

WALTER NTSIMANE'S PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN

IN THE RADIO SERIES

MOTLHABANE

BY

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POTCHEFSTROOM

2003

DECLARATION

I declare that

**WALTER NTSIMANE'S PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN THE RADIO
SERIES MOTLHABANE**

is my own work, that all the sources used or quoted have been indicated by means of complete references, and that I did not previously submit this mini-dissertation for a degree at another university.

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10.09.2003
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DATE

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ABSTRACT

The portrayal of women in Setswana literary works and in the electronic media tends to perpetuate stereotypes of women. This may result in a society that continues to degrade women. Ntsimane, the author of *Motlhabane*, has written a drama series that depicts women in a negative way through the creation of weak female characters who are often exploited by males, are gossips, adulterous and generally manipulative and of low morals. Feminist literature has, among other things, challenged, especially male authors who promote and perpetuate negative stereotypes of women. The view that women are weak, adulterous, possessive and have low morals emerges from traditional cultural perceptions, and thus writers who do not give a balanced view of women continue to portray this view. Women have been discriminated against in many spheres of life, such as in the work place, at home, in politics, in the economy and in society in general.

This study explores the portrayal of women in the radio series *Motlhabane* and reveals clearly that the series fails to portray women as having an important role to play in life and in a family structure and thus need to be afforded respect. The conclusions of this study are a warning to men about women who do not fit the traditional mould of submissive wives and are therefore looked upon as being morally corrupt and promiscuous. The author does not treat his female characters with respect. The study highlights challenges facing emerging authors who write about women, and directs them to focus on representing women in a balanced manner in their works.

The challenge for the emerging generation of authors is to learn to write in a sensitive balanced manner about women.

KEY WORDS:

Representation of women, Women/women in drama, Radio Drama/Theatre, Feminism/feminist/female, *Motlhabane*, Ntsimane Walter

OPSOMMING

Daar is 'n geneigheid om vroue in die Setswana-letterkunde en in die elektroniese media te stereotipeer. Dit mag daartoe lei dat vroue in die samelewing gedegradeer word. Ntsimane, die outeur van *Motlhabane*, het 'n dramareeks geskryf waarin vrouekarakters skinder en owerspel pleeg, en swak, negatief en as manipulerend uitgebeeld word met lae morele waardes. Feministiese literatuur het, benewens ander dinge, manlike outeurs uitgedaag wat hierdie negatiewe stereotipering van vroue bevorder. Die beskouing dat vroue swak, owerspelig en besitlik is en lae morele waardes het, spruit uit 'n tradisionele kultuurpersepsie. Skrywers wat nie hulle karaktes volgens geslag ewewigtig aanbied nie, volhard in so 'n uitbeelding. Vroue ondervind diskriminasie in baie lewensfere wat die werkplek, die huis, die politiek, die ekonomie en die samelewing in die algemeen insluit.

In hierdie studie is die uitbeelding van vroue in die radiodramareeks *Motlhabane* ondersoek. As vertrekpunt word geneem dat vroue in familiestrukture en die lewe 'n belangrike rol het om te speel en respek verdien. Die bevinding van hierdie studie is eerder 'n waarskuwing aan mans oor vroue wat nie meer in die tradisionele rol van onderdanige eggenotes inpas nie en daarom as moreel sleg en promisku beskou word. Die outeur het vroue nie met respek uitgebeeld nie. Voorts bied die studie 'n uitdaging aan opkomende outeurs om vroue in hulle werk op 'n gebalanseerde wyse uit te beeld. Die verantwoordelikheid van die opkommende generasie outeurs is om sensitief te wees vir die veranderende rol van vroue en om dit gebalanseerd uit te beeld.

SLEUTELWOORDE:

Representasie van vroue, vroue/vroue in drama, radiodrama, teater, feminisme, feminis, vroulik, *Motlhabane*, Ntsimane , Walter

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXTUALIZATION

Although the Motswana woman as mother-figure is regarded as the authority figure in the household second to the father, as mother-in-law, as head of the family, as mentor and advisor to younger women in the household, traditional Setswana culture subjected women to a powerful patriarchy so that they are often undermined as individuals, and sometimes discriminated against as the "weaker sex". Batswana women are assigned inferior positions to their husbands and considered child-bearers and pleasure objects. Mbere (1995:5) states that: "They were and are obliged to do domestic work and fulfill childcare functions. They are obedient to the highest 'authority of their patriarchy'. This is confirmed by Moraga's (1983:212) assertion that "this oppression is perceivable also in the political, economic and social fields", and that is why even today most traditional leaders within the Batswana in South Africa are men, and why even in this era women are still subjected to traditional stereotypes in most spheres of their lives. Mkhise Jabulani (1991:3) asserts that

The most neglected feature of the liberation struggle inflicted by black writers in South Africa has been the question of gender oppression. This apathy towards gender oppression is sometimes attributed to the fact that fiction writing has been viewed as a male privilege. The result has been that, for a long period, male writers have portrayed women negatively.

This study is an analysis of Walter Ntsimane's radio drama series *Motlhabane*, focusing on the question of the author's portrayal of his female characters.

Since many Setswana series have been aired on *Radio Mmabatho* and *Radio Setswana*, one would think that a lot of research has been done

into this genre. Very little investigation, however, has been done into African radio series in general and none in Setswana radio series in particular. This lack of research makes the present study significant, particularly because of its emphasis on the important issue of female representation.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

This research project focuses on how women are portrayed and perceived in the radio series *Motlhabane*. The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Which characteristics are attributed to female characters in the radio series *Motlhabane*?
2. Does the portrayal of women in the radio series *Motlhabane* reinforce stereotypical beliefs of the audience or not?
3. How does the portrayal of women in this radio series compare to the views about women in traditional Batswana culture?

1.3. AIMS

The aims of this study are:

1. To find out what characteristics are attributed to the female characters in the radio series *Motlhabane*, and whether the writer intended to convey a stereotype of these characters.
2. To establish whether the series *Motlhabane* has reinforced general stereotypical beliefs about women.

3. To establish the roles of women at home and in the workplace according to Batswana culture and according to Christian beliefs.

1.4. CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENT

The researcher will argue that the portrayal of women through the character called Nono in the radio series *Motlhabane* is negative and stereotypical and that Nono does not reflect the true image of women in Batswana culture.

1.5. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The method that was used is mainly hermeneutical. The researcher analysed and interpreted the series according to feminist principles.

1.6. THE CORPUS

The researcher surveyed the literature on this topic. Both scripts and recorded performances of *Motlhabane* were used in the analysis. Transcripts of the recorded performances were also used in this study.

1.7. METHOD

The researcher analysed the content of the respective chapters in the literature and the radio series *Motlhabane* in order to identify points where women are portrayed in terms of their perceived attitudes, attributes, intellectual capacity, and other coded behavioural traits and female inclinations. The character Nono was used as main focus of analysis because she is the main female character in the series, and other female characters as sub-units of analysis. The men in the drama have also been scrutinised closely. Except for Matlho, there is

no indication that they are incestuous, greedy, weak, or in any way out of line with the socio-cultural expectations of the playwright.

In listening to and reading this drama series the researcher captured many points that could have influenced the characters in the drama series to act in the way they did. The researcher drew these themes from the characters who are either beautiful, adulterous, educated or gossips. The following focal points for the analysis were found:

- a) Women and the perception of beauty
- b) Women and love
- c) Women, marriage and tradition
- d) Women, prostitution and adultery
- e) Women, lies and gossip
- f) Women and religion
- g) Women and material things

1.8. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The underlying framework used in this study is the feminist approach, which pays attention to perceived differences between men and women or gender differences and the way they are portrayed in literature and in culture as a whole. An outline of the feminist approach is given in Chapter 3.

1.9. LITERATURE REVIEW

Feminist literature will be surveyed in order to utilise it as a framework for the study. Other literature pertaining to the analysis of studies and writings on women and the traditional Batswana culture, Batswana idioms and language, research done into radio drama, and other related literature where stories of women are told and some of the stories from the mainstream media have been probed, including literature on the customs and beliefs of the Batswana.

Researchers such as Tshamano and Makosazana have investigated African radio drama. Tshamano (1994) in his M.A dissertation, researched some Venda radio dramas. His topic was *Radio drama: A critical study of some Radio Venda Broadcasts*. He concluded that women are expected to be submissive and subservient. Another researcher, Makosanzana (1991), studied Xhosa radio dramas under the title *A comparative study of six Xhosa Dramas*. Her findings indicate that African drama generally degrades women, who are often subjected to physical or emotional abuse.

Mooketsi (1991) also conducted some research into radio drama. In her dissertation, *Radio drama with critical reference to three broadcasts by Radio Sesotho*, she addresses the nature and characteristics of radio drama, and found that in these dramas, women are often degraded, subjected to humiliating treatment, treated as objects of sexual abuse and are never given roles of responsibility.

Language is an integral part of the social aspect. Human beings are creatures of culture. Their personalities, desires, ways of behaving and understanding are constructed by the societies into which they are born and the traditions they inherit. Therefore, linguistic chauvinism

is a product of culture, and often ensures that in discourse women are relegated to a lesser position than men.

Feminists have also observed that the semiology of culture often degrades women, making them into sex symbols and objects not only in semiotic expression but also in linguistic expression. Zulu men know too well that an expression like “dudlu” now detested by women, was used to compliment women in the past. “Dudlu” is an abbreviation of “sdudla” (Zulu for a fat woman).

The language of power dominates the Setswana language used in *Motlhabane*, and many examples will be cited in chapter 4, which will illustrate the dominance of undesirable stereotypes.

1.10 SUMMARY OF *MOTLHABANE*

Motlhabane was aired for the first time on *Radio Mmabatho* in 1989 and due to popular demand was aired on *Motsweding FM* in 2001. The drama comprises fifty (50) episodes.

Motlhabane, the radio series, is named for the main character. “Motlhabane” means, “soldier” in Setswana. This signifies that the man “Motlhabane” is brave and strong. He has a girlfriend by the name Nono who later becomes his wife. Nono is either a nickname or a shortening of the name Nonofu (meaning “seasoned”) or just a form of endearment (theneketso, in Setswana) derived from the name Nana, which means “little child”. The name is typically female. In the series it has no specific meaning. What attracts Motlhabane to her is mostly her beauty, but what he does not know is that she is deceptive and has had several affairs with different men. This he discovers later, and it is part reason for his decision to divorce her. It is this characterisation of Nono that highlights her extreme beauty and irresponsibility, which also exposes her family background, her

mother and grandparents and her entire being. The only good thing about Nono is her beauty.

This series takes place in the late nineteen eighties at UNIBO the University of Bophuthatswana, now called the University of North West) in Mafikeng, and in Pudumong, a township near Taung in the former Bophuthatswana homeland in the present North West Province of South Africa. In the first three episodes, Motlhabane proposes marriage to Nono, to which she agrees. Motlhabane's mother does not like Nono and this makes the preparations for the wedding difficult. His mother wants Motlhabane to marry someone else, a girl in Luka where he comes from, the daughter of Raditamati..

Motlhabane is determined to marry Nono against the will of his parents. Motlhabane's grandmother likes Motlhabane and gives the nod to his love for Nono. She believes that God will bless Motlhabane's marriage to Nono.

Motlhabane has a close friend and confidant called Matlho, meaning "eyes" (denoting that he has eyes for many women). Matlho is married to Mamepe ("honeycomb", denoting that she is simply sweet) and they have four children. Matlho is a student at the university and Mamepe is a local teacher who hopes that when Matlho completes his degree he will get a job and help support the family as it is very difficult for her financially. She is also responsible for Matlho's tuition, his children's clothing and school fees. Over and above this she pays maintenance for Matlho's other girlfriend's child. That is how kind Mamepe is.

Matlho has a love affair with Nono that Motlhabane is not aware of. The two cheat on Motlhabane deliberately, calling him a fool. In episode 1: 7 Nono tells Matlho that: "Ka re sematla sele se ntsha magadi gompieno. Nna ga ke itse gore ke ya go tshela jang kwa ntle ga

gago". (That fool is paying lobola today. I don't know how I am going to live without you.)

Matlho also shows that he is excited by their illicit affair (illicit because he is married to Mamepe, and Nono is not married yet "Nono, motshameko ono o kotsi tota ke a go rata, fela o nyalwa ke tsala ya me." (Nono this is a dangerous game. I love you, but you are getting married to my friend.)

As culture prescribes, Nono like any Motswana girl goes through most of the traditional and cultural customs that mark a Batswana marriage. It is not easy when the two families meet to discuss Nono's lobola. The Matlhomantsi family (denoting that Nono comes from a family of people who are dishonest in love matters), Nono's family, looks down upon the Madimabe family (Madimabe means "unfortunate"), Motlhabane's family. The marriage negotiations do not run smoothly. Tau, Nono's uncle, is determined to make everything difficult. In episode 2, Boikgogomo, Nono's other uncle, asserts that Tau is jealous of Nono because his daughters are all divorced. For example, he sends back Motlhabane's family with the lobola on their first visit. His excuse is that traditionally lobola has to be paid very early in the morning. Nevertheless, on the second negotiation meeting to discuss lobola the two families manage to reach an agreement and the date for the wedding is set.

While the lobola is being negotiated, there are rumours in Mafikeng that Nono is expecting Matlho's child. This comes out later as Motlhabane confronts Nono about her unfaithful behaviour, in episode 48. Nono becomes furious and tells Motlhabane that the baby is not even his. This, Nono also confirms to Mmadira when Mmadira confronts Nono about her behaviour.

The wedding takes place in Mafikeng (episode 9). On the wedding day the Motlhabane family leaves before they can give the newlyweds their

last marriage orders (that is, how they should take care of their marriage so that it succeeds). Ntsimane does not say why the Madimabe leave so unceremoniously after the Motlhabane's wedding.

Nono has her own agenda in this marriage. She marries Motlhabane for material gain and because she (Nono) has a child out of wedlock. In episode 1 she recalls this when she tells Mmadira that ..a o itse nna fa ke batla go bua nnete, Motlhabane ga ke mmatle. Nna ke nyadisiwa ke gore ke setse ke na le ngwana yo o se nang rraagwe. (You know, to tell the truth I don't like Motlhabane. What made me agree to this marriage is that I have a child out of the wedlock.)

Nono and Motlhabane move to Pudumong where Motlhabane is a lecturer (episode 17). Motlhabane chooses to live in Pudumong because he does not want to be near his parents or near Nono's parents. While he detests the interference of their parents, Motlhabane also wants to live peacefully with his wife.

Nono's behaviour never changes although she is married. She secretly meets Matlho and gives Motlhabane the impression that she is visiting her uncle. This affair persists even when Motlhabane tries to investigate Nono's movements.

Motlhabane and Nono are "blessed with a child" (episode 25) and they name him Thapelo which means "prayer". However, secrets have a way of leaking out and Motlhabane gets to know that Nono has had an extra-marital affair. In episode 48 this angers Motlhabane and he hires a private investigator (Gaoumakwe) to find out who goes out with Nono, and when and where they meet. The information is gathered and taken to Motlhabane. The couple starts fighting at home and in anger Nono tells Motlhabane that the children are not his. Their marriage ends in divorce (episode 50).

During the divorce proceedings the outcome of the investigation is revealed. The tapes from the video cameras that were installed secretly by Motlhabane's investigator in Motlhabane's and Nono's bedroom and also at the entrance of the house are played. The tapes reveal Matlho entering the house and then going into Motlhabane's bedroom with Nono. Then shortly after that the curtain closes in the couple's bedroom. Matlho and Nono make love. Motlhabane's investigator explains everything in court, including how he managed to capture scenes with a hidden video camera. Nono denies all, in spite of the recorded evidence. To add insult to all this, Nono comes to court drunk. The court rules that she should lose everything, including the custody of her children (episode 50).

1.11. OVERVIEW

This section gives an overview of the different chapters. They are as follows.

CHAPTER ONE:

Chapter one outlines the contextualization, problem statement, aims, central theoretical statement, research design and methodology, literature review and summary of the drama series *Motlhabane*.

CHAPTER TWO:

This chapter demonstrates the strength of black women. It also reflects the role of women as determined by black culture in general and Batswana culture in particular, which will give the readers a background against which they can understand how Batswana women are portrayed in the radio series *Motlhabane*.

CHAPTER THREE:

Chapter three outlines the feminist approach and the concept of stereotypes, and shows how this is applied to the analysis of the radio drama series *Motlhabane*.

CHAPTER FOUR:

This chapter is the analysis of the characterization in the series, and it covers both male and female characters. Finally, it looks at how female characters are portrayed in *Motlhabane*.

CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusions

This chapter will answer the research questions, summarize the conclusions and come up with recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

HOW WOMEN IN GENERAL ARE TREATED IN BLACK AND BATSWANA CULTURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims at highlighting the pressures women have to bear. It demonstrates their expected roles in society, as well as how some of these roles have deprived women of their proper status in society. Hopefully this will highlight the extent of the prejudices against women because of the role the society expects them to play. Examples will be drawn from the literature to demonstrate these facts. The chapter also reflects on the role of women in black culture in general and Batswana culture in particular, which will aid our understanding of how Batswana women are portrayed in the radio series under study.

The general expectations of women among the Batswana are that they should be very industrious, have strong moral values, be obedient to authority and respectful to the menfolk, including circumcised youths. Women are only given leadership roles within their immediate family structures, according to Mereotlhe (1998).

2.2. WOMEN AND TRADITIONAL BATSWANA CULTURE

The strength of women in South Africa was demonstrated during the apartheid era. During the hard times of apartheid, women knew that they had to stand by their husbands. For decades whites were regarded as being better than blacks. Economic and social power was associated with whites. Most whites lived in urban areas while blacks lived in rural areas where there was little or no work to generate

income. African men were forced to work in towns and cities to provide cheap labour, especially in the mines. Migrant labour forced women to become the heads of the families left behind by their menfolk (South Africa Yearbook, 1999). Mereotlhe (1998:16) supports this: as a result of this and other socio-economic problems brought about by family disintegration, single parenthood mushroomed.

Today many Batswana women and women from other ethnic groups are the sole breadwinners and child-raisers. This is confirmed by Kalule-Sabiti (2001) in his report on youth migration in the North West. Industrialisation, migration to the cities, the resultant family disintegration and the destruction of the cultural family unit has seen a lot of women become single parents.

Staying far from home for long periods resulted in men having extra-marital relationships that led to the establishment of families outside marriage. When it was time to go home, they would end up having to share their earnings between two families, resulting in family breakups and the rise of single parenthood. Mereotlhe (1998: 15) states: "This resulted in polygamous marriages and husbands having to share their small income between three families: the nuclear family, the pseudo-family and the extended family."

Semenya (2001:11) tells how his own mother, literally with her own hands, built a house for her children, and raised them the way she did.

As a result of family break-ups, black women found themselves charged with the responsibility of sustaining families single-handedly, a problem that still persists. This experience of women is reflected mostly in black literature (Mereotlhe 1998, Motshologane 1974). Many women are breadwinners who raise children on their own and have done well for themselves (Mereotlhe 1998:11-15). Ntsimane

(1989) himself refers to the struggle of the single female parent and the fate of the children born of such parents in the Batswana villages. Either they grow up under hated stepfathers or loving uncles, or they grow up under mothers who earn their living by morally unacceptable ways. Nono belongs to the latter category, and her moral standards have been affected by this background and this gives the drama its foundation and its stereotypical inclination. Mereotlhe (1998:16) also quotes Ntombela – Nzimande as saying: “I have respect for my mother, who raised five children alone as our father was a migrant labourer.”

While the father figure might be absent in black families, there is always a family. Most of these single women breadwinners have the strength, love and ability to hold their families together. Most of them overlook their misfortune and devote their lives to sustaining their families with love and profound compassion.

Many black women have stood by their families in the most difficult circumstances. It did not come as a surprise that Winnie Mandela stood by her husband Nelson Mandela when he was on Robben Island. Her love for the liberation of the nation forced her to endure hardships to see her children Zenani and Zinzi grow up. Davis (1989:100) says: "Between 1962 and 1985 she experienced only ten months of freedom. She spent the rest of the time either in prison, facing court charges, under house arrest or banning orders." Davis further emphasises Winnie's support for her husband in the strong statement that when she married Nelson Mandela in 1958 she knew well she had married the struggle, the liberation of her people.

Males in Batswana culture are vested with authority over their families, and thus their surnames are also vested with power and preference. The paternal name becomes the family name. Women are often powerless because of the authority and the hierarchy in patriarchal families. They have to scheme and manipulate and

through sympathy get what they want. It is evident that the family or clan has in some way encouraged domination of women by men in black communities. In Batswana communities in particular, women are deemed unfit to have authority, and thus cannot make decisions in their tribal courts. Today there are homes where mothers cannot reprimand their own "circumcised" sons. The following is told by an American author, but the principle is the same. It is applicable even amongst the Batswana. Bell Hooks (1991: 102) testifies that::

“At a very young age, black male children learn that they have a privileged status in the world based on their having been born male. They learn that this status is superior to that of woman.”

The Batswana are predominantly patrilineal, that is, the membership of the tribe and family is traced through the father. Property, riches and rank pass from father to son and to the next male member in the absence of a son (Mogapi, 1994).

Marriage, too, has been a contributory factor to the domination of women in Batswana culture. Arranged marriages were so important that marriage partners were determined when children were still expected by their mothers. Mogapi (1994: 149) states:

“Lenyalo mo Setswaneng ke kagisano. Ke kopanyo ya malwapa a ditshika tsa banyalani....batsadi ba ne ba tlhophela bana ba bone batho ba ba tshwanetseng go nyalana nabo.”

(Marriage in Setswana is co-operation. It unifies the homes of the families of the newlyweds...parents would choose partners for their children.)

To avoid what Motlhabane went through, children would be committed to their partners at an early age or while they are still in their mothers' womb. This was a tradition parents would adhere to because they have gone through the same practice. As Mereotlhe (1998:12) observes, “children knew from childhood who their

marriage partners were going to be and they were groomed in that direction”.

There was always an understanding between families. Once the negotiations were settled, and the boy was ready to get married he would start visiting the girl's home in the evening. This practice is known as *go ralala* and it would continue until the first child was born. The woman and the child would be taken to her husband's home. If the wife was found barren the man could claim the wife's sister and have children with her. Ntsime (undated: 17) states: “*Mosimane o tshwanetse go ralala jalo go fitlha mosetsana a nna ratla la tlou. Go ralala go go ne go tlhokega gone ba gabo mosimane, ba ba batla gore mosetsana a ime a le kwa gabo gore go bonale gore o kgona go tshola bana.*” (The boy was supposed to visit until the girl becomes pregnant. This was important because the boy's family wants the girl to become pregnant while still at her parent's home so that they can see that she is able to bear children.)

According to Batswana culture, marriage was compulsory. To be a *lefetwa* (spinster) was taboo. Should a girl not marry, this might be construed as a sign of witchcraft in the family or that she was disrespectful.

Another Batswana custom that was and is still practiced is “*seyantlo*” (wife replacement/substitute). This concept means that when a wife dies the husband marries his wife's younger sister, the reason being that a sister will be able to take care of the wife's children better than a complete stranger. (Mogapi 1994: 164) supports this: “*Motho yo o ileng seyantlo le ene o ne a kgona go tshwara bana ba nyalo ya ntlha sentle, ka jaana e le ba mpa ya gagwe.*” (Anyone who substitutes brother or sister in marriage is capable of taking better care of the children than an outsider, because of blood ties.)

Today this practice might be viewed as an imposition, but in the old days it worked for most people.

2.3. WOMEN AND DOMESTIC LIFE

In order to examine the state of women in Batswana culture closely, there is a need to focus on domestic life. Sulliman, (1991:117) states: "Women were assigned additional obligations which fell within their domestic domain such as food preparation and reproductive roles including child care."

Motshologane (1974: 23) supports this:

A wife was subservient to her husband in terms of authority and decision-making within the family. Her role was to do the household duties, to cultivate her own piece of arable land and to provide her children and husband with food from her crops. She was to obey her husband in all things and to cohabit with him regularly.

Such a woman has been depicted in the drama series. The character is Mamepe, a very sweet and understanding woman.

Women have always been obliged to do domestic work and to rear children. If a woman marries into a Batswana family, she is expected to have children. If the family is childless, the failure is attributed to the woman and not to her husband. The community determines a woman's way of living and her way of thinking. Married women are pressurised to have more children to prove their worth in both the community and in marriage.

The economic oppression of women is evident when women share wealth or financial means with their in-laws. This shows itself

particularly where a married son is the sole breadwinner. In these instances, the mother-in-law will depend on her son for financial assistance and this will cause conflict between the wife and her mother-in-law. In most cases the son will be forced to balance his loyalties between his wife and his mother, as in the case of *The Bold and the Beautiful*, where the mother-figure Stephanie is forever in conflict with Brooke, who was once married to her first son and has now married the second one.

The extended family can also put pressure on the lives of married women to conform to based on the cultural expectations of a woman. If the extended family accepts, loves and supports the daughter-in-law, marriage tensions can be eased. However, if the family does not support the woman and makes unreasonable demands on her, she might suffer as a consequence. Examples of these are found in several literary sources e.g. Thomas Mofolo's 1948 epic, *Chaka*, where Nandi, the mother of the king, is expelled from the royal kraal, together with her son, Chaka, and has to go into exile for some years. The epic *Chaka* relates the story of a young man born out of wedlock, sired by King Senzangakhona and the mother Nandi, who was later killed by Chaka himself for hiding his son. Chaka used to kill all baby sons sired by him.

Female roles in traditional Batswana culture are well defined and determined. Every woman has her specific role that should be adhered to with little or no room for flexibility. Even grandmothers have a share of responsibility in sustaining their families. Children are often sent to their grandmothers when families break up or when parents are forced by circumstance such as political reasons to stay away from their families. In episode 1, Ntsimane asserts that Motlhabane went to live with his grandparents when his mother (Nteseng) married Motlhabane's stepfather who did not want Motlhabane. Also, the

drama *Motlhabane* shows Nono as failing her children, who have to be brought up by their grandparents as she loses custody to their father.

The fact that women remain at home, caring for children when men migrate to the mines, creates a very strong bond of sisterhood. Black women extend their caring to other women as they form a strong bond by providing support to nurture one another. Common these days is the concept of "stokvel" or societies, which refers to women's social and financial clubs. Men have now copied and commercialized these, and call them funeral societies. These clubs are formed to provide a bond of sisterhood for financial and emotional support. Black women form firm and strong bonds that see them through a lot of stress caused by being sexually and racially oppressed. Susser (1994: 242), in support of this, asserts that "sisterhood equips individual women with the strength to overcome the sense of isolation and, hence, provides the morale and *esprit de corps*". The black sisters in the townships of South Africa get their moral support, their inspiration, and a lot of their economic power from stokvels.

Another dimension of domestic life is revealed when there is death in the family. The widow mourns in black (though today the colour of clothes has changed to purple, white and blue). She has to be purified before becoming part of the family again. In Batswana culture (and some other black cultures) women are supposed to mourn their husbands for a year or more, while men are exempted or exempt themselves from that. In some instances men get involved with other women three months after the death of their wives, but women have to wait a full year. A woman has to be in mourning for this period because if she commits adultery while in mourning, the partner might die from "boswagadi". (Mogapi: 1994: 172) states that "Fa mosadi yo o mo boswagading a ka kopana le monna, monna yo o tsenwa ke bolwetse ... Fa boswagadi bo fela, e bong ngwaga morago ga loso lwa monna, motlholagadi o a apolwa". (If a woman in mourning cohabits

sexually with a man, he contracts a disease... when the mourning period ends after a year, the widow has her black attire removed from her body...she is free.)

2.4. WOMEN AND VIOLENCE

The 1993 Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women ensures that violence against women is no longer a "private affair" but a public issue. It demanded government action to prevent violence against women, no matter who the perpetrators are. In the same year, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action stated "human rights for women and children are an inalienable and indivisible part of universal human rights" (Ansell and Veriava, 2000:133).

It is common knowledge that the oppression of women goes beyond domestic boundaries into larger communities and eventually the entire country. For example, every day there are reports in the media of women and children being beaten, raped and killed every minute in South Africa. Despite the passing of the Prevention of Violence Act of 1993 women and children are still subjected to violence, the perpetrators being their husbands, their uncles or people in the street. This phenomenon is in contradiction with traditional culture, where women and children were protected, but urbanization has changed many things.

The news on TV, radio and in the newspapers reports that a woman or girl child is raped every minute and most have tested HIV positive as a result. There is a myth that when a person is HIV positive, sleeping with a virgin will cure him. Thus we find children as young as three years old getting raped. Mereotlhe (1998:19) states that: "Some consult traditional practitioners deceive them by telling them they will be healed if they have sex with a virgin".

Violence has always been found in traditional times, but was concealed, as women had to be silent and were not as vocal as they are today. The media advocacy against violence today is a reaction to the traditional silence that has seen women die under the violence perpetrated against them by males. Van der Merwe (1994: 67) asserts: "While men are struggling, women are passive onlookers, silent victims.even before her death, a woman has died inwardly through loneliness and neglect."

2.5. WOMEN AND BLACK CUSTOMS

The Constitution of South Africa recognizes customary law. It recognises customary law marriages, which give rights to the customary child and the children born in this union. If we argue further, some of these practices are detrimental and discriminatory to black women because they weaken marriage as an institution and the rights of a wife married to her husband under civil law. In the traditional culture, any man who assaults his wife "o a kgwatha" (is given corporal punishment in the king's court), where older men strip him naked and give him a few strokes on the buttocks.

One of the practices that are very popular amongst some ethnic groups including the Batswana is polygamous marriage. In most cases men marry one woman in church or at the magistrate office and others are common law wives. This practice continues to this day, and the migratory labour system has contributed a lot to it.

This customary practice usually gives men power and dominance. Mereotlhe (1998: 20) observes that "such customary rights still give married men the marital power". Customs, tradition and values are used to prevent women from active participation in family politics, and social and economic activities. Women have to remain at home while men go to the kgotla where political and economic issues are

discussed. Women are forced to subject themselves to a submissive role and to be confined to home.

Society can be very cruel; if a woman, because of the oppression at home, leaves her husband, the blame is laid on her. This will be the talk of the village. The urban locations of South Africa have taken on another form of living, and thus women suffer even more there, because they do not have an extended family to support them.

Modern courts of law are alien to most rural women. Women themselves will say, "Go a itshokiwa mo lenyalong" (You have to have patience in marriage). This patience is demanded of women, but the question is whether men have patience in marriage. The expectation is feminine in gender, and never masculine, and thus is vested in the masculine domain where men may get away with certain privileges the women may never even dream about.

Women also perpetuate this cruelty by persevering in marriages so as not to bring shame on the family. That is why you find that many women stay in marriages that are oppressive in every way (Motsei, 1995: 2.)

The South African Constitution is a fine piece of legislation. The Constitution realises that liberation would not be complete without the emancipation of women from male dominance. The statistics reveal that abuse of women emanates from male dominance and aggression on the whole, which sees women molested and abused in several ways, bullied into several forms of actions, and often killed. The *Sowetan Sunday World* (August 2001:22) shares these sentiments:

The passing of a number of progressive laws and the amendment of certain legislation theoretically implies the improvement of women's position in a society. Yet the reality is

that most women continue to face marginalisation and discrimination in their homes, workplaces and communities.

All these assertions are based on observation and experience. The woman's side of the story, in any domestic conflict, is known but is kept secret, and it becomes traumatic over a long time, even though she has been raped, abused in some way or another, or continually assaulted. The man's side of the story, as in *Motlhabane*, emerges to the detriment of the woman, so that she is disgraced forever, and in public. Men are protected because women fear losing the economic support they get from the man, or the shame associated with the man's scandal. Funerals, the grapevine or the media reports often tell the story, either partly or in full, of conflict between a man and a woman. The media allegedly destroyed Princess Diana, but her real destroyer could have been her own husband, Prince Charles, right from the beginning of her fairytale marriage. A CNN talk show programme on Thursday 20th June 1997 vividly argued that the royal family actually might have killed her. This woman might have brought shame to the royal house by marrying El Fayed, and yet Prince Charles may now marry Camilla Parker Bowles, and his sons do not mind, as long as their father is happy (CNN: Larry King Show, 20th June, 2002). Nationally, women are battered because they do not live according to the expectations of their "high society" families or according to tradition. This can be done consciously or unconsciously. Stereotyping here is done by groups and the gender stereotype becomes the dominant stereotype.

Examples of fixed marriages in traditional black lives have led to disasters comparable to that of Diana: that divorce insuuing her home circumstances led her to look for a partner outside the approved socio-cultural milieu.

2. 6. WOMEN AND RELIGION

The Bible, which is supposed to protect women, is often used as an instrument of oppression. Preachers read parts of the scripture that seem to favour male domination. The verses are quoted to validate the status quo. For instance, the Bible states that women should always obey their husbands. Ephesians 5: 22 & 23 states:

Lona basadi, ikokobeletseng banna ba e leng ba lona, jaaka lo ikokobeletsa Morena, gone monna ke tlhogo ya mosadi, jaaka keresete ene e le tlhogo ya phuthego.

(You wives, obey your husbands; just as you obey God; because a man is the head of the woman, just as Christ is the head of the congregation.)

This and other similar verses are familiar in the Batswana code of conduct for women. There are codes of conduct similar to these for men but these codes of conduct are not strong enough to promote morality regarding their relationships with women, as is evident from the lenient manner in which they are treated in comparison to women when they have transgressed. In *Motlhabane*, a woman like Nono would be the perfect analogy of the woman that was stoned in the Bible. Adultery may be condoned through polygamy for men but women may not marry more than one person.

It is a known fact that women were not easily recruited to be pastors. In the 1970's in the Church of England, ordaining a woman was seen as a taboo but was later agreed to. Prof Sylvia Viljoen at Sociology in Unisa confirms that as a child she had a strong urge to be a minister, but this was closed to her because she was a woman (Star1998: 18).

While there is evidence of change, it is quite slow in some areas. The Methodist church in North West Province has ordained two women, Rev. Dr. Dibuseng-Ketshabile in Mmabatho and Rev. Shanki Molusi in

Klerksdorp (*Methodist Tribunal*, 15 June, 2002). There might be others somewhere else but this is just a drop in the ocean compared to the number of males.

Many churches will still not agree to the elevation of the status of women in the church. The Muslim faith will simply not have women in certain roles in the mosque. One wonders if it is because they think that women cannot teach laws, morals or conduct.

2.7 WOMEN AND LEGISLATION

In 1997 the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women proclaimed that any discrimination against women was unjust and incompatible with the welfare of the family and society and called for new laws to end discrimination. In 1979 the Convention of Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) demanded that women should be accorded rights equal to those of men and they should be able to enjoy these rights on an equal footing with men in public and private domains. This means that all obstacles to equality must be identified and rooted out.

The 1993 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development recognised international reproductive rights. It required that any population and development programme guarantee gender equality, the empowerment of women, the ability of women to control their own fertility and the elimination of violence against women. (African population conference in the 21st century: 1993: 22)

The 1995 Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women adopted a Declaration and a Programme of Action. The conference identified 12 obstacles to the advancement of women and girls: poverty, education, health, violence, armed conflict, economic structures, power-sharing, institutional mechanisms, human rights, media environment and

discrimination facing the girl-child. The conference urged governments to create national plans of action targeting the particular obstacles to gender equality in their own countries and commit themselves to action. The honourable Minister (of Social Welfare then) Geraldine Frasier Moleketi and Honourable Dr. Nkosazana Zuma, then Minister of Health, led South Africa in the Beijing process to discuss aspects that affect women and children, and to exchange ideas on these aspects.

2.8. WOMEN AND THE WORKPLACE

In the past, women were restricted to low level jobs. There were jobs that were traditionally for women. Women were trained to be tea-girls, secretaries, nurses and teachers. Cameron (1992: 5) states: "Some tasks are women's and others are men's. Men's work is economically and socially valued; women's usually is not."

Semenya (2001: 102) asserts that women were naturally excluded from public affairs. They were viewed as unsuited and unable to hold positions of responsibility outside the home or to be in a position of seniority.

When women enter the workplace, they are paid salaries lower than those of men, even though they would be doing the same job. Susser (1994: 240) states that:

Leisure time, particularly for many educated middle-class women, created a new challenge: how to find suitable avenues for self-realization. Many entered the labor market only to have their hopes dashed. They were paid less than men for the same work, they were not considered seriously for promotions and they were the last hired and the first fired.

It was only after 1994 in South Africa that women in the public sector were placed in key posts as members of executive councils, members of parliament, speakers, directors and managers. Before 1994, the sole female politician fielded by the white Democratic Party was not effective enough. However, it does seem that the move to field more women in key parliamentary positions has not been welcomed in some circles, and this is evident from the opposition that women find from some of their male counterparts, especially in the media. Van der Merwe (1995: 179) says that “men dominate not only political-decision making but also the public sector”.

In the last few years women have been placed in positions of authority and they have adapted well against all odds. In 22 April 2001 the *Sunday Times* stated that Dr. Nkosazana Zuma was highly rated as a female minister in the South African cabinet, citing that she coped very well with her work. Most of the time such women will find opposition and be discriminated against by their male counterparts.

The *Mail and Guardian* newspaper has been particularly vocal in portraying black female politicians negatively. They have written ugly articles about Geraldine Frazier-Moleketi, about Nkosazana Zuma, about Frene Ginwala, about Baleka Kgosietsile-Mbete and about Winnie Mandela. It is not what they write which offends women but how they are not credited for their work in politics.

Many working women will receive no support from their husbands because many men still believe that the place of a woman is in the kitchen. Many women, who have taken the plunge and handled both a home and a career, have had their marriages end in divorce or continue to be abused and suffer discriminations of all forms at the workplace because many men cannot accept the challenge of women being their equals. Mereotlhe (1998:25) says: “those who are married

are forced by circumstances to choose between their careers and their families”.

In the North West Provincial Government there are few women in key positions. The Office of the Status of Women confirms that there is one director general, two deputy directors general and two chief directors. This makes one wonder what happened to the many, many educated women that we have in the province and who are active in politics and civil society affairs. It does seem that the best place for women's empowerment is the church.

2.9 WOMEN AND THE USE OF LANGUAGE

The Setswana language has several cynical cultural allusions to women, and these are often quite unsavoury. In the drama *Motlhabane* the Setswana language idiom has been overemployed and given the guise of linguistic enhancement, but (as will become clear in the analysis) it will be used selectively to convey a message that sends signals that women are to be humble and subservient. This is been contradictory to what the feminist theory sees as sexist language. It also often happens in praise songs, where women's body parts become subjects of ridicule for entertainment purposes. The dramatist may employ the same linguistic antics to describe or to paint the picture of a woman, which to the modern feminist is totally deplorable.

Tswana proverbs have the effect of oppressing women. Mereotlhe (1998: 21) asserts that “one way tribes uphold their cultures and perpetuate their existence, is through proverbs.”

In Tswana culture, while women suffer discrimination in general, there is a further division among women on a racial basis. Black women have been the most discriminated against, and black rural women have the least power. This also shows that discrimination is

rife towards all women. In her speech at the event where Boitumelo-Plaatje-Molefe, first lady of the North West Province, dedicated International Women's Day (May 18th 2000), she declared that they are the most disadvantaged, having to fetch fire wood, make fire, prepare food, make warm water possible in winter and live under squalid conditions, where electrification and the use of telephones still have to be negotiated. Most rural women continue to suffer "triple oppression": from their chiefs, their husbands, and their communities. Rural women have to carry babies on their backs, wood on their heads, and water in their hands, all at the same time, while men continue to recite the notorious saying that "mosadi tshwene o jewa mabago" (an ugly woman must have good working hands).

What is the relation between language and the body? There is a strand of feminism that connects gender with language via the bodily experience of sexuality. Cameron (1992) asserts that other feminists vigorously disagree with this "essentialising" notion. Gender stereotypes are often articulated in sexist talk, and in the Batswana culture they are often expressed in idioms, songs, poetry and praise songs. The most famous saying is the Barolong and Batlhaping ba ga Phuduhutswana (clan's name) "Go isa marago kgosing" (to take the buttocks to the king), when Batswana maidens show off their breasts and buttocks to the *kgosi* during a ceremony where the chief must select a new wife.

Although this tradition has virtually died among the South African Batswana, it is still practised among the Swazi. The *City Press* reports on the Swazi event every year. The present saga in Swaziland, where a mother, Lindiwe Dlamini, has taken King Mswati III to court for the abduction of her daughter, Zena Mahlangu, has shaken the kingdom.

King Mswati III is a polygamist whose nation has allowed him marry any young woman of his choice. King Mswati III comes from the

kingdom where the rights of women are interpreted differently. The *City Press* (27th October 2002) reported that the girl had consented to being abducted into Mswati's court in order to be his bride, but the mother is adamant that she must come back home. Abduction of the girl by Mswati's aides has been condemned by human rights organisations and political parties. The traditional reed dance is being blamed for this latest saga, as this event is where the king saw the girl. In Setswana the reed dance is still practised. This practice is called *go isa marago kgosing*. It is a practice that, in itself, assigns to women the basest position in society, that of sex object and potential object of abuse.

This chapter reflected on the role of women in black culture in general and Batswana culture, which I hope, has aided the understanding of how Batswana women are portrayed in the radio series *Motlhabane*. Now that the background of how women are generally treated has been given, the researcher will in the next chapter focus on the feminist approach, which will be applied in the analysis of the radio series *Motlhabane*.

CHAPTER 3

THE FEMINIST APPROACH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with feminism, the approach that will be applied in the analysis of the radio series *Motlhabane* in chapter 4. According to Morris (1993:1),

Feminism is a political perception based on two fundamental premises: (1) that gender difference is the foundation of a structural inequality between women and men, by which women suffer systematic social injustice, and (2) that the inequality between the sexes is not the result of biological necessity but is produced by the cultural construction of gender differences.

Feminism can be said to draw its influence from the women's liberation movement. When the women's movement emerged it observed the injustices and negative sexist attitudes against women. This happened through drama and other forms of literature, like epic poetry and satire during the Elizabethan era in the 17th century, for example. The French Revolution in the 18th century is also one of the good examples of the struggle for freedom of speech and propagation of the ideals of liberty, fraternity and equality. Influenced by the industrial revolution in the 19th century and the dissemination of information that came with technology and the media, the fourth estate, this ensured that ideas were freely expressed to the public (Case, 1982).

Later in the 19th century, feminism spread to other countries such as the United States of America. The initial feminists used literature as one of their weapons to revolutionize those who had an interest in feminism.

Ryan and van Zyl (1982: 203) are of the opinion that feminism is a means of giving autonomous value to women's experience by helping women and others perceive the political, economic and social oppression to which women were subjected, as well as an attempt to bring about new standards against which women could be measured.

Brown and Olson (1978:1) assert that one of the first liberals was Christine de Pisan of France in the 17th century. This is not surprising because after the death of her husband she had to care for her children single-handedly, on the money she earned with her pen. This practice was not prevalent among women in those days. She is therefore regarded as one of the pioneers who ventured into the male domain.

In 19th century USA, England and France feminism emerged due to the violence against women. Caplan (1989:6) states that in the 19th century

Feminist campaigning had led to a gradual, albeit often grudging, recognition on the part of the wider society of the frequent incidence of battering and rape, both inside and outside marriage, and, more recently, of the frequency of the sexual (including incestuous) abuse of children, especially females.

Macpherson (2000: 2) states that Feminism emerged in North America in the 1960s:

In reaction to the conservative attitudes of the postwar era, providing a public forum for addressing private concerns, including sexuality, women's subordinate role in society, child care, consideration for working mothers, power inequalities between men and women, and the myriad ways in which the

subordination of women was not only accepted but even enshrined in law.

However, Case (1988: 5) argues that in England feminism in the theatre, was noticed in the 19th because only men and boys were allowed to act in public at that time. Case (1982: 21) states: "Church schools and choirs supplied the first performers in this period, situating theatre within an all-male world."

There has never been a good explanation for this except that women's voices were too weak for the stage and some said women were excluded because they could not read or if they were seen on stage they would be regarded as prostitutes. Case (1988:20) states that:

The construction of the sexual frame for women in theatre had begun centuries earlier, when the Catholic church banned the practice of theatre as immoral and women who performed were associated with prostitution.

Literature reveals that there was an acute underrepresentation of women as playwrights. This neglect of women became a concern to some theorists, but these were mostly female critics.

According to feminist theory, women receive little or no support in their needs in any sphere of life, be it socio-economic needs or otherwise. Inequalities between men and women in career opportunities, labour, power and authority were observed. Moi (1985: xiv) states that: "The principal objective of feminist criticism has always been political; it seeks to expose, not to perpetuate, patriarchal practices."

It is evident from the literature about feminism that from time immemorial women have been regarded as inferior "by men and the society we live in", but this is an assumption that is not always true.

Brown and Olson (1978: 2) observe that: "Lack of physical strength does not imply lack of intelligence, but that as long as woman is kept out of all serious discussions, she cannot develop an independent mind".

If Eve the first woman God ever made, was able to turn the world upside down, then this demonstrates that women are significantly important because they have potential and this potential must be tapped, now and always (Semenya, 2001). It is evident that women have tough minds and tough bodies. Van der Merwe (1994: 67) cites an example of the Afrikaner woman who killed a Zulu warrior with an axe. The oppression of women is manifested in different spheres of life, politically, socially and economically.

Feminists such as Cameron (1992) believe that language is a medium of oppression. The early feminist analysis of language vested to some extent on the notion of conditioning. Cameron (1992) believes that if one is repeatedly exposed to stereotypes and distortions, one ends up believing them and taking them for granted. Language has been recognized as one of the elements that authors use to reduce the status of women in literature.

According to feminism, language does not in itself guarantee communication, and words are often distorted and turned around. Cameron expresses the alienation of women through language by stating that her words have been distorted; they have been taken away and turned against her. Cameron (1992: 8) illustrates this notion when she says: "Sometimes when I am talking to people, I really feel at a loss for words, I have this idea in my head and a feeling I want to express and I just can't get it out".

Cameron (1992) further says feminists feel that language is a powerful resource which ideas can be formulated and disseminated to influence

the patriarchal society to change its ideas to suit everyone. Cameron and other feminists express a need 'to reclaim' language for women. Ryan and van Zyl (1982:203) support the above:

A radical critique of literature, feminism in its impulse would take the work first of all as a clue of how we live, to how we have been led to imagine ourselves, how our language has trapped as well as liberated us, and how we can begin to see – and therefore live – afresh.

Cameron (1992) asserts that radical, liberal, materialistic, humanistic, Marxist and other trends of feminism are best expressed through language. The focus of the following sections of this chapter will be on radical and materialistic feminism and stereotypes of women because of the angle the researcher is taking to analyse the drama series *Motlhabane*.

3.1.1. RADICAL FEMINISM

The word *radical* is used in political circles to refer to the bringing about of complete change. Radical feminists believe that patriarchy is the main cause of women's oppression and is at the root of most social problems. Case (1988: 64) states that "patriarchy has formed a male culture that wherever it has predominated has oppressed women of all socio-economic classes and races".

Tiro (2000: 16) also observes that radical feminists "see society as controlled by male rulers who use women and benefit from their reproductive capacity. This is done by treating women as inferior and gaining at their expense."

Radical feminists advocate that all structures of power are patriarchal and should be changed to accommodate women. This is also brought about by disappointments, sufferings, and deprivation that are

inflicted by these structures of power on women (Morris, 1993:5). They (radical feminists) advocate “nursery and child-center provision, maternity leave and legislation to promote equal rights for women.” Some feminists argue that promoting equal rights for nursery and maternity should not be the ultimate. Morris (1993:5) says that “they want to deconstruct the prevailing status quo completely, so as to transform the existing order of reality”.

Further, radical feminists allege that patriarchy represents male dominance at home and at work. Case (1988: 64) asserts that

Patriarchy is the system, which elevates men to positions of power through the notion of *pater* or father, placing men in an economic and social executive position within the family unit, the market place and the state.”

Morris (1993) further says that radical feminists believe that for women to gain power and feel equal to their male counterparts they have to separate themselves from the influence of men. That is why radical feminists feel that it is appropriate to practice women’s consciousness-raising groups (CR) where women share their experiences and exchange ideas. Radical feminists focus on gender issues. Their objective is, as Case (1988: 205) states, “to provide women with a voice after centuries of silence”.

These CR groups give women a chance to voice their interests and to exchange ideas that empower them. Due to this sharing of ideas and engaging in dialogues women discover that another form of oppression is that of being used as sexual objects by men. Case (1988: 66) states that “male culture made women’s bodies into objects of male desire, converting them into sites of beauty and sexuality for men to gaze upon”.

With the strong influence of radical feminists, women begin to appreciate that they are individuals, that they have rights and that they have to reclaim those rights as individuals and reject restrictive measures imposed on them. However, everywhere that women have campaigned for their liberation, they have evoked the resistance of men generally, and their quest for equality has been responded to with subtle forms of oppression (Case, 1988). Radical feminists have been strongly criticised for the loss of their womanly virtues but it has made women realize their potential for venturing on their own.

3.1.2 MATERIALISTIC FEMINISM

Materialistic feminism is used to cover aspects of Marxist and socialist feminism. Materialistic feminists believe that the oppression of women is not brought about by men but by the role of class and history, which seems to be a contradiction to what the radical feminists believe. Case (1988: 82) emphasizes this influence by saying that “women experiences are influenced by high capitalism, national politics and workers organizations such as unions and collectives”.

It is in this context that materialistic feminists feel that capitalism divides women into three classes, the upper, middle and working class. This does not mean that the relationship of sisterhood does not exist. The irony of this class distinction, however, is that it causes women-on-women oppression. As Case (1988:83) says, women of the privileged classes actually oppress women of the working class.

This is typified in the woman-to-woman relationship between domestic servants and their mistresses in South Africa. One other factor of oppression of women revealed by materialistic feminism is the socio-economic status of women. In the workplace in South Africa there are still some instances of salary disparity between men and women. The fact that more men than women hold better positions implies that:

they are paid better than women. At home, women are not paid for housekeeping and childbearing.

It is the researcher's belief and understanding of feminism and women's literature that most people have not given themselves the time to observe and comprehend women's experiences, beliefs and ideologies and to understand how women perceive reality around them. Lodge (1993: 345) quotes Lerner as she states that

Women have been left out of history not because of the evil conspiracies of men in general or male historians in particular, but because we have considered history in male-centred terms. We have missed women and their activities because we have asked questions of history, which are not appropriate to women.

The materialistic feminism in this section highlighted the class divisions and oppression of women by women. This reflects that not only men oppress women. It is my understanding that women are also capable of both discriminating against and oppressing others of the same sex.

3.1.3 STEREOTYPES OF WOMEN

According to van der Merwe (1994), the use of the term stereotype originates from Walter Lippman's 1922 book *Public Opinion*. Prejudices and preconditions are transmitted from generation to generation and colour people's view of the world. Stereotypes are defined as the cultural and moral expectations of a social group. They reflect and confirm ideological views held by members of the society. They are resistant to change but may adapt to change as a result of education and mass media influences. The definition put forward by van der Merwe reads as follows:

The stereotyped view is a simplistic view, shared by members of a social group, transmitted from generation to generation and

propagated by the mass media; it contains a simplistic view between right and wrong, reflecting and confirming the cultural and ideological expectations of the group. It is the expression of love-hate feelings towards the self and the other.

A stereotype is a thought or an idea that we learn to accept about a particular group of people, or an individual person, based on the group that he or she "comes from". Moghaddam (1993: 66) depicts stereotypes as "rigid impressions" where group differences are judged on the basis of culture, race, gender and nationality. Ethnic, gender and culture stereotypes are often the most prevalent in African literature. Mereotlhe (1998:3) quotes Besley and More's (1997:4) statement about the reinforcement of stereotypes:

It is well known that women in general are prone to feelings of insecurity and jealousy. They have a reduced sense of justice, a less developed commitment to moral principles than men and they are more commonly motivated by feelings than by reason.

Literature reveals that some male authors are sexist and write statements that undermine women. These stereotypes are a result of blatant prejudice against women. Cameron (1985: 33) quotes Lakoff as saying that "women really do speak more softly than men, use diminutives like teeny-weeny, construct their sentences 'loosely' and leave them unfinished, all the while jumping from topic to topic".

The premise of this study is that women are generally characterized unfairly, because quotes like the above reinforce an ideology of inequality and low self esteem in order to promote women's subordination to men.

The drama series *Motlhabane* sets out to confirm this stereotype and to entrench it through literal portrayal of the female characters. Ntsimane in this drama series has portrayed Motlhabane's own

mother as a victim because she was abandoned by Motlhabane's father, a condition which is rife among women who fall pregnant premaritally, especially amongst the Batswana.

Stereotypes of women can easily be understood and recognized in our everyday life if a few examples can be given. The following are perceptions and stereotypes about women. Most Setswana literature such as drama, the novel, poetry, and praise songs are written on the basis of perceptions and stereotypes. Mereotlhe (1998) asserts that "Most Tswana novelists write their novels on the basis of some pervasive myths about women."

Mereotlhe, Ntsimane and other authors of Setswana literature have in their works exhibited the following common perceptions and stereotypes about women:

a. Divorce: If something goes wrong in marriage the woman gets blamed for neglecting her husband. Most of the time when marriages break down, it is blamed on the women, who are supposed to build the home.

b. Adultery: Women are adulterous; men are not. "Monna ke selepe, o a adimisiwa" (A man is like an axe and may be borrowed). Men may commit adultery, but women may be ostracized for doing the same.

c. Career women or women holding a high position at work:

When women attain high positions, it is attributed to relationships with men of influence.

d. Education: There is no need for women to be educated because their place is in the kitchen.

e. Child bearing: Childless marriages are blamed on women in Batswana culture.

f. Weakness: There is a belief that women are born weak. Their bodies are delicate and they are weak in all respects, especially physically, compared to men. This is just a perception.

g. Death: When a wife dies, either another woman has bewitched her or she has died of natural causes.

h. Decision-making: Women are stupid, are not capable of making serious decisions and are generally indecisive.

i. Culture/tradition: Culture and norms of tradition are meant for women and used by men to suit their purpose.

j. Submissiveness: Women should be submissive to their husband. Culture, tradition and the society have instilled this perception and have taught women to be submissive in order to show their womanhood.

k. Gossipmongers: Women are the only people who gossip.

This chapter highlighted the theory of and elements (radical and materialistic) of feminism approach including stereotypes of women. In the following chapter the researcher will focus on the analysis of male and female characters in the radio series *Motlhabane*.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF MALE AND FEMALE CHARACTERS IN THE RADIO SERIES MOTLHABANE

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The discussion in the previous chapter focused on feminism to provide a theoretical basis for an argument. The present chapter reflects on male and female characters in the series.

The chapter presents Ntsimane's content, intention, tone, feeling, and appeal, especially based on his portrayal of Nono and other female characters in the series. The portrayal of the male characters is discussed with a view of establishing the imbalance between the presentation of male and female characters.

The analysis of characters focuses on the significance of the characters, fictitious characters, the entertainment value of characters, character animation, character and personality, active and passive characters, development of characters and characters in action. Individual characters in the series are analysed according to these elements. Finally, this chapter will also look at themes, such as women and love, women and the perceptions of beauty, women, marriage and tradition, women prostitution and adultery, women lies and gossip, women and religion and women and material things as they are developed by different actions performed by the characters. The character aspects and themes cited are vital to provide data for the study.

4.1.1 SIGNIFICANCE OF CHARACTERS

The role of characters in a radio play is to entertain the listeners and to make the story meaningful. Characterisation is one of the ways in which the playwright can drive his message home. Characters give meaning to literature, because what characters say or utter is in most cases associated with human experiences. Shole (1988: 20) states that

“Banelwa ke melomo ya moterama gone ena ga a kgone go tshamalaletsa mmogedi lefoko. Ka moo mafoko a gagwe a tseega tsia fa banelwa ba tshwantshegile mo go kgotsofatsang.”

(Characters are the mouthpieces of a playwright because he cannot utter words to the audience by himself. His words are comprehended well if the characters are well depicted.)

In the drama series *Motlhabane* the names of the characters have specific denotations which make the listener aware of who they are dealing with. Motlhabane is a warrior, who fights for the love of an unfaithful woman from a home background of a family called Mathomantsi. The meaning of this surname is “one who is promiscuous”.

4.1.2 FICTITIOUS CHARACTERS

Characters in a drama or play are fictitious and the dramatist must invest a character with certain distinctive attributes in a convincing way. The characters must be presented through dialogue or action. Reaske (1996: 46) states that

Characters speak about each other and characters speak about themselves – particularly about their central emotions such as love and hate. The combination of speeches and action throughout a play, the small asides and jokes, the short angry speeches, the lengthy diatribes all add up to produce in our

minds an understanding of characters in a drama as people who might really exist.

In *Motlhabane*, female characters that portray ideal women are clearly presented by Matlho's wife, Mamepe, and Nono's cousin, Mmadira. Their level of tolerance and concern respectively is a creation that the playwright employs to show how good they are. They portray the ideal woman in order to lend contrast to the villain Nono. In episode 47 Mmadira cautions Nono about her reckless life. "Fa o itshwere sentle, ke ka wena re tla tlotliwang ke ba ga Madimabe. Nono, tlogela go re tshegisa ka batho. Lenyalo ke lesego la modimo". (If you behave, the Madimabe family will respect us. Nono, stop making us a laughing stock. Marriage is a gift from God.)

4.1.3 ENTERTAINMENT VALUE OF CHARACTERS

The challenge that the playwright faces in radio as a dramatic medium is the creation of interesting, believable characters who manage to distinguish themselves through what they say or what is said about them within a few minutes of their appearance. Peck and Coyle ((1984: 79) state that "we assess them on the basis of what they say and do, and what the other characters say about them".

For example, in *Motlhabane* this reveals itself when Nono tells Mmadira about Motlhabane's marriage proposal in episode 5:

"Mmadira, ke dumela fela gore Motlhabane a nnyale ga ke mo rate. Ke rata Matlho mme ga a na madi. Motlhabane o rutegile, o na le madi".

(Mmadira, I have agreed to Motlhabane's marriage proposal but do not love him. I love Matlho but he does not have money. Motlhabane is educated and has money.)

4.1.4. CHARACTER ANIMATION

Ash (1985: 31) states that the importance of character animation is to make a character come to life in a radio drama. This helps the listener's imagination to develop images that fit the character. It is therefore crucial that the speeches characters utter, particularly those in their first episodes, capture the imagination of the listeners.

Speech in the radio play is very significant since it determines the way characters are developed. As Mereotlhe (1998: 37) observes, "Characters in a text give us the opportunity to reflect on ourselves when confronted with certain social hardships, problems and occasions."

In most of Nono's utterances her speech reveals that she does not care at all about anyone except herself, her body, her pleasure and her sexual lust. For example she states: "Nna Nono ke montle banna ga ke ba bitse ba a itlisa". (I, Nono I am beautiful, I don't call men, they come on their own)

In the same episode, this is also supported by her utterances in episode 47:

"Kana nna ga ke mo rate. Se ke se batlang ke lenyalo. Ga ke batle go kgorelediwa. Nna nka se tlhale mosimane ope. Fa Action a tla ke tla mo amogela ka tatsogo oo mabedi."

(I don't love him. What I want is marriage. I don't want to be disturbed. I am not going to leave any boy. When Action comes, I will welcome him with my two hands.)

The above quotations reflect Nono's self-centredness.

4.1.5. CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY

Characters are found to have complex human personalities with many different facets. Peck and Coyle (1984: 75) state that “characters are always caught up in some sort of a dilemma or confusion; they are always faced by some sort of problem”. Matlho is attracted to his friend's fiancée. Even after their marriage, he continues to love Nono, his friend's wife, although he has a wife of his own. Matlho knows that his game is dangerous, but the strong and determined woman, Nono, keeps him in the affair. Mamepe, on the other hand, is simply too sweet, and she is the ideal and role model of a woman, who in some cases may simply be too sweet to be cherished. She even pays maintenance for Matlho's child by another woman. She is too sweet to even challenge the affair.

4. 1.6. ACTIVE AND PASSIVE CHARACTERS

In every drama there are active and passive characters. Some characters are passive throughout a play. These characters are usually static or unchanging. Peck and Coyle (1984) state that those who are active perform the play; they have large parts and usually bring about a certain change.

The dramatist or playwright makes his characters determine the nature of the plot with its incidents, its complications and resolutions. Things happen because the characters act in accordance with their feelings, thoughts, will and desire.

4.1.7 DEVELOPMENT OF A CHARACTER

The playwright uses utterances by characters to describe other characters' physical stature. We know the nature and physique of a character from his conversation or through a dialogue and through

his actions (or lack of actions). Reaske (1996: 46) states that “whether he is a meticulous or sloppy person, attractive or unattractive, old or young, small or large” he becomes clear through the dialogue. Further, Aston and Savona, (1991:35) state “A character in drama is constructed wholly within and by means of language and gestures and has no currency beyond the fictional world of the text.”

4.1.8 CHARACTERS IN ACTION

The listeners learn more about characters by listening to their dialogue, interpreting their actions, conflicts and conversations, their behaviour in different situations, about the difference of their behaviour from one another especially when sharing a situation. They also infer how the dramatised situation translates into a scene.

There are many questions that listeners can ask about the character. Listeners interpret the characters in terms of their actions and that gives them a chance to conclude that characters do things for certain reasons. In the following sections the characters are discussed individually and by gender, first the male characters and the then female ones.

4. 2. CENTRAL MALE CHARACTERS IN THE DRAMA

In the beginning of this chapter, different aspects of character have been discussed. It is now important to apply that theory. The characters’ behaviour and description of physique will be given. First a table of the central male characters that are going to be discussed as the chapter unfolds will be given, and later a table of the central female characters’ will be given. Then the discussion of these characters and their role in the series will follow as they form part of the portrayal of women in the series *Motlhabane*.

TABLE 4.2.1 CENTRAL MALE CHARACTERS

NAME	MEANING	ROLE
Motlhabane	Soldier/fighter/warrior	Nono's husband
Matlho	Eyes	Mamepe's husband and Nono's boyfriend. He is also Motlhabane's friend
Tau	Lion	Nono's uncle

4.2.2.Motlhabane

The name Motlhabane means, soldier. A soldier is a person who fights wars; he is brave, strong and very assertive.

Motlhabane grew up struggling, as his grandparents did not have money to take care of him. His grandfather used to sell bones to buy Motlhabane's clothes and books, while Motlhabane would sell oranges after school to pay his school fees. Motlhabane could not stay with his mother and his stepfather because his stepfather did not want an illegitimate child in his house. The name may depict a fighter for the love of a woman without love. However, the only battle that he wins is his divorce.

When Motlhabane wants to marry Nono, he goes to Luka to tell his parents. In episode 6, his parents advise him to leave Nono and look somewhere else for a wife. They suggest that he marries the girl from Luka, Rraditamati's daughter whom Motlhabane once went out with. Motlhabane's parents argue that he is still young, he does not know Nono well and Nono has a child by another man. There seems to be some misunderstanding about this marriage. The conflict between Motlhabane and his parents makes the story interesting because "ngwana yo o sa utlweg molao wa batsadi, o utlwa wa manong." (The disobedient child always suffers the consequences of his/her actions.)

Motlhabane defies his parents and continues with his intentions of marrying Nono. In episode 7, Motlhabane relates to Matlho what has happened in Luka when he went to tell his parents about his intention to marry Nono. He says, “Ke tswa kwa gae, ga ba rate kgang e ya go nyala Nono. Mme fela ke a mo nyala.” (I come from home; they do not like me to marry Nono. But I am marrying her.)

Matlho responds by saying “Batsadi ba tshoga fela Nono ke lekgarebe le le ntle.” (Parents are always scared, Nono is a beautiful lady.)

As much as Motlhabane loves Nono he has his doubts about this marriage too, as is shown in episode 10. Out of the blue, alone at Nono’s home, he thinks aloud.

Banna, a ke bone botshelo. Ke batla go nyala mosetsana o mme ga ke wele makgwafo. Nako dingwe ke lora a na le basimanyana. Motlhomongwe ke mo tlogele.

(Men, is this life. I want to marry this girl but I have doubts. Sometimes I dream of her being with other boys. Maybe I should just leave her.)

He is a dedicated family man who wants his wife and children to be comfortable. Motlhabane wishes to live peacefully with his family.

He moves to Taung so that he can live peacefully with his wife without the interference of his parents. Though Motlhabane is a lecturer he has a lot of money, as Nono reveals in episode 7, and whatever his wife wants, he provides. He is a very patient and a peaceloving person.

When Motlhabane’s marriage comes to an end, it hurts him a lot. Nono is not cooperative and her behaviour is appalling. In episode 48 Motlhabane finally realises that Nono does not love him. Motlhabane is deeply hurt by Nono’s unruly behaviour.

In his soliloquy he states, “Nono moratiwa nneye sebaka sa go supa lorato lwa me mo go wena.” (Nono my love give me time to show you my love.)

Motlhabane has tried to make his marriage work but in vain. In the same episode as the above Motlhabane speaks in tears, saying:

“A motho a ka tlogela mosadi a mo rata a gobea le mebila masigo. A motho o teng yo a ka itsokelang dilo tse di diragalang. O gana go nthekele diaparo fa di gagogile. O a ngongorega fa a tshwanetse go nkapeela .”

(Is there anyone who can allow his loving wife to walk the street at night. Is there a person who can have patience. She refuses to buy me clothes when they are torn. She complains when she is supposed to cook for me).

Motlhabane’s words from episode 48 quoted above, clearly indicates that he still loves Nono very much.

Motlhabane seeks the help of an investigator in order to get information about her movements. Nono does not listen to what Motlhabane tells her. She does not want Motlhabane’s advice.

After the failure of his marriage, Motlhabane realises that his marriage was doomed to fail from the beginning. He should have listened to his family, who did not approve of his marriage to Nono in the first place. The stereotype of the modern woman has been strengthened by the discovery of Nono's infidelity towards her husband.

Semenya (2001) observes that societal stereotypes have always allowed men to assume the superior position without question. Ntsimane shows in Motlhabane the bitterness of a man who has been scorned by a woman who exploited his kindness and had an affair

with his friend, and paints a picture of a negative stereotype of an educated Motswana woman from a single parent background.

4.2.3. Matlho

Matlho means “eyes”. This name is shortened from Matlhomantsi. In Setswana Matlhomantsi means a playboy and a very irresponsible person. Similarly, the character Matlho likes having extra-marital affairs though he has a wife and four children. One of his girlfriends is Nono, Motlhabane’s wife. Motlhabane is supposed to be Matlho’s best friend.

Matlho is not comfortable with this affair. In episode 7 Nono and Matlho are supposed to meet at UNIBO. After making a call to Nono to set up the appointment, he thinks to himself::

Bathung a selo se se siame. Motlhabane ke tsala ya me. Tota nna ke ne ke iteka lesego hela ke bona boMike le boPeter botlhe ba feta. Nono jaanong o mpitsa bo Honey, bo sweety le bo lovey. (People is this fine. Motlhabane is my friend. Actually I was just trying my luck because I saw everyone going for her. Now Nono calls me Honey, Sweety, and lovey.)

The affair is confirmed by Nono in episode 8:2 when she says to Matlho, “ba lemogile kgotsa ba sa lemoga nna ke a go rata Matlho.” (Whether or not people know it, I love you, Matlho.)

Matlho does not take care of his family. His house does not have furniture and his children do not have clothes. He does not buy a wedding ring for his wife, but he spends his money on other women. Matlho is dishonest, he wants to sell Nono’s rings by her consent. He says there is no reason for Nono to wear Motlhabane’s rings because she does not love her husband. Matlho and Nono do not stop their love affair even after Nono is married. Motlhabane becomes suspicious

and hires a private investigator and finally files for divorce. In this series Matlho's role is that of a villain.

4.2.4 Tau

The name Tau means "lion", a name that connotes bravery. In the play Tau is rude, brave and impolite and looks down on people. This is evident enough when Motlhabane's uncles, Bodila (sour milk) Mositlaphala (reptile), Tshwarangtshwarang (unity) and Motlholaisong (one who sits by the fire heat) introduce themselves during the lobola negotiations. In episode 11, Tau says: "Hm.....maina a, a ntse jang fa e kete a diphologolo jaana?" (Hm...what kind of the names are these, they are like names of animals.)

This shows that Tau does not respect other people and he looks down on Motlhabane's family.

After what Tau has said to Mpho, Tau's sister-in-law reprimands him. She scolds Tau for talking rudely to Nono's in-laws. This Tau does not take kindly. He displays his rudeness. Mpho, his-sister-in-law, tries to calm him down especially when talking to Motlhabane's family.

In episode 6, Tau screams at Mpho and says:

"A o raya nna o re e nne modiga Mpho? Ga o kgalemele mogatso ntlhapatsa fa pele ga batho? Wena o seke wa lebala gore o tlike ka dikgomo fano. Ga ke itse gore tsa bogadi ba setlogolo Nono o di tsenatsena jang..kgotsa o ithaya o re Nono o tshwanetse go ikgorosa kwa bogadi jaaka o dirile. O seka wa mpuisa dilo tse ke sa batleng go di bua. Boikgogomoso, kgalemela mosadi wa gago."

(Mpho, how come you are telling me to calm down? Why don't you reprimand your wife, who is insulting me in front of everyone? Don't forget that you are married into this family. I

don't see how my niece's lobola is any of your concern... or do you think that Nono should go to her in-laws by herself like you did? Don't make me say things against my will. Boikgogomoso, reprimand your wife!)

By raising his voice, especially when addressing a female, and by refusing to be chastised, Tau shows a lot of disrespect.

Tau is also a very jealous man and his attitude is negative towards Motlhabane's family. He refuses to take lobola for Nono. His excuse is that Motlhabane's family came late instead of very early in the morning, as tradition demands. Boikgogomoso, Tau's brother, apologises to the visitors for being sent back with the lobola. He further explains this about his brother Tau in episode 6:

“Abuti fa a riana o jewa ke lefufa. Bana ba gagwe ba tladilwe botlhe. Ba tlhalelwa boaka, jaanong ga a batle fa Nono a ka nyalwa.”

(My brother is very jealous. His children are all divorcees. Divorced for committing adultery. Now he does not want Nono to be married.)

The author portrays Tau as rude to emphasise that Nono does not come from a well balanced family. The stereotype that is revealed here is that men have to be honoured and respected at all times by women or rather that women are subservient to men. The following discussion focuses on key female characters.

4.3. THE CENTRAL FEMALE CHARACTERS

4.3.1 TABLE

Name	Meaning	Role
Nono	Used as a form of endearment	Motlhabane's wife Mother of Thapelo and Joyce Matlho's girlfriend
Lebogang	Thank you	Motlhabane's grandmother
Mabela	Vanity	Nono's mother
Mamepe	Honeycomb	Matlho's wife
Nteseng	Let me be	Motlhabane's mother

4. 3.2. Nono

The name Nono has no specific meaning and it is usually used as a term of endearment. Nono is portrayed as someone who loves men. She goes out with several men such as George, Action and Matlho at the same time. She has been doing that from an early age. Through the whole series she has relationships with different men even though she is married to Motlhabane. Mmadira, Nono's cousin, advises Nono to change her behaviour because people are aware of what Nono is doing. Instead of Nono responding positively, in episode 47 she says:

“Nna Nono, morwadia Matlhomantsi, ke a itse gore ke montle. Banna ba a nthata, ebile ga ke ba bitse ba a ntatela. Tota Motlhabane ga ke mo rate ke rata madi a gagwe.”

(I am Nono, daughter of Matlhomantsi. I know that I am beautiful. Men love me, I don't call them; they follow me. I don't love Motlhabane, I love his money.)

Nono does not love anyone but herself. Even though she is marrying Motlhabane, whom she calls a fool that has money, she is expecting Matlho's child. In episode 47, when Mmadira confronts Nono about her behaviour towards Motlhabane, Nono confirms to Mmadira that Thapelo, her second child, who is said to be Motlhabane's, is in fact Matlho's child. When Mmadira still tries to digest what Nono has said, she adds: "A Motlhabane a ka nna le ngwana yo o montle jaana?" (Do you think Motlhabane can have a child as beautiful as this?)

Nono also continues to make appointments to see other boyfriends even after being aware that Motlhabane has contacted his parents about paying lobola for her. When Matlho confirms that he really loves her and that he will do anything to win her, she agrees but still continues to be in contact with Action, the father of her first child. This confirms that Nono does not love anyone but herself and that she is selfish. When she is alone, in episode 8, she thinks aloud:

"Matlho Mokwena! Haa...o nagana gore nka tlogela lenyalo le ntswa diatleng ka ntlha ya gagwe? O a tsenwa ke a mmona. Le fa ke dirile phoso eno e e setseng e na le dikgwedi di le tlhano nae fela ke ne ke sa reye gore ke batla lenyalo mo go ene. Kana Action raagwe ngwanake yo mogolo, o letse a leditse maabane. A re re kopane kwa Mmabatho Sun ka ura ya bolesomenngwe. Matlho o batlile a ntshenyetsa nako."

(Matlho Mokwena! Haa... does he think I would destroy my marriage because of him? He must be insane. Even if I have made this mistake of being five months pregnant with him, that does not mean I want to get married to him. By the way, Action who is my eldest child's father, whom Motlhabane found me

with, phoned yesterday. He would like to meet me at Mmabatho Sun at 11. Matlho almost wasted my time.)

Nono is materialistic. This reveals itself in Nono's utterances whenever she confesses to other people that she married Motlhabane for his money. She is pleased with what Motlhabane does for her financially even if she does not love him. This becomes clear when Mabela tells Mmadira about the good news that she has received from Luka from Motlhabane's parents that Motlhabane is interested in marrying her daughter Nono. Mmadira notices some expression on Nono's face and says: "Nono ke eng o ka re ga wa itumela jaana. Nono lenyalo ke lesego la Modimo, bangwe ga ba le bone mme ba a le batla." (Nono, what is wrong. It is as if you are not happy about this. Nono, marriage is God's blessing, others want to get married but they don't get it.)

Out of excitement Mmadira congratulates her cousin. In response Nono says: "Mmadira nna ke ne ke ithaya ke re Motlhabane o a tshameka. Ga ke mo rate, ke dumela fela ka gore ke na le ngwana, ke rra ditshetele, o rutegile." (Mmadira, I thought Motlhabane was joking. I don't love him, I agreed because I have a child and he has lots of money and he is educated.)

Nono does not love Motlhabane; she marries him for his money. This is confirmed in episode 8 when Nono says: "Gape motho yole o bona madi a seng kana ka sepe. A wena o ka tlogela more o ole ka dikala." (That person gets lots of money; can you really ignore a windfall?)

Nono is deceptive, cunning and cruel to her friend. Mamepe, Matlho's wife, has marital problems and from time to time Mamepe confides in Nono about Matlho's extra-marital affairs. Nono acts innocently as if she does not know anything, while she is the one who is going out with Matlho. The following is one of the conversations between Mamepe and Nono (episode 6):

Mamepe “Nono banyana bangwe ba ne ba bua ba re Matlho o utlwana le mosetsana mongwe kwa UNIBO. Se se mmakaditse ke fa ba re e bile o mo mmeleng. O imisitswe ke Matlho mme mosetsana ke mosadi wa tsala ya ga Matlho.”

(Nono, some girls were having a conversation stating that Matlho goes out with some girl at UNIBO. What surprised me was that the girl is pregnant. Matlho impregnated her and this girl is the wife of Matlho’s friend.)

Nono: “Ousi Mamepe ga ke itse fa Matlho a ratana le ope kwa UNIBO. Legale motlhomongwe ba bua nnete.”

(Sister Mamepe, I don’t know whether that Matlho is in love with anyone at UNIBO. Maybe they are telling the truth.)

Motlhabane goes to Nono to report about his deliberations with his parents about the lobola. He asks Matlho to accompany him to Nono’s place. In episode 7, this is what happens when they arrive:

Motlhabane: “Nono, tla ke go atle, ke eng o ka re ga o batle.”

(Nono, come let me kiss you, why it is as if you don’t want to.)

Nono: “Nyaa, ke a tshaba, ke tshaba oubuti Matlho.”

(No, I am scared; I am scared of brother Matlho.)

Motlhabane goes to the bathroom without kissing his prospective wife. While he is still away Nono says, “Ao Matlho go diregile jang. Ka bona ke betswa ke letswalo fa ke lo bona lo tsena. Tla ke go atle Moratiwa eseng Motlhabane.” (Matlho, what happened? I was shocked to see you coming. Come let me kiss you, my love, not Motlhabane.)

After a while Matlho leaves Nono and Motlhabane alone together. In episode 8 Nono pretends that she missed Motlhabane despite her refusal to kiss him in front of Matlho.

Nono: "Ke ne ke go gopotse gore. E ka re o tla tsoga o Mphetogela.(Pause) ka gore o tswa gae go reng o sa re sepe. Tota gape ke eng o tla le Matlho Mokwena kwano. Ga ke mo rate, ga go na mosese ope o o fetang."

(I missed you. It was as if you would change your mind about me. (Pause.) Because you went home why are you saying nothing. Why did you bring Matlho Mokwena along. I don't like him, no dress passes him.)

Nono is so deceptive that it hurts. She pretends that she is innocent while she is not. To Mamepe's question she claims ignorance and to Motlhabane she pretends that she hates Matlho because he loves women. Unfortunately, Motlhabane believes her on both accounts.

The fact that Nono has had a child out of wedlock before she was married, and yet another one out of wedlock during her marriage shows a gross disregard for morals on her part. Her lack of conscience is exaggerated. This sends the message that women of her kind, who have had a child out of wedlock, cannot be trusted.

The central character in this study, namely Nono, the woman Motlhabane married by mistake, does not fit into the pattern of cultural expectations mentioned in chapter two. She therefore offers a model in contrast to that of a typical traditional Motswana woman. She is definitely not a role model, but rather a transformation of the normal traditional woman, a product of "university education".

This depiction of Nono has the effect to inform and warn men about women that are educated at university level and may be too arrogant for males from a rural Batswana background. In episode 48, Motlhabane states that Nono's behaviour is influenced by her education and beauty. This assumption is proved in several episodes of the drama especially in episode 47.

Mmadira advise Nono to change her behaviour for the better and to behave like a married woman. In response Nono says: "O itseng ka lenyalo Mmadira, gonne ga wa nyalwa." (What do you know about marriage, Mmadira, because you are not married?)

Mmadira: "O tlhokisa Motlhabane lerato. O mo tlhokisa bothito. Ka letsatsi le lengwe o tla nkgopola Nono."

(You have put Motlhabane at a disadvantage. One day you will think of me.)

Nono: "Mmadira o itseng ka lenyalo, gonne ga wa nyalwa e bile ga wa rutega. Nna ke rutegile e bile ke montle. A Motlhabane a se nkgoreletse mo ditseleng tse a fitlhetseng ke di tsamaya."

(Mmadira, what do you know about marriage, because you are not married and you are not educated. Me, I am educated and beautiful. Let Motlhabane not obstruct me on the roads that he found me walking.)

Nono drinks a lot. The drama series does not explain why she gets drunk. The researcher can only assume that it is out of frustration with the divorce that day, something that she thought would never happen. She vomits in front of the judge in the divorce court.

Nono is a woman of extremes; this is what was said by the judge while passing judgement. Nono had everything in life: beauty, intelligence, a husband who loves and adores her very much and two beautiful children but she fails to win custody of her children. When the judge passes judgement he says this in English,

“Mrs Madimabe, I condemn your behaviour in marriage. You are a woman of extremes. You are extremely beautiful. You are extremely evil and irresponsible. I will award custody of your children to the plaintiff in order to avoid you bringing them up after your example.”

Nono is portrayed as a stereotype of a woman who behaves outside of societal norms and values that define a woman. She displays arrogance and dominance, which are expressed in her extreme promiscuity. Perhaps Nono is seen as a very radical woman even if she is not a feminist, a rebel who deviates completely from the norm, and rather opts to have, besides her caring husband, someone more adventurous, and more exciting.

4.3.3. LEBOGANG

Lebogang is Motlhabane’s grandmother. She is very sympathetic and protective towards Motlhabane. Lebogang is very religious. When everyone wants Motlhabane to give up on Nono she refuses. In episode 1: 6, she says: “Fa e le gore badimo ga ba rate ke a go tshepisa Nteseng, lenyalo ga le kitla le tswelala mme fa ba rata re tla opelela ngwana ‘dikuku di monate.’ (If the ancestors do not approve I am telling you Nteseng, this marriage will not take place but if they approve we will sing the song ‘wedding cakes are best’ for the child.)

In Setswana culture people believe that ancestors play a significant role in their well-being. The above quote reflects that Lebogang believes that the wedding will take place if the ancestors deem so. This

is an expression that is used in Setswana when the wedding takes place. As much as the Motlhabane's family have doubts about Nono, Motlhabane's grandmother believes that Motlhabane has made the right choice of a wife.

Lebogang is kindhearted. She took over the upbringing of Motlhabane when his stepfather did not want him because he was an illegitimate child. Lebogang's role in this series is to show that Motlhabane grew up in a religious, balanced home where there is a father figure. This also reinforces that Motlhabane could not be undisciplined because of his home background. Also, this reflects that in the Setswana culture grandparents have duties to perform within the family structure. For example, when a marriage breaks up, children are taken to the grandparents so that the couple can sort themselves up.

4.3.4. MABELA

Mabela, whose name means "vanity", is Nono's mother. She is very proud. Her brother, Tau, confirms this when he says, "Bona fa Mabela, o mabela fela jaaka leina la gago" (Look here Mabela, you are just as proud as your name states.)

Her actions confirm this because when the Madimabe's family marries Nono, she tells Nteseng, Motlhabane's mother, that her daughter (Nono) is beautiful and very intelligent. With pride she tells that she took care of her single-handedly.

She has suffered at the hands of men. Nono's father left her while her children were small to take care of them by herself. His reason for leaving Mabela was that she was adulterous. She found herself a boyfriend but her brother, Tau, did not approve of it because this man was his friend (the name of this man is not given).

Mabela approves of Nono's marriage to Motlhabane, but to strengthen this union she goes to see a traditional doctor to give them muti. With this muti Motlhabane would marry Nono.

4.3.5. MAMEPE

Mamepe, whose name means "honeycomb," is Matlho's wife. She has four children that Matlho does not take care of. She clothes and feeds them and pays their tuition fees alone while their father fools around with other women. Matlho is still at school. Mamepe hopes that when Matlho finishes school he will help her. Mamepe is dedicated to her family because she used to pay child maintenance to another woman who has had a child with Matlho. When Matlho finishes school he does not help Mamepe to maintain the children like she hoped. He does not even discuss anything with her that concerns their home and life together. In episode 37, Mamepe confides to Nono,

"Ke ne ke solofetse fa Matlho a tla nthusa fa a fetsa kwa sekolong. Ga a ntherise sepe. O tsena a tswa. Ka re fa kgwedi e fela yona ga ke mmone."

(I had a hope that when Matlho finish school he will help. He does not discuss anything with me. He comes and goes. When the month ends I do not see him.)

Mamepe is a very sweet, well-behaved woman. She is a strong character. Even if Matlho is doing as he likes she keeps her family together.

4.3.6. NTESENG

Nteseng is Motlhabane's mother. She does not want Motlhabane to marry for two reasons. Her excuses are that Motlhabane is still too young and that he should marry one of the local girls, Raditamati's

daughter. In episode 1, Nteseng emphasizes that Motlhabane is not ready to marry and says: "Maminanyana a go tshwana le Motlhabane jaana a ka re a a nyala." ("a little snotnose like Motlhabane, can he really say he wants to marry"?)

Nteseng is superstitious and believes that Motlhabane wants to marry Nono because Nono has bewitched him.

Now that the central male and female characters have been discussed individually it is appropriate to look at the themes that complement this drama series.

4.4 PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN

For centuries, issues relating to women and concerns of women were either ignored or treated in a very cavalier way despite the fact that women make up at least half of the world's population. It was not until relatively recently that women won the right to vote. But even at the present time, there are many societies that treat women like minors, with no right to own property or make very basic decisions concerning themselves and their families. Semenya (2001) asserts that in recent times a lot has been written on and about women and the issues that concern them.

This dissertation is one such attempt, and it looks at the way in which women are portrayed in the radio series *Motlhabane*. It does this by investigating such themes as women and perceptions of beauty, women and love, women and economic power (materialistic), women, marriage and tradition, women and prostitution, women, lies and gossip, and women and religion.

4.4.1 WOMEN AND THE PERCEPTIONS OF BEAUTY

There is a perception that women with beautiful features are capable of wickedness and low morals. This perception is found among the Batswana. There are idioms that endorse this such as “Bontle bo na le dibebejana” (Beauty has flaws) and “O se bone tholana borethe, teng ga yone go a baba” (Do not get fooled by a girl’s external beauty, deep down she harbours bitterness and danger).

Nono's role in this series comes out even more clearly, as she is the central female figure in this drama series, a beautiful woman who attracts roving eyes like those of Matlho.

It is undisputable that Nono is beautiful because everyone talks about her beauty. For example, in episode 6:11, Lebogang, Motlhabane’s grandmother, supports this: “Kana ke utlwa go twe bontle jwa gagwe bo gaisa dinaledi.” (By the way I have heard that her beauty surpasses stars.)

In episode 8: 15, while Motlhabane is having doubts about marrying Nono, Matlho cautions him about Nono’s beauty: “...A o batla gore Nono wa maratana-go-lejwa, lekgarebe le le setlhana le go tswe dinaleng?” (Do you want to lose Nono, the beautiful fair lady?)

Most people have negative perceptions of beautiful women. Ntsimane has ensured he capitalises on this theory about beautiful women in his drama series. To enhance his metaphor, he has convincingly projected Nono as a beautiful woman without scruples, without mercy and without any feeling for anyone other than herself. This is how Nono was depicted in the series. In episode 47, when Mmadira tries to caution Nono about her behaviour, she says: “O bosula tota Nono. Ga o na kutlwelo-botlhoko mo go Motlhabane.” (You are cruel Nono. You don’t have mercy on Motlhabane.)

Ntsimane has gone further to exploit the concept of beauty devoid of all the elements of kindness and sympathy for those who attend church see (episode 5) “Motlhabane o tsamaya kereke” (Motlhabane is a church goer). This was Nono's opinion about the man she would still marry “ka gone e le mohumi” (because he is a rich man). A woman of such immense beauty has to be equally cruel, selfish and arrogant. This is how Nono is portrayed in the drama series.

4.4.2 WOMEN AND LOVE

In this drama series, the author makes people who believe they are loved and think they are in love, so blind that they do not see anything beyond skin-deep beauty.

It is undisputable that Matlho has no intention to break off his relationship with Nono. In episode 1: 3 he confesses to Nono that their marriages to Motlhabane and Mamepe are mistakes. They have to find a way of silencing Motlhabane and Mamepe so that they can get married and be together forever.

“Kana ke setse ke ineeletse ka Lenyalo le Mamepe. Nka dira eng gore ke fedise kgolagano ya me le Mamepe. A ke ye go tsaya sethunya ke mo hule. Lenyalo la gago le Motlhabane ke phoso. O tshwanetse wa nyalwa ke nna e seng ene. Motlhabane le Mamepe ba re sutele.”

(By the way, I am married to Mamepe. What can I do to end this union with Mamepe? Should I take a gun and shoot her? Your marriage with Motlhabane is a mistake. You are supposed to be married to me. Motlhabane and Mamepe should get out of our way.)

To this Nono shows no emotion and responds by saying Matlho can do anything he wants.

In episode 1: 3 Matlho tells Nono how much he loves life:

“O ka re go ka bo go kgonega wa bo o bona lerato le le mo pelong ya me. Le phaphasela go feta makhubu a lewatle, le bogale go feta lerumo la ga Shaka.”

(I wish you could see the depth of love in my heart. It is stronger than the waves of the sea and sharper than Shaka's spear.)

The researcher feels that female characters in *Motlhabane* have low morals. Men do not discourage them, but rather take advantage of them. This concept of 'bonyatsi' (seeing the other woman) is expressed as having been initiated by Nono in the drama series, and encouraged by Matlho, a friend to Motlhabane. Male characters do not seem to perceive Matlho's behavior on negative light. However, there is evidence that women have begun to gossip about this love affair.

Other women such as Mmadira mention Matlho's name from time to time as they try to persuade Nono to leave him. It is also evident that women are gossips and people who interfere in the affairs of others.

In women and feminist literature (Cameron 1992) it is mentioned that women writers are neglected or are ignored whenever they raise their voices. Initially, a female writer would never even be recognised by those who commission drama of a nature that would place men in a position of scorn. Their work may never reach the medium of radio. But today things have changed. Semanya (2001) asserts that women have been acknowledged and recognized for their works in literature.

One sees all the heartbreak stories in women magazines like *Fenina*, *Anne-Marie* and others, or in the paperbacks at local bookstores. A case in point is the story of Winnie Mandela, entitled, *Part of My soul Went With Him* (1986) which started to be sold in South Africa just a few years ago because it was banned in our country before 1994. The

paperback edition of the book sold a lot in America, especially when Winnie featured in the movie *Eyes on the Price*, also in 1986.

Men in *Motlhabane* are in control. Mabela, Nono's mother, falls in love with Tau's friend. Tau does not approve of this affair and it ends. The affair causes a rift between Mabela and her brother Tau. They stop talking to each other until the day they negotiate Nono's lobola. Nteseng, Motlhabane's mother, gets married to a man who does not like her only son because Motlhabane is born out of wedlock. One would think that this might come as a criticism in the radio series in order to show that most of the time women compromise their lives and everything to please men. Motlhabane is taken to his grandparent's house to grow up there. It is sad that some of the male playwrights are unsympathetic and when they write they give the impression that women are desperate for marriage and to be loved. Nono gives her rings to Matlho, her boyfriend, to sell because Matlho asks for them. Women are portrayed as vulnerable and insecure.

In this series women are portrayed as weak, promiscuous and with low morals. Women are easily attracted to men in order to get material things, and this is how Nono is portrayed. She is a woman who marries only for the sake of wealth and status. Nono actually tells Mmadira, her cousin, in many episodes (such as 1, 2, 6, 12, 34, 46, 47, 48) that Motlhabane is wealthy and educated.

4.4.3 WOMEN, MARRIAGE AND TRADITION

Nono's marriage, like any Motswana girl's, goes through traditional obligations and rituals. Motlhabane's mother comes to meet with Nono's mother before they can bring lobola. This is to let Nono's family know that their son has seen a wife within the Matlhomantsi family and to make arrangements for the day that the two families will meet to talk

about this. In episode 5: 1, Nteseng tells her daughter, Nkgopoleng, about her visit to Mafikeng:

“Ke leba kwa Mafikeng. Ke leba go lo ke sa go itse. Ke ya go diragatsa kopo ya ga Motlhabane ngwanaake. Ke ya go mo kopela mosadi.”

(I am going to Mafikeng. I am going to a place that I do not know. I am going to fulfill Motlhabane, my child’s request. I am going to marry a wife for him.)

Further, to support that this marriage goes through traditional obligations, the Madimabe family comes to discuss the lobola. In episode 6: 4, Bodila, Motlhabane’s uncle introduces his family:

“Re tswa kwa Phokeng. Setlogolo sa rona Motlhabane Madimabe, o re boleletse fa a bone sego sa metsi fano. Re fa ka kgang eo.”

(We are from Phokeng. Our nephew Motlhabane Madimabe has seen a woman here. We are here because of that.)

On the day that the two families meet, the Madimabe family is sent back with the lobola because they have been late. This angers them especially since they have come far. However, in Batswana culture it is the norm that the lobola is exchanged in the early hours of the morning because it is believed that if lobola is accepted during the day it will bring mishap. In episode 6: 5 Boikgogomoso, Nono’s uncle explains this: “...fela sebe sa phiri ke gore le tlile thari. Mono ga re ntshe bogadi nako e.” (... unfortunately you came late. Here we do not give lobola at this time.)

As culture prescribes, the girl whose lobola is coming to be paid has to be home so that her in-laws should be able to see their prospective daughter-in-law. This is done in every family because everyone assumes that the in-laws do not know their daughter-in-law even if they do know her. Nono was not around on this big day; she had gone

to school to write some tests. Motlhabane's family views this negatively.

Motlhabane and Nono are married in a Christian way. After the wedding Motlhabane's family goes home without giving last orders to their son about how to care for his wife as is usual in every Batswana family. However, the Matlhomantsi family remain with the newly-weds as tradition demands. In episode 10: 3 Mpho, Nono's aunt advises Nono:

“Fa o batla gore lenyalo la gago le tswelele pele, le tie o tshwanetse wa itlotla, wa ithata, wa itse fa o nyetswe ke Motlhabane a le esi”.

(If you want your marriage to be a success, you need to respect yourself, love yourself and accept that you are married to Motlhabane only.)

When last orders are given you are not supposed to answer or comment about what is said. So, Nono and Motlhabane has to listen and take the orders as they are. It depends on them whether they want to implement what they have been told or not.

In this series tradition plays a very important part with regard to marriage. In Motlhabane's marriage most of the traditional obligations have been met. There are other traditional aspects, which are ignored such as Motlhabane's family leaving before they have finished their obligation as parents. This might have been done purposely but I have no proof of this as there is nothing that points to this in the series. Also, the church wedding is modern though other families like to do both, once when the lobola is paid according to the Batswana tradition and you are customarily married and this union is recognized. Later the couple can go to church to have the union blessed.

4.4.4 WOMEN, PROSTITUTION AND ADULTERY

Nono grew up in a family of divorcees. Her mother, Mabela, her aunt whose name is not mentioned and her cousins, Tau's daughters, are all divorced. All these divorces are attributed to adultery. In episode 5: 12, Mabela tells Nteseng, Motlhabane's mother:

“Kana ousi wa me o ne a nna le mathata a a ntseng jaana. A tlhalwa ke monna le ene a tlatsa tlatsa kangang mo motseng o no wa Mmabatho gore ousi ke seaka.”

(My sister had the same problem as me. Her husband divorced her and told everyone in Mmabatho that she was adulterous.)

The researcher views with concern that the playwright makes Nono's mother confirm this by telling everyone that Nono's father left her because he said she was adulterous. She further tells Motlhabane's mother that her sister is also divorced for the same reason. This repeats itself when Nono displays the same behaviour even when she is married. In episode 8: 10, Nono tells her cousin, Mmadira:

“Action ke a mo rata le fa a ntlogetse ka ngwana. Ga ke re phoso e ne e le ya me. Kana o ntlogetse gore o ne a tlhola a ntshwara le mathaka a a farologaneng. Ka re le ene o ne a le botlhajana go feta Motlhabane. Fa o re o a ikutswa o mo morago ga gago.”

(I love Action even if he left me with a child. The mistake was mine. He left me because he always caught me with different men. He was more intelligent than Motlhabane. When you try to go hiding with someone he is there behind you.)

Mmadira does not like what she hears from Nono and asks Nono why she allowed Motlhabane to marry her if she knew she was not going to change her behaviour. In episode 5: 10 Mabela thinks aloud:

“Ba ne ba ithaya ba re ngwanake ga a na a nyalwa, rraabona o kae. E rile fa a utlwa gore ngwanaake o merwalo, ga twe ke fa a tshega a re ke moretlwa wa tsela, o goditse mmaagwe.”

(They thought my child would never get married, where is her father? They say when he heard that my child was pregnant he laughed and said she was an adulteress like her mother.)

In this series the playwright depicts some women such as Mabela, Nono and her aunts as adulterous and as prostitutes. According to him very few things are positive about some of these women.

4.4.6. WOMEN, LIES AND GOSSIP

Gossip plays a destructive role in this series. Gossip is attributed to women. Mamepe, Matlho's wife, tells Nono that she has heard from girls in a taxi from town that Matlho has an affair with a girl from UNIBO whom he has made pregnant. This girl is the wife of Matlho's friend. In episode 8: 11, Mamepe tells Nono that:

“Fela selo se se neng se gakgamatsa mo puong ya basetsana ale, ba re mosetsana wa teng ke mosadi wa tsala ya ga Matlho mme e bile Matlho o mo robile leoto.”

(What was confusing in those girls' talk was that this girl is the wife to Matlho's friend and Matlho has made her pregnant.)

This information worries Nono and she protects herself by telling Mamepe (episode 8; 11)

“Ka re batho ka go rata maaka. Ga ke itse gore ke eng ba nagana gore aubuti Matlho o tla kwa Unibo. Legale o ka fitlhela ba bua nnete” (People like telling lies. I do not know why they think Bro Matlho comes to Unibo. In any case they might be telling the truth.)

Mmadira, Nono's cousin tells Mabela, Nono's mother, about Nono's pregnancy and who the father is. She tells about this because she has heard some girls gossiping about this.

“Maloba ke utlwile basetsana bangwe ba bua ka ene ka mokgwa o o sa kgatliseng. Ba re morwalo o a o rwelweng ke wa ga Action e seng wa ga Motlhabane. Mongwe a tlola a ganela go re ga se wa ga Action ke wa ga Matlho.”

(The other day I overheard other girls talk badly about her. They were saying she is pregnant with Action’s child. Another one said it is not Action but Matlho.)

Nono is like any mother who needs what is best for her children. She lies to get her child a father. We see this when Nono says George and not Action fathered her illegitimate child. She does this because Action refuses to take responsibility for his child. Nono does not want her child like herself, to grow up without having a father.

This is yet another stereotype that women are gossipers. Nowhere in the series does the playwright attribute gossip to men.

4.4.7 WOMEN AND RELIGION

In many homes today families have both the traditional the western marriage. When lobola is paid it means you marry traditionally and this union is observed and respected. In other families such as the researcher’s family they also go to church to have this union blessed. It is common in our homes that both marriages are acknowledged.

The women in Motlhabane are religious even if they are said to have low morals. Nono marries in church, which shows that she is either a Christian or a churchgoer or related to someone who is a Christian. Lebogang, Motlhabane’s grandmother, keeps on mentioning that if God does not want Nono and Motlhabane’s union the marriage will not take place. She prays for them to get married.

In episode 2 Nteseng says, “fa kgolagano e e dirilwe kwa legodimong lenyalo le tla nna teng” (if a union is made in heaven the marriage will take place). Mamepe, Matlho’s wife, does not see Nono out when she comes to visit because she is waiting for the church council as it is going to gather at her place. One might think that this is a deliberate ploy on the part of Mamepe but nowhere in the series is this confirmed except for the following quote. In episode 8: 12, Mamepe tells Nono that: Ga ke go ntshe, o se ka wa re ke a go bifela. Ke emetse maloko a kereke. Re na le pitso ya khuduthamaga. E tlike go tshwarelwa fano gompiano.” (I am not seeing you out; do not say I am being funny. We have a church executive meeting. It is going to be here today.)

This Nono accepts and says “Ousi Mamepe a ke se go die” (Ousi Mamepe, let me not delay you.) Nono leaves for home.

In episode 5: 2, Nteseng, Motlhabane’s mother, thinks aloud and says, “Fa seno e le go tlhoka lesego, go tlike go ratile Ramasedi. ...le gale Modimo o mogolo. Ke ena a itseng kwa re tla felelang gona.” (If this means to be unfortunate, it will be the Almighty’s wish. But I have faith in God.)

In episode 5: 2, Nkgopoleng, Motlhabane’s sister, tells her other sisters, “Fa re ntse re gola, o re isitse kerekeng gore re ithute go tlotla Modimo; wa re isa sekolong gore re tlhalefe. Tota ke eng se re se batlang.” (During our childhood, you took us to church so that we should learn to respect God; you took us to school so that we should be wise. Now, what is it that we want?)

In episode 10: 1, Tau, Nono’s eldest uncle tells the newly-weds, Motlhabane and Nono, “Re utlwile se moruti a se buileng kwa kerekeng gompiano.” (We have heard what the minister said today.)

Religion in this series plays a visible role, especially in Motlhabane's family. Nono and Motlhabane marry in church. When Motlhabane experiences marital problems he turns to the church. In episode 48 Motlhabane tells Nono that: "ke go kopile gore re ye kerekeng ka makgetha a le mantse gore o sokologe, o a gana." (I have asked you to go to church many times so that you should repent but you refused.)

Whenever Motlhabane's family is challenged emotionally they believe that God will never forsake them. Women such as Nteseng, Nkgopoleng and Lebogang have faith in God. In episode 13, Mamepe tells Nono that she is waiting for the church council which is having a church meeting at her home. The researcher observes that Christianity and churchgoers in this series are from Motlhabane's family because every expression about God is said by his family member and not Nono's family. Ntsimane has made sure that Nono's family is viewed in a poor light.

4.4.8 WOMEN AND MATERIAL THINGS

Nono is depicted as a materialistic woman. In episode 47, Nono tells Mmadira that she is expecting her third child and it is not Motlhabane's child. It is Bopang Bosigo's child and Bopang has told her that she will get anything she wants.

"Wa reng Mmadira, wa re ke tsaya madi kae? O lebetse gore Bopang o na le madi, ke mohumi. O rile fa ke tlhoka, ke tle go ena."

(What are you saying, Mmadira? Are you asking were do I get the money? Have you forgotten that Bopang has money, he is rich. He said if I need money I should come and get it.)

Nono demands expensive things from her husband, Motlhabane. For example, she demands an expensive ring and maternity dresses. In episode 5: 15, Nono confirms that she does not love Motlhabane, but

rather his money. Her deepest motivation is money and having an educated and a rich father for her child.

In episode 48 Nono tells Mmadira that::

“Tota ke nyetswe gonne ke rata gore ke nne Mrs Semangmang, ke rwale palamonwana, bile ngwanaake Joyce a nne le rraagwe yo o rutegileng e bile a na le madi jaaka Motlhabane.”

(I got married because I wanted to be Mrs so and so, so that I should wear rings, and my child Joyce should have a father who is educated and rich.)

Nono repeats these words in episodes 47 and 48 to give an idea of emphasis. In episode 2, Nteseng and Nkgopoleng, Motlhabane's mother and sister, are against Motlhabane's marriage. They fear that he will not support them financially any more. In episode 2: 8 Nteseng tells her daughters, Nkgopoleng, Boipuso and Ntebogeng, when they complain about Motlhabane getting married too soon: “Lona kana le a bo le batla go ja ngwananke diatla. Se le se gopotseng fela ke madi a gagwe.” (I know you want to benefit from my child. What you want to have is his money.)

The sisters of Motlhabane and his mother are portrayed as jealous of Nono for economic reasons after Nono and Motlhabane's marriage. They would have to share his money. He is the boss and the provider in his home. Nono, despite her university education, does not seem to enjoy the privilege of holding a position in her own right, or a provider of bread and clothing in her home. She is portrayed as being dependent and spoilt, and as a baby breeder who is thrilled by new maternity dresses. This is an insult to women. In episode 35, Nteseng tells Lebogang that:

“Tota Nono o batlang. Bona jaaka Motlhabane a mo tlhokomela. O ne a batla di matheniti tse di turang fa a le mo mmeleng a mo rekela a di itumelela”.

(What is it that Nono wants? Look at how Motlhabane is taking care of her. She wanted expensive maternity dresses when she was pregnant. He bought them and she will be happy about them.)

In episode 5: 15, Nono tells Motlhabane: "Tota palamonwana e le ya dikete di le nne e nkgathile tota" (In actual fact, that R4000, 00 ring impressed me a great deal). In order to attack the female species, the writer has relied on satire and sometimes sexist Setswana idiom to drive his point home. In the process, the female characters are attacked and subjected to a number of subtle insults.

The radio series *Motlhabane* often impresses one as having selected the most extreme examples of prejudicial Batswana expressions to drive its point home. For example, in episode 48, Motlhabane thinks aloud: "Maabane fa tsala ya me e le teng, Nono ke fa a feta ka mosese o bonala ka fa gare. Fa ke re ke a kgalema a ntenegela." (Yesterday a friend of mine was here; Nono came wearing a transparent dress. When I tried to talk to her about it she became angry.) Nono, for example, always fits the stereotype of a very immoral and wanton Motswana woman, who uses her beauty to to beguile men, and does not conform to what is expected as the norm, in contrast to the less arrogant Mamepe who is the woman who conforms to the norm of subservience and obedience, which is the love-prejudice the Batswana men condone.

Mabela, for example, Nono's closest relative, is a woman who comes from a family background with lesser morals, and who raised her daughter in a single parent home. Although Nono's cousin, Mmadira comes through as a very humble and fair woman, vehemently opposed to what Nono is doing behind her husband's back, her character seems to have been juxtaposed intentionally to paint a preferred female character. On the other hand, she fails to convince Nono that

her schemes are not good and emerges as a weak character that cannot assert her influence on the wayward and more arrogant Nono. Neither does she expose her or threaten to do so, and might hence be construed as a collaborator.

Through language, the series promotes the power position of men above that of women. For example, the radio series shows that in this culture a woman is not supposed to reprimand a man. In episode 6:2, Tau, Nono's uncle, is incensed by Mpho and exclaims :

"A o raya nna o re ke nne modiga Mpho? Ga o kgalemele mogatso a ntlhapatsa fa pele ga batho? Wena o seka wa lebala gore o tlile ka kgomo fano."

(Mpho how come you are telling me to calm down? To Mpho's husband he says: Why don't you reprimand your wife, who is insulting me in front of everyone? To Mpho again: Don't forget that you simply married into this family, and you are not one of us).

Tau feels insulted only because a woman (Mpho) reprimands him. Batswana men are normally not reprimanded by women in front of other folks. Women are also not expected to insult men. The stereotype portrayed here is that of a woman without manners, without humility and without scruples. The woman is rude, and this characteristic is not normally associated with Africanness in women.

It is evident that in the approach to female characters in Setswana literature and drama, women may be portrayed stereotypically, either through innuendo and idiom, or simply directly and blatantly. The study also looked into the way other women in the drama have been portrayed in contrast to Nono to offer the preferred contrast to a woman of her calibre, as well as at the position of the men in the drama and found that Ntsimane portrayed men as very patient, and if weak, as victims of an adulterous woman, for example Motlhabane.

Nono is portrayed as a greedy adulteress in a sustained extra-marital relationship with Matlho, where it is demonstrated that Nono gives more attention to Matlho rather than to her doting husband, who buys her nine to ten maternity dresses during her pregnancy. Nono is portrayed as very worldly and extremely selfish. The events in the drama also reveal evidence that Nono does not conform to the preferred stereotypical Motswana female role model.

It is the researcher's contention that the image painted of Nono the main female character in *Motlhabane* has been manipulated to depict an exaggerated prejudiced picture of a very bad girl. The characterization of other women in the radio series *Motlhabane* reflects a utopia of the desirable Motswana woman. Using satire and unnuedo, the writer has managed to put Nono in an awkward position that the advocacy against this beautiful woman from her peculiar background has been launched successfully through this drama.

Ntsimane has ensured that the listener actually spits in Nono's face for her unspeakable behaviour. Her deceptiveness has been grossly exaggerated in order to arouse in the observer emotions of hatred and scorn for such an ungrateful woman. In episode 48, Nono tells Mmadira that she is expecting the third child which is not Motlhabane's. The hate prejudice is reinforced in each episode in which Nono features because the playwright would like to show how bad Nono is. She is the real villain in this drama. She has the sordid history of playing games with men, and does not blame her former boyfriend for not marrying her, as she admittedly was busy with someone else.

The writer has succeeded in using the character Nono to portray a very negative stereotype of women. Among others, Nono and her mother are given the labels of divorcees and adulteresses, while other

women in the series, although good in nature and conformist, are painted as gossipmongers and very weak in character, without authority and independence. The lesser virtue of women is laid bare as Nono is depicted as a terrible sex-monger and exploiter, with insinuations that she may have picked up this behaviour at home (her mother is not married).

Motlhabane hates himself for loving a woman like Nono in the first place, who and sends out the message that sophisticated and worldly women are not worth marrying, are not typically Batswana and are generally immoral. For example, in episode 48, Motlhabane thinks aloud:

“go reng ke ne ke itetlelela go nyala Nono? Bona jaanong o ka re ke sematla. Nkabe ke inyaletse mosetsana wa ga Rraditamati le fa asa rutege.”

(why did I allow myself to marry Nono? Look now I look like a fool. I should have married father Rraditamadi's daughter even if she is not educated.)

The contradiction here is also that his own mother (Nteseng) conceived him out of wedlock. She is a woman that is jealous of Nono because she (Nono) would share Motlhabane's earnings with her. This characteristic jealousy puts women in a childish position, which indeed does not fit with the feminist critics of men's portrayal of women. The two women are actually portrayed as being hopelessly dependent. It is as though they, on their own, cannot be economically independent. No feminist critic would condone such a portrayal.

Some good things have been said about Nteseng, Motlhabane's mother, but the way she is portrayed is not fair. The sisters of Motlhabane are also portrayed as jealous for the same reason. He leaves home to take his bride to Taung because his sisters and mother vie for his economic protection. This is an arrogant assertion that

women cannot even work in a team to make ends meet, but would rather bicker and gossip in order to justify their selfcentredness.

Ntsimane has made some space for women who have single-handedly educated their children. In this series Mamepe signifies the epitome of virtue and the ideal and preferred woman. She does everything to ensure harmony in the home. This is the ideal woman the writer wants to promote, and one who represents the cultural expectations.

The study also examined whether the dramatist has assessed the cultural codes of the communities for whom he has written. The listeners have to recognize and associate the events of the radio series with their experience. In other words, the series has to be understood against the backdrop of expectations of traditional views of women and their cultural codes.

The following examples are some of the expressions used in the drama series, *Motlhabane*, borrowed from the Setswana idiom and analyzed by the researcher:

i. Mosadi tshwene o jewa mabogo (Woman is like a baboon, you can only eat her hands) (Hard work beautifies the ugliest woman). This suggests that the only reason a woman marries is because of her hands doing hard labor in scrubbing floors, washing clothes, tending children, cooking for her husband and family and many other roles that depict the woman as a slave, even though she is ugly (mosadi-tshwene...woman who looks like a baboon).

In episode 37, Motlhabane thinks aloud in regret that he should have listened to his parents and married Raditamati's daughter in Luka because even if she is not beautiful like Nono she is well behaved and she could cook for him and his children. In the modern sense, this and other expressions of its type seem on their way out as women

begin to protest against such derogatory utterances, often directed at women and never at men.

ii. Ga nke di etelelwa pele ke e e namagadi (Bigger game should never be lead by a female). This suggests that leadership roles are for men only. The female never leads the males. A woman is only a minor and can therefore not lead at all. Such derogatory implications often get mentioned when women have failed in their leadership duties at home and motherhood roles.

In Setswana there are indeed several positive idioms about women, which do not seem to find their way into *Motlhabane*. Unfaithful men are protected by expressions such as “Monna ke selepe o a adimisanwa...” (A man is like an axe....he can be borrowed). In *Motlhabane*, the character Matlho seems to fit this idiomatic expression and the suggestion of the writer is that the man is not ridiculous if he runs around with many women, but that if it is the woman who chases after men it is terribly sick. Nono is just such a woman. Matlho's wife Mamepe is really good. She is the domestic type that fits the role model Ntsimane wishes to promote.

In this chapter the researcher has analysed the male and female characters who play important roles in the series. Ntsimane depicts his main character as materialistic, adulterous and as gossipmonger.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

The study focused on the portrayal of women in Ntsimane's radio drama series, *Motlhabane*. It examined the stereotypes that are attributed to the main character Nono and other characters such as Mabela and Nteseng. The characters who are presented by the playwright appear to have tendencies that reveal liberated behaviour which can be understood as being immoral.

The research questions which the study attempted to answer were

1. Which characteristics are attributed to female characters in the radio drama series *Motlhabane*?
2. Does the portrayal of women in the radio drama *Motlhabane* reinforce stereotypical beliefs of the audience or not?
3. How does the portrayal of women in this drama series compare to the views about women in the traditional Batswana culture?

The radio series *Motlhabane* revolves around *Motlhabane* and *Nono* who are the main characters. The author's depiction of *Nono* and other women characters is indeed often negative, women such as *Nono*, *Mabela* (*Nono's* mother), *Mamape* and *Nteseng* (*Motlhabane's* mother) are depicted as weak in certain areas of behaviour, in spite of their socio-economic status and positions of power in their families and homes.

For example, in *Nono* and *Mmadira's* conversation in episode 47 the latter accuses the former of witchcraft: "O phirimisitse *Motlhabane* pelo, ka dingaka ...le banna ba o ba ratang." (You have blinded *Motlhabane* with these witchdoctors of yours and these men you love).

Mmadira suggests to Nono that Motlhabane is not even aware of her many witchdoctor consultations to weaken his perception and her evil associations with men. In this scene, both women are in a light mood and Mmadira is in no way angry with Nono, even as she chastises her. However, the accusations directed at Nono have weight. Mmadira further scolds Nono for her actions: "O Satane Nono, o gogetse Motlhabane mo thaelong." (You are a devil, Nono, you have led Motlhabane into temptation).

In response Nono says: "O itseng wena Mmadira ka lenyalo, ka o sa nyalwa." (What do you know about marriage, Mmadira, because you are not married.)

Since Mmadira is not married, she therefore does not qualify to talk to Nono, a married woman about her affairs. It would seem that in the drama series, the value of women is measured by their marital status. This implies that single or unmarried women cannot make sound decisions or pass judgement by virtue of their marital status.

The entire drama series depicts Nono as a woman of low moral values who lacks a conscience. Perhaps her behaviour is motivated by her beauty and her liking of material things, as reflected in episode 47. The negative extremes attributed to woman might make male listeners of the drama series think twice before marrying beautiful women, thus confirming the Setswana idiom which says "Bontle bo na le dibebejane" (beauty has its own qualms).

The playwright initially agreed to be interviewed by the researcher, but rescinded his decision at the last minute; an interview might have helped to clarify some of the criticism on the part of the researcher. Most of what the playwright associates with Nono reinforces the stereotype that a beautiful woman could be "a devil". Her love for

material things that she got through her many negative behaviour such as adultery which she committed with a lot of men including George, Action and Matlho is portrayed throughout a drama.

Mabela, Nteseng and Mamepe's characters are also depicted by what the playwright reveals about them and their families. For example, Nono's mother is said to have been left by her husband to care for her children alone without his support. Nteseng too was left by Motlhabane's father to care for Motlhabane single-handedly. Also, when Nteseng married another man, Motlhabane's stepfather did not want an illegitimate child, so Motlhabane had to be raised by his grandparents. Matlho could not support his children even when he was working, so Mamepe had to support them. As much as Ntsimane highlights the stereotypes that are attributed to women, he does not fail to reflect and expose bad deeds by men such as Matlho.

Looking at how Nono changed men such as Action, Matlho, Bro Styles and Mike, we can only assume that this can be attributed to her growing up in a family without a father. Her behaviour shows traits of wanting the protection and affection of men as demonstrated by her extra-marital affairs. All men in her life compensated for what she never had due to the absence of a father during her childhood. In episode 3 Mmadira and Nono are having a conversation about Nono's anxiety to see another man:

Nono: "Mmadira, ke ne ke setse ke tsenwa ke tsebetsebe fa ke bona Motlhabane a sa sute. Ke tshwanetse ka kopana le Matlho ko UNIBO."

(Mmadira, I was beginning to be restless thinking that Motlhabane is not going to go anywhere. I have to meet Matlho at UNIBO.)

Mmadira: "Ao, Nono o motho yo o ntseng jang? A o ne o sa re wa nyalwa ke Motlhabane."

(Oh, Nono, what kind of a person are you? Didn't you say you are getting married to Motlhabane?)

Nono: "Mmadira nna ke godile mo lapeng le le senang rre, mme ga ke battle bana ba me ba gole jalo."

(Mmadira, I grew up in a home without a father, and I don't want my children to grow up the way I did.)

Further, in episode 2 it is reflected that Nono grew up without a father figure in her home. Mabela tells Nteseng when she comes to negotiate for lobola for Nono, how her husband had left while the children were very young and she has had to take responsibility for raising them single-handedly.

Contrary to Nono's background, Ntsimane shows that Motlhabane was raised by his grandparents, whose moral values were very high. He was therefore protected from growing up in an environment without a father figure and a role model. This portrayal highlights a clear distinction of growing up between the two main characters, Nono and Motlhabane. Motlhabane grew up in his grandparents solid home, while Nono grew up in a single parent home.

Nono's behaviour as displayed in the series fits that of a sexually immoral woman. It seems from the series that Nono does not act in accordance with the set of values of a typical Motswana woman. She married a man who had a typical traditional Setswana life-view, perception and expectation of a wife. Because of Motlhabane's cultural background, Ntsimane, in this drama, seems to reinforce the stereotype against those who do not conform to the norms of the typical traditional and cultural Setswana patriarchy.

The playwright has presented an exposition of Nono that demonstrates that men can be terribly uncompromising with an adulteress (Nono), and quite accommodating with an adulterer (Matlho). When Motlhabane discovers Nono and Matlho's affair, he blames Nono for breaking up Matlho's marriage because he fails to understand that Matlho is as guilty as Nono.

Motlhabane tells Nono about the rings discovered by Mamepe (Matlho's wife) under Matlho's pillow. Nono has given her rings to Matlho and Mamepe has discovered them under his pillow. Mamepe returns the rings to Motlhabane (episode 49). Motlhabane confronts Nono about this, making reference to culture.

Motlhabane: "Nono moratiwa ga ke itse gore o tthaloganya Setswana go le go kae. Dipalamonwana ga di a latlhega, o di neile tsala ya me Matlho Mokwena. Le fa o ka lela, o itse sentle se o se direleng. Mamepe o di bone fa tlase ga mosamo mme a di nnaya. A o itse fa ba tthalane ba tthalane ka ntlha ya dipalamonwana tseo."

(Nono, love, I don't know whether you understand Setswana. The rings are not lost, you gave them to Matlho Mokwena. Even if you cry you know what you have done. Mamepe saw them under the pillow and she gave them to me. Do you know that they have divorced, they divorced because of these rings.)

Matlho's divorce from Mamepe is blamed at Nono because of her rings which were found by Mamepe under Matlho's pillow.

Nono: “ Nna ga ke a naya Matlho sepe, o tshwanetse a be a di utswitse”.
(I did not give Matlho anything, he must have stolen them).

Divorce is Nono’s ultimate punishment for her adulterous involvement with Matlho and other men such as Mike and Action (episode 50). The divorce comes as a shock to Nono since she does not expect it. Motlhabane does not want to accept Nono’s begging for forgiveness even in Court because he does not trust her any more.

The judge is unsympathetic to Nono and labels her extremist and irresponsible. He gives Motlhabane the custody of the two children so that they should not grow up under Nono’s bad influence. This reduces Nono to tears and she is unable to defend herself against the judgement.

In this radio drama series *Motlhabane*, Ntsimane asserts that if a partner is not loyal, if she/he is unfaithful, the consequence will be a divorce as it happens with Nono and Matlho. Unfortunately, Nono remains at the centre of the climatic and disastrous end to her actions. Nono’s fate has been exposed in court. Although Matlho’s name is mentioned in court during the proceedings, he exits very silently from the scene. Nono gets all the blame in court and her neighbours gossip about her. Nono is being divorced for her immoral behaviour. The impression that the listeners get is that whatever mishaps there are in a marriage are ascribed to women.

Ntsimane has also highlighted good female characters such as Mamepe. The name Mamepe (honeycomb) for example, signifies a female character that is too sweet, well behaved and responsible, and this is the underlying implication for Mamepe’s behaviour.

For instance, Mamepe pays tuition for her children, and clothes and feeds them single-handedly because her playboy husband, Matlho, is still studying. She further pays maintenance to Matlho's girlfriend. This portrayal of Mamepe shows a kind woman who loves her family. She is not portrayed as a heroine. In the series her behaviour is appreciated by all. Mmadira and Motlhabane do not stop using her as an example of a good woman.

Given the above portrayal of Mamepe, it can be deduced that Mamepe represents a "good" and humble Motswana woman that every Motswana man would have as a wife and every child would like to have as a mother. However, the playwright's intention in this portrayal is to contrast her to Nono so as to show characteristics of a good model of Motswana woman.

Generally, black male writers of drama portray women as abused, not because men are abusers, but because they (the women) are bad. It is not convincing to be given a woman like Nono. She (Nono) hated Motlhabane at a very early stage in her marriage, saying that she does not really love him, but that she loved his money. The playwright does not reveal whether Motlhabane abuses Nono at the beginning of the plot, but at the end it is quite clear that her beauty made him jealous (episode 48).

In general, the women in this series are depicted as villains. The Shakespearian quote, "vanity, thy name is woman", aptly applies in this series to degrade Nono beyond any sympathy by the listener. Her sordid details are told elaborately and the other women are satirical juxtaposed to contradict her so as to paint the author's picture of a correct woman. The men such as Motlhabane and others in the drama are profiled as victims of a beautiful woman with terribly low morals. Nono is analogous to Delilah in the Bible. Male authors of Setswana literature such as Mashike, Monyaise and others often develop female

characters with low morals and low intellect when it comes to sexual behaviour. The women are depicted as loose, stupid and adulterous. Ntsimane is the epitome of such portrayal in his use of the character Nono.

In the radio series *Motlhabane* the playwright has placed his characters in different situations. Women characters are placed in the most awkward situations where they have to get support from the male characters in order to survive. In some instances they are left with the burden of caring for the family single-handedly. Mamepe does not receive praise, but she is used to demonstrate to the listener how an ideal woman should be. She is a deliberate contrast to the base and arrogant Nono, the adulteress with a university degree. This emphasis on the degree is also significant for the analysis. In episode 49, Motlhabane accuses Nono that she is doing all this because she is educated. Nono is said to be doing all these negative things, as though her degree (education) determines her behaviour. Her education does not serve as a deterrent for her negative behaviour.

Ntsimane portrays male characters in this series as more powerful than the female characters. For example, the male characters are richer than their female counterparts. This gives them power over the women they seduce with money. All the men in Nono's life, except Matlho, are rich. Others are sweet-tongued and women believe whatever they say, only to find that they bring about the women's downfall. Therefore the male characters in the radio series can be considered manipulative in that they always do as they please, at the expense of the women characters. Motlhabane's character in particular is reflected positively; he does not swear and he maintains the highest level of moral values.

Ntsimane, like most male authors, is quick to expose the evil that women do. Although Motlhabane is an illegitimate child, the

playwright does not focus on his father's irresponsibility. Instead his grandparents' positive upbringing is highlighted as a contrast to Nono's situation.

This seems like a subtle and deliberate protection of irresponsible men. Ntsimane is so biased against women that he focuses less on their personal problems and more on their evil deeds, using Nono as central character and the devil incarnate to warn men who intend marrying a beautiful woman. Ntsimane does not consider that the pain that his female characters endure is caused by his male characters. His male characters always have alternatives in times of trouble. For example, in court Nono is seen as a bad woman and Matlho, who contributes enormously to Nono's divorce, is not punished.

Tradition and culture has been used in protecting and covering up for the male characters. For example, the status of single women (Mmadira) renders them inferior. The lessons derived from such portrayal of women by the dictates of culture are negative.

It is important that the next generation of authors or those who write about women should try and pay tribute to women by writing positive things about them. They should be careful not to fall in the same trap that the former playwrights have. The concern is that children might in some way be indoctrinated and conditioned into thinking in stereotypical ways because they will think that all women are the way they are described by playwrights, while women who behave badly are only a fraction of the populace.

Authors like Ntsimane who manage to draw such a big listenership would be appreciated more if they write positive things about women so that the next generation of authors should write great exploits of women characters. In Mamepe's case, the author has tried to write

positively about her but this is just to justify the author's model of a good and ideal Motswana woman. This is a challenge to every woman writer and all emerging authors to change the mindset of people by writing positive stories that build humanity and the nation.

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