a relationship with. All the arrangements for the meet-up were made by the parents; and finally, Fumane met the man chosen for her. The man chosen for Fumane was Moeketsi Thatho who was her boyfriend.

2.3 Execution of Parental Duties

In this section, the researcher shows how the execution of parental responsibility has been portrayed as the rationale behind the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) in *Meokho ea Thabo*. Amongst different scholars that define parental duties, the researcher found the following most relevant to the objective of this study: Obioha and Tšoeunyane (2012), Santrock (2016), and Amos (2013). According to Obioha and Tšoeunyane (2012), parental duty refers to the responsibilities that a parent has to fulfill in the upbringing of children. What one can draw from Obioha and Tšoeunyane's (2012) definition is that parenting is a daily function that a parent performs in their son's or daughter's life. In addition, Santrock (2006) stresses that through parenting, parents extend their wealth of experience and knowledge to the younger members of their family through various mediums. What Santrock (2006) implies is that parents teach their children certain aspects of their families and societies. Furthermore, Amos (2013) is of the view that through parenting, cultural values are passed to children. From these definitions of parenting and parental duties, the researcher drew the understanding that the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) is perpetuated from one generation to another through parenting.

In the Basotho society, one of the aspects of knowledge and experiences that parents pass on to their sons and daughters is the acknowledgment of the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). The examination of the execution of the parental duties was done through the employment of the Structural-Functional theory using its two principles which are conformity to cultural norms and maintenance of social stability.

In *Meokho ea Thabo*, it has been portrayed that one of the reasons behind *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) is fulfilling parental duties. For example,

Motale informed Moeketsi that his parents had chosen a wife for him basing themselves on certain cultural practices. For instance, Motale told Moeketsi that he was choosing a spouse for him as doing so was performing the duties entrusted to him culturally as a parent:

1. *Ntat 'ao ha a hlokahala o ne a ntaee hore ke u holise ke be ke u batlele mosali 'me kajeno nako ea hore u mo fumane e fihlile.* (Khaketla, 1979:88)

“Your father, when he died, he ordered me to groom you and to find a wife for you; and today is the time for you to get a wife has arrived.”

From the above extract, Motale states that his late brother commanded that he should raise Moeketsi and choose a wife for him when the time for him to marry arrived. It was also reflected in the above citation that in Basotho society, choosing a spouse for the child was part of parenting, thus *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) is a parental duty. Furthermore, Motale expressed that for parenting duties to be fully performed, a parent ought to find a wife for his son. Motale’s act of informing Moeketsi that the time to find a wife for him has come called for the conformity to cultural norms and practices principle of the Structural-Functional theory. Conformity to cultural norms and practices states that an individual has to abide by the norms and practices that govern their family and society. In performing his duty as a parent, Motale was conforming to the cultural norms of his family that stated that in the upbringing of a son, the parent must also find a wife for that son.

The death of Motale’s brother had brought about a new function that Motale had to perform in his brother’s home. Motale was no longer an uncle in his brother’s home; rather, he was now the man of the house. This means that the duties he had to perform had also changed to those of the head of the family. Supportive of this change of

functions, Obioha and Tšoeunyane (2012) note that, as individuals move to a different level, the roles they perform and the expectations from their families and societies change, especially in indigenous Basotho family systems.

In the structure of the family, Motale's function was to nurture Moeketsi and inculcate in him the cultural practices and norms of the family. Performance of the parental duty of choosing a spouse for Moeketsi reflected the conformity to cultural practices and norms principle of the Structural-Functional theory. Motale had the parental responsibility upon Moeketsi, because in the Basotho societies, younger brothers take the parental duties of their late brothers. In clarity to this issue, Lesitsi (2002) indicates that the younger brother of the deceased husband takes over as the man of the house in his late brother's home. The younger brother takes care of the widow and orphans. According to the Structural-Functional theory, every member of a society has a role to perform to ensure the smooth running of the society. Motale was performing the function of taking care of his late brother's family and thus portraying conformity to cultural practices. As the head of the family, Motale was adhering to the cultural expectations and performs the parental duty of grooming Moeketsi and choosing a spouse for him.

Furthermore, in the Basotho society, the wishes and commands that the deceased gave before death are respected. There are Sesotho proverbs that illustrate this matter, for example, "*lentsoe la mofu le aheloa lesaka*" (Mokitimi, 1997:58) translated as, the kraal is built for the deceased's words. This proverb means that what the person said as their wish before death has to be respected, and those that are still alive have to fulfill those wishes and abide by them. Motale was fulfilling the function that his family has trusted him to perform in his late brother's family, and what he did is in line with the conformity to cultural norms and practices principle of the Structural-Functional theory. Choosing a spouse for Moeketsi was a

parental duty, and performing this duty was a function in society that lead to stability in society because a stable family contributes to a stable society.

Performance of parental duty has also been projected in the excerpt below:

2. *ke hantle ha u utloa, ngoana ke oa ho utloa batsoali ba hae kamehla.* (Khaketla, 1979:89)

“It is good that you understand a child listens to his parents always.”

In the above extract, Motale showed that in the Sesotho culture, a son is always expected to abide by the cultural norms and practices governing his family. Abiding by the cultural practices of the family denoted conformity to cultural norms and practices. Moeketsi was expected to honour and conform to the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) and marry the woman chosen by his parents. It was also reflected in the foregoing citation that Moeketsi understood and adhered to what Motale told him as his parent.

In the Basotho society, children learn the cultural practices of their families and society from their elders. When Motale told Moeketsi that he had to perform his parental duty of finding a wife for him, he was acting per the conformity to cultural practices principle of the Structural-Functional theory. In the same way, Moeketsi showed conformity to cultural norms and practices that are advocated for by the Structural-Functional theory. Moeketsi listened to Motale as the parent when he told him that he had to choose a wife for him. Listening to Motale and acknowledging that he had to perform his parental duty of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses), showed that Moeketsi understood the duties that Motale had to perform as the parent.

Moeketsi's obedience indicated that Motale had mastered his parental duty of instilling in Moeketsi the understanding of the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). Both Motale and Moeketsi's approach to the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) brings to the researcher, the Structural-Functional theory in its principle of conformity to cultural practices and norms of the society. Motale informs and stresses to Moeketsi that he has to choose a wife for him as doing so, is his parental duty. Similarly, Moeketsi listens to what Motale tells him without any objection and this shows that Moeketsi is going to abide by the knowledge that Motale is imparting to him. The knowledge that Motale was imparting to Moeketsi is that *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) was practiced because a parent must choose a spouse for his son.

In the Basotho society, marriage is a very important aspect of culture that is aimed at developing the families and society at large (Matšela, 1990). Based on what Matšela states concerning the importance of marriage in the Basotho society, the researcher observes that Motale feels the need to perform his parental duty of choosing a spouse for Moeketsi because he understands the importance of marriage institutions within the Basotho society. Members of society need to abide by and conform to their society's culture. Conforming to the cultural practices and norms secures the culture of that society, and the elders in the society are the ones who perform the major function in ensuring conformity to cultural practices through performing their parental duties.

The Structural-Functional theory declares that various parts of the society work together to ensure the functioning of such a society. In the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses), the elders carry out their function as pillars of the society by performing their parental duty of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses); ensuring that the younger generation also conforms to this

culture. Likewise, the children played their role of abiding by their parents' orders and conforming to the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). Therefore, both the parents and children performed their functions to ensure the smooth functioning of society.

2.4 Preservation of Cultural Practices

Preservation of cultural practices is keeping cultural norms and practices alive and valuable as well as maintaining their original form. In agreement with the researcher's view, Sibani (2018) states that culture preservation means keeping the artifacts and traditions of a community intact against factors trying to change them and wear them away. Sibani's (2018) definition implies that cultural practices are preserved so that future generations know the cultural practices that have been practiced by their forefathers. Also, for the younger generations to pass such cultural practices on to other generations to follow without changing the cultural practices or letting them to vanish.

Additionally, Umeluzor (2014) states that the African cultural heritage is commonly preserved orally. Umeluzor (2014) reflects that for the African cultures to be known from generation to generation, the elders pass them on to younger generations by word of mouth. The Basotho, being part of the African society, also use oral traditions to pass on their cultural practices from one generation to another.

When choosing a spouse for the child, parents focused more on the family from which the target spouse comes. Parents considered the social status of the family from which they want to choose a spouse. On this account, Sherif-Trask (2003) states that some marriages were based on membership of certain social groups. This was done because the Basotho believed that "*ngoana ke seipone sa lelapa labo*", meaning that, a child reflects the behaviour patterns of their family. This, therefore,

says that choosing a spouse from a family that has the discipline and commendable behaviour is to preserve the culture of the conjugal family. A woman from a respectable family valued the cultural practices and norms that govern her family, hence it would be easy for her to value the norms and cultural practices of the family that she got married into.

In *Meokho ea Thabo*, the preservation of cultural practices was reflected in several instances. For example, Motale convinced Moeketsi that the family's norms and practices involved in the institution of marriage should be preserved. For instance, Motale said to Moeketsi:

3. *Molao oo `na le ntat`ao re holisitsoeng ka oona, ke oona oo le uena u tlamehileng hore u tsamaee ka oona.*
(Khaketla 1979:89)

“The rule that your father and I were groomed with is the one that you also must abide by.”

In this extract, Motale has portrayed that the parents get the cultural practices and norms from their forefathers, and they, in turn, enforce those cultures on their children so that they are culturally awakened and take pride in the cultural practices of their families and society. The smooth running of the family ensured the smooth functioning of society because a family is a fundamental brick in society.

Motale made it clear to Moeketsi that the knowledge that he got from his elders was preserved through him to pass on to the generations to follow. By passing the knowledge of cultural practices to Moeketsi, Motale was preserving the culture of his family. Moeketsi was expected to carry out his function of ensuring the smooth functioning of the family by abiding by the custom that Motale had informed him to have always been followed in the family. Moeketsi was also expected to pass the

knowledge of cultural practices that he had acquired from Motale to generations to follow.

In support of the current findings on the issue of preserving culture, Obioha and Tšoeunyane (2012) indicates that the role of the elders in Basotho families involves acting as the archives of information. The elders serve to maintain the traditional structure of the family and offer information that is needed, but it is not physically recorded. Obioha and Tšoeunyane (2012) view on the culture preservation reflects that there is information that is not documented in any paper which is preserved by elders who are also the repositories of the knowledge of the cultural practices. The researcher acknowledged this opinion as the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) is part of the knowledge concepts of the Basotho society that are not documented.

In accordance to the Structural Functionalism, one of the concepts states that, in a society, different people have different roles that they perform to ensure the smooth functioning of the society. The above extract showed that Motale was ensuring the smooth functioning of his family by passing onto Moeketsi the knowledge of the cultural practices followed in the family about the marriage institution. Securing the cultural practices of the society was one way of fulfilling a function in the society of ensuring its smooth functioning, and that is one of the principles of the Structural-Functional theory. Motale also expressed that parents valued their cultural practices a lot and expected their children to do so as well.

Moeketsi told his parents that he had a woman that he intended to marry. His parents objected and told him that he could not choose his spouse. The right to choose a spouse lies entirely on the parents. Motale confronted Moeketsi showing him that he

had no choice in what the parents said concerning the choice of the spouse. For instance, Motale said:

4. *Bona mona Moeketsi, ha kea tla khang le uena mona, ke ne ke tlo u bolella feela seo `na le ausi re se rerileng, ke sa rate le ho tseba hore na oa lumela kapa che, kapa hona ho u kopa keletso. Oa mo tseba ngoanana eo hore ke oa mang? Oa tseba haeba ba habo ba hana likobo (ba loea)?* (Khaketla, 1979:89)

“Look here Moeketsi, I have not come to argue with you here; I was just going to inform you what my sister and I have planned; I am not interested in knowing whether you agree or not, or ask you for some advice. Do you know whose child that girl is? Do you know if her family denies blankets?”

In the foregoing excerpt, Motale indicated that he did not want to risk the existence of his family by allowing Moeketsi to marry from a family that they knew nothing about. Motale feared that Moeketsi might marry a woman from a family that practiced witchcraft. Since it was the main function of parents to preserve the cultural practices of their family and society, parents chose spouses for their children because through the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) parents were able to choose a woman from a family with good morals and dignity. The Structural-Functional theory states that every member of society plays a certain role. It is evident from the above quotation that the role of preserving the cultural practices of the family lies in the hands of the parents who fulfilled it through *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) and the children who had to abide by the parental choice of their parents.

The Structural-Functional theory also states that various parts of the society work together to keep the society functioning. In this case, Motale did not want to perform the role of preserving the cultural practices of his family alone. Motale wanted Moeketsi to conform to the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) and marry Fumane so that she would help in the preservation of the cultural practices of the family.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter was intended to answer the first objective of the study which is identifying the rationale behind the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). The data presented in this chapter has indicated that the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) was practiced because it was the parental responsibility and the Basotho society conserved their culture through this cultural practice. Through the characters such as Motale, it has been demonstrated that the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) is a central aspect of the Basotho customary marriage and through the *culture of ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses), parents performed their parental responsibilities.

CHAPTER THREE

THE MERITS OF THE CULTURE OF *HO KHETHELA MOLEKANE* (PARENTAL CHOICE OF SPOUSES)

3.0 *Introduction*

The previous chapter was on the examination of the rationale behind the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). The novel that was examined is *Meokho ea Thabo* by Khaketla (1979). The principles of the Functional-Structural theory that the researcher employed in the examination of the rationale behind the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) are conformity to cultural norms and practices, as well as maintenance of social stability.

The current chapter looks into the merits of the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) on the matched couple as portrayed in *Liketso* by Morojele (1987). The culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) ensured that the couple had family support at all times. The analysis of the merits of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) has been done through the application of the Structural-Functional theory. The principles of the Structural-Functional theory employed in this chapter are collective functioning and social stability.

This chapter sets off by providing a summary of *Liketso* followed by the analysis of *Liketso* in which the researcher focused on the merits of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses), specifically, the availability of a family support system.

3.1 *Summary of Liketso*

Liketso is a novel based on the friendship of two men named Matšohlo and Kopano. Matšohlo and Kopano met at the cattle post and became best friends who shared and

planned everything together. Matšohlo and Kopano got married at the same time and their families joined their friendship.

Matšohlo had a baby boy and named him Tokelo. Kopano had a baby girl and named her Lerato. Matšohlo and Kopano decided to seal their friendship by arranging a marriage between Tokelo and Lerato. Matšohlo's wife and Kopano's wife did not agree to this arrangement, but their husbands reminded them that women are not decision-makers in the family. `Matokelo (Matšohlo's wife) and `Malerato (Kopano's wife) had to accept their husbands' arrangement and let their children get married.

Tokelo and Lerato were informed about their parents' decision of uniting them in matrimony. Tokelo and Lerato were not happy about their parents' choice, but they accepted and got married. Lerato was very much taken care of by her in-laws and felt at home. Lerato was named `Maliketso in her conjugal home. After three months in marriage, `Maliketso got sick and later discovered that she was pregnant. A few days after `Maliketso discovered that she was pregnant, Tokelo fled and hid in Gauteng.

Even in the absence of Tokelo, `Maliketso got all the support from her in-laws who nursed her when she was sick. `Maliketso was blessed with a baby girl, Liketso. When Liketso was two years old, her grandfather, Matšohlo died. Tokelo told `Matokelo and `Maliketso that he married `Maliketso only to please his father and now that his father has passed on, he wanted nothing to do with `Maliketso. Tokelo told `Matokelo and `Maliketso that he is going to marry the woman that he loves.

Tokelo abused `Maliketso physically and emotionally. However, his brother, Tanki, and `Matokelo tried to talk to him and show him the importance of caring for his wife and family. After some time, Tokelo abandoned `Maliketso and Liketso and

fled to the Republic of South Africa. Even in Tokelo's absence, members of Matšohlo family stood by `Maliketso and gave her all their support. `Matokelo shared everything with `Maliketso. Tanki took Liketso and stayed with her. Since `Maliketso was struggling financially, Tanki paid for Liketso's education.

3.2 Availability of Family Support

In this section, the researcher focused on how the culture of *ho khetela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) guaranteed the family support of the couple that the parents have matched. Family support in this study refers to the emotional, financial and physical support that the couple gets from the family, which was meant to ensure the stability of the marriage founded on the culture of *ho khetela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). According to Degbey (2012), a family in the African context refers not only to the nuclear family, but also to the extended family. In addition to this definition, Adinlofu (2009) avers that a family provides all economic, social and psychological security to its members. These definitions of a family has given the researcher an understanding that, like in all African societies, the family members supported each other and ensure each other's well-being in all aspects of life in the Basotho society.

3.2.1 Nuclear Family Support

A nuclear family is a group of people united by ties of parenthood and consisting of a pair of adults and their socially recognised children (Nhlapo, 1991). Additionally, Moyo (2001) asserts that a nuclear family is regarded as a traditional family unit with significant figures: a mother, whose primary role is to take care of the family; and a father, whose primary role is to provide economic and security stability to the family; and the children. From these definitions of a nuclear family, the researcher notes that nuclear family members are the immediate relatives. Nuclear family

members are very close relatives that are easily available for one another in times of need.

In *Liketso*, nuclear family support was exemplified in different instances. For example, during `Maliketso's sickness, the entire nuclear family gave her support as shown in the extract below:

5. *Ha isa isa `Maliketso a kula. Boemo bona ba tšoenya ba ha Matšohlo haholo. Ha bokuli bona bo kokobela ha fumaneha hore `Maliketso o boetse morao. O ne a se a qetile likhoeli tse tharo a le moo lenyalong. Kamora matsatsinyana, Tokelo a ipha limenyane. Ntat`ae a fuputsa ka lenyele ho fumana moo a ileng. Phuputsong ea hae a fumana hore o thobetse Khauteng.* (Morojele, 1987:11)

“After a short time, `Maliketso fell sick. This situation worried the Matšohlo's family a lot. When the illness subsided, it was discovered that `Maliketso was pregnant. She had spent three months in marriage. After a few days, Tokelo disappeared. His father investigated secretly to find out where he had gone. In his investigations, he found that he had eloped to Gauteng.”

The above excerpt shows that when `Maliketso was sick, the whole family was worried. The Structural-Functional theory states that every member in a society is part of a unit, and the entire unit has to work together for the smooth functioning of the society. In Matšohlo's family, the well-being of `Maliketso is a concern of all the other members of the family. The entire family values Maliketso's well-being

because without her, the family cannot function smoothly. On this account, Goran (2004) states that the family is one of the most important units in the African social structures. The collective functioning principle of the Structural-Functional theory is portrayed by Matšohlo when he investigates Tokelo's disappearance in private. As the head of the family, Matšohlo is performing his function of looking out for all members of his family so that they work collectively to ensure the smooth running of the family. Matšohlo searches for Tokelo in private to avoid stressing `Maliketso who is sick and other members of the family who are already concerned about `Maliketso's ill-health. The collective functioning principle states that in a group or structure, all members work interdependently towards the achievement of a common goal that ensures the smooth functioning of the society. What Matšohlo's family portrays in supporting `Maliketso in her illness calls for the collective functioning principle of the Structural-Functional theory because all the members of this family work hand in hand towards a common goal of ensuring `Maliketso's well-being so that the entire family functions smoothly.

Furthermore, the above citation reflects that Matšohlo's family provides `Maliketso with all the support that she needs. The family sympathies and empathies with `Maliketso in her sickness; she is not suffering alone. This support is meant to ensure that `Maliketso's family and the entire Matšohlo family run smoothly. The above extract also shows that in the culture of *ho khethela molekane*, (parental choice of spouses), the daughter-in-law is fully accepted by the in-laws and gets all the support from her in-laws. Matšohlo's family supports `Maliketso in her illness as well as in finding her husband who just disappeared during `Maliketso's illness. All members of the unit work together interdependently to ensure the collective and smooth functioning of the unit. A family is a unit, and all members are affected by the conditions of others.

The availability of nuclear family support was also portrayed when `Matokelo intervened at the time when Tokelo neglected and abused `Maliketso. Tokelo had turned himself into a useless man who did nothing productive for his family. `Matokelo felt the need as a mother to intervene and reprimand Tokelo. `Matokelo's support was exemplified in the extract below:

6. *Ka letsatsi le leng `Matokelo a hla a ipha nako ea ho buisana le Tokelo. A mo bontša mabaka le bohlokoa ba hore a boloke khotso ea lelapa la hae.* (Morojele, 1987:24)

“On one particular day, `Matokelo gave herself some time to talk to Tokelo vigorously. She showed him the reasons and benefits of keeping peace in his family.”

The foregoing extract shows that `Matokelo took the initiative of restoring peace that was deteriorating in Tokelo's family. The absence of peace meant that the family could not function smoothly. `Matokelo felt that for the family of Tokelo and `Maliketso to have peace and run smoothly, she had to perform her function and intervene as a mother. `Matokelo confronted Tokelo and showed him the benefits of maintaining peace in his family. `Matokelo did not leave the responsibility of restoring peace upon `Maliketso and Tokelo, rather she felt that it was her role as a mother to ensure that Tokelo's family lived peacefully. `Matokelo's initiative brought into the picture the collective functioning principle of the Structural-Functional theory. As a mother, `Matokelo provided support to the junior members of her family to ensure the smooth functioning of the entire family. Supportive to the functions of a mother-in-law, Falore (2012) indicates that a mother-in-law is expected to provide support and succor for the young couple. Falore (2012) means

that, amongst all the people who offer support to the couple, a mother's role is very significant.

`Matokelo was the mother in Matšohlo's family and her function was to support Tokelo and `Maliketso to ensure that their marriage was sustained. `Matokelo portrayed collective functioning because she did not let things fall apart in Tokelo's family without performing her function as a senior member of the family. `Matokelo helped and provided support to help in restoring peace in her son's home. `Matokelo was performing her duty that women are entrusted with in the Basotho society, making sure that the family runs smoothly. In support, there are Sesotho proverbs that prove that a mother in the family is the one who has to tackle challenging issues so that a family functions smoothly, for example, *`m`a-ngoana o tšoara thipa ka bohaleng* (Mokitimi, 1997) translated as, the mother of a child holds the knife (dagger) on the sharper edge (side of the blade). This proverb means that a mother goes to extreme situations to ensure that her children are satisfied (Mokitimi, *ibid*). `Matokelo was doing what was expected of her as a mother, and protected her son's marriage and family. In addition, Saibu (2018) concurs that mothers are expected to be a model for their sons on how exemplary wives and home keepers ought to be. This may be interpreted to mean that a mother in a family has to hold his son's hand and support him in maintaining a stable marriage.

In the Basotho society, a mother was also expected to guide her children. This was the function that `Matokelo was performing, and it brought about the collective functioning principle of the Structural-Functional theory. Matšohlo's family was a structure that `Matokelo and her children were part of. The support and guidance that Tokelo and `Maliketso get from `Matokelo helped them to secure the stability of their family and ensure that the entire family functioned smoothly. In this accord, Afisi (2010:29) says "...even though the patriarchal system in Africa cannot be

denied, the African woman possesses the power that binds the society together”. Afisi (ibid) also adds that the survival of the family and the future of marriage depend on a great deal on the African woman. The researcher found what Afisi (2010) says very relevant in the current study clarification that in the family structure, a mother is a strong pillar that ensures the smooth functioning of the entire structure.

In the absence of peace in Tokelo and `Maliketso’s family, the entire family could not function smoothly. `Maliketso would not be able to perform the functions expected from her as a daughter-in-law; and Tokelo as well, would not be able to perform his duties. Failure in the functioning of `Maliketso and Tokelo due to the absence of peace in their family, meant that the smooth functioning of the whole family would be affected. According to the collective functioning principle of the Structural-Functional theory, every member has to perform a function that leads to a common goal of smooth functioning of the entire structure, and this was exactly what `Matokelo was doing in her family.

3.2.2 Extended Family Support

An extended family is an extensive group of people who are related by blood or marriage, including, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins (Melvin, 1996). Martin (1980) adds that extended family members have the responsibility of providing basic economic and emotional support to each other. These definitions of extended family reveal that there are relatives outside the immediate blood relatives that are bound together and provide support to one another. In *Liketso*, some characters are not immediate relatives to either `Maliketso or Tokelo but offered support to the two as part of their extended family. Examples of such family members are Tokelo’s uncles.

The extended family also offered support to the couple married in the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). It has been mentioned earlier that

in the African context, a family does not only refer to the nuclear family. This means that in the Basotho society, the extended family also provided support to the couple married through the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). The support provided by the extended family was reflected in some instances in *Liketso*; for example, Tokelo's relatives intervened when Tokelo was misbehaving. The intervention of the extended family was projected in the extract below:

7. *Tanki le rangoan'ae ba ne ba nyatsa Tokelo haholo
'me ba mo khalemela ka mekhoha ea hae. (Morojele,
1987:25)*

“Tanki and his uncles criticised Tokelo a lot and corrected him in his habits.”

This extract shows that putting Tokelo in his place and trying to stop him from doing degrading activities such as alcohol abuse and failing to provide for his family was a function that was collectively performed by the entire family. Both the nuclear and extended family members took part in ensuring that Tokelo left his dirty habits and became a responsible member of the family. As the Structural-Functional theory states, parts of the society work together like body parts to ensure and maintain the smooth functioning of the whole structure. In Matšohlo's family, everyone was performing a certain function towards a common goal of providing support to Tokelo and `Maliketso to ensure the stability of their marriage. The support provided by Tanki and his uncles was aimed at ensuring that Tokelo and `Maliketso's marriage was sustained. The actions and behaviour of Tanki and his uncles proved the collective functioning principle of the Structural-Functional theory because by helping in advising Tokelo, they were performing their function as Tokelo's elders to show him the right way of handling his family. Tanki and his uncles strived for

Tokelo to be responsible and perform his duties as the head of his family so that the entire family could function smoothly.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter was intended at attempting the second objective of the study that is examining the merits of the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) as portrayed in *Liketso*. From the data presented from the novel under study in this chapter, the researcher has realised that `Maliketso and Tokelo, as the matched couple, gained support from the nuclear family as well as the extended family. Tokelo and `Maliketso, as a couple, married through the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses), and had the social and psychological support of their family. All members of the Matšohlo clan functioned collectively to support Tokelo and `Maliketso to ensure the stability of their marriage. The family is a strong source of a support system. Ankrah (1993) affirms that the African family has persistently maintained its place as a central human social unit. The traditional family unit, whether in the nuclear or extended form, is a network of people connected by kin or blood relationship. The assumption from what Ankrah (1993) states is that family members collectively work together to support one another, so that their unit is strong and functions smoothly.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE IMPACT OF THE CULTURE OF HO KHETHELA MOLEKANE (PARENTAL CHOICE OF SPOUSES)

4.0 Introduction

Chapter three focused on the merits of the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) as portrayed in *Liketso* by Morojele (1987). The principles of the Functional- Structural theory that were employed are collective functioning and social stability.

This chapter looks into the impact of the Western culture on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). The novel that was used to examine the impact of the Western culture on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) is *Kotleloa Sehong* by Ramakhula (2005). The researcher applied the Structural-Functional theory as the analytical lens through which the impact of the Western culture on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) was examined. The principle of the Structural-Functional theory employed is a social revolution.

The focus of this chapter is, therefore, on the impact brought by the Western belief system and the Western education system on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). This chapter presents the nature of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses), a summary of *Kotleloa Sehong* by Ramakhula (2005) and the analysis of the impact of the western culture on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) as portrayed in *Kotleloa Sehong*. The Western culture is a term used to refer to a heritage of social norms, ethical values, traditional customs, belief systems and political systems that originate

or are associated with Europe (Arinze). From this definition, the researcher observes that the origin of the Western culture is Europe. It is also reflected in this definition that the Western culture covers several domains within a society. Additionally, Sibani (2018) states that the Western culture connotes the knowledge, belief, morals and way of life of the Western world. Sibani (2018) further avows that the Western culture has impacted the African traditional society in a very positive and negative way. The assumption drawn from Sibani's (2018) comment on the Western culture is that the Western culture has brought a socio-cultural impact on the African societies, the Basotho society inclusive. Ejiofor (1996) states that every culture has its own unique identity characterised by traditions, values and norms that make it distinctive. Ejiofor (1996) further maintains that over centuries, it has been observed that the old African traditions are gradually fading away as the Africans adopt the Western traditions and slowly conform to the Western influence. Based on the above definitions of the Western culture and the domains that are likely to be affected by the Western culture within a society, the researcher examined *Kotleloa Sehong* intending to identify the impact that the Western culture has brought on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) amongst the Basotho society.

4.1 Nature of ho Khethela Molekane (Parental Choice of Spouses)

Traditional marriage in Lesotho was planned by parents who chose a wife for their son (Matšela, 1990). Choosing a wife was very important and those involved did so in a very dedicated and honest manner. Although Matšela is not a contemporary scholar, the researcher finds him relevant in the current study because there are limited scholars who wrote about the Basotho traditional marriage, especially parental choice of spouses. In addition to what Matšela (1990) states, Lesitsi (2002) complements that, when choosing a wife for their son, parents looked for women that their son showed interest in during the traditional boys and girls games and

dances that were performed in the presence of the parents. The researcher adopts the presented clarifications of the Basotho parental choice marriage as the core of the current study is *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). A recap on the nature of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) has helped the researcher in identifying the impact that the Western culture has brought onto the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). It is logical to identify the impact when the nature is known.

4.2 Summary of *Kotleloa Sehong*

Kotleloa Sehong is a novel that presents the life of Sefata and his family. Sefata is a Mosotho man who values his culture a lot and lives according to his cultural norms and traditions. Sefata's family is located in the highlands of Lesotho. He has a wife named `Majoalane who is a dedicated Christian. There are many children in this family. Sefata's children were sent to initiation school and married spouses chosen by their parents. However, the last born in this family, Joalane, was sent to school in the lowlands and lived with her grandmother who was a Christian. Since Joalane spent most of the time away from home, at school, her parents excluded her from many traditional practices. When Sefata felt that it was time for Joalane to be sent to initiation school, `Majoalane made some excuses that Joalane should be allowed to finish her studies before going to initiation school.

When Joalane had finished her primary school studies, Sefata informed her that he has arranged for a man that will marry her. Sefata told `Majoalane and Joalane that the man chosen for Joalane will visit her. Since `Majoalane was a Christian, she was against the idea of choosing a spouse for Joalane. `Majoalane, therefore, did all she could to ensure the failure of the visit that was supposed to be paid by the man arranged for Joalane. `Majoalane consulted the pastor's wife and asked her for a piece of advice on how to help Joalane avoid the visit.

The plan was made by `Majoalane and the pastor's wife together with their daughters. Joalane was supposed to pretend to be sick so that her father would take her to the hospital. On arrival at the hospital, Sefata was told that Joalane had to lodge since she was very ill. Sefata informed the doctor that Joalane was expecting a very important visitor, so she had to be discharged; but his explanations were in vain. Joalane had to stay in hospital.

The arranged man got to Sefata's home and found out that Joalane was not around. The man arranged for Joalane was Sebota. In the absence of Joalane, Sebota then went and took a different woman home as his wife. His parents discovered after performing the bridal acceptance ceremony that the woman brought home was not the daughter-in-law that they were expecting. Their son had not married Joalane who they were expecting. The plan that `Majoalane and the pastor's wife had made succeeded because Joalane was saved from the visit and marriage of a man that Sefata had arranged for her.

Sefata transformed from being a culturally oriented man. He began to show an understanding of how Christianity and the Western education system function. He excused Joalane from initiation school and allowed her to get married to the man of her choice at a time that was convenient to her and the man that she will get married to. Likhang, Sefata's brother tried to talk some sense into Sefata that he should always behave and conduct his family matters concerning the cultural practices, but Sefata did not listen. Likhang was aware that Sefata was gradually turning away from the traditional ways of living. Sefata eventually got baptised and transformed into a Christian.

Joalane finally got married to the man she chose, Tsoakae, who was her teacher. Their wedding ceremony reflected the Western culture. The guests of honour were

church members and educated people. After marriage, this couple worked together in one school. Tsoakae was a principal and Joalane was a deputy principal.

4.3 Impact of Western Culture on *ho Khethela Molekane*

It has been mentioned earlier that the Western culture has affected the African cultures negatively. According to Arowolo (2010), the Western education and Christianity have challenged the belief systems and social norms of Africa. This study focuses on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) as part of the institution of marriage within the Basotho society. Sibani (2014) indicates that marriage is a significant part of life in all African traditions as it bestows respect, and it is the context within which family lines are extended. The marriage institution is the area in which a substantial increase in the Western influence is observed. *Kotleloa sehong* (2005), as a novel under inspection, presented the impact of the Western culture on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) in various instances.

One example in which the impact of the Western cultural is portrayed is when Sefata informs Joalane and `Majoalane that the man he has chosen for Joalane was paying a visit. However, `Majoalane and Joalane were not happy; and therefore, consulted the pastor`s family to seek advice to avoid the visit and plan the failure of the marriage that Sefata had arranged for Joalane. The impact of the western culture was seen in the extract below:

8. *Joalane a tsebisoa ka mohlankana eo a mo khethetsoeng [hore] o tla mo chakela `me a itokise. Ha Joalane a utloa litaba tsena a senyeha pelo ha bohloko. `Majoalane a mo utloela bohloko `me a lokela ho tšoara thipa ka*

bohaleng, a kopana le mohats'a moruti `me a kopa keletso. (Ramakhula, 2005:50)

“Joalane was informed that the man chosen for her will visit; therefore, she had to be prepared. When Joalane heard the news, she was heartbroken. `Majoalane felt sorry for her, and she had to hold a knife on the sharper edge. She met the pastor’s wife and asked for help.”

The excerpt above shows that when Joalane and `Majoalane received the news about the visit to be paid by the man arranged for Joalane, they did not accept the news. They went out to seek advice to avoid the visit. `Majoalane sought advice from the pastor’s wife. `Majoalane failed to perform her function as a wife to support Sefata and make Joalane understand that she had to marry the man chosen for her by her father. Also, `Majoalane failed to perform her function as a mother to hold her daughter’s hand and guide her through the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). Seeking some advice from the pastor’s wife reflected social revolution. In the Basotho society, when a husband as the head of a family has made a decision, the wife and children abide by that decision. However, in this case, `Majoalane tempered with the Basotho family structure and family members’ functions: she consulted a foreign body, a Christian to advise her on the traditional matters.

`Majoalane’s behaviour denoted the social revolution principle of the Structural-Functional theory because the pastor’s wife was likely to advise her against the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). On this account, Nwuso (1993) indicates that for an African to be a Christian, which is the Western belief system, one has to abandon one’s culture and religion. This quotation affirms that `Majoalane had abandoned her culture since she was a Christian, and this is why

she wanted Joalane to avoid meeting the man that was chosen to marry her. The social revolution principle indicates that changes in the nature and structure of society are recognised through transformations in culture, philosophy and political systems. According to Afisi (2010), in the African traditional family structures, the female influence on the moral character of the traditional society was very enduring because women had a unique position in instilling the socio-religious values and morals in the family. Drawing from Afisi (2010), the researcher concludes that `Majoalane had transformed from her role as an African woman. She failed to instill in Joalane the socio-religious morals of the Basotho society and this behaviour reflected social revolution; instead, `Majoalane promoted the Western religion and education system.

`Majoalane undermined the authority that Sefata held as the head of the family. Consulting a foreigner about internal family matters was a clear indication of social revolution. In the Basotho society, if there are matters that need intervention, the elders of the family are the ones that intervene. Obioha and Tšoeunyane (2012) affirm that settling disputes between couples in marriage is regarded as a role of specialisation for the elders who possess all the wisdom, experience and patience required to make peace within couples. This indicates that `Majoalane decided to ignore the Basotho traditional way of resolving misunderstandings in families. She did not consult the family elders; she went to a foreigner who is a Christian. Seeking advice from the pastor's wife showed social revolution because `Majoalane trusted foreigners to resolve her family problems instead of the elders of the family.

Furthermore, the impact of the Western culture on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) is projected when Sefata changes his mind concerning choosing a spouse for Joalane. Sefata says:

9. *Ngoan'aka ea tsebang ho ngola, ea `ngollang mangolo ao batho ba nthorisang ka `ona. Ke ne ke se ke u lahlile moratuo oa oaka ke u nyalisa ngoan'a morui. U mpe u ntšoarele.* (Ramakhula, 2005:56)

“My child that knows how to write, who writes me letters that people praise me. I had abandoned you, my darling, sending you off to marry a wealthy man's son. Please forgive me.”

The above citation shows that Sefata regretted having chosen a spouse for Joalane. He felt that allowing Joalane to marry the man that he had chosen for her as a parent was neglecting her. Sefata decided to abandon his role as Joalane's father in choosing a spouse for her. Just because Joalane was educated, Sefata excused her from the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). This decision reflected social revolution. Sefata's decision was influenced by Joalane's enrolment in the Western education system. Joalane's parents treated her differently because she had been exposed to the Western culture through the Western education. Joalane was the main driver of the social revolution in Sefata's family.

Additionally, the impact of the Western culture on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) was projected when Sefata allowed Joalane to choose her spouse and get married at a time convenient to her after completing her studies. Joalane's freedom was expressed when Sefata said:

10. *Ngoan'aka litaba tsa lenyalo la hau joale ke li beha boikhethelong ba hau. U tla ikhethela mohlankana kapa eena a ikhethela uena le lumellane. Haeba u ntse u le maikutlong a ho ea sekolong sena seo u se*

khethileng, u hle u qale hona joale ho itukisa.
(Ramakhula, 2005:58)

“My daughter, I put your marriage issues in your hands. You will choose a man or he will choose you, and you will both reach an agreement. If you are still on the feeling of going to the school that you have chosen, start preparing yourself now.”

The above extract shows that Joalane was at liberty to choose who she wanted to get married to. Sefata neglected his parental duty of choosing a spouse for Joalane. The idea of letting a daughter to choose herself a spouse reflected the social revolution principle of the Structural-Functional theory. The liberty that Joalane was given undermined the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses), and this was driven by the fact that Joalane had to continue with her studies. The Western education system in this case was a force driving the social revolution reflected in Sefata’s decision to give Joalane the choice to get married to the man that she chose as well as allow her to pursue her studies.

The above quotation also showed that the Basotho had transformed into the Western culture so much that they undermined their own culture. Sefata and his family were absorbed into Christianity and the Western education system so much that they neglected their cultural practices thereby exposing them to extinction. This negligence reflected the social revolution principle of the structural-functional theory. According to Sibani (2018), the Africans have imbibed the Western culture and have appropriated it so much that it now becomes part and parcel of their lives. Based on this quotation, the researcher assumed that the social revolution principle observed in Sefata’s decision was driven by the fact that his wife was absorbed in the Western religion system and his daughter in the Western education system.

Similarly, the impact of the Western culture on the culture of *ho khetela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) was demonstrated in Sefata's conversation with his brother, Likhang, during the *lobola* (dowry) negotiations for Joalane's marriage. Likhang tried to convince Sefata that even though Sefata was influenced by the Western culture, the traditional practices for marriage should be followed. Likhang said:

11. *Kea bona hore u tahilo e ke bona bojakanenyana boo u bo kentsoeng ke motsoalle enoa oa hau oa moruti oa leqai. Feela ke ntse ke tiisa hore ngoana enoa ke oaka. Ke ilo `matlela motho ea tla mo nyala.* (Ramakhula, 2005:60)
“I see that you are drunk because of this Christianity that you have been introduced to by this friend of yours who is a pastor that did not go to initiation school. But I still say that this is my daughter. I am going to find a man that will marry her.”

In the above extract, it is evident that Likhang was aware of the social revolution portrayed by Sefata. Likhang was also aware that the social revolution expressed by Sefata was influenced by Christianity that Sefata had been introduced to by his friend who was a pastor that did not go to initiation school. According to Likhang, the fact that the pastor did not go to initiation school showed that he did not abide by the cultural practices. It was without any doubt that the pastor through his Western belief system, is the drive behind the social revolution principle of the Structural-functional theory that Likhang observed in Sefata's behavior. Likhang felt that since Sefata was neglecting his function of choosing a spouse for Joalane, he would take over that responsibility and choose a man that would marry Joalane.

Furthermore, Sefata planned to hold the Western marriage ceremony for Joalane. When convincing Joalane that he fully gave her the freedom to marry the man of her choice, Sefata said:

*12. Ke tlo u etsetsa mokete oa semetletsa ke meme bohle
ba lokelang; [sic] mahaejuu, masanta le bo `malithatsana
hore batl'oa [sic] tlotlisa ngoana'ka ea rutehileng.
(Ramakhula 2005:60)*

“I will make a great feast and invite all those who deserve to attend the ceremony; people of high social status, women from church unions and groups to celebrate with my educated daughter.”

The above citation reflects that Sefata was ready to hold a great feast for Joalane. He indicated that he would invite Christians to praise her educated daughter. Sefata was handling marriage matters in a way that was not common in the Basotho society. Sefata portrayed that he had been influenced by the Western culture. Sefata's way of handling Joalane's marriage celebration was the portrayal of social revolution. In support of this, Ejiofor (1996) states that weddings in Africa have always involved ceremonies and traditional engagements where a lot of importance is placed on family and culture. However, these days, the most African families conduct two weddings, the traditional and the modern Western wedding. From Ejiofor's (1996) view, the researcher depicted that Sefata was placing more focus on the Christian community and neglected the cultural way of conducting marriage ceremonies. Sefata said nothing about inviting family members, but his main focus was on people who had introduced him to Christianity. The social revolution principle of the Structural-functional theory tresses that societies transform some of their cultural ways. This transformation was realised in the way Sefata handled Joalane's

wedding. It was not a customary marriage, rather, a Western motivated wedding ceremony.

In addition, Manyeli (2001) states that due to the influence of the Western culture, couples have a traditional marriage and later on the wedding in church or court because civil marriages are given an upper hand over customary marriages. This implies that the Western culture is more valued by the Basotho society than they value their traditional practices.

4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter was aimed at addressing the third objective of the study which is examining the impact of the Western culture on the culture of *ho khethela molekane molekane* (parental choice of spouses) as reflected in *Kotleloa Sehong*. Through the data presented in the above cited extracts from *Kotleloa Sehong*, it has been portrayed that the cultural transformations and social revolution are a result of Christian teachings and the Western formal education system. The Western culture harms the Basotho cultural practices, especially the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). People who believe in the Western religion and education regard *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) as primitive. Sefata compromised the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) just to please his fellow Christians and to fit amongst the upper social group of people who are educated and abide by the western culture.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter is the summary of what the researcher did in the previous chapters. The chapter presents the conclusion on the analysis made from the following novels: *Meokho ea Thabo* by Khaketla (1979), *Liketso* by Morojele (1987) and *Kotleloa Sehong* by Ramakhula (2005). The aforementioned novels were analysed in this study to identify the rationale behind the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses), the merits of the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses), as well as the impact that the Western culture has had on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). This chapter provides a summary of the chapters, findings of the study based on the research objectives posed in the introductory chapter of the study, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

5.1 Summary of the Chapters

Chapter one entailed the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, hypotheses and research objectives. The chapter also provided the purpose of the study and the rationale behind the study. Furthermore, chapter one provided the literature review, theoretical framework and methodology. Lastly, chapter one provided the organisation of the study and ethical considerations.

Chapter two provided the rationale behind the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) as portrayed in *Meokho ea Thabo* by Khaketla (1979). The principle of the Structural-Functional theory employed in chapter two is conformity to cultural practices. The researcher constructed two sub-sections in developing chapter two. The first sub-section focused on the performance of parental

duties and the second sub-section focused on the preservation of cultural norms and practices.

Chapter three focused on the merits of the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) as depicted in *Liketso* by Morojele (1987). This chapter employed the collective functioning principle of the Structural-Functional theory. The chapter looked into the availability of family support focusing on the nuclear family and extended family.

Chapter four looked into the impact of the Western culture on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). The analysis of the impact of the Western culture on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* was conducted with the use of the social revolution principle of the Structural-Functional theory. Chapter four focused on the Western religion and the Western education system.

5.3 Findings

This study aimed at identifying the significance of the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) in the Basotho society. The examination was based on the three Sesotho novels: *Meokho ea Thabo*, *Liketso*, and *Kotleloa Sehong*. The study employed the Structural-Functional theory in the analysis of the three mentioned Sesotho novels.

In *Meokho ea Thabo*, the study has revealed the rationale behind the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). Parents choose spouses for their children because doing so is a parental duty in the Basotho society. It has also been found in this study that the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) is practiced to preserve the cultural norms and practices of the family within the Basotho society. The principle of the Structural-Functional theory that was used

to unveil the rationale behind the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) is conformity to cultural norms and practices.

Through the use of the collective functioning principle of the Structural-Functional theory, the researcher has discovered the merits of the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) in *Liketso*. The married couple gets support from the internal family and extended family. The support offered may be physical, emotional and economic.

In *Kotleloa Sehong*, the study has revealed that the Western culture, through Christianity and the Western education system, has brought a negative impact on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses). The principle of the Structural-Functional theory that was used to examine the impact of the Western culture on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) is a social revolution.

5.4 Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Studies

5.4.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

- It will be in the best interest of Sesotho literature to have contemporary Sesotho authors who will put dignity and value to the cultural practices and norms through their works, more especially, the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses).
- Furthermore, authors of different Sesotho literary genres should expose the benefits of the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) in the Basotho society.

5.4.2 *Suggestions for Further Studies*

- Through the use of more research, the Basotho should be enlightened on the impact that the Western culture has on the Basotho cultural practices and norms.
- More studies should be conducted to instill in the Basotho the value of their cultural practices with the focus on the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses)
- The researcher recommends that in Sesotho literary studies, the culture of *ho khethela molekane* (parental choice of spouses) and its possibility of helping in avoiding and solving marital challenges and problems within the Basotho society be given a priority.
- The three Sesotho novels examined in this study still need more exploration concerning other themes that are portrayed and literary devices as well as the narrative techniques used.

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