

THE PORTRAYAL OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN MAAKE'S NOVEL *MME*

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that: **The Portrayal of Female Characters in Maake's Novel *Mme***, is my own work, that all the sources used or quoted have been put and recognised or accepted by means of entire references, and that this exposition was not previously submitted by me for a degree at another institution or university.

Signature: _____

Date: November 2015.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this mini-dissertation to my family. My two little angels, Kabelo and Mamello for their patience. My wonderful mom, Makgapuleng for her support and undying love. My one and only younger sister Mahadi for always being there for me.

SUMMARY

This research project entitled: **The Portrayal of Female Characters in Maake's Novel *Mme*** is about the manner in which the author portrayed female characters in the novel. The author unlike the most Sesotho authors who portray their female characters as inferior, he portrays his female characters as strong human beings. The study is divided into six chapters and the strong characterisation of women as depicted in the novel is discussed in those chapters.

Chapter one is the introductory chapter and it presents the definition of concepts, problem statement, the aims of the study, methodology, literature review as well as the contribution and challenges of the study.

The second chapter is the chapter that provides the study with the theoretical frame-work. This study is guided by Feminism. The Feminist theory helps to organize the study and provides a context in which to examine the problem of the study. It also helps to achieve the aims of the study.

The third chapter gives a clear picture on how Maake (1995) portrayed the young female characters. There are many young female characters but for the purpose of this study only three characters are looked at. These characters are Dikeledi who later became Mmateboho because she is now a married woman. Miss Lekena is the unmarried woman teacher. Mmatakatso is also married and she is

closer to Mmateboho.

The fourth chapter discusses how Sehloho abuses his concubine Mmalenka by eloping with her by force. As she is reluctant to go with Sehloho, he beats her and forces her to leave her house without a person guarding it. Mmalenka is forced to leave her house and her business because she is a shebeen queen. The most painful part of Sehloho's action, is when he takes Mmalenka to Mmadimakatso's house and forces both his wife Mmadimakatso and his concubine Mmalenka to sleep in the same room. Mmadimakatso does not agree to share a room with Mmalenka. Sehloho accommodates Mmalenka in the outside room.

In the fifth chapter, the study discusses how Sehloho when he is in Dithotaneng at Setinkolo's place. He is much attracted to Setinkolo's daughter Sofi. He proposes love to Sofi and tells her lies that he is still a single man. Sehloho elopes with Sofi to Mmalenka's place. He forces Mmalenka to accommodate Sofi in her hut's room but Mmalenka beats Sofi. At the end, Sehloho and Sofi sleep in Mmalenka's hut. Mmalenka decides to sleep with Sehloho's children in another hut. Mmadimakatso and Mmalenka go out and Sofi is left alone at home. She calls Sefofane and they steal from Mmalenka and Mmadimakatso.

The concluding chapter is related to the questions raised in the introductory chapter. Sofi becomes the voice of the voiceless. As she steals from

Mmadimakatso and Mmalenka, Sehloho's status of patriarchal domination

ceases and both Mmalenka and Sofi are released from the practice of *tjhobediso*. Mmalenka is released from an abusive marriage and she returns to her house.

The study concludes with recommendations for applying research and suggestions concerning further research.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

1.1 Introduction

Traditionally a Mosotho woman must depend on her husband. She must know and always remember that she is inferior to a man. Basotho parents have taught their children that to have a better life in the future, they must have someone to take care of them, that is a man.

There are important roles that women play in a society, such as the contribution they make in the household. These contributions come from a wide range of women's experience and social- cultural background. There are some issues which divide and sideline women from taking part in society. The inequalities that exist between men and women are of great significance in Feminist theory since Feminism promotes equality of the sexes. No gender should be conceived as superior or more privileged than the other. Women are revealed as a class of property of men, first the father, then the husband, her sexuality belongs to him, thus virginity and faithfulness in marriage are paramount requirements. Feminists strive in their writings to change this mindset of women being men's property.

It is for these reasons mentioned above that this research is undertaken to make people, especially men who look down upon women, that women are indeed capable of nation building, that women in general have one thing in common that is a passionate commitment to equality both personal and social, irrespective of their status. Other creative writers, especially male creative writers, do not give

women their appropriate acknowledgement, their realities are not addressed. This research will look at the perception that other writers used to portray women as female characters who are potentially dangerous to the man if she wishes to use her sexual and intellectual gifts to undo or change him or to gain her own ends at his expense.

Very seldom does a woman stand on her own feet. (Bird 1994: 60) confirms this when he says:

Even where a woman or woman's name obtained legendary status, where force of character or position has procured a unique place for her, or necessary to a plot that revolves about males where an author, following his own sympathies or artistic aims, has lingered over a particular female figure, the roles played by women in the writing are almost exclusively subordinate and / or supporting roles. Women are adjuncts to the men, they are the minor, and only occasionally the major characters.

The study argues that despite living in a patriarchal and conservative society, the Basotho women creative writers have not successfully asserted their right to be heard and their right to define their world in their own terms. We would suggest that some Basotho creative writers have done better than women out of feminism. Maake (1995) in his novel *Mme* has tried to change that perception and make us readers aware that women are the pillar of the families and they play a big role in the society irrespective of their status. Women have started to stand for their rights. They want recognition, just like men, in all spheres of life. Male writers seem to have done better than women in portraying women's rights.

Maake (1995) uses the female character *Mme* in the story as a powerful and strong person.

Maake (1995) can be seen as representative of a burgeoning consciousness in Basotho society in which there is a need to re-think the position of women thus far, to challenge entrenched prejudices and to suggest the possibilities for women for a more participatory role in changing perceptions towards the female gender.

The Creative writers have the power to create a new realization in women as Maake does. He creates that reality as neither victor nor victims but as partner in nation building. Unlike other creative writers, the author wants to make women a positive symbol, the conqueror and heroine. Maake (1995) finds the kernel of positive portrayal of woman's image, which was never fully realized by other creative writers before.

1.2 Definition of concepts.

1.2.1 Patriarchy

Sanderson (2001:198), maintains that patriarchy is the structure of modern culture and political systems which are ruled by men. Such systems are detrimental to the rights of women. Jean (2002:18) defines patriarchy as a social system in which the father heads the family and descent is traced through the father's side of the family.

According to Abrams (1988:208), patriarchy refers to male-centred and controlled, and is organized and conducted in such away as to subordinate

women to men in all cultural domains, religions, familial, political, economic, social, legal, and artistic.

For the purpose of this research I would say that patriarchy refers to society that is ruled and controlled by males.

1.2.2 Feminism

The term “feminism” is used to spell out the commitment to women’s struggle against oppression. This commitment is translated into practices for liberation for women from all that oppresses them. Feminism does not benefit any specific group for women over the men. It is about a different consciousness, a radically transformed perspective which questions our social, cultural, political and religious traditions and calls for structural change in all these spheres.

According to Kramarae and Treichter (1985:159) Feminism has political theory and practice to free all women: working class women, poor women, physically challenged women etc. Anything less than these is not feminism, but merely female self- aggrandizement.

1.2.3 Feminist

“Mother what is a feminist?” A feminist, my daughter, is any woman who cares to think about her own affairs as men don’t think she oughter” Kramarae & Trechter (1985: 161). To supplement the above point Rebecca West says: “I myself have never been able to find out precisely what a feminist is”, I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat!!! (Kramarae & Trechter) 1985: 160).

For the purpose of this research Feminism will be understood as the belief that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men. A Feminist is a person who supports the belief that women should have the same rights as men. One can say that a feminist is viewed as any person - a man or woman - who supports the belief that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men.

1.3 Problem statement

Every society has its own challenges as well as problems. South Africa is faced with the monster that rapes, kills, and abuses women. The well-known Basotho proverb that says: *Mosadi ke morena* (A woman is a king), meaning that a woman is respected by everyone, is no longer respected in the society. A woman is the cornerstone upon which a society is built. Women play an important role in society that is why it is said that if you educate a woman you educate a nation. Nyathikazi (2012: 5) a *City Press* reporter says: "Two young women were demeaned, disrespected, humiliated and violated. Their sin in the eyes of the men involved was the type of clothing they had on". South Africa is no longer a safe place for infants, young women or pensioners, because they are abused, raped and killed by heartless males.

As more and more women are globally taking up their constitutional rights of receiving respect, especially from men, Basotho women who were marginalized in the past by males, are still not respected by males. Male creative writers continue marginalizing and dehumanizing women. Male creative writers, to mention few, such as Ntsane (1987) in his novel *Nna Sajene Kokobela*, Maphalla

(1991) in *Nna ke mang?* and Moephuli's (1982) *Peo ena e jetswe ke wena* portrayed women (female characters) negatively in their creative writings.

In Maphalla's (1991) novel *Nna ke mang*, the writer portrays a female character as a person not to be trusted, not to rely on. In Maphalla's (1982) novel, his main character is Mmatsekiso, she doesn't respect her husband, she talks as she wants to her husband, she always wins the argument. She ends up having an affair with one of her customers Nthapeleng, who is a local businessman that her husband works for. She abuses her husband emotionally. Her husband decided to disappear from the scene because he can no longer tolerate what his wife is doing and he becomes a serial killer because of anger inside him and he ends up getting a life sentence. The writer in this novel portrays the image of woman as a prostitute, a slut, a whore who just slept around with whoever she met. She portrays a woman as loose cannon. A person who doesn't say no for an answer, she is ill disciplined when it comes to falling in love. He portrays a woman as a person who doesn't respect herself, someone with a bad reputation when it comes to love affairs, who wants to fulfill her needs for sexual pleasure.

Ntsane (1987) in his Novel *Nna Sajene Kokobela*, portrays a female character who is Topisi's wife as a cruel person, who doesn't care about other living beings. In his novel we read that Topisi's wife had once beaten a young boy until he was unconscious, for merely missing her pig with a stone. She then put a live cat into the hot oven and clipped a chicken's feathers and let it go. The way the writer portrays a woman, gives us a picture that the woman is a murderous conspirator, because she planned her husband's murder. According to the writer this female character instead of protecting the child, becomes the cruel person who is capable of anything evil.

In his novel, Moephuli (1982) also portrays a female character as an opportunist who gets what she wants as soon as she gets the opportunity especially from a man. A man can be trapped in her web if he is not disciplined enough. Samina and Kgwapho met at the horse race. They combine their money each one was left with, and bet on the horses which fortunately won the race. This is where things started to happen. Moephuli portrays Samina as a prostitute, a slut, a whore who just sleeps around with whoever she meets.

The above-mentioned creative writers have portrayed the image of a female character as a dangerous person who can distract and destroy a man's life. According to them a woman is a person with psychological dislocation who can change man's behaviour, who can destabilize peace in a man's life and society in general. They have offered only stereotyped images of female characters in their writings.

When the curtain falls, the questions that the researcher should answer are as follows:

- (a) What are the main issues within feminist theory that relate to the portrayal of female characters?
- (b) How are female characters portrayed traditionally in Basotho novels?
- (c) How are young female characters portrayed in *Mme*?
- (d) How are old female characters portrayed in *Mme*?
- (c) How is the character of Mme portrayed in the novel?
- (f) How does Maake's portrayal of Mme differ from the traditional portrayal of female

characters in Basotho novels?

1.4 Aims of the study

The aim of the study is to determine how Maake's (1995) portrayal of female characters differs from the traditional portrayal of female characters in the novels of Basotho creative writers. The research aims were derived from the above problems to determine:

- (a) What the main issues are within feminist theory that relate to the portrayal of female characters.
- (b) How female characters are portrayed traditionally in Basotho novels.
- (c) How young females characters are portrayed in Maake's novel *Mme*.
- (d) How old females characters are portrayed in Maake's novel *Mme*.
- (e) How *Mme* is portrayed in Maake's novel
- (f) How Maake's portrayal of *Mme* differs from the traditional portrayal of female characters in Basotho novels.

However the aim is to address wider issues, the positive role of a woman in a society, the contribution she makes in the household. These contributions come from a wide range of women's experience and social-cultural background. There are some issues which divide and sideline a woman from taking part in society. Maake, as creative writer, shows us that women can contribute positively and change people's lives.

1.5 Methodology

This is not an empirical study, but a discourse analysis study. Library and inter-loan services will be the tools to collect data as opposed to face-to-face

interviews and questionnaires. Literary theory, Feminism theory will be applied to emphasize the argument.

In the last half of the twentieth century many postcolonial African women find themselves living out of balance. Their value, images and cultural identity have been marginalized. To establish dominion, males acted as head of the households, having authority over women and children. Within feminist theory, patriarchy is considered the structure of modern culture and political systems, which are ruled by men. Such structures are said to be detrimental to the rights of women. Alice Walker and other Womanists pointed out that black women experienced a different kind of oppression from that of white women. Black women began creating theory and developing a new movement which spoke to the combination of problems they were encountering, sexism, racism and classism.

The following message is from the Black Women's Manifesto:

The black woman is demanding a new set of female definitions and recognition of herself of a citizen, companion and confidant, not a matriarchal villain or a step stool baby-maker. Role integration advocates the complementary recognition of man and woman, not the competitive recognition of same (Walker, 1990:294).

Women are just capable like men, what men can do, women can do too. Women are no longer the objects of men, they are no longer prisoners to their homes. Their freedom belongs to them and to them only.

1.6 Literature review

Cloete, (2000) in *Psychological afflictions as expressed in Bessie Head, A Question of Power and Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions*, examines female suffering manifesting itself in nervous affliction as a result of colonial patriarchy as portrayed in these two novels. The writer argues that the theme of *A Question of Power* (1973) is the struggle of a displaced marginalized woman for what she perceives as her rights in a hostile world.

In *Nervous Conditions* (1988) the theme is similar because Dangarembga reveals how patriarchy coupled with Colonialism, caused different kinds of psychological afflictions in her female protagonist. Tembu struggles to shake off restrictions placed on her development by elements from both white and black cultures. Nyasha's revulsion at patriarchy and Colonialism manifests itself in a series of incidents totally baffling to her parents.

In Bessie Head's novel, in Elizabeth's nightmarish journey to finding herself as a Coloured from South Africa as well as an acceptance of her new country Botswana and its people, she is wrestling with her physical and spiritual environment. Kenosi and Birgitte serve as examples of women who positively influence Elizabeth's mental growth, while Camilla constantly reminds Elizabeth of whites in South Africa who tormented and dehumanized her.

This is a well-written article in which the writer's research exposes both similarities and dissimilarities in handling of the problem of female dehumanizing. In both novels, female characters attempt to function in a society that does not allow them to socialize, the result is their being punished for their disobedience.

Kenyon (cited in Walker) in *The Color Purple* (1982) and Emecheta's, *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979), argues that being a mother is the experience of most women, but in the societies in which they live in they were both embedded in the institution of motherhood but still firmly and aggressively under the control of men, and that the relative fertility of a woman is the strongest decisive factor determining her social standing and security.

They review and renew the roles of women inside and outside the family circle in order to arrive at less divisive and more creative ways of living together.

Both Walker and Emecheta show that by clubbing together, women can overcome male domination. Nnu Ego, in *The Joys of Motherhood*, is too busy obeying her husband, giving birth to children and fulfilling societal expectations to be able to have time to befriend women and share experiences and ideas with other women. As a result, she dies alone and quietly by the roadside, finally beaten by the iniquities of the life in which she finds herself. In *The Colour Purple*, Walker shows the strength of sisterhood through the relationship between Celie and Nettie, who help each other against the oppression and cruel men in their lives. They emerge triumphant at the end of the novel, again through Shug Avery who helps Celie recover her lost humanity and image, a recovery that is also boosted by the knitting session with other women.

Walker and Emecheta can be regarded as feminist writers. They can both be regarded as crusaders for the rights of women located within a stifling male patriarchal context, and they both focus on the achievement of change in terms of the woman's status within this context. Their themes are the same because

they suffer the same discrimination of their sexes from men irrespective of their different social backgrounds.

Nair (1995) is making a point that African women suffered great deal during colonialism and post-colonialism as a result of colonialism and patriarchy. Colonialism created the distortion of the spirit necessary to enslave women, leaving them without a frame of reference.

Smith (2000) maintains that black women were told to be quiet both for the sake of being lady-like and to make women less objectionable in the eyes of white people. She also points out that another reason why black women were oppressed more is because of certain stereotypes attributed to them, namely; mammy, sapphire and bulldagger.

Mwepu (2008) in *Women and their struggle for emancipation in Lopes' works* lends women a revolutionary voice with which they address and resolve their problems themselves. Mwepu maintains that through education women will liberate themselves from colonial and patriarchal oppression.

None of the above researchers wrote about my theme, therefore they paved the way for this research topic entitled "The Portrayal of female characters in Maake's novel *Mme*" to be undertaken and to change a mindset and belief that in order for a writer to be creative especially a male writer, one has to portray a woman negatively in one's writing.

1.7 Chapter division of the study

The study consists six chapters. Chapter one introduces the study and defines the concepts.

Chapter two describes in detail the research theory. It gives the general discussion. Other related concepts to the main literary theory Feminism that will be dealt with, are gender, sex, and patriarchy.

Chapter three will focus on the image of young female characters in the novel *Mme* as portrayed by the writer Maake (1995).

Chapter four focuses on the image of old female characters in the novel *Mme* as portrayed by the writer.

Chapter five focuses on the character *Mme* as portrayed by the writer.

Chapter six is the concluding chapter where the results of the literature review on feminism are analyzed. Traditional characterization of females in Basotho novels and the analysis of female characters in *Mme* are integrated in the concluding chapter.

1.8 Ethics

Ethics approval will be sought from the North-West University Ethics Committee. This is an interpretative study of texts in the public domain and no human subjects will be participating in the study. Ethics matters are therefore not complex.

1.9 Possible contribution of the study

This study will lead members of African society becoming aware of the fact that feminism does not only refer to females. There are males who are feminists. This study will contribute a great deal by exposing the challenges attached to feminism. The study will further argue that males are also feminists when they protect the rights of women.

1.10 Possible challenges of the study

The textual research with regard to the title: “The Portrayal of female characters in Maake’s novel *Mme*”, is very limited. Most Sesotho literature written by males focuses on suppressing women.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter gives a broad outline as to what the main idea of the study is; how Maake (1995) portrays women and expose the wrongs of patriarchal control under the guise of the Basotho culture. Maake (1995) recognizes that in Basotho societies there exist inequalities because males are in the domination positions.

In the following chapters the study will discuss the methodology of criticism of patriarchy and show that females are the source of life in the communities. The study will demonstrate how women create a space for themselves and other women to re-articulate their identity. The main focus of chapter two will be on recasting women subjectivity by allowing them to mention and explore the structure of oppression.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAME-WORK

2.1 Introduction

According to Jefferson & Robey (1991:204), Feminist criticism is a specific kind of political discourse, a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism, not simply a concern for gender in literature. It is both commitment and a political movement that seeks justice for women and the end of all forms of oppression. A general definition might state that it is the belief that women, purely and simply because they are women, are treated inequitably within a society which is organised to prioritise male viewpoints and concerns. Within this patriarchal paradigm women become everything men do not want to be seen to be: where men are rational, they are emotional, where men are active, they are passive, and so on . Therefore, feminist emphasis on women's experience is important as a political strategy that has given voice to women's oppression by, and resistance to, patriarchal prescriptions.

In this chapter, we aim to pay more attention to Feminists' aspects such as: A feminist approach, the patriarchal society, the image of women in males' writings and gender in literature as important aspects of the Feminist approach. Using the Feminist conception of female oppression which has its roots in patriarchy, as a point of reference, this study examines how the multiple forces of cultural institutions, abuse, violence and objectification work together to form a

formidable collective force causing pain and trauma to articulate the female experience.

2.2 A Feminist approach

It is a well-known fact based on the history of literature that often women are portrayed negatively by male writers. It is a tradition that whenever a male writer wants to put his facts on a piece of paper a woman is the major influence in his writing.

Feminist criticism is a broad field of literary criticism. There are many types of feminism such as Western feminism, African feminism, French feminism, Black feminism and Marxist feminism. Feminism started as a political movement and other writers have used it as a literary theory to address and highlight the injustices against women in literature. Feminism as literary theory helps readers and critics to ask and answer questions about literary texts. It helps scholars to come up with constructive and critical arguments concerning the scholarly views of literature as there are many conflicting approaches and arguments concerning the philosophy of feminism. Even though there are different approaches concerning feminism, their meeting point is where they define patriarchy as an unjust social system that is oppressive to women. For the purpose of this research, we intend to take feminism as our tool to analyse and discuss Maake's text *Mme*. We don't intend to rely on one philosophy of feminism such as Black feminism or Western feminism. All different types of Feminism will be intergrated into this study.

Feminism will fit in the textual dynamics of the text *Mme* itself. The study aims to show how feminism as a strategy of literary interpretation can reveal some new possibilities of reading *Mme*.

2.3 Patriarchal society

Patriarchy is the term used to describe the society in which we live today, characterized by current and historic unequal power relations between women and men whereby women are systematically disadvantaged and oppressed. This takes place across almost every sphere of life but is particularly noticeable in women's under-representation in key state institutions, in decision-making positions and in employment and industry. Male violence against women is also a key feature of patriarchy. Hooks (1989) argues that:

Feminism, as liberation struggle, must exist apart from and as a part of the larger struggle to eradicate domination in all its forms. We must understand that patriarchal domination shares an ideological foundation with racism and other forms of group oppression. And that there is no hope that it can be eradicated while these systems remain intact (Hooks, 1989:22).

Patriarchy shows that men have social power in every important structure of society and that women do not have any real access to such structures. It also refers to a social system whereby males dominate women. In Maake's book we see patriarchal domination when Thollo's uncle says:

Ke kgale ke ntse ke tjho ke re basadi ba Kgauteng ke meleko.

Bona kajeno moferefere oo o leng ho wona.

I have been saying this that the Kgauteng women are devils.

Look at the trouble that you are in today (Maake, 1995: 92).

The above extract demonstrates that males dominate because Thollo's uncle refers to women staying in Kgauteng as devils. Opposing oppression in its many forms is important and a necessary means to feminism. Diseko does not allow patriarchy to dominate, therefore she attacks it with strong words. Diseko says:

Ke re le mmamele hantle, bontate, le lona bomme, hore rona batho baKgauteng, jwalo ka ha le e bolela, ha re diphoofolo. Re batho jwalo ka lona.

I urge you fathers and mothers to listen carefully, that we people of Kgauteng we are not animals as you say. We are human beings like you (Maake, 1995:104).

Diseko is a feminist as she fights all forms of oppression of male domination. Feminists believe that people have gendered biases since others around them have set rules that others must follow. Feminists assert that although women may excel in certain areas and men in others, women are just as competent as men (Selden, 1989:135).

If in fact literature is a reflection of reality, that despite individual perceptions it mirrors social manners, then women's changing roles, be they social, political or emotional, in life and literature, must not be ignored. But if in fact society is male, then literature must also be male. Though writing about females by males may be suspect, all literature, even women's writing about women may also need to be re-read.

While male characters have been given freedom to become what they like, even if to fail if they choose, women characters have been written to play and re-play the same themes, limited as they are. Savitt (1982:134) says:

When the female character deviates from the norm, from these stringent stereotypes, more attention is then called to the purity of what the female character is supposed to be.

The narrowness, the confining nature of the women's stereotypes in literature is as nullifying as are the imagined strictures on her in real life. Men are encouraged to become men both in novels and life. Women are forced to rise above being a woman. When women strive to be more man-like, they are condemned when they take on male characteristics like aggression, ambition or bravery.

In most male's writings women are depicted as manipulative and devious. Hence the female writers always wrote with this commonality and feminine awareness in mind. Therefore, women's writing and women's experiences implied unities of culture.

Traditionally, male writer writing about women's (mother/wife) role always carries with it a host of schizoid tendencies. The pure idea of wifeliness, smacks of submission, inferiority and willingness to please a man at her own expense. If a

wife tries to liberate herself from her submissive role, she is seen as a domineering character, nasty and unkind.

2.4 The image of women in men's writings

Women exert a more powerful force on the text than any other creature. Each author, particularly a male author, wants to prove how good he is only if he can write his fiction about a female character. Man is not repressed but acknowledged, his power is not lessened by the recognition of the power of the female. These authors also put a higher significance on culture and nature than on industry and economic classes.

Even at her worst, the mother/wife is heads above the role of the old maid, for the mother/wife has achieved a modicum of respectability by being married. She is almost always physically unattractive and is seen by others as either crazy or pitiable. Savitt (1982) when defining the image of woman by male writer states:

She most often reeks of frustrated motherhood and always of frustrated sexuality. Because she did not choose her role, she is usually characterised by extreme passivity. She may manifest great religiousity or pity, but not spirituality (Savitt,1982:167).

Women are also described by male writers in terms of instability, the hysterical female. Pity is another attributes characteristic of women's stereotypes. This idea of pity can be seen over and over again in the characters women so often portray in literature. Ellmann (1982) also speaks of the spirituality of women the way women ennoble their men. This ennobling of men comes through curiously in not only a spiritual way, but also when the woman is seen as a seductress or

goddess. The two traits that by Ellmann (1982) most define the role of women in literature is *confinement* and *compliance*.

Confinement, according to Ellmann (1982), can be seen as the extreme opposite of what is strictly masculine in literature's range of character. Confinement allows women to thrive in innocence, purity and seclusion in smallness. When Ellmann (1982) emphasises that, she states:

Woman who comes to life in the kitchen is symbolic of the narrowness of women's roles (Ellmann,1982:199).

One of our traditional writer Moephuli (1982) is applying confinement in his writing as a form of writing about woman in his literature. The narrator says:

O shebeha a kgathetse mosadimoholo wa batho, empa o tla etsa jwang? Ha e se a nne a eme a lokise ho leng teng, hobane ha a sa etse jwalo ba tla robala le e batang, etswe ba ntse ba bolawa ke tlala.

An old woman looks so tired, but what can she do? If she does not stand up and prepare whatever she has, they will sleep with an empty stomach (Moephuli, 1982:2).

Compliance in women takes various forms according to Ellmann (1982). Women are compliant as submissive daughters and wives, as mothers or whores, they may all share the same sense of submission. Women are somehow excluded from the real stuff that makes heroes tick. Ellmann (1982:196) further says:

Patriarchal society views women essentially as supporting characters in the drama of life. Men change the world, and

women help them. This assumption has led to an inaccurate literary terminology and criticism.

Savitt (1982:153) makes the following remarks about the stereotype of women in literature:

The role of woman in literature may be seen as cages small and unnaturally restricting. And as birds in cages, if one flaps her wings too long and hard against the steel bars, the wings will break.

Few women characters are given the strength or courage to resist these limits. Women are kept innocent and ignorant, are protected from all that may threaten the sanctity and purity of what the world wants a woman to be. Hence Savitt (1982) says:

If a woman is not what she is supposed to be, what then must a man do to keep up with her? Since women are prevented from being heroes, it is only fitting that men will overdo their own heroic role (Savitt, 1982:150).

A woman is seen as eternally waiting to be saved, constantly dependent, a victim, usually in the name of love. Women are in war fighting for their rights. In most institutions, males are dominating women. In churches males are in leadership positions, at work, in economy, males are leading. Women are up in arms fighting the patriarchal dominance.

2.5 Gender in literature

In literature, in a novel in particular, most male creative writers have a tendency of writing negatively about women characters in their writings. The traditional portrayal of women by both men and women in literature tended to be shallow, in the sense that women were treated very stereotypically either as a passive angel or an aggressive monster. Women would be expressed as beautiful, naïve, fragile and weak figures that were thought to be below men. But unlike the ordinary stereotypical figure, one significant way women were presented was women as seductive and wicked.

From a text written by an acclaimed Ntsane (1987), when he describes the beauty of woman, he says:

Sebopehong sebopuwa sena se a rateha, se a boheha, ke kgabisa e kang ya difate, jwang le dipalesa naheng, lefatsheng. Mahlo a monna a kgahlwa ke sebopuwa sena.

In physical appearance this creature is attractive, it is attractive and lovable. Its decoration is like the wild trees in the bush, like the flowers in the veld. It catches man's eyes the way it attracts (Ntsane, 1987:13).

Ntsane again describes how weak the woman is underneath that beauty, again he makes mention that a woman is not weak but she is also powerful in a sense that where she has been, she has left only sorrow, death and bloodshed.

Ha ho thwe ke pitsa e fokolang, ha sefokole, se mpa se le matla ka ditsela tse ding mme mehlaleng ya sona batho ba wa mofela, madi a a tsholoha a etsa diphororo.

When they say a woman is a weak calabash, it does not mean that, but it means that a woman is powerful in many other ways and where she passes people die, and there is bloodshed (Ntsane, 1987:14).

Ntsane (1987) describes how the beauty of woman can seduce a man. Her beauty is like the nature in the world. A woman, because of her gender, becomes a stereotypical figure when it comes to fiction writing by male writers in particular.

Hardy, as quoted by Monique (1990), says:

Literature encourages social stereotype by providing names and labels: 'Talkative', 'old wives', 'gossip', and 'chatterboxes' are containers into which actual, talking women can be placed, whereas talkative men are only talking men, individuals and not parts of tradition and fictionalized 'truth' (Monique, 1990:16).

Maphalla (1992), in his writing, demonstrates a talkative woman who ends up overpowering her husband with the reasoning capacity she has. She becomes aggressive towards her husband. The narrator says:

Ere nna ke o bolelle lebaka le leleng feela le leholo leo ka lona kerekisang jwala. Jwala bo nkenyetsa tjhelete. Tjhelete eo ke e etsang ka jwala bona e feta eo wena o e sebetsang bosiu bohle ha o ntse o kokometse mane dirameng o lebetse mabenkele a Makgowa.

Let me tell you one good reason why I sell beer. With beer I make good money. The money I make by selling beer is much more than what you earn for working at night watching the complex (Maphalla, 1992:4).

Shakespeare seems to have been raising questions about the standard images of males and females, about what the characteristics of each gender are, about what is defined as masculine and feminine, about how each gender possesses both masculine and feminine qualities and behaviours, about nature and the power of a hegemonic patriarchy and about the roles women and men should play in acting the stories of their lives.

2.6 Conclusion

There are different kinds of feminism but they all reveal how women are ill-treated by patriarchal domination. Feminists are not those who are committed in principle to justice for women, but those who take themselves to have reasons to bring about social change on women's behalf. Feminism reveals many things in literature. It becomes a tool used to explain the characters' behaviour. The more one applies feminism to Maake's characters, the more realistic his creativity appears. The theory also makes the novel appealing for readers.

In the next chapters feminism will be a cornerstone in analysing the portrayal of Maake's characters.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PORTRAYAL OF YOUNG WOMEN

3.1 Introduction

Young women are also always and often misrepresented within the literary tradition. Feminist critics have alerted readers to the way in which women are frequently constructed as 'other' to a male norm. Instead of being perceived as identities in their own right, women characters tend to function as location for male desires, fears and anxieties about the female. Most often the representation of women in literature consists of stereotypical images of virgin and whore, wicked witch and child-like innocent, Eve and Magdalene, wife, mother and mistress.

There are many young female characters that Maake (1995) has talked about in his writing. Our focus will be only on three young female characters that is, Dikeledi, Mmatakato and Lekena. His characters are affected one way or the other by friendships, relationships and many other things in the environment they live in.

3.2 Dikeledi as a teenage girl

Great care is taken in selecting a child's name and some factors are considered before a name is given. The Book of Proverbs, 22:1, states that: 'a good name is to be chosen than the riches'. Hence in Sesotho proverbs they say 'bitsolebe ke seromo' which means 'a bad name is an evil to omen'.

The author introduces us to a middle aged woman who is relating her life as a young teenage girl to one of her friends on how she got married to the man she is living with. The author introduces us to Dikeledi. The name “Dikeledi” means ‘tears’. In most of the time Dikeledi is in the situation where she cannot escape without shedding tears. She was adopted by her aunt while she was still very young when her parents died. Her aunt is a very strict woman. Hence Maake, as quoted by Millet, has this to say about the family:

The eldest male parent is absolutely supreme in his household. His dominion extends to life and death and is unqualified over his children and their house as over his slaves (Millet,2003:4).

In some families women are stronger than their masters. It is evident in our text where we find a single woman raising a teenage girl when she adopted her after their parents passed away. The narrator says:

Dikeledi batswadi ba hae ba ile ba hlokahala a sale monyane, mme a hodiswa ke enwa rakgadiae, ya neng a sa fuwa thari ke badimo

Dikeledi’s parents died when she was still young and was raised by her aunt who never had children of her own (Maake, 1995:14).

Dikeledi, while still living with her aunt, sells some fruit at a nearby camp to mineworkers.

Jwale ha ba qeta ho kena ho tsa hae, ba se ba nka mebanki ya bona, ba e tlatsitse ditholwana , ho ya rekisa haufi le kompone.

Then they will wear their home clothes and take their baskets full of fruits and sell them next to the mine camp (Maake, 1995:12).

Dikeledi is a hard worker and a responsible young girl because she has realised that to have something of her own she better do something and not simply because her aunt wanted her to do that. She is in a relationship with a classmate just like any other girl her age. Suddenly, she receives a letter from her boyfriend Tsekiso and the message is short and to the point and it is written in English - 'The silver cup is broken'. The narrator says that:

Keledi tsa theoha jwalo ka diphororo marameng a hae. A ipata sefahleho a lla ha bohloko.

Tears streamed down her cheeks. She hid her face and cried hysterically (Maake, 1995: 26).

Dikeledi was disappointed particularly by her boyfriend who just left her for no apparent reason. She used to love that boy and had high hopes with him regarding the future. But despite the frustration and sadness she has support from her lady teacher Lekena, on her side, to console her. She tries her level best to make Dikeledi understand that this is not the end of her life.

After receiving bad news, Dikeledi's aunt received a letter that a certain family member will come to marry Dikeledi. She thought that the letter is from the boyfriend whom she knew as her lover, that is Tsekiso. She became excited that she would be getting married to the man of her dream.

On realising that the person who intends to marry her is not Tsekiso but Thollo, who had never proposed to her, she decides to tell her friend Mpuse the sad news. The narrator says:

Jwale ho ne se ka moo Dikeledi a ka hlolang a pata taba ya hae. Le yena o ne a se a ultwa hore e a mo tjhesa, e batla ho tswa. A qalella ho phetlela motswalle wa hae fuba sa hae.

There was no other way for Dikeledi to just keep the secret about such good news. She, herself felt that she needed to share such news with someone. She then starts to share it with her friend (Maake, 1995:46).

Coates, as quoted by Kwatsha (1996:16) mentions that women's friendships and relationship are in the nature of emotional healing among women. Women turn to each other when they have women's problems in their lives. By sharing their experience they show sisterhood and trust in each other.

Women friends have gone through a similar experience, have grown as people as a result of these experiences and shared development is absent from even the most intimate relationship with men.

She is disappointed as she realised that she will be married to Thollo and not to the person she loves. The narrator says:

Ho tloha qalong taba ya bona ha e a ka ya tloha e bile jwalo ka taba ya batjha ba bangata, ke hore ba buisane, ba ratane, mme ba nyalane.

From the beginning their issue was never like many other youth of today, meaning like a proposal of love, falling in love and getting married (Maake, 1995:11).

Auston, as quoted by Walder (1995) about the prime theme of marriage, is far from trivial. She argues that:

Marriage is a complex, delicate process of investigation and manoeuvring by women in order that they may achieve a good settlement for life without sacrifice of dignity or self –respect (Walder,1995:52).

Derrida, as quoted by Margo *et al.* (1994) argued regarding marriage that:

As for marriage for one thing it is a bargain to which only entrance is free, its continuance being constrained and forced, depending otherwise than on our will (Margo,1994:80).

As Dikeledi is not happy to Thollo's wife, she seeks and advice from her friend Mpuse. Her friend Mpuse advises her to enter into matrimony with Thollo. Mpuse says to Dikeledi: *Ha ba bangata batho ba fumanang lenyalo...* - There are not many people who get married...(Maake,1995:47).

The name Mpuse is derived from the verb stem *busa* meaning to 'return to or for'. *Busa pelo* – take the right decision. Mpuse is also a short form for Puseletso. Mpuse's advice, allows Dikeledi to make a right decision to marry Thollo. The narrator says the following about Dikeledi's response to Mpuse's advice:

Leha a sa ka a bolella Mpuse...pelo ya kgolwa ...hore enwa motho o bona dintho ka ihlo le tjhatsi.

Even though she did not tell Mpuse...the heart believed that this person sees things with a clear eye (Maake, 1995:48).

There is a strong friendly relationship between Mpuse and Dikeledi. Dikeledi accepts the advice from her friend Mpuse. There is a strong link between the name and its identity. Mpuse is a firm friend of Dikeledi. She guides Dikeledi in taking a good decision.

Margo (1994) says the following about friendship:

Friendship feeds on communication. Friendship, on the contrary is enjoyed according as it desired, it is bred, nourished and increased only in enjoyment, since it is spiritual (Margo,1994:79).

Even though Dikeledi took her friend's advice, it become a problem to Dikeledi to get married to a man who had never proposed to her. That is why a day before her wedding, unnoticed ran away, because of the tension that exists between the imaginary and symbolic. Long before the wedding the narrator gives us a glimpse into Dikeledi's ambition of becoming a dentist:

Dikeledi a tswa ka tlung ho le ngwese, a leba hekeng, a kena tseleng, a sa tsebe moo a yang. A ipona a se a matha a sa tsebe hore o balehelang.

Dikeledi got out of the house in the quiet of darkness. She then went where she does not know. She finds herself running for no reason (Maake, 1995:61).

The narrator chooses the cemetery as a place that shapes Dikeledi into womanhood. This was the first step for Dikeledi on the road to her marriage. On her way to nowhere she meets a woman with a cold shaky voice. We hear a woman with a shaky voice asking Dikeledi:

O hlahlathela hara masiu tjena o ya kae mosadi? ho botsa mosadi enwa, a mo tadimile ka mahlong.

Why are you wandering so aimlessly in the middle of the night, where are you going young woman? asked an old woman stirring at her (Maake, 1995:62).

Dikeledi becomes a victim in a sense that she is getting married to the man to whom she never agreed to his proposal and never fell in love with him, like any other girl of her age. Hence she decided to run away from this marriage.

3.2.3 Dikeledi as daughter-in-law

Today Dikeledi is Mmateboho. The prefix- “Mma”- refers to the mother of someone. The name Teboho is derived from ‘ho leboha’ which means gratitude or thankfulness. The name Mmateboho (mother of thankfulness) refers to her nature. She bore a son and he is named Teboho. The name Teboho becomes an extension of the thankfulness the people receive from her. Mmateboho prepared food for Mme, she could not let Mme go without getting something to eat. The narrator says:

Yaba jwale Mmateboho o hlophisa dijana tsa ho ngwathela. Ba qalella ho ja. Moeti wa rona le yena a hla a ja sa mpanaphatloha, a sa bue le ho bua.

She then started to prepare dishes to serve. They started to eat. Our stranger eats all the food in silence (Maake, 1995:4).

Another sign that shows that the daughter-in-law is a warm-hearted person is that she serves food even to strangers. Before Mme’s arrival, Mmateboho and Diseko were not on good terms. As her name suggests, Mmateboho put her pride aside and knocks at Diseko’s door because she wants Mme to be

accommodated. She could not leave Mme to go to nowhere as she once did.

The narrator says:

*Ha ho re etloetlo! a hopola kgaitse dia, e dulang hona mona
motseng ona, hore mohlomong a ka thusa.*

Suddenly she remembers that her brother who is staying in the community might help an old woman (Maake, 1995:4).

She even accompanies Mme to Diseko's place. Mmateboho is the incarnation of thankfulness and love. She sacrifices money and love to bury Mme. The love between her and Mme is kindled by her mercy. The development of a character is reflected in Dikeledi's name change when her cultural transformation takes place. This idea is supported by Deluzain (1996:1) when saying that the name given at birth is only the first of several names a person will bear throughout life. The name Mmateboho reflects a new stage in her life because she is now a daughter-in-law. Mmateboho has an identity of her own but her nature and behaviour serve as a commentary upon Mme's nature and behaviour.

Field (1997) makes the following statement about mothers:

Women are born to be mothers. Motherhood is natural and easy. Motherhood is bliss. Motherhood is instinctive. Mothers know best (Field, 1997:125).

Mmateboho as young as she is in her marriage, she dominates the family unit through the fulfilment of her maternal role. She constantly attends to the needs of others, helps them when they feel incapable and comforts them in their sorrow. Mmateboho, as a mother and a committed wife look after a stranger who is looking for a place to stay.

Kemp has this to say: “The father is not always the portraitist of the family, often is the mother” (Kemp,1993:174).

Mill, as quoted by Millet (2000) when defining a domestic sphere of wife she says:

Wherever a true wife comes, this house is always around her.
Home is where she is, and it stretches far around her for those
who else were homeless (Millet, 2000:99).

Wilson, as quoted by Shiach (2000) argues that a home is a place of a suburban housewife, a place which is too limiting, a trap they have to escape. This home is a place in which they have identified solely as wives and mothers rather than fully developed individuals. A life of domesticity is not enough if a woman has to be an individual, free to develop her own potential (Shiach, 2000:477).

Mmateboho is a young dedicated and committed wife to her family. The narrator describes her ability as a committed wife in the following way:

*Ho ne ho futhumetse ka tlung, dipitsa di se di fahilwe, dijo tsa
motsheare di nkgahle ha monate, di se di emetse ho tsholwa.
Monko wa tsona e le o monate.*

The house was warm inside, pots set aside, food ready to be
served for lunch, with a delicious smell (Maake, 1995:3).

The above phrase shows that there no place like home especially if a woman is a dedicated wife who performs her duties and care for others while her husband is not around. For Wilson as quoted by Shiach (2000) says that:

Suburban domesticity, the world of private, ordinary home, needs to be left behind by woman in the pursuit of their full development person (Shiach, 2000:477).

Maake (1995) also, in his writing, wants to end this traditional writing that many creative writers do, of trapping women in their private domain which is a home, hence De Lauretis as quoted by Shiach (2000) utters these words:

The force that shapes women's domestic lives is that women should feature as central participants rather than as convenient figures to represent some notion of modernity's other, embodiment, dependence (Shiach,2000:148).

Mmateboho and her neighbor Mmatakatso earn their living by selling small items at the race course. It is how they make ends meet while their husbands are misusing their money through gambling. The narrator says:

Mmateboho le moahisane ba roka mese ya bomme le bana mme e re mohla mojaho wa dipere o leng Lekwa, ba ye teng ho ya rekisa.

Mmateboho and her neighbour will design some women's dresses and for the kids so that when the race is taking place at Lekwa they will go and sell them (Maake,1995:7-8).

Mmateboho's business is her skill because she started selling fruits while she was still a school girl after school for mineworkers at the camp. Mandel (1995) uses these words when trying to encourage women to do things for themselves and not to depend on their husbands, and that is what Mmateboho and other young women are doing.

"Every woman has to continue to find ways of surviving, she must be cognizant that no man would rescue her except herself" (Mandell,1995:43).

Because these women are struggling to create an everyday life for themselves and their families with or without men, De Lauretis as quoted by Shiach says that the modern life will make women healthy, happier and fulfilling:

We women have been worms for too long. All those pretty phrase about the hand that carries the string-bag being the hand that rules the world or something are as empty as a butcher's shop (Shiach,2000:482).

Lastly Mmateboho sacrifices her money, her home and love to bury Mme as she could not leave her to go to nowhere, as she once did, although her husband never knew Mme before.

3.3 Mmatakatso as a traditional woman

The name Mmatakatso is from 'ho lakatsa', meaning appetite, desire, or lust. This is reflected for instance in the fact that she has an appetite for Mmateboho's food. She wishes to know how Mmateboho met Thollo. She has also the desire to know whether Thollo allowed Mmateboho to further her studies or not. She wishes she were Mmateboho because she would have taken the purse felt from Thollo. In other words, she lusts after Thollo's money. She is very eager to possess or gain Thollo's money. Immediately after Mme's death, she heard Mmateboho lamenting. She quickly runs to Mmateboho's place because she wished to know why Mmateboho is lamenting. The narrator says: ...*Mmatakatso a phutha Mme matsoho* - ...Mmatakatso folded Mme's hands (Maake, 1995:97).

She had the desire to fold Mme's hands. She even went out to let other women know that Mme had passed away. The author gives us another aspect of the

personality of Mmatakatso. She is invited to be part of the family as Thollo's relatives from Matatiele accuse Mmateboho about Mme. She turns that invitation down because she is not concerned with the neighbour's affairs. She is not interested in the affairs of Mmateboho's and Thollo's relatives. It is surprising to see Mmatakatso sitting unconcerned with the painful drama going on around her friend and neighbour Mmateboho. Mmatakatso's cultural identity is clear in the sense that although she is so interested in some things, she is not interested in the Mmateboho's family affairs.

3.4. Mmisi Lekena as a mediator

A middle aged female teacher is also one of our characters. The name Lekena is derived from the verb stem 'kena' which means to enter. She goes in between Dikeledi and her sorrow of being rejected by her boyfriend. She is a dedicated disciplinarian. She intervenes when other girls who lack morals are making a fool out of the Dikeledi and mock her after being rejected by her boyfriend Tsekiso. She reprimands them with these words:

*Ha nka ba ka le bona, kapa ka utlwa ka menyenyetsi hore le
kile la buisa Dikeledi hampe, le tla ntseba.*

If I can find out or hear by rumours that you were tongue-lashing Dikeledi you will regret it (Maake, 1995:29).

Mmisi Lekena sees it as her duty to teach learners in the fullest sense, including their behaviour. She does that irrespective of whatever these girls will say. Her duty as an educator is also to motivate the learners regarding their future, that is why she is not happy when she finds out that Dikeledi is getting married before she has completed her studies.

Ke ne ke ikonka ka wena hohle moo ke neng ke tsamaya teng, o ne o le mohlala o motle wa ngwana ya ikemeseditseng ho ya hole ka thuto tsa hae.

I was proud of you wherever I went. You were a good example, a child who was dedicated in her studies (Maake, 1995:53).

She is also sympathetic to Dikeledi, and she is also empathetic in a sense that because she is able to put herself in Dikeledi's position and try to feel what she is been through, she then consoled Dikeledi by saying:

Ho lahlwa ke mohlankana ha se ntho e qalang ka wena", ke Mmisi Lekena eo. Sesotho se re se nkganang se nthola morwalo.

It is normal to be rejected by a boyfriend" said Mmisi Lekena. Sesotho says he who denies me, unloads my burden (Maake, 1995:53).

Mmisi Lekena made this problem her obligation, to help Dikeledi since she has realised that most of her friends are turning against her. It is her duty to see to it that Dikeledi gets counselling regarding her problem of being rejected by her loved one.

According to Watson (1995) education should not be limited to men only. She believes that more knowledge will make women better mothers and more efficient housewives. Watson (1995) says:

To educate women is to disprove the promise of sex inferiority on which slavery was found and also to arm them for the fight for freedom (Watson,1995:211).

She also tries her level best to convince Dikeledi not to take such a great step of getting married before she completes her studies. She pleaded with Dikeledi and

tried to make her see things differently. In her mind she thought that Dikeledi is trying to please her man and proving herself to her former boyfriend, that she is a marrying type of a girl, meaning that, she puts a man's happiness before her own. She then said to Dikeledi:

*Empa ha o ikgethetse tsela eo, mme o na le bonnete ba hore
ho nyalwa ke seo o se batlang hona jwale, ho lokile, ha ho
kamoo nka etsang hore o fetole maikutlo a hao ka teng.*

If you have already decided and absolutely sure that this is what you want, it is fine, there is no way I can change your mind (Maake, 1995:53).

According to Mmisi Lekena, Dikeledi wants to please her man and forget about her happiness and future, meaning that, she puts somebody else's happiness first, whereas Mmisi Lekena believes that woman's future is in her hands. Gone are the days that a woman has to be recognised, respected and be valuable when she is married. Mmisi Lekena is trying to be a friend to Dikeledi and try to show her that life is not about getting married. Hence Johnson, as quoted by Jaggar (1994) confirms that when she talks about intimacy and support among women friends:

The emotional and psychological support women provide for each other . A close friend makes you feel like a worthwhile human being,that you are capable of loving and sharing (Jaggar (1994:89).

But since Mmisi Lekena is not married, Dikeledi does not take her advice. Dikeledi thinks that Mmisi Lekena is jealous because she is not married, hence she said these words in her heart:

Ke a kgolwa o batla ke be lefetwa jwaloka wena. Nna ha se nna ya itseng o se nyalwe, o be o be mo kana.

I did not say you must not get married up until at this age. You want me to be just like you (Maake, 1995:53).

Dikeledi, as young girl, has a misconception that Mmisi Lekena is a single woman because she cannot find a man or because she is not attractive to men. In other words, Mmisi Lekena is trying to show that responsibility, she just wanted to show Dikeledi that marriage is just a way of giving up whatever dream you had, a kind of sacrifice and regret at the end, especially if her dreams are shattered. Heilbrun (1989) say that for a young girl the female destiny of flirtation, wedding, and motherhood is insufficient or even unattractive:

Youth is still a time of hope than a time of uncertainty and most of all a time of depression where one could distract one's attention from the blunted female destiny (Heilbrun,1989:51).

Mmisi Lekena is an independent and successful woman. She shows that women are tough and they can survive without men in their lives Through her name (Lekena), the author has shown us two different identities of this character. In the first instance she acts as a mediator (monamodi) and in the second is a meddler. Both identities are reflected in her name.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter depicts young women as powerful human beings who can make their own decisions, especially if the situations allow them to take some initiatives.

Women such as Mmateboho and Mmatakatso, are strong women who take initiatives to go and buy clothes that they sell at the race course. This means that, these women contribute to the economy. They are financially independent and they are not house-wives waiting to receive money from their husbands. Lekena is also a young woman who is independent. She is educated and leads the life that she likes. At her age she is not married because she chose it that way. She is a symbol of women's emancipation. For women to be free, they should be educated. Women no longer need to be silenced and oppressed because of their gender. It also shows that women are no longer vulnerable when it comes to decision making in their own homes and education is the weapon they can use to fight patriarchal domination.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PORTRAYAL OF OLD FEMALE CHARACTERS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on how the creative writer Maake (1995) portrays old women in his writing. There are many old female characters in his novel, however our focus will be on Rakgadi, mme Mahloko and mme Thaise.

Maake (1995) portrays his characters as feminists. Most creative writers show the oppression and the cruelty of men on their women, and exposed such practice as evil. However Maake (1995) undergoes a great change, for the better, especially when portraying the female characters in his writing.

4.2. Rakgadi as a single parent

Millet (1999:34) argues that:

The father is the head of the family. Female heads of household tend to be regarded as undesirable, the phenomenon is a trait of poverty or misfortune.

In some families women are stronger than their masters. This is evident in our text where Dikeledi is raised by a single parent who is also a widow, her aunt, after Dikeledi's parents passed away. The narrator says:

Rakgadi o ne a itulela a le mong. Ka mora hoba batswadi ba Dikeledi ba hlokahale, a inkela yena ho ya dula le yena mona Evaton.

Rakgadi was living alone. And after Dikeledi's parents passed away she then took her to stay with her at Evaton (Maake, 1995:14).

The above phrase shows that women are also capable of being the head of the family regardless of the situation. Dikeledi's aunt is a widow but in addition also takes care of an orphan.

Child care is, according to the feminists, an activity which is seen as the main way of liberating women from their oppressive situation within the family and enabling them to weigh themselves equally with men in the society.

Moss (1991:131), as quoted by Charles (1991: 192) argued that the feminists would like to end the misconception that it is women with partners who can become mothers in their families. Women alone can also be decision makers to their children.

Goodman (1996:70) says the following about women:

Women are also strong, capable and remarkable. Women in nature were never assumed to be weak, in fact they are often physically, emotionally and morally strong, they are the pillars in their families.

Dikeledi intended getting married but Rakgadi expresses her feelings regarding the issue of her getting married before completing her studies. Kaplan (1992) says the following words about the importance of education:

The object of education is to prepare the child for its heavenly home, a task in which a mother is ultimately seen as central (Kaplan,1992:83).

Kaplan (1992) further says:

God has given a mother all the power that she may govern and guide the children as she pleases. He has placed in your hands a helpless babe, entirely dependent upon you (Kaplan,1992:84).

From the above extract, one concludes that mothers have a powerful influence over the welfare of future generations. Children are entirely in their mother's hands. All the enjoyment is at her disposal. Rakgadi says the following to Dikeledi:

Ke batla hore o inahane ka taba ena hantle, Nkele, hosane o se tsohe o re Rakgadi o o nyadisitse ka kgang, a habetse tjhelete.

I want you to think carefully about this matter, Nkele, don't say that Rakgadi has forced you into this marriage because she was after money (Maake, 1995:48).

Rakgadi never misses a chance to guide Dikeledi especially in making positive decision. We also read about how Rakgadi got worried when she found out that Dikeledi has found the wallet with the money where she used to sell fruits at the camp. She becomes harsh on Dikeledi when trying to get the truth regarding the wallet. Her loud dominating voice with its sharp tone confirms the image of a mother figure to Dikeledi. Rakgadi says to Dikeledi:

O sa tla be o mpoelle nnete kajeno lena. O ka beha tjhelete ka tlung o sa tsebe monga yona.

Today you are going to tell me the truth. How can you keep the money at home whereas you do not know who the owner is (Maake,1995:15).

Rakgadi wants only the best for Dikeledi. She tries her level best to be a disciplinarian and is too protective of Dikeledi which is why she interrogates her about the issue of the money, demanding only the truth.

When Rakgadi finds Dikeledi with a stranger at her house, she becomes angry. The stranger is the owner of the lost and found wallet, Thollo Mofokeng. Rakgadi is very angry at finding that a man with Dikeledi, which is why she does not even have an interest in finding out who that man is.

...Ka pelong a re, 'Ke ne ke tjho ka re ngwana enwa ke moleko. Kajeno ke mo fumane.

...In her heart she says, I was suspecting that this girl is naughty. Today I have found her out (Maake,1995:17).

When the stranger greets Rakgadi, she responds in a negative way and just goes straight to her bedroom. She is full of anger.

Smith, as quoted by Davies (1994) says:

When a woman gets the blues, she goes to her bedroom and hides. When a man gets the blues, he catches a freight train and rides (Davies,1994:1329).

The narrator says:

Rakgadi a dumella tlase, dinko tsena a di famotse ka kgang, a fetela ka phaposing ya hae a sa beha le mokotla wa hae ka kitjhining jwalo ka mehleng.

Rakgadi responded in a low voice, with her nose wide open and she then went straight to her bedroom with her bag not leaving it in the kitchen as she used to (Maake,1995:17).

This stranger realises that Rakgadi is a woman who is trustworthy. He views both Rakgadi and Dikeledi as people whom one can trust. The stranger becomes interested in Dikeledi and without proposing love, he sends his relatives to Rakgadi to ask for her hand in marriage. Dikeledi thought that these people are the relatives of her boy friend Tsekiso. On realising that the person intending to marry her is an old man Thollo Mofokeng, she becomes confused.

Rakgadi wants Dikeledi to think very carefully about her marriage with the old man Thollo. She tells Dikeledi that if she intends to change her mind, she can do so because no one will force her to enter into marriage if she is not willing. Rakgadi supports her on this journey of her life. At the same time she is worried that Dikeledi must complete her studies before she gets married. Rakgadi says to Dikeledi:

Ha jwale o eme kae? Ke batla ho tseba, hoba ha o batla ho kweneha ke tla ema le wena. Ba ka nna ba bitswa ra tlo bua le bona hape,...

Where do you stand? I want to know. If you want to change your mind, I will support you all the way, they can be called and we can discuss the issue again,... (Maake, 1995:37).

Cott (1987) made the statement below to underline the commitment of woman's presence in the home and to indicate the inequalities of the sexes when making

woman inextricably dependent on men. And that is what Rakgadi is exactly doing to Dikeledi. She devotes her time and energy to her only daughter and finds peace in her relationship with her daughter.

If women are considered dependent on others (men) for their protection and support, self-preservation itself demanded skill in personal relationships (Cott,1987:167).

Irigaray (1985) has this to say about why mothers engage in 'fusional' relating:

Our abundance is inexhaustible: it knows neither want nor plenty. Since we give each other (our) all, with nothing held back, nothing hoarded, our exchanges are without terms, without end (Irigaray,1985: 213).

The above phrase demonstrates that there is a bond between Dikeledi and Rakgadi and as they are both women they do not need a strategy from a man, since they are able to be directly close, not needing to go via men as their assistants. Their bond is mutually based on mutual love, respect and understanding.

At last Dikeledi agrees to enter into marriage with Thollo. Rakgadi supports her daughter's decision and does everything to give Dikeledi a good wedding. Rakgadi manages to run Dikeledi's wedding through the help of her neighbours mma Mahloko and mma Thaise.

4.3. Mma Mahloko as a negotiator

Mme Mahloko is also one of the helpers during the negotiations in Dikeledi's customary marriage. Mme Mahloko is Rakgadi's neighbour since Rakgadi had

no family around, she then asked Mme Mahloko and her husband to help her regarding the issue of Dikeledi's negotiations marriage. And they agree as they regard Dikeledi as their own daughter.

Kaplan (1992) says the following about the devoted mother:

The indulgent mother takes something for herself by satisfying needs for love, nurturance and merging through the child (Kaplan,1992:47).

Mma Mahloko wants to see Dikeledi and Rakgadi happy and that is the reason that she goes all out to help with all the arrangements. During the negotiations process Mma Mahloko is one of the delegates to help Rakgadi. Ntate Mahloko asks her wife mma Mahloko to go and call Dikeledi to come in:

Na o ka ya bitsa moradi, ra tla ra utlwa taba tsa hae? Ho lokile, ntate, ke tla mo lata, a araba a se a bile a ema, a tswa ho ya lata Dikeledi.

Can you please call our daughter so that we can hear her story? I will call her, responding same time and going out to call Dikeledi (Maake, 1995:33).

Mme Mahloko shows how to be a support to Dikeledi by being on her side. Mme Mahloko offers the kind of support one could think of as maternal, coming, that is from someone older and wiser than a peer.

During the matrimonial negotiations, mma Mahloko had a chance to talk to Dikeledi. She encourages her to say what is important for her. She emphasises the fact that, if Dikeledi is no longer interested in marriage, she must say so and she will support her on that. Mma Mahloko says the following to Dikeledi:

Ha a fihla ho yena, a ka a buisana le yena hanyenyane, a mmolella hore ha a sa rate taba ena eo ba tlileng ka yona, a se tshabe, a hle a latole.

When she was with her she then talked to her a little bit, and told her that if she is not ready she can still withdraw (Maake, 1995:33).

Mma Mahloko is aware of the difficulties in marriage, that is the reason she tells Dikeledi that if she is not interested in entering into the marriage, she must say so. Mma Mahloko respects the rights of children and she wants Dikeledi to take a right decision.

Greene *et al* (1993) say these words in terms of women giving support to each other especially through difficult situations: "When one of us is down, at least one other will be in a better frame of mind and be able to help" (Greene *et al*, 1993: 204).

Some of the Basotho traditional writers often associate a mother with death and destruction, not only of herself but also of her child. A woman is often shown as delicate, sensitive, prone to jealousy, easily intimidated, insecure, whereas a man is shown as uncomplicated, sensible, rational, cautious, a moderate and good citizen, kindly involved in good work. Maake (1995) is shining a new light on most of the male writers about the image of women. He portrays women as the source of life, not as people destroying life.

Mme Mahloko is trying to show the love she has for Dikeledi irrespective of the fact that she is not her biological daughter, by still standing by her side. Dikeledi's needs comes first to Mme Mahloko

Culler (1983: 56) says the following about feminists:

What feminists ignore or deny at their peril is that women share men's anti-female feelings usually in a mitigated form, but deeply nevertheless.

According to Culler (1983), this stems partly from the fact that women have been steeped in self-derogatory societal stereotypes, while constantly pitted against each other for the favours of the reigning sex.

Mma Mahloko is there to help Rakgadi with the wedding preparations. She never takes into consideration that Dikeledi is not her biological child but she tries to give Dikeledi and Rakgadi the support they need.

4.4 Mma Thaise as a good neighbour

Mma Thaise also helps with the arrangements as Rakgadi is expecting visitors from Thollo's family. As is the custom, visitors are welcomed with food. Mma Thaise cooks for the visitors. The narrator says:

Mme mma Mahloko le mme Thaisi ba ne ba le teng le bona ho tla thusa ka ho pheha. Mme mma Mahloko o ne a ritetse ba Sesotho.

Mme Mahloko and Mme Thaisi were there to help with preparations like cooking. Mme Mahloko had brewed traditional beer (Maake, 1995:31).

Mma Thaise stands as a mother to Dikeledi. She is brought to see Dikeledi entering into marriage and parents negotiating that marriage and wedding.

According to the Basotho culture, women are not allowed to be present during the matrimonial negotiations. But mma Thaise is also there, and this

demonstrates that as Maake (1995) gives women a platform because they are also members of the community. The narrator says:

...taba ena e ne e sa tshwarwa ka mokgwa wa Sesotho
...hoba bomme ba ne ba sa tshwanela ho ba teng...ha ho
lebote, hoba meetlo ha e a ema, e fetofetoha le dinako.
...this issue was not handled according to Sesotho practice...
because women were not allowed to be present...it is not an
issue because cultures are not static, they change with times
(Maake, 1995:33).

With mma Thaise as part of the negotiating team, she tries to break the silence, she prefers to talk rather than just keeping quiet. She wants to end this perspective that the silence of woman is a ritual of truth and culture. Laurence (1991) has to say these words regarding the silence of women:

These resistant silences are sometimes passive experiments.
To absent yourself-that is easier than to speak aloud.....It is
worth watching carefully to see what effect the experiment of
absenting oneself has had-if any (Laurence, 1991:157).

The reality that women are not seen as credible speakers or have no authority to speak their experience is an issue which the feminists are taking care of. Maake (1995) demonstrates that a male person can also be a feminist. A feminist is not only a female person. A feminist can be a male or female person whose writing is fighting for the rights of oppressed women.

4.5 Conclusion

Rakgadi is from Bohlokong and as the name suggests, she has been through pains and sadness. Her brother passed away and also her brother's wife. Here we are referring to Dikeledi's parents. Dikeledi and her cultural identity correspond with the meaning and identity of the place where she is from.

The Sebokeng community is a process in which people regard each other in a certain way, that is, love, care or concern for the other and in which they relate to each other and act together in mutuality as persons. As the name suggests, characters from this place are characterized by the occasions that bind them together. There are church members such as Fatima, Mpolokeng, and Rakgadi. Rakgadi, mma Mahloko and mma Thaise are together because they are neighbours. They are strong women because they stand together for Dikeledi's future.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PORTRAYAL OF MME

5.1 Introduction

Out of all the species that God has created on earth, a woman is the most interesting and dynamic. There is a saying: “if you want something to be said, tell a man, if you want something done tell a woman. The word ‘Mme’ in its general meaning, denotes the female parent to her children. But as it is used in connection with our mothers, it carries many associations: warmth, love, comfort, security, protection, life coach, and many others. People hold strong feelings about their mothers because the mother is very important in one’s life.

Maake (1995) has the skill of presenting social issues in a vivid way. One of the social issues addressed in the novel is motherhood. The heroine Mme is portrayed as a devout woman who has a desire to give love to people and children in particular.

This chapter focuses on how Maake (1995) portrays Mme. Feminism will not be left out in order to unpack some of the facts about Mme in particular.

5.2. Mme as a story teller and a teacher

Mme as a parent lives by the virtue she believes in. Her virtue entails mothering and mentoring. She does a primary parenting work that is a nursery. She is a good story -teller when it comes to teaching young children. Storytelling women are regarded as assets in the community. The world’s earliest archives or libraries were the memories of women, patiently transmitted from mouth to ears. She makes it her obligation to impart that knowledge and teach young children

the culture of storytelling. These were children who knew nothing about that culture, more especially the township children. The narrator informs us as follows about her:

Mme jwalo ka ka motho ya phetseng mahaeng bophelo ba hae bohle. O ne a tseba ntho tse ngata tseo batho ba ditoropong ba sa di tsebeng.

Mme as a person who spent most of her life in rural areas, knew many things which the township people did not know (Maake, 1995:74).

Mme would gather young children and relate ancient stories which they did not know. The narrator says the following about her:

Ene e le motho ya yeng a rate ho qoqela batho ntho tse ngata mme le bana o ne a ba qoqela ditshomo tseo matsatsing ana di seng di sa qoqwe hoba batho ba se ba shebella dithelevishini.

She was someone who used to tell stories to the children which are no longer told because people are now used to watching television (Maake, 1995:74).

Mme as a mother believes in inculcating the culture of storytelling in the young ones, so that they could get something out of it, such as advice, enjoyment, respect, values and morals.

Minha-ha (1989) has this to say about storytelling:

Mind breathes mind, power feels power, and absorbs it, as it were. The telling of stories refreshes the body, it gives exercise to the intellect and its power. It tests the judgement and the feelings (Minha-ha, 1989:126).

Mme is a traditional woman who is trying her level best to promote the culture of storytelling to the young ones. She is trying to teach the young ones to use their mind and think positively and creatively when making decisions. The storyteller is regarded as a personage of power. Her power does more than illuminate or refresh the mind.

Traditionally, grandmothers, according to Mphahlele, as quoted by Davies (1994 :258) function in three major activities: one as preserver of extended family history, secondly as a repository and distributor of family history, wisdom and Black folklore and thirdly as the retainer and communicator of values and ideals which support and enhance their personhood, their family and their community.

Mme, as a story-teller, fits into the third activity, where she is the communicator of values and respect which support and instil good personhood in the children and which will shape them into a dignified, respected adulthood.

Mme is loved by children, including Masesi, the young daughter of Mmateboho. Masesi prefers to be with Mme always so that she can learn a lot from her. She would question Mme about this and that. The narrator says the following about the relationship between the two:

Hobane o ne a mo rata haholo, a rata ho dula le yena a mmotse ntho tse ngata, a bile a rata le ditshomo tsa Mme. E ne e re ha a tshwanetse ho ya hae, mantsiboya, e be bothata, motho a lle a re yena o batla ho dula le Mme

Because she used to love her so much, she spent most of her time with Mme, she would ask her so many things, she even liked to listen to her stories. When she had to go home, she would cry hysterically for Mme (Maake, 1995:78).

The above extract shows how Mme is loved and good at taking care of children. To show that Mme enjoys what she is doing for the kids around Sebokeng, children find it exciting to listen to her stories. Mme is a traditional woman who is trying to promote culture in the youth, meaning she tries to show them and teach them Sesotho cultures and customs. The stories that she narrates to the kids are those of the olden days which even their parents did not know.

She is not only good in story-telling, but also in handiwork, especially in traditional objects. She volunteers to teach the primary school kids. The schools around the area, especially the primaries also benefit from the knowledge that Mme possesses. The narrator says the following:

O ne a ruta kapa a ye dikolong a ilo thusa bana, ke hore dikolo tsa mathomo. Ka baka la tsebo ya hae a hla a ratwa ke batho haholo.

She used to go to primary schools and teach the learners. Because of the knowledge she had, she was loved by people (Maahe, 1995:74).

She did not help the parents only, but also teachers in some of the primary schools, in teaching cultures, which some of the teachers didn't know about. Mme is a blessing in that community because of her brain, her attitude and her aptitude.

Mme is passionate about teaching children and making traditional objects, especially handicrafts such as weaving, clay making and other traditional art from Sesotho culture. She is patient with children and she always talks in a soft voice so that they understand what she is telling and teaching them.

A bontsha bana ho etsa meseme e alwang fatshe ya Sesotho, e neng e etswa ka jwang ba motolo, o ne o tla utlwa a bua le bana ka mokgwa o bonolo.

She showed the children how to make Sesotho floor mats, which were made with the grass, called 'motolo' and you would hear her speaking to them in a soft voice (Maake, 1995:74).

The above quotation is about Mme's teachings. Mme is a good teacher especially on teaching and handling the children. She is capable of taking care of the children with her kind and humble manner. Hence we hear that from our narrator when he says the following:

O ne o tla utlwa a bua le bana ka mokgwa o bonolo, mme ha ba etsa phoso a sa ba kgalemele ka hamper jwaloka ka ha bommisi ba bang ba ne ba etsa.

You would find her talking to children in a soft spoken manner whenever they made some mistakes. She would not shout at them like other teachers do (Maake, 1995:74).

That alone shows her mothering skill to every child she interacts with in her presence. Mme is also good in cooking traditional Basotho food. She is also helping and teaching young mother how to cook the Basotho traditional food. The narrator says the following about Mme's dedication to teaching cooking skills to people around the community:

Bommenyana ba batjha... ba neng ba rata ho tseba ho pheha dijo tsa Sesotho, le ho etsa nthonyana tse itseng tsa matsoho, tseo Basotho ba neng ba iketsetsa tsona, ba ne ba atisa ho tla ho yena.

Young women who were interested in knowing how to cook Sesotho food or how to do small handiwork used to come to her to learn (Maake, 1995:74).

Her courage, energy, generosity, responsibility and good humour makes her a special woman in the community of Sebokeng. She makes everyone welcome whenever people were around her. Minha-ha emphasised that conception in the following words:

The heart of the joint family, the needle sews its different members together, she is a woman in relation not only to her husband, but also to all people. She is equally mother of her children and mother of all the children (Minha-ha (1989:107).

Mme is the pillar of strength and support in the community. She shows her mothering skills, and to show that she lives by her values she believes in, she also develops other young women. She mentors other women to be good mothers who know how to cook traditional food.

5.3. Mme as a protector of children

Mme is a peace-loving and socially responsible person. She does not pretend if something is wrong. Mme would feel uncomfortable or unhappy about Diseko ill-treating the innocent children playing near her property. She would feel guilty if she did not intervene to help children against Diseko.

Diseko is metaphorically represented as her dog. Her behaviour is also of a beast, for beasts eat each other. We hear Mme reprimanding Diseko as follows: *Butle ho harolaka bana tjena* - Stop mauling children in that way (Maake, 1995:109). 'Harola' means to devour or tear into pieces. Diseko's dog nearly tore one boy into pieces. She does not welcome people with a warm heart. She chases away children playing near her property. She is compared to the behaviour of her dog.

Mme is a mother who does not like to see children being ill-treated. To Mme children are a blessing to everyone, every family and the community in general. She regards children as innocent creatures. Diseko ill-treats innocent children and Mme says the following to her:

*Ha o bone hore o lehlohonolo le lekaakang ha ba rata ho
bapalla mona ha hao?. Bana ke batho ba senang molato,
mme ha ho ka hlaha tsietsi mona lapeng, ke bona bat la
phalellang ho o thusa, kapa ho hlaba mokgosi.*

Don't you know see how lucky you are when children like to play at your home?. Children are innocent people, and if you can experience misfortune they are the ones who will rescue you or will call others for help (Maake, 1995:109).

Diseko's house assumes functions much more than its physical structure. Her house symbolizes a doomed house of a person. Diseko's dog also enlarges meaning beyond the physical presence of an object. Diseko's home is a house or home of bondage, because of herself and her dog, people do not pay them a visit. Children are afraid to play near Diseko's house because she chases them away. At a later stage Diseko said: *Mme enwa o tliseditse lapa la ka seriti* (Maake, 1995:102). *This mother brought dignity to my home.*

At a later stage Diseko's house, because of Mme, acts as a protective shield for the community of Sebokeng, giving it shade (life) from the oppressive Diseko. The identity of Diseko's home has completely changed. Adults and children love Diseko's home. Her home is identified with warmth, love and protection.

Mme is also good in traditional knowledge especially of healing the traditional ailments. She is not a traditional healer but because of the knowledge of traditional herbs she possesses, she is able to heal some of the ailments and sicknesses especially those which the medical doctors were unable to cure.

On a particular day a mother whose baby was very sick went to Diseko to borrow money. The mother intended to take the baby to medical practitioners in hospital in Kgauteng. Mme looked at the baby and diagnosed the ailment and treated the baby.

Mme tells the mother that the ailment can only be cured by traditional herbs. She says to the mother of the sick baby:

Ntho ena ke kokwana, ha ho ngaka ya sekgowa e ka e phekolang, ho realo Mme. Ha re kene ka mokgorong ka mona, a realo a se a nka ngwana a kena le yena ka motlotlwaneng oo a dulang ka ho wona.

This thing is an ailment called 'kokwana' and there is no white doctor who can cure it, says Mme. Let's go inside, says Mme taking the baby with her inside her room where she stays (Maake, 1995:76).

Mme is not a doctor or a herbalist. Whatever she does, is done out of love. She does not expect any favour in return. She represents motherhood and motherly love. Mme felt pity for little infants belonging to the people of Sebokeng. She

therefore doctored and nursed them. She was able to cure “kokwana”. The narrator says: *Motho enwa o ne a ratwa ke batho hle,...ka baka la mosa le molemo wa hae* - This person was so loved by people...because of her mercy and kindness (Maake, 1995:74).

Today the people of Sebokeng are proud to have a medical practitioner. At one time one was a sick infant. Mme cured him and today he is a real medical doctor. The narrator says the following about Mme’s blanket:

Kobo yane eo Mme a neng a fihle a thathetse mehaswana ya hae ka yona... e fedile ke ho pepa bana ba Sebokeng...- That blanket Mme arrived with wrapping up her belongings... is in tatters because of carrying the children of Sebokeng on her back... (Maake, 1995:110).

Mme and her blanket are an embodiment of goodness. When this doctor was still an infant and was sick, Mme tried her best, summoning up all her skills. She even carried him on her back with this blanket which is now in tatters. Today he is a qualified doctor. Mme is a woman who once lived and who made sure that the people of Sebokeng never forget her.

5.4. Mme’s death and burial

During Mme’s last days of her life, she does not want to give-up. She does not even want to show anyone how sick and critical she is. She does not want to be a burden to anyone, to inconvenience anyone around her with her illness. Mme pretends that everything is fine. The narrator says:

Leha a ne a bajwa e ne e se motho ya tlohellang mmele hore o tepelle. Ka mehla ba ne ba fumana a itiisitse, a dutse ka ntle, kapa a ntse a etsa hona le hwane.

Although she was very sick she was not the person who would show that by allowing her body to droop. Every day they found her composed, sitting outside or busy with chores (Maake, 1995:83).

Mme is a very strong woman. She fights her illness silently. When Mmateboho realizes that she is getting weaker and weaker, she takes her to her home and nurses her patiently. Mme passed away peacefully and Mmateboho cried bitterly.

Her burial is well organised irrespective of her not having any close relatives and family around the Sebokeng area. Her funeral preparations are well organised by those women who had learnt from her, who used to love, adore and respect her because of her teachings. The narrator says:

Tsohle di ile tsa hlophiswa ke basadi ba dulang ba sebetsa motsheare. Bohle ba qalella ho tlisa diphehiso, hobane e bile bongata bo ne bo tseba mme enwa ya hlokahetseng

Everything was organised by those women who used to stay at home. All of them contributed by donating food because most of them knew the deceased woman (Maake, 1995:97).

It is Mme who identifies the Sebokeng residents as a community. Sebokeng people are together as one because Mme taught them to share everything, birth, life and death, sorrow and trouble, happiness and joy. The narrator portrays Mme not as only as a person but also as a place where dreams and reality become one, where the physical meets the spiritual. Here we find the awareness of the

link between the name of the place Sebokeng and its identity, the place that brings people together as one.

Many of them attended Mme's funeral. They are all saddened by her death. On the burial day, the atmosphere of sadness and mourning is conveyed through the clear description of the mood of Sebokeng community. Mme's death creates an atmosphere of loss and grief. They cry for their beloved mother and also fear that no one is going to prepare medicine for their sick children. During Mme's burial, people were crying: *Ba ne ba lla, ...ba llela mma bona. E ne e hlile e le Mme ka nnete...* - They were crying...crying for their mother. She was a real mother (Maake, 1995:98).

5.5 Conclusion

Mme's death marks a new beginning in Diseko's life. She is no longer that Diseko who said to Mmateboho, *ha ke batle hore motho enwa wa hao a tlo shwella mona ha ka* - I do not want your person to die in my house (Maake,1995:94). She is confident that she has more years in front of her than behind her. She is concerned with the affairs of Mmateboho's and Thollo's relatives. She scolds Thollo for allowing her relatives to put the blame on Mmateboho. Diseko's feelings are complemented by the narrator who praises with the associative eulogy *Diseko wa Mmadiseko* -Diseko, the daughter of Mmadiseko (Maake,1995:103). *Motho enwa* and *Mme enwa* - This person and this mother are different. Now Diseko is referring to Mme as "Mme enwa" - This mother. *Ke motho tjena ka baka la Mme...* - I am a person thus because of Mme... (Maake,1995:108).

The second part of the name implies the link between Diseko and her identity because she realizes that Mme made her into a good person. She speaks with her eyes full of tears. She is no longer the person who hurts innocent children.

In Mme's belongings, Diseko finds a letter written to Thollo by Mme stating the whereabouts of their son, a wedding photo proving that Mme was Thollo's wife.

...o ne a ithutile botebo ba Mme, mme jwale a batla ho tshwana le yena - ...

She taught herself the depth of Mme, now she wants to be like her (Maake,1995:113).

Diseko intends not to let the cat out of the bag as that can ruin the marriage of Mmateboho and Thollo. Diseko's testimony of her lesson from Mme was her response to keep all the secrets as Mme did. Mme's death becomes the source of her urgency to experience a kind of religious rebirth in her life. Mme's life comes to an end and Diseko becomes her natural successor in terms of the secrets she will keep.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1 Concluding remarks

This chapter will review our study thus far. In chapter one we indicated that the main focus of the study is based on the portrayal of female characters in Maake's novel *Mme*. We also stated the reasons behind the choice of our methodology and literary theory which is Feminism. In Methodology we used a discourse analysis study to unpack our findings on the marginalisation of images, the value and cultural identity of women. A comprehensive study of a literature review is also discussed.

In our second chapter our theoretical frame work, namely Feminism, was dealt with. It was clearly indicated that Maake's novel yields itself to the application of this theory. The conception of the text as having well-behaved female characters and their conversations that are interpretable because of their actions in the textual context is our starting point. We tried to show that feminist theory is applicable to Sesotho literature. Maake's novel proves itself by demonstrating some of the Feminists' suggestions as true. This suggests to us that literary theories are there to be used or applied until they yield some answers to our literary questions.

Chapter three shows how Maake fuses the traditional way of looking at young women. Maake (1995) has been influenced by the Basotho proverb saying: *Mosadi ke morena* – meaning that a woman is respected by everyone. Young female characters such as Mmateboho and Mmatakatso can provide for

themselves and their families. Mmateboho and Mmatakatso played an important role in the economy by not expecting their husbands to support them financially.

Maake (1995) further maintains that the issue of women's emancipation cannot be achieved without formal school education. It is evident from the text when Miss Lekena is portrayed as a pillar of support, especially to young women and Dikeledi in particular, where she considered education as liberating women from poverty, from being dependent on men. She was trying to convince her not to get married before she, Dikeledi, completes her studies hence she questions the marriage of Dikeledi. According to Miss Lekena, women must not and never in their lives make marriage a lifetime profession, because they might not know what the future holds for them in that institution. They should rather make education their priority in order for them to have something to balance their lives on.

Chapter four emphasizes the fact that Maake (1995) portrayed older female characters as the support structure among themselves and he also encourages them to be independent. He portrayed his old female characters with the guts to make their own decisions as long as they will benefit from those decisions. Rakgadi was a strong woman in a sense that she raised Dikeledi single-handedly. She was there for Dikeledi up until she got married. Feminist critics like Maake (1995) would like to show humankind the mistakes they made by making women the stereotyped brainless creatures of traditional literature and society in general. During Dikeledi's marriage negotiations women such as Mma Mahloko and Mma Thaise were among the people who were present during the negotiations. This was considered as taboo in the olden days in Basotho culture

for women to be involved during marriage negotiations as it was known as men's duty only.

Chapter five is very important for our study. It sets Maake (1995) as a unique novelist among his Basotho counterparts. This chapter displays Maake's skills of communicating the Basotho culture through his outstanding character Mme. This chapter shows the positive characteristics of a Mosotho woman.

In spite of Mme being left by her husband she doesn't show that there is something bothering her emotionally when she arrived in Sebokeng, she became a blessing in disguise to the community. She played the role of mother figure to the children and young women of Sebokeng. Traditionally, as a mother you are not only the mother to your children but to all the children in your community - hence the saying it takes a village to raise a child. A mother is a pillar in the family, who can make and create a warm welcoming home. That is why there is Sesotho proverb which says "*Mme o tshwara thipa ka bohaleng*", (a woman holds the knife where it is sharp) which means that a mother is always there for her family in every circumstance.

Men, just like women, can be in a position to fight for women's rights and trying to show other men that women need to be respected and not be considered as objects of men. Steineck (2000:142) utters these words: "*There has always been a joke that women are a complete mystery to men, whereas men are transparent to women*".

Maake (1995) shows that women are no longer a joke, an Idiot creature and a laughing stock for men, especially when it comes to having written about them in his novel. He has also showed that you can break down a woman temporarily but a real woman will always pick up the pieces, rebuild herself and come back stronger than ever. We get the evidence from Mme because she managed to survive without her husband until the last day when she passed on. Women can be in charge of their own lives, domestically, economically and psychologically without men in their lives. By so doing women demonstrate independence and the principles of Feminism in their own survival.

Mme became a peace maker and a reconciler. It is evident in the text that Diseko did not get along well with her sister-in-law Mmateboho and most of the community members, including children, who were not used to entering her home, but after Mme became Diseko's family member everyone would go to her place to seek help from Mme.

6.2 Suggestion for future research

The status of women around the world is still a burning issue. Given that the Western literature has always and still deals with this theme, the African literature, particularly Sesotho literature is still lagging behind. I think now is the time for male creative writers to apply feminism in their writing by making women characters who may be recognised as the people contributing positively to the community. The Feminists and the theory itself wants to be an eye opener to other writers - that women must not be the only creatures in the universe who find pain and degradation in their relationships with men and that women in their

relationships with other women must find female solidarity, power and independence.

For Feminists, it is high time that men must accept the fact that their authority in the family sphere is and must not be exclusively patriarchal but also take into consideration that the position of women in the family is also significant. Let us be clear, women do not say that they want to be men, but they simply want to be listened too just like men want, and their womanhood to be fully accepted in society. Feminism as a literary theory is the new way of opposing oppression against women, of lifting the self-esteem of women. It teaches women not to hide their inner world and create a front, an outer shell to help them get by.

One of the proponents of Feminism, MacCarthy (2001:122) says the following about the notion of feminists:

I deeply honour men and their masculinity. I love their productivity, their direction, their capacity, their ability to direct and be fast. I love the power and clarity of thought, philosophy knowledge, their virility and their courage, and I respect all that we have built over the last millennia.

Feminists proclaim that as much as men are honoured for their sex and gender, women must be honoured too for theirs because they have a contribution to make in society. Their physical strength must not be their disadvantage which will hamper them from being given a chance to prove themselves.

6.3 General conclusion

In conclusion, we would like to point out that the concern regarding the emancipation of African and in particular Basotho women is one of the reasons that led Maake (1995) to create the novel *Mme*. His male status does not oppress women but liberates them.

Astel, as quoted by Crow (2000:135), says the following about the alienation of women from their sexuality:

Women are alienated from their own sexuality in conforming to their roles as sexual objects, from motherhood through the process of obstetrics a scientific expert and from their own intellectuality by a world of ideas whose terms have been to set down by men.

Maake (1995), in his creativity, is trying to end the perception that women, because of their sexuality, must always be treated like irrational objects which often need men to help them in their thinking and reasoning. Maake (1995) in his writing speaks to all women through women, that women must be liberated. He shows readers that women can play a huge role only if they can be given a platform to prove themselves, that they are indeed as capable as men. Through his novel he contributes to the course of the liberation of African women. The conclusion we can draw from Maake's novel is that throughout the world, women are engaged in a struggle to emancipate themselves from patriarchal injustices.

In the final conclusion, we would like to point out that Maake (1995) employs two female characters as the voices of the voiceless. Miss Lekena is portrayed as the

one who uses education to liberate women. She uses education as a weapon that can emancipate women from a patriarchal society. Singh argues that:

(C)olonial institutions chose males over females for education and then too, the sex roles distinctions common to many African societies supported the notion that Western education was a barrier to a woman's role as wife and mother (Singh, 2008 :4)

Even though colonial institutions chose males over females for education, Lekena fights for the rights of women through education. At her age, she is not yet married because she had a choice of getting into marriage or not. Economically she is not dependent on a male or husband. She is a good example that other women can follow if they wish to be liberated from the patriarchal implications.

Lastly in the novel, Diseko is another strong female character. She is brave enough to be the voice of other oppressed and silent women. She is the voice of emancipation of women. She refuses to suffer in silence hence she is encouraging other women not to be sunk deeper in patriarchy.

Bowman (2013: 38) says: "Women are people. People are varied, as varied and complex as male characters who might be considered strong because they get things done and solve all the problems".

The above statement encourages women to have their own opinions and to speak their minds. As the Bafokeng family attack Mmateboho about the death and the burial of Mme at Thollo's house, Diseko decides to intervene to protect her sister-in-law from the family of her husband.

Potso ena eo le e botsang ausi Mmateboho, ke eo nna nka e arabang. Pele ke e araba, ke rata ho bua ka seo mahlo a ka a se boneng, seo tsebe tsaka di se utlwileng, ha e sale Bafokeng ba fihla mona.

I think that question can be answered by me instead of my sister Mmateboho, but before I answer, let me talk about what I have seen and what I have heard with my own ears ever since the Bafokeng have arrived (Maake, 1995:90).

Diseko is fighting oppression and patriarchy that the Bafokeng are trying to apply to Mmateboho. She defends Mmateboho and explains to the Bafokeng family who Mme really was. She even questions about them whether they were listening about all that was said about Mme in the funeral service.

Le ka be le ile la di utlwa ha di buuwa ke bomme ba mo tsebileng haesale a fihla mona Sebokeng. Tse ngata ha ke na di bua, hobane ke a tseba hore le ke ke la mmamela, ka baka la moya ona oo le tlileng ka wona.

You should have listened to all that was said by those who knew her ever since she arrived here in Sebokeng. I won't say much, because I know you won't listen due to the attitude you came here with (Maake, 1995:91).

Diseko goes on to tell Thollo how unfair he is, because he is not standing by his wife. He allows his family to attack his wife about the death of Mme. Diseko tells him in front of his family that he should have supported his wife.

Wena ntate wa mona lapeng, ke swabile haholo hobane ke ka baka la hao ausi Mmateboho a kentsweng kgotla mona, a qoswa ka Mme.

I am so disappointed with you as the father of this home. It is because of you that there's a case against Mmateboho because of Mme. (Maake, 1995:91).

What Diseko is trying to say to Thollo is that he was supposed to give his wife full support no matter how wrong or right she was. Maake (1995) shows readers that men can be sometimes selfish, unfaithful and dishonest. Tsekiso is a school boy who is hurting Dikeledi. He plays with her feelings by double- crossing her with another girl from Sharpeville. The worse part of it is that he ends his relationship with Dikeledi by objectifying her with the words *"the silver cup is broken"*. He makes Dikeledi his object by comparing her with a cup.

After the marriage, Thollo never allowed Mmateboho to further her study. Thollo never told Mateboho that he left his wife Mme at home in Matatiele. Diseko has been portrayed as the one encouraging such voiceless women to stand up and fight for their rights.

There seems to be no contradiction for men to be automatically beneficiaries of a system that feminism seeks to destroy yet align themselves with feminism. Mbulelo Botha (2012) had his own perceptions about males being feminists:

I am convinced it is not impossible for men to be feminists, it is also brave and ethically desirable. At the most simple level, to be a feminist male means to embrace values that seek gender justice for all (Botha, 2012:07).

Maake (1995) proved Mbulelo Botha correct. In his creativity, the author acts as a feminist. The writer produced a novel which is provocative and creative, which communicates the idea of bringing about social change to end injustices against all oppressed women.

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