

**GENDER IDENTITY IN SETSWANA SHORT  
STORIES FOR YOUNG ADULTS:  
*MMUALEBE* BY R.M. MALOPE**

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## ABSTRACT

In this mini-dissertation, the main aim is to investigate and to describe the representation of gender identity in the four short stories in *Mmualebe* (R.M. Malope). It also implies developing a critique of the representation of gender identity in the four short stories of *Mmualebe*; comparing traditionalism and modernity with regard to the representation of gender identity; describing possible responses of the implied readers (male and female) with regard to reception aesthetics and developmental psychology; and to supply the variants and constants regarding the representation of gender identity in the four short stories of *Mmualebe*.

In developing a critique of the representation of gender identity, some important literary techniques are used. Through these techniques, the role of the conflict between traditionalism and modernity regarding the representation of gender identity is determined.

In general, it is evident that all theories used in this study, when integrated, can help with the development of a positive gender identity. Men and women need to be made aware of gender equality and equity and at the same time not to abuse their gender rights.

**Keywords:** female, male, identity, comparative literature, young adult, gender, narratology, cultural identity, traditionalism, modernity.

## OPSOMMING

Die hooffokus van hierdie skripsie is om die representasie van geslagsidentiteit in die vier kortverhale in *Mmualebe* (R.M. Malope) te ondersoek en te beskryf. Dit impliseer ook die ontwikkel van 'n stel kriteria waarvolgens geslagsidentiteit soos gerepresenteer in *Mmualebe* ondersoek kan word; die vergelyk van tradisionalisme en moderniteit met betrekking tot die representasie van geslagsidentiteit; die beskryf van die moontlike lesersreaksies van jong volwassenes (manlik en vroulik) as moontlike lesers soos dit na aanleiding van die resepsie-estetika en die ontwikkelingspsigologie benader kan word; ook die uiteensetting van die variante en konstantes met betrekking tot die representasie van geslagsidentiteit in die vier kortverhale in *Mmualebe*.

In die ontwikkel van 'n stel kriteria waarvolgens die geslagsidentiteit in hierdie kortverhaalbundel ondersoek kan word, is verskeie sake soos kulturele kwessies, die ontwikkelingspsigologie en literêre procédés in ag geneem. Deur middel hiervan is die rol van die konflik tussen tradisionalisme en moderniteit bepaal en beskryf.

Oor die algemeen is dit duidelik dat die geïntegreerde gebruik van die teoretiese uitgangspunte in hierdie studie van waarde kan wees in die bepaal en beskryf van geslagsidentiteit, asook, indien effektief toegepas, kan bydra tot die positiewe ontwikkeling van geslagsidentiteit. Jong volwassenes – manlik en vroulik – kan hierdeur bewus gemaak word van geslagsgelykheid sonder om hulle regte te misbruik.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PAGE

**ABSTRACT** ..... i

**OPSOMMING** .....ii

## CHAPTER 1

**INTRODUCTION** ..... 1

1.1 CONTEXTUALISATION ..... 1

1.2 RELEVANCE OF THE RESEARCH ..... 4

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT..... 4

1.4 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION ..... 5

1.5 CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENT ..... 6

1.6 METHOD OF INVESTIGATION..... 6

1.7 DEMARCATION ..... 6

1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE AND CONCLUSION ..... 7

## CHAPTER 2

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK** ..... 9

2.1 ORIENTATION ..... 9

2.2 CULTURAL IDENTITY AND GENDER IDENTITY..... 9

2.2.1 INTRODUCTION ..... 9

2.2.2 DEFINITIONS ..... 9

2.2.2.1 Culture ..... 9

2.2.2.2	Identity .....	10
2.2.2.3	Cultural identity .....	10
2.2.3	CULTURAL ASPECTS OF GENDER IDENTITY .....	11
2.2.3.1	Introduction .....	11
2.2.3.2	Name .....	11
2.2.3.3	Age .....	12
2.2.3.4	Marriage.....	12
2.2.3.5	Religion .....	13
2.2.3.6	Communication and language .....	14
2.2.3.7	Gender roles .....	14
2.3	DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY .....	15
2.3.1	INTRODUCTION .....	15
2.3.2	DETERMINANTS OF DEVELOPMENT.....	16
2.3.2.1	Biological determinants.....	16
2.3.2.2	Environmental determinants .....	17
2.4	GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUITY .....	18
2.4.1	INTRODUCTION .....	18
2.4.2	SELF-CONCEPT AND IDENTITY .....	18
2.4.2.1	What is self-concept?.....	18
2.4.2.2	Types of self-concept.....	19
2.4.3	WHAT IS IDENTITY?.....	20
2.4.4	ROLES, GENDER EQUALITY AND GENDER EQUITY.....	20
2.4.4.1	What are roles?.....	20
2.4.4.2	Gender.....	21
2.4.4.3	Equality .....	22
2.4.4.4	Gender equity .....	22
2.4.4.5	Early childhood developmental roles and gender equality .....	22
2.4.4.6	Roles during school years: gender equality and gender equity.....	22
2.4.5	EQUITY AND THE BILL OF RIGHTS .....	23



2.5	NARRATOLOGY .....	23
2.5.1	INTRODUCTION .....	23
2.5.2	WHAT IS NARRATOLOGY AND NARRATIVE?.....	24
2.5.3	NARRATIVE TEXTS .....	24
2.5.4	FEATURES OF NARRATIVE .....	25
2.5.5	NARRATIVE ASPECTS.....	26
2.5.5.1	Characterization.....	26
2.5.5.2	Space.....	27
2.5.5.3	Time.....	27
2.5.5.4	Events.....	28
2.5.5.5	Narration and focalization .....	28
2.6	RECEPTION THEORY .....	29
2.6.1	INTRODUCTION .....	29
2.6.2	THE IMPLIED READER .....	29
2.6.3	SOURCES OF RECEPTION THEORY .....	30
2.6.4	HORIZON OF EXPECTATIONS.....	31
2.6.5	THE READER'S RESPONSE.....	31
2.7	INTERTEXTUALITY .....	32
2.8	CONCLUSION.....	33

## CHAPTER 3

### INTERPRETATIVE ANALYSES OF THE FOUR SHORT STORIES

	IN <i>MMUALEBE</i> BY R.M. MALOPE.....	34
3.1	INTRODUCTION .....	34
3.2	“BODIBA JO BO JELENG NGWANA’A MMAAGO” [ONCE BITTEN, TWICE SHY].....	34
3.2.1	SUMMARY: THE STORY IN A NUTSHELL .....	34
3.2.2	NAME .....	35
3.2.3	AGE .....	38

3.2.4	MARRIAGE.....	39
3.2.5	RELIGION.....	39
3.2.6	COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE .....	40
3.2.7	GENDER ROLES .....	41
3.2.8	POSSIBLE RESPONSES BY YOUNG ADULTS (MALE AND FEMALE) .....	41
3.2.9	SYNTHESIS.....	42
3.3	“LE FA O KA E BUELA LENGOPENG” [SECRETS HAVE THEIR OWN WAY OF COMING OUT] .....	42
3.3.1	SUMMARY: THE STORY IN A NUTSHELL .....	42
3.3.2	NAME .....	43
3.3.3	AGE .....	45
3.3.4	MARRIAGE.....	46
3.3.5	RELIGION.....	46
3.3.6	COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE .....	47
3.3.7	GENDER ROLES .....	47
3.3.8	POSSIBLE RESPONSES BY YOUNG ADULTS (MALE AND FEMALE) .....	48
3.3.9	SYNTHESIS.....	48
3.4	“O RE TSHEGISA KA BADITŠHABA” [YOU ARE LETTING OTHER NATIONS LAUGH AT US].....	49
3.4.1	SUMMARY: THE STORY IN A NUTSHELL .....	49
3.4.2	NAME .....	49
3.4.3	AGE .....	51
3.4.4	MARRIAGE.....	52
3.4.5	RELIGION.....	52
3.4.6	COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE .....	53
3.4.7	GENDER ROLES .....	53
3.4.8	POSSIBLE RESPONSES BY YOUNG ADULTS (MALE AND FEMALE) .....	54
3.4.9	SYNTHESIS.....	54
3.5	“O NKUTLWE” [YOU MUST LISTEN TO ME] .....	55
3.5.1	SUMMARY: THE STORY IN A NUTSHELL .....	55
3.5.2	NAME .....	56

3.5.3	AGE .....	58
3.5.4	MARRIAGE .....	59
3.5.5	RELIGION.....	59
3.5.6	COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE .....	60
3.5.7	GENDER ROLES .....	61
3.5.8	POSSIBLE RESPONSES BY YOUNG ADULTS (MALE AND FEMALE) .....	61
3.5.9	SYNTHESIS.....	62
3.6	CONCLUSION .....	62

## CHAPTER 4

### COMPARISON OF *MMUALEBE*'S SHORT STORIES: VARIANTS AND CONSTANTS .....

4.1	INTRODUCTION .....	63
4.2	VARIANTS BETWEEN THE FOUR SHORT STORIES IN <i>MMUALEBE</i> .....	63
4.2.1	CULTURAL ASPECTS OF GENDER IDENTITY .....	63
4.2.1.1	Name .....	65
4.2.1.2	Age .....	66
4.2.1.3	Marriage.....	67
4.2.1.4	Religion .....	68
4.2.1.5	Communication and language .....	69
4.2.1.6	Gender roles .....	70
4.2.2	SYNTHESIS.....	71
4.3	CONSTANTS OF <i>MMUALEBE</i> 'S FOUR SHORT STORIES .....	71
4.3.1	CULTURAL ASPECTS OF GENDER IDENTITY .....	71
4.3.1.1	Name .....	72
4.3.1.2	Age .....	73
4.3.1.3	Marriage.....	73
4.3.1.4	Religion .....	74
4.3.1.5	Communication and language .....	74
4.3.1.6	Gender roles .....	75

4.3.2	SYNTHESIS.....	75
4.4	SUITABILITY OF THE SHORT STORIES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG ADULTS' GENDER IDENTITY .....	75
4.5	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION .....	76
	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>78</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 3.1:	Names in “Bodiba jo bo jeleng ngwana’a mmaago” [Once bitten, twice shy] .....	36
TABLE 3.2:	Names in “Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng” [Secrets have their own way of coming out] .....	43
TABLE 3.3:	Names in “O re tshegisa ka baditšhaba” [You are letting other nations laugh at us] .....	50
TABLE 3.4:	Names in “O nkutlwe” [You must listen to me] .....	56
TABLE 4.1:	VARIANTS .....	64
TABLE 4.2:	Constants .....	72

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 CONTEXTUALISATION

In the Batswana tradition, it is the role of men to protect women and to provide them with the comforts of life, whereas women must take care of the reproduction role in the family. The research of Alverson (1978:183) of more than two decades ago showed that the general assumption was that "women cannot work for themselves, so they should get married". This has not changed much since women still play a central role in the self-development of men in a traditional way of the Batswana and in *Mmualebe* (R.M. Malope) Alverson's research on the concept of marriage still applies.

Gaganakis's (1999:148) research showed that "although there are more black girls than boys in the schooling system and more girls than boys pass Grade 12, girls' career directions and participation in the labour market remain gender specific. They have greater exposure to education but they achieve less than their male counterparts". It is a possibility that this is caused by the negative gender roles to which a developing child, adolescent or young adult are exposed.

Feminists object to the ways in which gender is represented in literature. Selden (1989:142) argues that "for a long time reading has assumed a male perspective and that there is a real difference of view when the experiences and values of women become central in the act of reading". For example, women are taken as natural housewives, mothers and housekeepers but men as authors of literature. The Brönte sisters published under men's names. Mary Ann Evans used the pseudonym George Elliot to publish her work. The issue of women being undermined is a universal problem.

In folktales, for example, the hero is usually male and the victim is female. In many cases the short stories in *Mmualebe* depict women as objects and not as subjects. In *Mmualebe* as well as in folktales women get roles as housewives, belonging in the

kitchen, as it is expected by society. This proves that there is an assumption that "girls in general are passive, staying at home or doing routine tasks. Women's occupations always fall into the nurturing stereotype" (Wignell, 1976:10). Males are traditionally taken as strong and should work outdoors and earn a living.

The majority of South African girls are expected to fulfil the roles of housewives, wives and mothers. In addition, these roles are depicted as natural and fixed. Van Lierop-Debrauwer (1996:24), as well as De Villiers and Bester (1992:180) say adolescents undergo development of their sex roles and create a world wherein they look for solutions to their problems of becoming adults through the process of socialisation in the context of the family and society at large.

Parents unconsciously reinforce speech on their children in the stereotyped way they believe to be right. Whenever a child is heard talking differently from the language he or she is expected to, adults and the peer group scold her or him. This adds to De Klerk's (1987:6) argument that "society has a preconceived idea of how women and men speak (or should) and behave" which, she says, are misconceptions as they are killing the generation and the generation to come. The adolescent grows up among adults, copying their ways of living and at the same time trying to identify the self, and in the process acquires the role expected of him/her. The problems of gender identity development are caused partially by the societal influence. Louw *et al.* (1998:441) say: "In the past a man's choice of a career was regarded as more important than a woman's, since it defined both his family and social status". This perception might have been influenced by the belief that a traditional woman should listen to her husband and do as she is told as the man is regarded as the head of the family.

Wolpe *et al.* (1997:40) say that "gender is the socially constructed differences between males and females". In the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (1987:517) it is remarked that "identity is who a particular person is". It is necessary to realise that gender is partially constructed by society and identity is a process and change of identity on the basis of time.

It is stated by Czaplinski (1976:7) that statistics prove that most of the books for children are based on male characters. For example, one finds the use of 'he' is predominated by 2 to 1 and men are 7 to 1 compared to women. Van der Westhuizen



(1989:6) points out that the adolescent during high school years must have the right books at the right time to enable him/her to develop as a reader and as a human being. In Van der Westhuizen (1989:7) Ghesquiere states that just like a child, an adolescent must go through different learning situations to be a reading/learning young adult. Steenberg (in Van der Westhuizen, 1989:7) argues that in young adult literature the age of the main characters range between 18 to 25, which corresponds with the age of the possible readers of *Mmualebe*.

Culturally, children are expected by their parents to behave accordingly as it is expected by the society. This has the implication that boys should behave tough, strong, and aggressive and girls should be pretty, little and dependent on boys. De Klerk (1987:7) argues that these expectations, as well as what children read in their literature, have a heavy weight on the sexist problem that is in literature. Vandergrift (1993:24) is of the opinion that "it is essential to note that feminism takes a positive and inductive stance" not to attack, but that it is "essential to identify texts that marginalise or degrade females".

*Mmualebe* has been prescribed by the Department of Education of the North West Province since 1994. Up to now it has been regarded as a good book for young adults because young adults are emotionally and intellectually ready to read it. Although it is a good book for young adults, there are certain issues that might be problematic, for example the way gender identity is represented within the problematics of traditionalism versus modernity. Young adults are intrigued by these short stories because they are more complicated than stories for children. *Mmualebe's* short stories are suitable for young adults as they represent events, time and space settings which the young adult can relate to, as well as characters with whom he/she can identify. In *Mmualebe's* short stories the young adult can identify with some of the characters as they are of the same age group as the target group and the events correlate with the experiences of Tswana young adults, for example love affairs and conflicts in the community. The time settings are not too complex for young adults to understand and the tension between traditionalism and modernity is part of their everyday experience.



## **1.2 RELEVANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

The greater part of South African children's literature, except Zulu, English and Afrikaans is developing slowly, the slowest of all the literary systems in South Africa. Swanepoel (1995:34) says with regard to children's literature in the African languages that "it is continuously ejected to the periphery of the literary poly-system and that this has a negative influence on every level of its existence". This very problem is also applicable to literature for the young adult.

Swanepoel (1995:35) states that the greater part of South African society was enslaved and belittled to such an extent that its human resources were focussed on breaking the shackles of oppression and that this is the main reason for the low, under-developed state of children's and young adult literature.

Leshoai (as quoted by Swanepoel, 1995:35) says that the breaking of the shackles of oppression "is the main reason why nobody seems to realise that things are falling apart among the Tswana children. They are no longer at ease with their own cultural identity because of the dominant influence of western culture". This brings the issue of traditionalism versus modernity to the fore.

Gerdes (1988:275) remarks that young people between 18 and 25 fall in a stage of life that lacks a clear definition and that they often experience a self-image crisis. This is part of their search for their own identity. Research on *Mmualebe* (R.M. Malope) is currently very relevant, because it is a book through which young adults can have a reading experience which will enable them to come to a better understanding of gender identity — if it is mediated by well-informed and literary competent facilitators.

## **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

If the analysis of the literary representation of gender identity in the four short stories in *Mmualebe* (R.M. Malope) is integrated with aspects of the cultural identity of the Batswana, the results of such a study can contribute to the impact these short stories can have on the development of the gender identity of young adults as potential readers. Gender identity is of the essence in this mini-dissertation. With the focus on

literature in general, and *Mmualebe* by R.M. Malope in particular, different problem questions arise.

The main question is: How is gender identity represented in the four short stories in *Mmualebe*?

This implies the following:

- Which literary techniques are important when developing a critique of the representation of gender identity in the four short stories in *Mmualebe* (R.M. Malope)?
- What is the role of the conflict between traditionalism and modernity in society with regard to the representation of gender identity?
- Considering that these four short stories are regarded as suitable for young adults, which possibilities of response by the implied readers (male and female) emerge?
- What are the variants and the constants with regard to the representation of gender identity in the four short stories in *Mmualebe* (R.M. Malope)?

## **1.4 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

The main objective of this mini-dissertation is to investigate and describe the representation of gender identity in the four short stories in *Mmualebe* (R.M. Malope).

This also implies the following:

- To develop a critique of the representation of gender identity in the four short stories of *Mmualebe* (R.M. Malope) (identify, analyse and describe).
- To compare traditionalism and modernity with regard to the representation of gender identity.
- To describe possible responses of the implied readers (male and female) with regard to reception aesthetics and developmental psychology.

- To supply the variants and the constants regarding the representation of gender identity in the four short stories of *Mmualebe* (R.M. Malope).

## 1.5 CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENT

I argued that there are certain literary techniques which are important when developing a critique of the representation of gender identity in the four short stories in *Mmualebe* (R.M. Malope). With this critique the role of the conflict between traditionalism and modernity with regard to the representation of gender identity as well as possible responses by the implied readers (male and female) can be determined.

## 1.6 METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

Qualitative research is conducted with the focus on young adult literature and gender studies. The analysis of the text (*Mmualebe* by R.M. Malope) and the literary survey is done with the databases consulted. Certain aspects regarding gender identity, traditionalism versus modernity in the Batswana culture, developmental psychology, narratology and reception theory are integrated simultaneously in the analysis of the four short stories in *Mmualebe* (R.M. Malope). A comparative method is used to determine the variants and constants regarding the representation of gender identity in the four short stories.

## 1.7 DEMARCATION

The focus is on the representation of gender identity in *Mmualebe*, R.M. Malope's short stories being:

- "Bodiba jo bo jeleng ngwana'a mmaago..." [Once bitten, twice shy]
- "Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng..." [Secrets have their own way of coming out]
- "O re tshegisa ka badišhaba" [You are letting other nations laugh at us]
- "O nkutlwe" [You must listen to me]

## • DESCRIPTION OF TERMINOLOGY

The most important keywords of the title of this study can be described as follows:

“Gender identity” is what is attached by the society to a particular male or female being.

It is said that “young adults” are people who fall between 18 and 25 years at a stage of life that lacks a clear definition and it is during this stage that self-image crises are experienced.

Another keyword is “suitable”, i.e. suitable for young adults. The study’s primary text is *Mmualebe* by R.M. Malope and it is prescribed for the Grade 12 learners. This *Mmualebe* compilation of short stories is suitable for young adults as the short stories represent events, time and space settings with which the young adult can relate, as well as the characters with whom he or she can identify.

## 1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE AND CONCLUSION

The main objective of this mini-dissertation is to investigate and describe the representation of gender identity in the four short stories in *Mmualebe* (R.M. Malope). A critique of the representation of gender identity is developed and the short stories are analysed. The main focus of this mini-dissertation is on the Batswana young adults as characters in the short stories, but attention is also paid to the way the representation of gender identity can contribute to the gender identity development of the reader.

The mini-dissertation is divided into four chapters. The relevance of this study as well as the problem statement is outlined in chapter 1.

In chapter 2 the theoretical survey receives attention. Cultural identity, developmental psychology, gender equality and equity, narratology and reception theory are discussed and intertwined with each other to form an integrated approach.

The main objective of chapter 3 is the analysis of the four short stories of *Mmualebe* by R.M. Malope. In this discourse the integration of traditionalism versus modernity, gender identity, developmental psychology, reception aesthetics and cultural identity

is being dealt with. The aspects of cultural identity, *i.e.* name, age, marriage, religion, communication and language, and gender identity are investigated in more detail. Possible reading responses by young adults are derived from the way gender identity is represented in the four short stories.

In chapter 4, the focus is on the variants and constants between the four short stories of *Mmualebe*. The comparison of these short stories is based on the aspects of gender identity.

After an outline of the theoretical framework has been given, the focus will thus be on the representation of gender identity in *Mmualebe*, R.M. Malope's short stories being: "Bodiba jo bo jeleng ngwana 'a mmaago" [Once bitten, twice shy], "Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng" [Secrets have their own way of coming out], "O re tshegisa ka baditšhaba" [You are letting other nations laugh at us], and "O nkutlwe" [You must listen to me].

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 ORIENTATION**

In this chapter, the focus will be on a theoretical survey. Cultural identity, developmental psychology, gender equality and equity, narratology and reception theory will be discussed. In this chapter the main aim is to develop a critique of the representation of gender identity in the four short stories of *Mmualebe* (R.M. Malope). One will understand that the reason for the use of different theories in this research is due to the fact that they all are intertwined with each other to form one solid research.

#### **2.2 CULTURAL IDENTITY AND GENDER IDENTITY**

##### **2.2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Culture is learned and not inherited. Literature can be regarded as a mirror for certain societies in which individuals are guided to understand another society's cultural beliefs, morals, values and not to criticise them. A discussion of the theory of cultural identity and gender identity is important, as it is known that an individual should know his or her gender and his or her cultural background in order to be taken as a whole human being. Furthermore, the terms *culture*, *identity* and *gender* will be defined.

##### **2.2.2 DEFINITIONS**

###### **2.2.2.1 Culture**

Culture is a mirror in which a person examines his or her life and alters it where necessary. Culture also features in poetry, marriage, language and in music Merafe (1993:33) argues that culture is life. It is the way people lived previously, live in the present time and will live in future.



In Kim (1999:46), Rich derives “ culture is the sum total of the learned behaviours of a group of people which are generally considered to be the tradition of that people and are transmitted from generation to generation”.

#### **2.2.2.2 Identity**

Allen (1990:585) defines identity as “the quality or condition of being a specified person or thing”.

#### **2.2.2.3 Cultural identity**

Brock and Tulasiewicz say cultural identity is “a net of adaptations ranging from ethnicity, through religion, social structure, philosophy, national consciousness and privilege patterns, art and science to domestic practices, games, myths and patterns of language acquired in various formal and informal ways” (in Kim, 1999:49).

Kim (1999:50) states that cultural identity and nationalism with certain identity patterns being chosen as criteria for the creation of an independent existence or distinct political nationhood, are linked. The elements recognised signify an independent existence, for example language, history, religion fields of activity, artefacts or symbols, and each has a definite importance for the acquisition of a sense of a particular cultural and national identity.

Segers says cultural identity can be ascribed to three factors (Kim, 1999:51), namely:

- formal characteristics concerning that nation or group at a given time in history;
- the programming of the mind within a particular community on the basis of which the cultural identity by the in-group is being constructed, and
- the way in which people from outside conduct a process of selection, interpretation and evaluation concerning the specificity of the in-group, which means the outside image of the cultural identity of a foreign nation or group.

Cultural identity can be like a mirror to which individuals return in order to see that their values, morals and beliefs are maintained as they were maintained in the olden days – a way to know oneself.

Gender “refers to the socially constructed differences between males and females” (Wolpe, Quinlan & Martinez, 1997:40).

From these definitions, it can be concluded that gender identity is the ability to differentiate between males and females and the quality to be a specific person.

The aspects of cultural representation of gender identity will be discussed accordingly.

### **2.2.3 CULTURAL ASPECTS OF GENDER IDENTITY**

#### **2.2.3.1 Introduction**

Certain facets need to be attended to in order for a person to develop into an adult accepted by the society he or she lives in, and those very facets will be used to detect the gender identity representation. The facets that will be focussed on are age, marriage, name, religion, language and role.

Culture is represented as identity through symbols because it refers to the attempt to represent a person in the terms of their culture. Lesete (2000:8) explains that the symbols which a society share, the style and communication in their visible cultural identity are the preserves of their culture.

#### **2.2.3.2 Name**

When a child is born, naming is necessary to detect the identity of that particular child.

To the Batswana names are semantically meaningful. Most of the names announce the role a particular character will fulfil and the actions he or she will perform in future. The Setswana name a child gets indicates an event that takes place around the time of the child's birth and reflects social norms and values and issues to society. That particular name is the determining factor of the person's behaviour and action



throughout his or her life, hence when naming a child, one needs to be very open minded. Name-giving techniques are powerful mechanisms of characterisation.

For example, if the name is 'Tshotlego' (suffering), the child will lead life filled with suffering, following the meaning of the name. Names stand in a synecdochic relation to the whole discourse that has been carried on throughout a person's life about who and what he or she is. In the sense a name is the most direct public allusion to a person's self-identity.

Alverson (1978:195) hints that "Tswana of all ages and in all communities refer to their name as a treasure and a resource". It is constantly in the making; it affects kinfolk, especially descendants, who will carry it. Names can kill and heal, impoverish and enrich, achieve great works or destroy.

#### **2.2.3.3 Age**

Age is an important ranking criterion in the Batswana society. According to Alverson (1978:111) the Tswana social identity is characterised by "what is human nature?; what is a proper Tswana adult? and what is the ideal good life?" In the Batswana's understanding wisdom comes with age. Certain knowledge must be laid down before subsequent knowledge can make sense. It is believed that the teenager cannot advise an older person about aspects of life, because he/she is considered inexperienced.

According to Steyne (in Turaki, 1999:108), the aged person must be respected and treated with dignity because recrimination follows after his/her decease, or before.

#### **2.2.3.4 Marriage**

In African society marriage is not a union of two people, it is rather a union of two families, as Kotu (1998:54) has stated: "manifest in various ritual practices like lobola negotiations".

A woman is married for her duties in the house and not for her beauty. The man is expected to do everything for his wife and children (Merafe, 1993:84). Culturally it is believed that " women cannot work for themselves, so they should get married by

lobola to the bride's father, to be able to pay back the family for feeding them" (Alverson, 1978:183). Still in the Batswana society having a child in ties of marriage is a pride of any woman. Being married is an honour.

It is also stated by O'Donovan (in Turaki, 1999:35) that in African society "polygamy makes sense from a traditional point of view". The Batswana men usually marry to get children and by so doing, they are gaining a guarantee to eternal life. As a Motswana man, if you do not marry, it means that you put a stop to living now and after.

Howard (1988:217), believes that marriage is the most common way of ensuring that the child and its caretaker are supported. In other words marriage is not so much a matter as it is of taking care. Thus, one may argue the point of marriage as a process of men gaining dominance over women. In Coetze (1987:136), Aquilius regards marriage as an "adoption of one's estate". One can then agree with Aquilius as in the Batswana marriages the bride's father is surrendering his daughter to the bridegroom's family.

Malope (in Sebate, 1999:35) reveals that a total disregard of traditional norms and values in marriages causes terrible marital conflicts between couples. It is also believed that a woman is not allowed to ask her husband about his whereabouts.

#### **2.2.3.5 Religion**

Religion is not merely a matter of belief. Howard (1988:356) says "it involves institutionalised patterns of behavior-rituals and ceremonies that express and reinforce religious beliefs". Religious beliefs include acceptance of the existence of power that is neither a part of nature in its physical manifestations nor a creation of human society.

Existence is to some degree controlled by a transcendent reality (created order). No matter how resolved a person is to do and achieve things, his/her life is still to some degree determined by creation. The Batswana believe mainly in the ancestors. They do, however, know God.

Some pray to God through their ancestors. "The past of the world is unclear to the Batswana but will be clarified in the time to come, that is when one is united with the ancestors who embody the final order established in the origins of Setswana" (Alverson, 1978:183). If you are a Motswana and do not agree with the society's beliefs you are perceived evil. One is regarded evil when one behaves indecorously and appears to be lazy, helpless or when one is self-centred, inconsiderate and inhospitable.

#### **2.2.3.6 Communication and language**

It is known that language is culture and culture is language. Either one cannot survive without the other. Kim believes that there is a close relationship between culture and language. He argues that "culture cannot be discussed without reference to language" (Kim, 1999:55). Through language, education, values and beliefs are acquired. In Setswana to have a valuable culture, your language must be enriched with proverbs, idioms and features of language such as similes, personifications, irony and others. It is important to acknowledge that vocabulary in some instances is influenced by cultural, environmental and physiological factors as Howard (1988:226) has stated. Trudgill (1986:32) says "language is very much a cultural phenomenon".

#### **2.2.3.7 Gender roles**

Attwell (1999:115) believes that because of the assumptions people hold about women, they tend to think that women are interested in domesticity, mothering and nurturing by nature. He further states that people "think that men are naturally strong and less caring. These assumptions create stereotyped views of masculinity and femininity."

The communities in which women find themselves usually regard them as weak creatures who cannot work for themselves. Their main role in families is to bear children and to honestly obey their husbands. Culturally women are treated as properties, they belong to their husbands' families. If the husband dies the widow is then remarried to the husband's younger brother and that is done without the widow's consent, and if the woman resists to be remarried then disaster will fall on her. A man

must look for work to maintain his family. Even the Bible says when a man marries, he must move away from his mother and father and stay with his wife to be able to work for her.

Developmental psychology will be the next point to focus on. A human being is ever growing and ever changing. Thus it is important to concentrate on the stages of the human development to further understand how the mind works and why some patterns of behaviour are followed.

## **2.3 DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY**

### **2.3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Developmental psychology has a perspective on human development. "It sees *human* behaviour as a changing system that includes both biological and sociocultural determinants, which work together to produce behavioural development" (Tilker, 1975:5). According to Tilker (1975:9) "the field attempts to describe and to explain changes in human behaviour across the years of the life span". The developmental psychologists turned their attention to building theories of development and to testing their theories empirically. Developmental psychology is the "scientific study of the growth, development and behavioural changes of humans, from conception to death" (Turner & Helms, 1995:3; Louw, 1991:3).

Bootzin, Bower, Crocker and Hall (in Louw & Edwards, 1993:490) believe that nature vs nurture, stability vs change and continuity vs discontinuity are of importance in the developmental psychology. The viewpoint that our characteristics and abilities are determinism is correct. The opposite viewpoint that environmental factors play the predominant role, is called environmental determinism.

Change does not only take place during the childhood years but during the total lifespan. Throughout life interaction takes place between human beings and the environment and can have a positive or negative influence. Development is a continuing process. Psychologists regard development as a series of genetically predetermined stages or steps in which each stage differs qualitatively from the

previous stage, and because of these differences they regard development as a discontinuing process.

## **2.3.2 DETERMINANTS OF DEVELOPMENT**

There are different determinants of development but the relevant determinants for this research are the biological and the environmental determinants and thus they will be discussed in detail.

### **2.3.2.1 Biological determinants**

Inheritances are biological determinants and they start working from conception up to death. This, of course, also applies to the gender which the expected baby will have, *i.e.* male or female.

According to Tilker (1975:46) "one way to study human genetics is to derive a set of general principles from research on lower animals, in which nearly ideal genetic research can be performed". The genetic make-up of an organism and its environmental circumstances affect the development of a given behaviour, momentary environmental circumstances affect the way that behaviour is expressed or whether it appears at all. Genetic behaviour needs the relevant environmental stimuli for it to surface.

Many genes contribute to the development of most behavioural characteristics. Tilker (1975:48) says that "at least 150 genes affect brain development". These genes exert their influences throughout the life span.

Tilker (1975:48) defines heritability as referring "to the relative contribution of genetics to a thwart or behavior". The differences between individual IQ scores are called variabilities. It is important to know that the individuals in the group have different genetic compositions as well as different life experiences. "The relative contribution of genetics to IQ test performance is the heritability of IQ in this group" (Tilker, 1975:50).



### **2.3.2.2 Environmental determinants**

Environmental determinants play a powerful role in the development of the growing child. It is obvious that all organisms must have sufficient air, water, food and light to maintain life. There are, however, various ways of defining the environment and of explaining how experience influences development.

Social environment includes all those effects that people have on one another in families, in peer groups and neighbourhoods. It includes the influences of social institutions like schools, cultural values, attitudes, beliefs and media.

Tilker (1975:53) points out that the family has been shown to influence many aspects of behavioural development, sex roles, self-concepts, interpersonal and intellectual skills. Fathers have been shown to be important in the early years of a boy's life for the boy to develop masculine sex roles. According to Tilker (1975:53) "the family provides a context for intellectual development".

Louw and Edwards (1997:517) state that adolescents spend more time in the presence of the peer group than in the presence of adults. Peers affect the behavioural development of people from early school age throughout the life span. The peer group has its own values and rules of behaviour which are different from those of the family. During adolescence the group is as strong as the family in providing a testing ground for becoming a person. Peer group is important in the formation of identity during adolescence.

"The schools socialize children in many ways that families and peer groups do" (Tilker, 1975:54). The rules applying to the pupils in a school may be different from those which apply to their families and friends. Schools influence social skills, psychological growth, children's feelings of the rules and regulations of society and intellectual realm.

Behaviour is affected either positively or negatively by television and other media. Bandure says that "some violence-prone youngsters appear to be influenced toward more aggression by watching aggressive models" (Tilker, 1975:64).

Gender equality will be the next theory for discussion. To have a matured society, it is important to know how to respect and to live with each other as people. In South Africa there are at present endeavours to create balance in the ways gender differences and roles are being looked at. Gender equality and equity are, therefore, regarded as important points of discussion for this study.

## **2.4 GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUITY**

### **2.4.1 INTRODUCTION**

According to this point of departure, self-concept and identity will be discussed. The question “Who am I”, can enjoy closer investigation.

### **2.4.2 SELF-CONCEPT AND IDENTITY**

Human beings could benefit much from reading material in order to enhance the self-concept and identity of the particular individual. The literature that is made available to the individual must be relevant. The age group and the culture of a particular individual must be taken into consideration. When investigating identity, addressing the question of who one is, different aspects of the individual and his/her environment should receive attention.

#### **2.4.2.1 What is self-concept?**

Burns (in Gerdes, 1988:77) says “the self-concept is a composite image of what we think we are, what we think we can achieve, what we think others think of us and what we would like to be”. According to Gerdes self-concept can be flexible, rigid and diffuse.

A flexible self-concept accommodates change. A person with a realistic self-image will make adjustments to his self-concept if they are necessary. The rigid self-concept consists of a strong resistance to change. The diffuse is unable to judge the self consistently.

### **2.4.2.2 Types of self-concept**

During adolescence the norms of friends and peer group become particularly important for self-evaluation. Gerdes (1988:77-81) divided the self-concept into the following:

- The physical self-concept which refers to the body image.
- The intellectual self-image embraces the person's perception of his/her intellectual abilities and talents.
- The psychological self-concept gives indications of emotional security and self-acceptance, seen as criterial for psychological maturity.
- The social self-concept refers to how a person's social self relates to the strength and nature of his/her social interests and involvement with others and their reaction to him/her. In Gerdes (1988:78) Adler builds his theory around the idea that the individual is a unified personality who must always be seen in a social context. The parents' self-esteem is an extremely important factor in the formation of the individual as well as the social self-concept.
- The moral self-concept: relates to the person's perception of the extent to which he/she satisfies the prescribed rules of conduct in a given society. The foundation of the moral self lies in the desire for approval and the avoidance of disapproval – first from the parents and then other significant people.
- The gender self-concept: Males and females are endowed with the predispositions towards maleness and femaleness.
- The ideal self: one's self-evaluation is closely related to one's ideal self, to the characteristics one would like to possess and the kind of a person one would like to be.
- Self-esteem: refers to the evaluative aspects of the self-concept. It refers quite literally to the extent to which we admire the self. It is related to our sense of worth.



### **2.4.3 WHAT IS IDENTITY?**

Longman (1987:517) defines identity as “who or what a particular person or thing is”.

Allen (1990:585) says identity “is a quality or condition of being a specified person or thing”.

According to Gerdes (1988:80), identity is understood in three types: public, personal and individual identity:

- **Public or social identity:** everyone is labelled by a name, by his/her position in relation to others. From birth a person has public identity. As an adult develops his/her roles his/her title will in all probability change, for example to that of a mother or father and so on.
- **Personal identity** refers to the sense of being continuous over time and in various situations. One retains one's identity despite other changes that may occur.
- **Individual identity** refers to the person's subjective uniqueness and individuality. It comprises the individual's view of himself /herself in relation to other individuals and to the social system. It is formed through the developing ability to define oneself as a separate unique individual, with certain attributions, affiliations, interests, values and beliefs.

### **2.4.4 ROLES, GENDER EQUALITY AND GENDER EQUITY**

One needs to know his or her expected roles in society in order to understand gender equality and equity. The question that has to be addressed is the identification or description of such roles.

#### **2.4.4.1 What are roles?**

“Roles refer to the position occupied in a society coupled with a set of behaviours and attitudes which are regarded as appropriate to someone playing that role” (Gerdes, 1988:88). Roles refer to four broad categories of work done by men and women at

home, in the community and economic sector, reproduction, production, community management and community politics.

A teacher, for example, is expected to fulfil those roles prescribed to him and to overcome the strain and conflicts in his role as a teacher. In achieving all these he must make it evident that the achievements are not at the expense of gender equality.

(I) Concepts related to *role* (Gerdes, 1988:88):-

- **Expectations:** Expectations are assumptions with regard to what particular roles entail. These expectations are based upon hopes, fears and beliefs and objective knowledge of what others expect of an individual and vice versa.
- **Fulfilment:** This refers to the way in which the individual actually performs a role and to how he/she feels about such performance.
- **Prescriptions:** prescriptions, expectations and fulfilments are all culture bound.
- **Strain and conflicts:** Difficulties may occur when the demands of a role or several roles produce strains of some kind such as stress due to overwork and fatigue.

As far as reproduction is concerned the female carries the baby and gives birth to it. This is her role. After the birth of the child both parents, i.e. the male included, are equally involved in assuming and sharing responsibility for the child. This is their role as parents. It serves to be kept in mind that males and females are equal in the eyes of the law (gender equality). One may wonder what gender equality actually entails.

#### 2.4.4.2 Gender

“It refers to the socially constructed differences between males and females. What this means is that through cultural formations that differ markedly and are ever changing, as reflected in everyday’s life and discourses, people learn appropriate gendered behaviour from the moment of birth” (Wolpe, Quinlan & Martinez, 1997:40). In short gender refers to the social meanings that are attached to being a female and being a male.

#### **2.4.4.3 Equality**

Wolpe *et al.* (1997:40) define equality as "non-negotiable with respect to the rights of the citizens before the law. All citizens are equal and must be treated as equal".

#### **2.4.4.4 Gender equity**

It is the term used by legal pundits/experts to describe the 'equal rights' of citizens. "Gender equity entails meeting women's and men's needs in order for them to participate fully in civil society and fulfil their familial roles adequately without being discriminated against because of their gender" (Wolpe *et al.*, 1997:270).

#### **2.4.4.5 Early childhood developmental roles and gender equality**

The early childhood development has a very important role to play in developing the values and attitudes of non-sexist and a non-racist future citizens. Early childhood is the foundation phase of education when children learn how to read and to understand the world that exists around them.

It is during these years that the beliefs of racists and sexists beliefs need to be deconstructed and that children should be prepared to inhabit a just and democratic non-sexist and non-racist society. Children must be taught not to discriminate against each other, as the constitution states "that the state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth" (The Constitution, 1997:7).

#### **2.4.4.6 Roles during school years: gender equality and gender equity**

Girls and boys in their earliest years of schooling have already acquired traditional gendered forms of behaviour, which may lead to forms of oppression. These negative forms of behavioural patterns can be addressed and some oppressive forms of behaviour confronted by teachers.

Teachers play an important role in transmitting all forms of knowledge, including those parts that reinforce gender inequities. Wolpe *et al.* (1997:77), state that the “manifestation and forms of gender learning varies from culture to culture. They say socially sanctioned practices that devalue women and deny them basic human rights need to be interrogated and schools are places where this can be carried out”.

Gender equity programmes in schools need to be addressed in order to address the practical and the strategic needs of women and girls in the community.

#### **2.4.5 EQUITY AND THE BILL OF RIGHTS**

Allen (1990:396) states that "equity is the application of the principles of justice to correct or supplement the law". Gender equity is promotion of equal opportunity and fair treatment for men and women in the personal, social, cultural, political and economic arenas (Wolpe *et al.*, 1997:40). Fair treatment of men and women means the way to cope with a set of problems which exist in the area from the social, cultural, political and economic arenas.

The Bill of Rights “is the cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. It enshrines all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom” (The Constitution, 1996:6).

### **2.5 NARRATOLOGY**

This research is a literary study and this is the sole reason why it is important to include narratology and to discuss it in its fullness.

#### **2.5.1 INTRODUCTION**

One may wonder what narratology is and whether there is any correlation between the kind of literature and narrative. In this section narrative texts, features of narrative and narrative aspects will be discussed in detail.

## **2.5.2 WHAT IS NARRATOLOGY AND NARRATIVE?**

Hardee and Henry (1990:2) regard narratology as the theory of narrative according to which to study its nature, form and functioning, while at the same time trying to characterize narrative competence; and it also aims to describe the narratively pertinent system of rules presiding over narrative production and processing. Hardee and Henry (1990:5) argue "If narratology is a theory of narrative, the corpus and scope depend on the definition of narrative".

Bal (1985:3) coins narratology as "the theory of narrative texts". Prince (1982:2) defines narrative as "the representation of real or fictive events and situations in the time sequence". He also says it is "a collection of signs which can be grouped into various classes" (Prince, 1982:7).

Hardee and Henry (1990:14) say narrative features narrations, narrators, and narratees; implies a series of transformations, and includes both structure and structuration; settles in repetition and moves through the desire for an end; is deferral, deciphers temporality and memory. They also believe that in (re)discovering and (re)inventing narrative, narratology allows better (re)discovery and (re)invention of narrative as a theme.

## **2.5.3 NARRATIVE TEXTS**

In presenting narratology as the theory of narrative texts, a number of central concepts are considered, namely text, narrative texts, story, fabula, event and actors are considered. Bal defines these central concepts as the following: (Bal, 1985:5): text is a finite, structured whole composed of language signs; narrative text is a text in which an agent relates a narrative; story is a fabula that is presented in a certain manner; fabula is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors; event is the transition from one state to another state; and actors are agents that perform action. They are not necessarily human beings.



## 2.5.4 FEATURES OF NARRATIVE

Narrative consists of the narrator, narratee, narration and narrated.

The *narrator* is the one by whom the story is being told, as chosen and used by the author. The first person narrator is detected by the pronouns "I" / "we" (Prince, 1982:7). Such a narrator is usually part of the set of characters included in the story. The third person narrator (sometimes referred to as the 'omniscient narrator') tells the story as if from the outside, like an onlooker who witnesses the events and who is aware of the characters' emotions and thoughts.

Abrams (1985:173) describes the *narratee* as "the explicit or implied person or audience to whom the narrator addresses the narrative". It may/may not be explicitly designated by a "you". "Sometimes the first person pronouns may designate not (only) a narrator but (also) a narratee" (Prince, 1982:18). That is, the narratee may know the narrator more or less well or not know him/her at all. The narratee is influenced by the narration addressed to him/her. What is said to the narratee will then determine his/her reaction.

The *narration* may or may not be explicitly designed by a set of signs. "It may have been deleted without leaving any traces but the narrative itself" (Prince, 1982:26). Numerous signs representing a narration are evident; e.g. its date, duration, spatial context, adequacy or (inadequacy) and signifying its presence in the narrative are evident. In some of the narrative fiction, there are no given hints as to when narration occurred. It is also possible to narrate without the specification of relationship between the space of the narration and the space of the narrated.

With the *narrated*, the narrative recounts a selection of situations and events occurring in a certain world. This usually and deliberately includes far more than a mere recount of events – feelings, thoughts, individual actions and reactions, decisions, consequences, the nature of crises and solutions, will, for example, most probably form part of the presentation.

## **2.5.5 NARRATIVE ASPECTS**

There are many aspects of narrative but the main focus in this study will be on characterization, space, time, events and narration and focalization. Characterization is the point of departure.

### **2.5.5.1 Characterization**

In characterization, the reader can use the name as the beginning point of knowing the character. Characterization according to Kotu (1998:16) can be defined as a narrative device employed by an author to give a human identity to literary figures. It is known that an author achieves this through the capacity of such figures to assume some form of human status for the reader or audience. In Kotu (1998:18), Ntombela argues that characterization is important at two levels. At a level of the story, the characters are grouped together and are called actants and at the text level characters are characters. Attwell (1999:55) says character can be defined as the collection of features or traits that together form the individual nature of a person or thing.

Character is the actor provided with distinctive characteristics which together create the effect of a character. Bal (1985:79) says character resembles a human being. She also states that a character is an "actor with distinctive human characteristics". She realizes the problem in dividing the character and human being. She also categorizes characters as round and flat characters. In most cases of the detective fiction flat characters are found and no round characters are distinguished. Round character are like complex persons, undergoing a change in the course of the story and constantly surprising the reader, but flat characters are stable, stereotypical and contain nothing surprising.

Flat characters develop very slowly or not at all. Such characters are easily recognized. Smuts (in Pretorius, 1990:41) says round characters can be the drivers of tragedy and it is the precise way of creating a character. Pretorius (1990:40) distinguishes flat characters in two dimensions and round characters in three dimensions.

### **2.5.5.2 Space**

Places are linked to certain points of perception, and they are space as they are seen in relation to their perception. Bal (1985:93) says the point of perception may be a character, situated in a space, observing and reacting to it. There are three senses involved in the perception of space, namely sight, hearing and touch.

These three, in combination or separately, result in the presentation of a space in the story. According to Bal (1985:94) the space in which the character is situated or is precisely not situated, is regarded as the frame. Space is the acting place. Bal (1985:96) points out that space can function steadily or dynamically. A steady space is a fixed frame within which the events take place, and dynamically functioning space is a factor which allows the movement of character.

### **2.5.5.3 Time**

There are two kinds of duration which are crisis and development. Crisis indicates a short span of time into which events have been compressed. Bal (1985:39) says that moments of crisis present themselves in a brief instant of time in which the life of persons or entire action takes a decisive turn. Only brief periods of an actor's life are presented and a crisis is usually included.

In the development of the story as much material as is found fit, can be presented. It also requires selection. It is not the entire lifetime that is presented, but parts only, and some parts are skipped, merely referred to or summarized.

Brink (1987:111) and Sithole (1998:11) divide time into four kinds being the story-time, narrative-time, text-time and historical-time. Story-time is expressed in hours, months and years. Narrative-time is the time it takes to narrate. Text-time is represented by words, paragraphs and chapters. Sithole (1998:11) states that "text-time has a linear order". Its linearity refers to the fact that events are not necessarily in a chronological order.

Historical-time is linked to specific historical data such as certain historical events and dates. In cases where events cannot be linked, speculation can be used. Speculation



can only be used to include names of known people and places, social setting, languages, norms and values of the people (Brink, 1987:112; Sithole,1998:12).

#### **2.5.5.4 Events**

Bal (1985:13) defines events as “the transition from one state to another state, caused or experienced by actors”. The transition proves the fact that an event is a process. The three criteria, *i.e.* change, choice and confrontation, limit the number of events which are investigated and each further develops a different aspect of the definition of events.

The verb ‘*change*’ is in itself an indication of a difference that has set in, of someone or something that is no longer the same. As far as *choice* is concerned it can be said that fundamental events open up a choice and in turn every choice that has been made will inevitably be followed by certain results (Bal, 1985:15). *Confrontation* takes place when two or more actors or groups find themselves in separate positions or situations, but yet in some way connected or aware, whether they are physically present in time and place or not. A confrontation usually implies that the actors or groups do have something to do with one another, and more often than not the accompanying feelings or actions are of a hostile or problematic nature.

#### **2.5.5.5 Narration and focalization**

Bal (1985:119) and Letsie (1996:8) explain that the narrative text as a text is converted into language signs in which the narrative agent tells a story. They further say “narrative agent or narrator means the linguistic subject, a function and not a person, which expresses itself in the language that constitutes the text” (Bal, 1985:120; Letsie, 1996:8).

Focalization in Bal’s view is the relation between vision and that which is seen or perceived (Bal, 1985:134). There are two types, namely the position relative to the story and the degree of persistence. It is also divided into three facets which are the perceptual, psychological and the ideological facets.

## **2.6 RECEPTION THEORY**

### **2.6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The reception theory examines the reader's role in literature. The supposition by which a literary text is accompanied is that it will be received by readers. Without the reader a literary text does not really serve a significant purpose, does altogether not become known or feature as part of man's life. Eagleton (1983:76) says "the reader makes implicit connections, fills in gaps, draws inferences and tests out hunches; and to do this means drawing on a tacit knowledge of the world in general and of literary conventions in particular". It is believed that in reception theory the reader concretizes the literary work, which is a chain of organized black marks on a page. The reception theory studies the individual relation between the reader and the text.

There are various theorists like Jan Mukarovsky, Gadamer, Jauss and Iser from Konstanz University (West Germany) who have introduced the distinct directions of reception theory in the late 1960s, but the focus in this research is on Iser, Jauss and Fish.

### **2.6.2 THE IMPLIED READER**

Cloete, Botha and Malan (1985:78) say that in Iser's theory there are open spaces with which the reader must concern himself/herself. Those open spaces are created by the author. Iser argues that a literary text is not a monument with a fixed set of characteristics which the reader takes in at a glance. Iser (in Selden, 1989:124) argues that the reader's communication with the text is a dynamic process of self-correction. As formulated by him it signifies that the self-correction will or should be modified on an ongoing basis.

In Iser's view, the critic's task is to explain the text's effects on the reader and not the text as an object. Selden and Widdowson (1993:49) say it is still unclear whether Iser allows the reader to fill up the gaps in the text at will or whether he regards the text as a final arbiter of the reader's actualizations. Eagleton (1983:79) says that Iser takes reading as a point that brings us into deeper self-consciousness, as a catalyzer to a more critical view of our own identities. He believes that in reading the reader needs

to be flexible and open-minded, prepared to question or discard beliefs or allow them to be transformed. Through reading an opportunity to formulate the unformulated is being created (in Selden, 1985:114).

- **Iser's three types of readers**

According to Iser readers can be divided into three different types, which are:

Implied reader – Iser (in Swanepoel, 1990:36) says it is “the one the author supposes to be reading his work. He is supposed to be present all the time and be able to follow all indicators of the text”. Selden (1985:112) says this reader is the reader created by the text itself, amounting to a network of response-inviting structures, which predispose us to read in certain ways.

Real reader – according to Iser the concept ‘real reader’ refers to different types of readers, such as romantic, realistic or intellectual. One could also add experienced readers, young readers, lay-readers, professional readers (Swanepoel, 1990:36).

Explicit reader - this is the reader the author directs himself/herself to, and sometimes this is done directly (Swanepoel, 1990:36). Iser states that the explicit reader “receives certain mental images in the process of reading; the images will inevitably be coloured by the reader's existing stock of experience” (Selden, 1985:112).

### **2.6.3 SOURCES OF RECEPTION**

In Swanepoel (1990:36), Iser says that, according to Grimm, there are three sources of reception, namely primary, secondary and tertiary.

Primary sources include marginalia, notes, diary entries, letters, autobiographies, memoirs and reports.

Secondary sources entail reported responses from readers.

Tertiary sources include interpretations, reviews, literary histories, advertisements and notes on the cover of books, archive material, publication bills and bibliographies.

#### **2.6.4 HORIZON OF EXPECTATIONS**

Jauss, as discussed by Selden (1985:114), has given a historical dimension to reader-oriented criticism, for example: "He tries to achieve a compromise between Russian Formalism which ignores history and social theories which ignore the text" (Selden, 1985:114). He uses the term horizon of expectation to describe the criteria readers use to judge literary texts in any given period. The attempts to understand work depends on the questions of own cultural environment allowing a raise.

Jauss (in Swanepoel, 1990:35) set up what he called a history of reception against the traditional literary history of authors and genres. Jauss stresses that a reader's horizon of expectations is determined by his/her socio-cultural background, reading experience, knowledge of the norms of genre and interpretations of the code of the text. The horizon of expectations gives an indication of how the work is valued and interpreted.

According to Selden (1989:126), Jauss rejects the idea that texts await an endless sequence of attempts to get at their meaning which lies within them. "One of the difficulties involved in Jauss's approach is related to this very fluidity and instability of horizons" (Selden, 1989:130). Jauss's theory provides an account of literary change from the point of view of reception.

#### **2.6.5 THE READER'S RESPONSE**

Fish (in Selden & Widdowson, 1993:58) developed a reader-oriented perspective called an affective stylistics. He concentrates on the adjustments of expectation to be made by readers as they proceed reading the text. He separates his approach very from all kinds of formalism by denying literary language any special status. He maintains that we use the same reading strategies to interpret literary and non-literary sentences.



Even if the material read is solely on linguistics, the way language is interpreted is going to be the same as that used for literature. The reader's expectation of meaning is continuously adjusted, that is the meaning is the total movement of reading. Fish (in Selden & Widdowson, 1993:54) believes that his reading of sentences simply follows the natural practice of informed readers.

Fish substitutes the structure of the reader's experience for the formal structure of the text. He argues that the reader's activity has meaning. Readers are always making sense of the text. The author's intention is detected or put together by the reader's perception. He says that form is called into being through the reader's interpretative strategies (Swanepoel, 1990:37). Eagleton (1983:118) says that in Fish's view "a reader is someone who possesses a linguistic competence, such a reader has internalised the syntactic and semantic knowledge required for reading".

As it is very important to realise till thus far that cultural and gender identity go hand in glove with each other and that it is necessary to integrate it with the developmental psychology, reception theory and narratology, this combination of theories will be of concern throughout the mini dissertation.

When analysing a text, it is important to understand and interpret that text, and when interpreting a text, one cannot but apply a frame of reference. Analysis of a text therefore implies intertextual activity.

## **2.7 INTERTEXTUALITY**

Wales (2001:220) defines intertextuality as "utterances or texts in relation to other utterances or texts". It is further stated by Wales that intertextuality is a feature of non-literary discourse and of non-verbal forms, films and music. In Worton and Still (1990:56), Riffaterre says an "intertext is one or more texts which the reader must know in order to understand a work of literature in terms of its overall significance".

When interpreting a text, the reader will benefit from intertextual knowledge. An intertextual relatedness can be found between the different texts of the same author. According to Van der Westhuizen (1990:46) the intertextual relatedness between earlier and later texts of the same author means that there are words of the text that set an accent for other texts. For the purposes of this study attention will also be paid

to an intertextual relatedness between the four short stories by R.M. Malope. The intertextuality is used by the reader as a frame of reference which helps with the interpretation of each individual text, but also when a comparison of the four texts is drawn up, so that variants and constants between the texts can be determined.

## **2.8 CONCLUSION**

Cultural identity, developmental psychology, gender equality and equity, narratology and reception aesthetic theory have been outlined and intergrated for the purposes of this study. It is evident that in some way all the discussed theories do go hand in glove with each other. To have a whole matured reading human being, all the theories do serve a certain purpose.

For example, the child is born and develops both physically and psychologically (developmental psychology) in a certain society. That society has its own culture of which that child is expected to learn (cultural identity). In most cases cultural values and morals are passed to that particular child through stories by elders of that society (narratology).

In the long run, while this child is developing he or she is then expected to be able to identify himself or herself and to know his or her expected roles (gender equality and equity). At a later stage that child is left alone (now a grown up) to choose whether what he or she has acquired is right or wrong. The person is given a chance to evaluate the stories told and to fill gaps and to cut off that which he thinks is not of importance (reception aesthetic).

Gender identity is a very crucial issue in South Africa and in this mini-dissertation. Suggestions as to what can be done to eradicate the problems accompanying it will be outlined. The main objective of this mini-dissertation is to develop a critique of the representation of gender identity and in so doing alert the reader's awareness of gender-related issues. The analysis of gender identity based on R.M. Malope's short stories from the text (*Mmualebe*) will be the focus of the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

# INTERPRETATIVE ANALYSES OF THE FOUR SHORT STORIES IN *MMUALEBE* BY R.M. MALOPE

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this chapter is to analyse the four short stories of *Mmualebe* which are: “Bodiba jo bo jeleng ngwana’a mmaago...” [Once bitten, twice shy]; “Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng” [Secrets have their own way of coming out], “O re tshegisa ka baditšhaba” [You are letting other nations laugh at us]; and “O nkutlwe” [You must listen to me].

In analysing the four short stories, traditionalism versus modernity, gender identity, developmental psychology, reception aesthetics and cultural identity will be integrated in the discourse. Aspects of cultural identity, being name, age, marriage, religion, communication and language and gender roles will be done in more detail. A summary of each of the short stories is supplied before the particular story is discussed. It should be known that the possible responses are not reached through interviews and questionnaires. Most of the facts will be based partially on the developmental psychology. It is further important to give the names of the characters in the four short stories, their meaning and their function in a tabular form. The characters’ names referred to in the above-mentioned statement are the main characters and the characters who play a role in the life of the main character but not all characters in the short stories. It is a necessity to provide possible responses by the young adults as implied readers of the four short stories.

### 3.2 “BODIBA JO BO JELENG NGWANA’A MMAAGO” [ONCE BITTEN, TWICE SHY]

#### 3.2.1 SUMMARY: THE STORY IN A NUTSHELL

The title of this short story derives from the Tswana idiom, which means that *the problems that happen to the other person before you, make sure they do not happen*



to you. Grandma Mmualebe is teaching Morongwa the real life. The story is about Tselane in a triangular relationship. Tselane is afraid of being a spinster. She then decided to have two boyfriends to increase her chances of marriage. If Mathulwe is not proposing to her then Moatlhodi will have to. Mathulwe, after realising that Tselane is double-crossing him, is seeking revenge.

Moatlhodi, a medical doctor, proposes to Tselane but she continues the affair with Mathulwe. Tselane falls pregnant, the father is Mathulwe and not her husband. She opts for abortion. She visits the woman of Khalambazo who is known to be an expert in abortion. Tselane then tells her husband she is pregnant and he performs an abortion on his wife. Moatlhodi, being a doctor, uses an injection and in secret Tselane uses the muti she got from the woman of Khalambazo. Tselane does not trust her husband enough and this is why she uses muti after the injection.

The theme of this short story highlights the shortcomings that are found by modern youth in search of their marital partners which is contrary to the traditional culture in which searching for a partner is done by the parents. One can further add to the theme the fact that modern people are educated but they lack life experience in general.

She is admitted to hospital. Before she dies, she tells the doctors that her husband, Moatlhodi and the woman of Khalambazo are responsible for her death. Moatlhodi and the woman of Khalambazo are arrested. On her deathbed she also blames Mathulwe for her death. Mathulwe is taken to the police station to be questioned.

### **3.2.2 NAME**

Names of characters are first given in a table and then discussed.

**TABLE 3.1: Names in “Bodiba jo bo jeleng ngwana’a mmaago” [Once bitten, twice shy]**

NAME	MEANING	FUNCTION
Morongwe	The one who is sent	She listens to story as told by Mmualebe.
Tlhagale	An eye opener	A policeman, and a friend to Mathulwe. He always updates Mathulwe of what is happening around them.
Mathulwe	One who is destroyed	He is cheated but later decided to take revenge.
Tselane	Small path	She is very modern, educated, married and unfaithful to her husband.
Moatlhodi	The judge	A medical doctor and a husband to Tselane.
MmaTshegofatso	Mother of blessing	Serves as an example to Tselane’s actions and life especially on matters of the heart.
Mmualebe	One who talks too much	She is very old, an adviser and strongly believes in the Batswana’s traditional values.
Mosadi wa Khalambazo	The woman of Khalambazo	She is known to be the terminator of pregnancies.

Morongwe (*the one who is sent*) listens to MmaMmualebe as she narrates the story to her. She feels that Malešwane, the main character, is very stupid by not questioning her husband about his whereabouts. She sees this story in a modern perspective and it is the reason she becomes so furious with the typical traditional woman in this short story.

Mmualebe (*the one who talks too much*), symbolizes her particular role in the short story. Traditionally, stories are told by old women in the evening, thus it is appropriate that MmaMmualebe tells this short story to her granddaughter Morongwe. Her advice to Morongwe concerns life and she is very sarcastic about modern life. She is a

referential character who teaches manners and gives advice to the young people. MmaMmualebe knows a lot about the Batswana values, morals and customs. In talking so much she is educating the youth, by teaching them cultural values they are expected to know. She can be regarded as an adviser.

Tselane (*small path*) tries to use her short ways of getting married. Tselane is a modern character and she is influenced by the time she lives in. This also has an influence on her career as a social worker. She still has the traditional roots of being afraid not to get married and she is practising modern ways of making sure she gets married and therefore turns out to be a character who is juxtapositioned between traditional culture and modernity. Tselane is a referential and a main character in this short story, a character who started to double-cross men at university, whereas, while staying at home, she only had one boyfriend. One can say the university as a modern institution has influenced her in a profound way. It is clear that a home in this short story symbolises the place where traditional morals and values are still practised. The name Tselane is the *diminutive* of path. That simply means that everything she does is undermined. She has two boyfriends, she proposes marriage, she is working while being married and she has an extramarital relationship. All the above-mentioned things are not expected to be done by a married Motswana woman. Tselane is used in the short story as an example to Morongwe because Mashike (1988:92) says the manner in which Tselane conducts her life is controlled by the modern times she finds herself in.

Moatlhodi (*judge*) is very judgemental. He is a medical doctor who does not manage to please his wife because he is much concerned about his career and his future, with himself and with what people are thinking of him. He performs an abortion on his wife because having a child at that point in time for him is out of question. There are medical complications. Tselane dies and he is arrested.

Mathulwe (*the destroyer*) destroys Moatlhodi and Tselane's marriage to take revenge. He feels that he is betrayed and for that reason he must take revenge. Tselane says he is warm-hearted. He does not make his intentions known. For example, he plans to marry Tselane but he does not tell her or even discuss marriage with her. By remaining quiet he reveals the dishonesty amongst the youth of today, and proves the fact that the modern youth is not afraid to break marriages. They do



not respect marriages. Mathulwe is an important character by means of whom the plot of this short story develops rapidly.

### **3.2.3 AGE**

As an old and wise woman Mmualebe is a typical traditional character. She strongly criticizes everything the modern generation is doing in contradiction to traditional values. Mmualebe is very sarcastic about the formal education the youth gets as she says that it does not equip them to cope with daily experiences. She educates Morongwa about what is culturally acceptable and opens her eyes to the wrong ways practised by modern youth. Morongwa feels her grandmother educates her that evening when she tells her a story.

The story is told in the evening by the grandmother, which is the exact time the Batswanas used to sit around fire and share their experiences. As a narrator of the short story and an experienced old woman, she is narrating the short story to give the youth the knowledge she acquired through experience.

Mathulwe, Moatlhodi and Tselane are young, inexperienced and modern characters. They do everything in a modern way. For example, Tselane, while in love with Mathulwe, is engaged to Moatlhodi which is something not accepted. They are educated but they lack the wisdom of how to approach life, as they are still young and inexperienced.

They also arrange their marriage whereas, according to the Batswana tradition, parents should be the ones who pre-arrange partners and such ceremonies as are the custom. Their affair fails because they do not involve their parents who have the experience to guide them about life. After Mathulwe has realized that Tselane is pregnant, he leaves her.

As parents are not involved right from the start, it is difficult for the youngsters to look to them for help. Mathulwe is, according to tradition, wrong when he throws away his own blood. Moatlhodi on the other hand helps Tselane to abort. Moatlhodi, Mathulwe and Tselane, modern characters, are doing everything that proves grandmother Mmualebe, the traditional character right in her criticism of modern life which is in

contrast to the wisdom of tradition and formal education presented at a modern institution which is representative of modern knowledge in this short story.

### **3.2.4 MARRIAGE**

As mentioned by Setiloane (1976:190) and Stoltz (2001:118), an accepted decent marriage and the norm for every Sotho-Tswana child, is still the marriage in which the two families of the bride and the bridegroom conduct the negotiations and with lobola transferred between them. It is evident that in this short story, Tselane and Moatlhodi's marriage is traditionally wrong, as no parent is involved. Tselane is changing marriage into a game. She finds herself two boyfriends whereby the first one to propose will be the one she will spend her whole life with. Tselane is educated, working and married and keeps her work. As a married Motswana woman she is not expected to be working as her husband is expected to work. It is known that in African society, marriage is a union of two families and not of two individuals, but Tselane and Moatlhodi are marrying without their parents' consent.

Culturally, Tselane is wrong to propose to Moatlhodi, but constitutionally it is her right as a human being to propose to a man, as all human beings are equal and have equal rights to do as they please as long as other people's rights are not infringed.

When Tselane gets pregnant with her lover's child, she opts for abortion, which is something traditionally unacceptable. If parents had been involved, Mathulwe, Tselane's lover, would have been expected to pay a for causing another man's wife to fall pregnant without prior arrangement with that woman's husband. The modern way of seeing a marriage as a union between two individuals without their parents' involvement, results in a dilemma as Tselane dies and Moatlhodi is arrested. Tselane proposes to Moatlhodi and by doing so she gains dominance over him, she is even able to have an extramarital affair, which might be expected from a man rather than a woman, especially in the context of the traditional approach.

### **3.2.5 RELIGION**

Religion can be described as institutionalized patterns of behaviour-rituals and ceremonies that express and reinforce religious beliefs (see 2.2.2.4.). Setiloane

(1976:190) emphasizes that young people are either sophisticated or de-tribalized and far, far from home; it is a matter of deep emotional concern if they conclude a marriage contract in which their parents are not involved. Tselane and Moatlhodi in their marriage have forgotten that their lives, decisions and actions are determined by creation, no matter how qualified and successful they are. Tselane and her husband (Moatlhodi) go straight to the magistrate to sign the marriage certificate; lobola is not paid to Tselane's parents. Their action, as Setiloane confirms, is only a deep emotional concern. Their ancestors are not called and this is according to Batswana culture the reason their marriage is not working.

The narrative is structured in such a way that they do everything in the worst ways, which is then associated with modernity. As the parents are not involved and ancestors not informed with ceremonies of lobola and families getting together, they (the ancestors) do not give their blessing. What can be concluded is that Malope depicts modern life as a disaster because Moatlhodi ends up a widower and a prisoner, and Tselane a corpse. Traditionally, parents should decide who must marry their daughter. If Tselane had followed the traditional way, she would not have proposed marriage to Moatlhodi. If they had followed the traditional way of solving problems, they would have had the better solution to their problem which is the involvement of their parents.

### **3.2.6 COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE**

The implied author uses the characterization of Mmualebe as well as a simile in further explaining some events in this short story. Mmualebe's language is rich in proverbs, idioms and cultural features as values and morals, for example, "kana kge ke bolo go go tlhoka: boko jwa me bo sisitse mo go bileng bo ikgama (Malope, 1982:1); [*she knows many things and she waited for a very long time to tell this story to her granddaughter*]. She means that her brain is full of information that needs to be passed to other generations. Youngsters respect her way of communication. She addresses them in a low and stern voice. Mathulwe and Tselane refer to each other as "mother's child" whereas they are lovers. They just do not use fancy words to address each other, but rather use culturally accepted ways to communicate.



Simile is used repeatedly in this short story to enhance some meaningful events. Mmualebe says she read Morongwe's thoughts just like she reads fingers. Mashike (1988:109) says metaphor is not often used in this short story; he further says the only time this symbol is used is when the implied author explains the friendship between Mathulwe and Tlhagale.

The implied author uses hyperbole when talking of Tselane's smile. He says her smile can weaken the bones of a lion. Personification is used when the woman of Khalambazo wonders why it is that life does not welcome a gift that is supposed to be welcomed with happiness. For example: "Botshelo kana bo gakgamatsa jang? (p. 9); [why is life so amazing?].

In the Batswana tradition it is rare for a woman to address her husband by using fancy names like "darling". When Tselane apologizes to Mathulwe for accepting Moatlhodi's proposal, she does that in a polite way and she offers Mathulwe a compensation prize of having an affair. Mmualebe communicates in a poetic style, for example "ke lerumo le thebe: ga se phenyo le seditse sa motlhabani yo o neng a bolotse..." (p. 1) [it is a shield and a sword, not victory of the soldier after a fight].

### **3.2.7 GENDER ROLES**

Tselane personally cannot be trusted. Her fear to be a spinster is costing her her honesty, her dignity and her life. Even after the marriage proposal she carries on with dishonesty. Because of her own unfaithfulness to her husband, she too cannot trust her husband. She thinks her husband will not perform an abortion successfully on her and she alternatively uses muti.

### **3.2.8 POSSIBLE RESPONSES BY YOUNG ADULTS (MALE AND FEMALE)**

The modern characters in this short story end up as prisoners and some widowers. This can be a total setback for the young people who read this short story. Female readers can be afraid to take a stand because they are not encouraged to do so in the short story. The reaction by Mathulwe, that of being in love with Tselane only to hurt her, can be very encouraging to the young adults to practise unrequited love. At



least female readers are encouraged not to terminate pregnancies. What happened to Moatlhodi can discourage young readers not to prepare well for the future. Moatlhodi prepares for the future through studies while Mathulwe sleeps with Tselane. For a person who is still in the process for maturing, it does not motivate to follow Moatlhodi's steps. The only hope that there is, is with the mediators to find a relevant way to interpret the short story in a way that the young people gain a strong gender and cultural identity, is by emphasising the fact that whatever one does, parents should be involved.

### **3.2.9 SYNTHESIS**

The author of this short story can be seen as a traditionalist who works with extremes to get strong contrasts between what is regarded within the stories as positive and negative values. It is evident that in everything he says he is against some of the modern ways of living. It can be concluded that he expects the youth to behave in traditional ways irrespective of the time they find themselves in. It can be said that he reaches his goal of showing the readers that certain ways of modernity are not good at all. For example, the modern characters end up as prisoners and some as widowers. It is necessary for the mediators to summarize or rather to narrate this short story in a way that will be of good to the modern youth so as not to disturb their gender identity but to help build a strong identity.

## **3.3 “LE FA O KA E BUELA LENGOPENG” [SECRETS HAVE THEIR OWN WAY OF COMING OUT]**

### **3.3.1 SUMMARY: THE STORY IN A NUTSHELL**

The title of this short story means that *secrets have their own way of coming out in public*. The story is told to Morongwe by MmaMmualabe to serve as an eye opener just before Morongwe gets married. The implied author wants to show that culture is no longer respected by the modern youth. The focus in this short story is on marriage.

Makeketa marries Malešwane. They cannot have children. Makeketa starts having a private affair justifying it by saying he eases his problems. Makeketa's aunt dies on a

Wednesday and she is to be buried that week's Saturday. He has plans with his concubine and for him it is difficult to cancel those plans. Makeketa goes to GaMosetlha to help with the preparations and does not return home. He goes to Zone 16 in Garankuwa, to his concubine.

His wife and other people awaits him but all in vain. They then decide to use public transport to the funeral. After the funeral they are permitted to return in search of Makeketa. On Sunday, when he arrives home, he tells his wife how he has had problems with his car and that the people who were at the funeral sent their greetings. Of course, he is lying. Malešwane keeps quiet all through the explanation and she does not want to hear about her husband's whereabouts. When Makeketa goes to the bedroom to sleep, Malešwane follows him and she starts crying. She is disappointed in her husband but she does not show it in front of other people.

The theme of this short story is that modern civilization is condemning culture and its goodness. The short story shows that modern civilization is again encouraging the loss of humanity among the Batswanas. It can be evident that all events in this short story originate in Makeketa and his wife's childless marriage.

### 3.3.2 NAME

Names have specific meaning, which is clear in the table and the following discussion.

**TABLE 3.2: Names in “Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng” [Secrets have their own way of coming out]**

NAME	MEANING	FUNCTION
Malešwane	Silence	A traditional married woman who believes that basic things like a house and a car should be bought by men.
Makeketa	The one who is full of stories	A husband to Malešwane and a cheater. He has a concubine.

**TABLE 3.2: Names in “Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng” [Secrets have their own way of coming out] [continued]**

NAME	MEANING	FUNCTION
MmaKedirileng	Mother of what did I do	Makeketa’s aunt who died and her funeral revealed Makeketa’s unfaithfulness.
Ditsele	Ways	He practises law and order in the family. He is a traditionalist and has power over all the other young ones.
Ntshebo	Gossip about me	A modern woman, a drunkard and cohabiting with her boyfriend.

Makeketa (*full of stories*) comes up with stories in his favour and he is also a smooth talker. He wants the funeral to be the following weekend for him to be able to proceed with his personal arrangements, at the same time trying to convince his wife not to go to the funeral. Makeketa is not a man of his words as he tells his wife that he will come and fetch her for the funeral. He does, however, not keep his promise and plans to leave earlier from his concubine, which he does not do. It is clear that he neither values the cultural rituals accompanying a funeral nor those in connection with ancestors.

He tries to solve his problem of not having children in his house by having an affair with a widow, but according to tradition, he is supposed to take his wife’s younger sister. Makeketa proves that he is a traditional man by ignoring Phure’s signals to stop him from lying. He proves that he is the head of the family and he is not going to listen to anyone.

Makeketa has humanity. This is proved by Uncle Ditsele’s explanation of his state when he leaves: “O tlogile mono a itekanetse. Tente e, e bapotswe ke ena. Kgomo e tlhabilwe ke ene. Dilwana tse o di mo neeleditseng, o di gorositse” (p. 22); [He left here in a good state. This tent is prepared by him. He slaughtered the cow. He brought the things you gave him to bring.]

Malešwane (*silence*) is a typical traditional woman. In the short story she keeps quiet when her husband decides to lie to her. When her husband arrives on Sunday, she does not shout at him and she even does not ask him about his whereabouts. She believes buying a house and a car is a man's responsibility: "Tsa theko ya ntlo kana sejanaga ke tsa banna eseng basadi" (p. 18); [Buying a house or a car is for men and not women.]

Mashike (1988:117) believes that through Malešwane, the implied author created a very appropriate example of a woman whom he expected other women to resemble. She is very young and different from other characters in this short story.

Her name, Malešwane, promotes the cultural beliefs that the meaning represents people in terms of their cultures. She keeps quiet even when she is not happy with what her husband is doing to her. She is a very obedient character. She respects her husband and cultural issues very much. She confirms the above interpretation when she states: "Ke ya GaMosetlha go boloka rakgadi ka laMatlhatso-bathapi ba rata kana ba sa rate. Fa ba sa amogele jalo mme ebile ba setse ba dumetse tiro ya bona ga ke e rapele" (p. 18); [I am going to GaMosetlha to bury my aunt on Saturday whether my employers like it or not. If they don't except it, or even if they have excepted it, I couldn't care less.]

She listens totally to a man and especially to elder men. When her uncle Ditsele tells her he would give them permission to leave if her husband does not arrive in the afternoon, she does not object. Makeketa tells her that he would come and take her to the funeral; she accepts and waits. In most cases she is not allowed her own options, she is just being told what to do and to think. It can be concluded that in her husband's eyes she is just a weak-minded and a non-thinking creature.

### **3.3.3 AGE**

Mr Ditsele is an elderly man who gives orders to all other characters and no one objects. He is respected because of his age. He stays in GaMosetlha, a rural place where cultural values and morals are still practised. He tells Makeketa that the funeral will be during the weekend and that is it. He comforts Malešwane by telling



her that Makeketa is fine wherever he is and she is comforted. The irony is that he is only thinking and talking about the man and does not regard the woman's feelings.

### **3.3.4 MARRIAGE**

Malešwane and Makeketa have a childless marriage which is very strenuous for Makeketa. He goes out to another woman justifying it by saying he is easing his marital problems. Makeketa values his concubine more than his wife and traditional cultural values. For example, when he has to attend his aunt's funeral, he decides to visit his concubine and he does not fulfil the promise he made to his wife that he will take her to the funeral.

Malešwane is a traditional woman who knows that she belongs to her husband's family. She confirms the above-mentioned fact when she is determined to attend the funeral of her husband's aunt irrespective of what her employers are saying.

### **3.3.5 RELIGION**

Malešwane truly believes in ancestors. She and Makeketa believe that when a person dies, she or he is not forgotten as according to culture it is believed that person is not dead, but sleeping and will be the mediator between the living and the dead. Even Setiloane (1976:64) confirms the above-mentioned belief when he states that at death, a Sotho-Tswana becomes an ancestor. In GaMosetlha, a rural area, funerals are still conducted in a traditional way and are held in the mornings. Whilst the burial feast is eaten, people discuss some issues, which is regarded as culturally very wrong. The burial feast is "eaten saltless to indicate that no joy is derived" (Setiloane, 1976:68).

Both Makeketa and his wife are young and against some ways of modern civilization. Makeketa uses rhetoric questions to emphasize his aversion for modern civilization: "Ke ditumelo tsa bomorwa-nka-ikuna, dilo tsa batho ba sena gaabo mogolo...O kile wa bona kae batho ba fitlha motho ba sa tlala seatla? Ga se segarona" (p. 14); [it is the beliefs of the civil people without home...Where have you seen so few people burying? It is not our culture.]

They believe in God. The priest is called to bury Makeketa's grandmother.

### 3.3.6 COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE

Malešwane does not address her husband rudely or without respect. When she is angry, she does not show it, she just keeps quiet. The way she communicates with her husband is very traditional. She uses words like 'kgaitsadi' meaning *sister*. It is easier for her to direct her anger to her employers and not to her husband. The communication she uses to men in particular is the language or the type of communication expected by traditional society.

Through the use of simile, the implied author tries to give the implied reader the reason why Makeketa has an extramarital affair. For example, "dikomang tsa batho ba nna ba le babedi mo lapeng jaaka maeba mo sentlhageng ga di fele" (p. 14); [The conflicts of two people staying in the house like doves in a nest does not end.] They stay together, Makeketa and his wife without a kid and this leads them to shout at each other as to avoid Makeketa from having an affair. This means that the implied author is in a way condoning Makeketa's actions.

The hyperbole in this short story, e.g. that he drives as if death is following him, is used in a context when Makeketa drives to finish the preparations and then drives to Garankuwa. It is again hyperbolically stated that Makeketa's thoughts are as fast as lightning. When aunt MmaKedirileng dies, the implied author uses metaphor to report her death. It is not said that she died but that she has passed away or that she has gone away forever.

### 3.3.7 GENDER ROLES

Malešwane grows up in rural areas where tradition is practised. She is influenced to follow culture and practise it even when she is staying in town. Deep down she is a traditional character belonging to her husband's family. Even when she tries to adopt the change from traditionalism to modernity by working, she still contains the rigid self-concept. She does not want to change from the traditional married woman who is expected not to work.

It is clear from the story that Malešwane's respect for her husband is portrayed in a positive way. She knows that her role in the family is not to buy a car and a house.



She respects her marriage. Even when she realises the problem of not having children, she does not think of cheating her husband. She is influenced by the society she grew up in, where she stays and leaves all the basic needs, like buying a house and a car, for her husband to do.

### **3.3.8 POSSIBLE RESPONSES BY YOUNG ADULTS (MALE AND FEMALE)**

Young male readers can be encouraged by this short story to take advantage of the traditional marriage. They know that a woman is not allowed to question her husband's whereabouts. The short story can serve as an eye-opener for young adults. They can realize that secrets in a marriage life are worthless and they will come out one day. The short story can again promote concubinage among the young adults. Young adults are not encouraged by the short story to be devoted to their marriages. Whenever there is a problem in their lives, this short story encourages them to quit and not to try and solve their problems. Young female readers are not motivated to intervene when necessary. For example, when Makeketa tells lies she knows her husband is lying but she keeps quiet. When they are alone she does not ask him why he lies, she cries. The short story enhances silence and low self-esteem in female characters.

### **3.3.9 SYNTHESIS**

Malešwane is a typical traditional character. She finds herself in a modern era and she does not adapt totally to modernity. It can be said that she respects the Batswana traditional culture. She knows that the married Motswana woman belongs to her husband's family. She is influenced by the place she grew up in (a rural place GaMosetlha). Makeketa is not honest and shields himself with the fact that the problem of not having children in his marriage causes him to go out and have an extra marital affair.

One must be able to endure hardships in one's marriage, no matter what the circumstances are. It is of importance to know that when one marries a person it is

not for reproduction purposes, as a couple they can adopt a child. People should learn the necessity of being honest.

### **3.4 “O RE TSHEGISA KA BADITŠHABA” [YOU ARE LETTING OTHER NATIONS LAUGH AT US]**

#### **3.4.1 SUMMARY: THE STORY IN A NUTSHELL**

Morongwe is telling her grandmother about her experiences with the education department. The implied author changes the narrator on purpose. Nowadays story-telling time is taken by television and again elders and old women are scarce. Some are taken to old age homes so they cannot narrate stories to their grandchildren. She has worked for a very long time without being paid a salary. Morongwe is depicted as a very dedicated teacher. In fact, she is not yet an employee of the department of education as her application forms are still in the principal's office. She then goes to the department's offices where she finds out that corruption is rampant.

The theme of this short story is to warn people who use their positions wrongly, e.g. where it is not necessary to oppress others. The implied author suggests that the problem is in education but does not point his finger exactly at what is wrong.

The people working at the department of education in this short story do not respect time. They do anything they want to do at any time. For example, they go out for breaks before the given time and come back after the time given. Morongwe meets Modisaotsile who is willing to give her the salary of a principal. When she gets paid the principal does not realize that the salary is not right, he is happy that Morongwe is getting paid and he boasts about having arranged everything. The principal does not know how much Morongwe as one of his teachers is supposed to get.

#### **3.4.2 NAME**

Names are important in portraying gender identity; they are given in the table below and then discussed.

**TABLE 3.3: Names in “O re tshegisa ka baditšhaba” [You are letting other nations laugh at us]**

NAME	MEANING	FUNCTION
Morongwa	The messenger	She is sent to break silence amongst the Batswana women.
Moilwa	The hated one	Administrator: Department of Education
Modisaotsile	The shepherd has arrived	Clerk: Department of Education. He is corrupt.
Mogokgo	The principal	He does not do his job as the principal, not because he does not know how to do it but because no one pushes him to do his work.
Motlhatlhobi	The inspector	He is very ignorant.

Morongwe (*the one who is sent*) is a character who is working under the authority constituted by male characters. She is the narrator and also the main character of this short story. She knows she must be silent and must not try to exchange words or try to reason with men. Morongwe in the short story is sent indirectly by traditional women (but actually by the implied author) to break the silence of women. She works for almost a year without salary. Morongwe confronts the principal. She keeps quiet for a very long time.. She is not silent because she is stupid or because she does not know her rights, but because she is a Motswana woman.

She breaks the silence by confronting the principal on salary matters. She tells the principal that when she was at university and training to be a teacher she was not told to be patient with the educational system when not paid. The principal is shocked



by Morongwe's reaction, he never expected her to confront him. She again tells the principal how rude he is.

After Morongwe's confrontation with the principal, she goes straight to the inspector's office to ask him if she is one of the teachers in his circuit. She does not even greet the inspector. She is direct with what she really wants to know. She avoids verbosity at all cost. Even when she is breaking the silence, she is still sticking to the language that is expected by the traditional society when a woman speaks to a man, which must be down to earth, respectful and clear.

When Morongwe leaves the office of the principal she asks whether he is still saying she should be patient. She has never complained before. She is in a way a traditional woman, very silent and pushed by the circumstances to break the silence.

Modisaotsile (*shepherd has arrived*) is one of the characters with a high profile in the Department of Education. He is very corrupt and a typical modern character. He does not respect time. He takes breaks whenever he feels like doing so. He needs bribery to do his job. After Morongwe has been pushed up and down he features in her life like a shepherd. He saves Morongwe all the trouble. He helps Morongwe hoping she will fall in love with him. He does not see Morongwe as anything else but as a woman who needs money and a man to help her survive. It does not occur to him that Morongwe might disclose all the corruption practised in the department.

### **3.4.3 AGE**

In this short story the idiom which applies, is 'phala e senang phalana ke lesilo', meaning *the grown up who does not listen to her or his children or to the young ones is stupid*. Grandmother Mmualebe learnt something from her grandchild. Morongwe briefs her on what is happening in modern life. MmaMmualebe, the traditional character, and Morongwe, the modern character, agree that the youth is going to school for far too long. They say that school is not the answer to daily problems.

MmaMmualebe says that passing the school grades must not be an honour or a sign of wisdom as examination papers are sold to the learners as if they were sweets. Morongwe gets the far better and more encouraging education that evening compared to the education she spent the years for in formal institutions, being the

universities. MmaMmualebe learns that the educated community of today must not be regarded as the light of the uneducated because they do not treat each other with respect.

MmaMmualebe is very sarcastic about the time taken in formal institutions, i.e. universities, whereas the learners are not trained to face the daily problems of just one evening. Traditionally, their elders taught children life experiences in the evenings around the fire. MmaMmualebe says that the modern generation goes to school just to come and boast with the qualifications they collected and not with the information and knowledge they have acquired.

MmaMmualebe accuses the modern generation of being afraid to look at themselves in the mirror. She says they know how to read and to write but they are not writing because they are afraid to show other nations what they are doing to each other. The narrated time is not exact as to whether the short story was told long ago or during the contemporary years. For example, the readers are told that the inspector arrives at school on Tuesday of that week but the readers do not know exactly which week is the week of the inspector's arrival.

#### **3.4.4 MARRIAGE**

Morongwe is not married but she has a boyfriend who is still at university studying law. The narrator of this short story says nothing more except that there is a boyfriend. It can be evident to the implied readers that marriage is not her priority. She is much concerned with her career.

#### **3.4.5 RELIGION**

Morongwe is a modern woman but she is strongly influenced by culture. In her mind she is a traditionalist. She is working and still upholds the beliefs of culture that a woman should be quiet when a man speaks. She knows that she must be silent and must not exchange words with men. When she confronts the principal, she still does not throw away the respect she must show to men.

Modern ways do not change Morongwe's belief in traditional culture. She does know that she must respect men and must not exchange words with them.

### **3.4.6 COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE**

Morongwe remains silent when she is not paid. She knows her rights and definitely is not stupid but she is a Motswana woman. She gets angry and confronts the principal. She confronts the principal and tells him he is rude. After Morongwe's confrontation with the principal, she goes straight to the inspector's office to ask him if she is one of the teachers employed in his circuit.

She proofs anger when she does not greet the inspector. She is direct with what she really wants to know. She avoids verbosity at all costs with the inspector. Even when she breaks the silence, she sticks to the language that is expected by the society- when a woman speaks to a man she must be clear and be respectful.

Morongwe bangs the door of the principal's office when she leaves. She is angry and still maintains the low voice and the respect when she addresses the principal. The implied author uses borrowed words from English. This is done because some of these borrowed words are not in the Setswana vocabulary, for example, 'ofisi = office', 'sekerete = cigarette'.

### **3.4.7 GENDER ROLES**

Morongwe relied solely on the principal's word. She should have gone to the department herself to see to it that she was properly appointed long before she started working. She relies on a man to run her errands such as making enquiries about not being paid for several months. In a way she still believes that a man must perform certain tasks. When she reaches the education department, she does not get the help she expected.

All men in the department treat her rudely. They are not willing to help her. She then meets Modisaotsile who once proposed to her while at school, about nine years before. She uses the opportunity and acts as if she still is considering Modisaotsile's



proposal. She again relies on Modisaotsile, a man again, to help her solve her salary problem.

In a way Morongwe strongly believes that men are there to work on behalf of women. She still leaves the salary matter on Modisaotsile's shoulders to settle. She deceives Modisaotsile just as Delilah did with Samson. She is told by Modisaotsile about the department's corruption's and secrets and she intends to tell her political organisation which still is perhaps to win the coming elections in order to sort out the corruption. She is also corrupt because after waiting for several months unpaid, she accepts the salary that belongs to the principal. She uses her beauty to be paid.

#### **3.4.8 POSSIBLE RESPONSES BY YOUNG ADULTS (MALE AND FEMALE)**

In this short story, the young adult can gain a lot especially in matters concerning today's life. For example, they learn that whenever you are appointed you must know the terms of the contract. In short, one must make certain that the documentation is intact and properly confirmed by a letter of appointment. They can realize that you should not wait for other people to run your errands. Young female readers can see that they need education in their lives. Young male readers will want to change the situation of corruption. In so doing they will learn and find work to eradicate this corruption in the working sphere. It encourages both the male and female readers not to trust anyone. Morongwe acts as if she considers Modisaotsile's proposal, whereas she actually wants to be helped with the payment issue.

#### **3.4.9 SYNTHESIS**

Morongwe, the main character of the short story, is an ambassador for the Batswana women. She breaks the silence. She is a modern woman with deep roots of traditional culture. She knows that traditionally she must be silent and must not exchange words with men. She breaks the silence by confronting the principal on salary matters. When the confrontation with the principal does not work, she goes straight to the inspector's office.

The author wants to bring to the surface the notion that the literate people do not serve as the light to the illiterates. People with higher posts can be and are very irresponsible. He again emphasizes that favouritism is working in the department of education. For example, Morongwe gets help because Modisaotsile favours her. The short story disturbs the ego of the males when it shows that males in the upper educational levels are irresponsible and do not execute their duties properly.

### **3.5 “O NKUTLWE” [YOU MUST LISTEN TO ME]**

#### **3.5.1 SUMMARY: THE STORY IN A NUTSHELL**

When Mofeti dies, he leaves his wife and two children behind. The wife is not working and the children are still young. His funeral is a very expensive one. Kedisaletse, his wife, is supposed to be married to Mofeti's younger brother, Tholo. Mr. Viljoen, the superintendent, wants to chase Kedisaletse out of the house, but Kedisaletse promises to find work. Mr Matlapeng wants Tholo to remarry Kedisaletse. In this he will be saving his brother's family.

Kedisaletse asks the reverend if it is possible for her to be remarried to Tholo and he says that those kinds of marriages are not accepted. Kedisaletse has problems with the Matlapeng family and they do not visit her house anymore. Pekwa, Mofeti's best friend, arrives as if he brings his condolences. He starts to buy food for Kedisaletse and her children. He then starts to sleep at Kedisaletse's house and to use Mofeti's car as he tells her that standing in the garage is not good for the car.

Pekwa convinces Kedisaletse to make a trade-in for a Chev and then he buys a combi using his name. Kedisaletse falls pregnant and Pekwa is nowhere to be found. Later on, he is found in the hospital, very sick. Kedisaletse is chased out of the house because Pekwa did not keep his side of the bargain of paying the rent. Kedisaletse gives birth to a premature baby who resembles Pekwa. Her beauty fades away.

The implied author shows the implied readers the conflict between modernity and traditional culture. The problems that are in this short story are of marriage, death and the maintaining of the orphans. The theme of this short story is the undermining

of culture and that the young people do not have control over their lives due to the influence of modern civilization.

### 3.5.2 NAME

The names are given in table form, and then discussed.

**TABLE 3.4: Names in “O nkutlwe” [You must listen to me]**

NAME	MEANING	FUNCTION
Kedisaletse	I have remained for it (it-troubles)	She is a typical Motswana woman, married uneducated and unemployed.
Mofeti	One who passes	He is the husband to Kedisaletse and he dies immediately when the story begins.
Tsholo	Caring	He is a medical doctor who strongly believes in Christianity.
Ketlamoreng	What can I do to her?	The father to Kedisaletse who promotes traditional values of the Batswana of marriages.
Pekwa	A bird (hawk)	He is a cheater, he again believes in taking other people's properties. He does not value a woman, only as a sexual partner.
Tlhobolo	A gun	The elder son of the late Mofeti and Kedisaletse.
Seteno	A brick	The younger son to Kedisaletse and Mofeti.
Matlapeng	At the stones	The father in law of Kedisaletse who believes that women are incapable of taking decisions.
Tholo	Kudu	A teacher who is still a bachelor and does not want to marry his brother's wife due to modern ways.



Mofeti (*the one who passes*), passes away when the short story begins. The whole story revolves around his presence and still after his death the story continues. When he passes away, the conflict between the traditional culture and Christianity begins. His name can amplify both death and the beginning. It can symbolize the death of Kedisaletse's husband, the end of Kedisaletse's luxurious life. It can also symbolize of the beginning of cultural conflicts.

Mr Matlapeng (*at the stones*) as Nchoe (1998:37) has defined, is a referential character in the short story promoting traditional customs and culture. After the death of his son, Kedisaletse's husband, he plans that his youngest son Tholo remarries Kedisaletse. His only fear is the fact that Tholo is shy, civilized and a teacher. His name, Matlapeng, can symbolize the death of his son and the figurative death of his late son's family, and he still believes that a woman is a child and cannot maintain the house alone without a man.

Mr. Matlapeng is blaming civilization for destroying culture. He says that traditionally the woman is not married to her husband but to the husband's family and relatives. He is not happy about the coffin that is bought for Mofeti, his deceased son. Instead the cow's skin that people are traditionally buried in should have been used.

Pekwa (*hawk*) is a typical modern man who parasites on women who are considered to have money after the death of their husbands. He acts as if he is heartbroken by the death of Mofeti. He knows that Mofeti is dead and Kedisaletse is not working. That means he will be Kedisaletse's helper in this troubled time. He advises Kedisaletse not to remarry Tholo because of his selfish reasons. Pekwa is a great pretender. He pretends to help Kedisaletse but his aim is to take everything that belongs to her. Pekwa promises to buy food and to pay the rent. He does not advise Kedisaletse to look for a job, as he believes that women should not work for themselves whereas there are men like him who are willing to work for them (women). As Nchoe has stated, Pekwa impregnates Kedisaletse and denies the responsibility of which he knows very well he should assume responsibility. Even when he moves out he does not explain to Kedisaletse, as he believes that a woman does not qualify for an explanation as to why he moves out. He is a parasite, he destroys and robs people of their properties. The implied author uses this character to criticize modern civilization.

Kedisaletse (*the one left with troubles*) is too silent. She remains with trouble and sorrow after the death of her husband. It is not amazing when the reader meets her without happiness, the world against her, relatives leaving her, Mofeti, her husband, dying and Viljoen on her back with threats about the payments of rent (Mashike, 1988:70). The above mentioned incidents are the problems encountered by Kedisaletse is in. During the husband's funeral and throughout the preparation she says nothing. The preparations are done without her input. She is not told about the meeting concerning her being remarried to the same family. When her husband's death is reported, she just keeps on crying and says nothing. Kedisaletse feels that she is not a property that is passed from one to the other, but she does not tell the parents. She keeps on postponing the date saying she still wants to pray, whereas she should have told them she does not want to marry Tholo. She is not direct with her feelings for Pekwa and knows very well that she loves him but she does not say it. She addresses Pekwa in a very respectable language. For example: "re Pekwa, go dilodilwana tse ke neng ke batla gore o di nthuse, tsweetswee (p. 49); [Mr Pekwa, there are some things that I want you to help me with, please.] She realizes that she is not going to make it in life without a man, so she replaces her husband with Pekwa. When Pekwa leaves her life, she goes straight home. She is unable to get a job as she got married while still in school and did not continue studying after marriage. She permits Pekwa to sell her husband's car in a very evasive way of talking. She should have said yes, but she says that he should do whatever he thinks right. She is depicted in a stereotyped way, especially with men. She does not decide for herself.

### **3.5.3 AGE**

Mr Matlapeng (*at the stones*) is a referential character. He is also a traditional character who promotes traditional customs and culture. After the death of his son, Mofeti (Kedisaletse's husband), he plans that his youngest son Tholo marry Kedisaletse. He forgets that in the modern times, people look for their own partners. The tradition of parents looking for spouses for their children is contrasted here with modernity.

He still believes that a woman cannot maintain the house alone as he says a woman is just like a child, and she cannot decide. He decides that Kedisaletse be married to Tholo without discussing it with her first. His sons refuse to marry Kedisaletse, not because they do not love her, but because of modern civilization. Mr Matlapeng blames modern civilization for he says it destroys traditional culture. He still maintains the belief that traditionally the woman is not married to her husband but to the husband's family and relatives. This is why he cannot understand why is it difficult for his sons as Kedisaletse is married into their family. He is also not happy about the expensive coffin that is bought to bury Mofeti (his son) as he prefers the cowskin.

#### **3.5.4 MARRIAGE**

Mr Matlapeng realizes that Kedisaletse has a big problem and he decides to help. In helping, he uses traditional ways. He asks Tholo, one of his other sons, a bachelor, to marry Kedisaletse. In so doing he will be taking responsibility over from his deceased brother. Tholo refuses. Mr Matlapeng asks his elder son to resort to polygamous marriage and he too refuses. He tries to show his sons the advantages of marrying Kedisaletse, but all in vain.

Mr Matlapeng predicts that failing for Kedisaletse to be remarried in the Matlapeng family to one of his sons, Mofeti's properties will end up in the wrong hands. He says Kedisaletse will end up being intimate with each and every man she meets. Everything he predicts happens. He, as an old man, knows what he is referring to. He is guiding his children from what he knows, from his experience in life.

#### **3.5.5 RELIGION**

It is implied in this short story that modern civilization can be blamed for many things that go wrong. It is also implied that in modern times people hate their traditional culture. Kedisaletse is called to the municipality offices to let her know that she will have to vacate the house, as the person who rented the house, died. She goes to the municipality's offices a week after her husband's funeral, which is according to traditional culture wrong, as a widow should not be seen on streets, as she is regarded as a danger to the society. She kneels down to ask for mercy from the



Matlapeng's ancestors. This proves to the readers that she is indeed trusting in ancestors that they do have power over the living.

When the Matlapeng's ancestors intervene by giving old man Matlapeng the thought of advising his sons to marry Kedisaletse, she fails to appreciate their intervention. For example, the ancestors intervene by indicating that Kedisaletse should marry Tholo, but she refuses. Kedisaletse falls in love with Pekwa. She sells the Chev and Pekwa buys a Datsun E20 cash. He uses the money they got from selling the Chev and adds only R2000. This is what Mr Matlapeng meant when he said that his son's property would fall into the wrong hands. People are sent to repossess the furniture and to lock the house. Kedisaletse is pregnant and Pekwa denies that he is the father to the unborn child. Kedisaletse loses everything and goes back home. As Pekwa cheats on Kedisaletse, it can be traced back to Mr. Matlapeng's last words in Kedisaletse's house when he warns her that she must not expect fortune to smile on her.

Kedisaletse prays to the ancestors of the Matlapeng family to assist her, but she does not accept their assistance. After all, when her possessions are taken from her, she prays that God should punish Pekwa. Pekwa is admitted to hospital due to an incurable sickness. Christianity is strongly emphasized, because it is suggested that her prayers are answered.

### **3.5.6 COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE**

All features according to Mashike (1988:80) in this short story, like the plot and characters are shown with the help of the language. The implied author uses simile to express the likeness of the township houses, for example: "Aitsane matlo a lekeishene ga a tlhalege jaaka dikgomo" (p. 41); [township houses cannot be differentiated like cattle].

A metaphor is used together with a hyperbole to stress exactly how young Kedisaletse is when her husband dies, for example; "A hulara jalo morwa Matlapeng-Bra Feti, atlogela Kedisaletse e le legamma, thaka ya thari, bana e le dirathane" (p. 43); [He passed away that way Matlapeng's son, leaving Kedisaletse like a virgin, ready to make children, kids infants.] Kedisaletse has two children when her husband

dies. The implied author suggests that Kedisaletse is really young by hyperbolically saying she is a virgin.

Kedisaletse respects Pekwa very much and when she talks to him, she does not use his name. She calls him a brother. Her children call him Uncle Pekwa. She knows she does not want to be married to Tholo but she does not confront the elders about it.

### **3.5.7 GENDER ROLES**

Kedisaletse is a perfect housewife. She does washing, raises the children and cooks for her husband. She is unable to find a job as she is not educated. She gets married at an early age while she is still in school and after marriage she does not go back to school. She replaces her husband with Pekwa, her husband's friend.

She is stereotyped, especially in her relationship with men of all ages. She does not decide for herself. She possesses beauty and not brains. After the death of her husband, she is devastated and the family arrives to prepare for the funeral and she does nothing. Kedisaletse leaves Pretoria after everything has been taken from her. Everything, meaning the house by the municipality, the car and her beauty by Pekwa. It can be concluded that she is going to Soweto to stay with her parents because she is unable to maintain herself. The implied author uses Mr. Matlapeng as a male character to say (in a conversation thus in the dialogue of the story) that a woman is just like a child.

### **3.5.8 POSSIBLE RESPONSES BY YOUNG ADULTS (MALE AND FEMALE)**

The young female readers can see the necessity of being educated and to have a job or career and an income of their own. Kedisaletse has a problem, she is not working and this results in her doing some wrong things in order to survive. For example, she gives herself to Pekwa. They can also learn to listen to their elders or else they will end up with problems. It again teaches the young female readers that beauty is not more important than brains.

### **3.5.9 SYNTHESIS**

The implied author points out that if one fails to listen to the elders, one ends up in the streets. The story is narrated from a male perspective. Kedisaletse is blamed for everything that has happened.

### **3.6 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter aspects of cultural identity, i.e. name, age, marriage, religion, communication and language, and gender roles have been discussed in detail and with the integration of gender identity and its representation in the short stories. From the analysis of these four short stories it is evident that the mediators like educators can use these stories to give young adults a better understanding of gender identity in the current problematics with regard to traditionalism, modernity and the Batswana people.

## CHAPTER 4

# COMPARISON OF *MMUALEBE*'S SHORT STORIES: VARIANTS AND CONSTANTS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The four short stories of *Mmualebe* which are: Bodiba jo bo jeleng ngwana'a mmaago..." [Once bitten, twice shy]; "Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng" [Secrets have their own way of coming out]; "O re tshegisa ka baditšhaba" [You are letting other nations laugh at us]; " O nkutiwe" [You must listen to me], are analyzed in the previous chapter. In this chapter, these four short stories of *Mmualebe* are compared.

In this chapter, the focus is on the variants and constants of the comparison between the four short stories of *Mmualebe*. The comparison of these short stories is based on the cultural aspects of identity, i.e. the name, age, marriage, religion, communication and language, and gender role. The summary and the conclusion of the mini-dissertation are also discussed in this chapter.

### 4.2 VARIANTS BETWEEN THE FOUR SHORT STORIES IN *MMUALEBE*

#### 4.2.1 CULTURAL ASPECTS OF GENDER IDENTITY

The cultural aspects of gender identity being name, age, marriage, religion, communication and language and gender role are discussed with the focus on the variants between the four short stories of *Mmualebe*. These variants are first listed in a tabular form and discussed in detail after the particular table.



**TABLE 4.1: VARIANTS**

ASPECTS OF CULTURAL IDENTITY	TITLES OF SHORT STORIES			
	"Bodiba jo bo Jeleng ngwana'a mmaago" [Once bitten, twice shy]	"Le fa o ka e buela lengopeg" [Secrets have their own way of coming out]	"O re tshegisa ka baditšhaba" [You are letting other nations laugh at us]	"O nkutlwe" [You must listen to me]
<b>Name</b>	Tselane, Mathulewe	Malešwane, Ditsele	Morongwe, Mmualebe and Mogokgo	Kedisaletse, Monnamogolo Matlapeng
<b>Age</b>	Old wise woman relates a story to the young woman about today's generation	A young woman gets orders from an old man	A traditionalist young woman is pressurised by the circumstances to act in contradiction with traditional values	The young generation acts totally against the values of the old generation
<b>Marriage</b>	Concubinage (marriage is for status)	Childless marriage (marriage for commitment and love)	Career influence on marriage (marriage to them is only a cultural custom)	Marriage is for a better life
<b>Religion</b>	Life associated with modernity (Christianity is not of great significance)	Ancestors and Christianity are emphasized	Traditional culture and Christianity are mentioned	Christianity (has a strong hold) versus traditionalism
<b>Communication and language</b>	Mmualebe communicates with Morongwe in a way that is polite and that teaches. She uses idioms, proverbs and cultural beliefs and values	The old man communicates with a young woman using traditional dominating language	A young woman communicates with a man in a respectful manner; many words are borrowed from English	A young woman is still afraid to confront the old man. Hyperbole, simile and metaphor are used in the dialogue
<b>Gender roles</b>	Cheating married woman. She cheats her husband	Honest married woman. Husband cheats her	Career woman. Uses men to get what she wants	Housewife and a working husband



#### 4.2.1.1 Name

In “Bodiba jo bo jeleng ngwana’a mmaago” [Once bitten, twice shy], Tselane is a modern character and a social worker. She conducts her life in a modern way. For example, she double-crosses men hoping to get married. She proposes to a man, which is traditionally wrong for a woman to do. She needs a man in her life for the status of being called a married woman. Tselane is very shy. She falls pregnant and her shyness clouds her mind. She decides on abortion. Mathulwe (the one who destroys), just like his name, destroys other people’s lives. He talks Tselane into having an affair with him and he knows it can destroy her marriage if her husband finds out about it.

In “Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng” [Secrets have their own way of coming out], Malešwane is a typical traditional woman. She resembles a Motswana woman who does what is expected of her by the Batswana community. She is a traditionalist. She believes in basics, for example the house and a car are to be bought by men. Her behaviour is influenced by the environment she grew up in, a rural area where traditional culture is practised. She does live in an urban area but she is not influenced by the urban culture. She is not educated. Ditsele, the wise old man gives orders and he does not care what Malešwane thinks. He is only concerned with Makeketa who is a man. He is very traditional and he believes that a man should worry about the whereabouts of a woman and not vice versa.

In “O re tshegisa ka baditšhaba” [You are letting other nations laugh at us], Morongwe is caught up in the middle. She is forced by the circumstances she finds herself in to act in contradiction with her traditional beliefs. She is a Motswana woman who keeps quiet and respects men. She is also caught up in breaking the silence of the Batswana women towards men. She respects men and she is also a straight talker. She serves as the spokesperson for the Batswana women. She is personally a cultured person, with cultural values of a Motswana woman. Publicly she is a bit westernized. For example, she confronts men in the education department. Mogokgo is only in a principal’s post because he is a man. The above-mentioned fact is supported by the fact that he does not perform his duty, e.g. of taking the new appointee’s form to the department’s offices. He knows that a woman should not

exchange words with a man and this is the reason he is amazed by Morongwe's confrontations.

In "O nkutlwe" [You must listen to me] Kedisaletse is an excellent example of the Motswana woman. She is married, uneducated, unemployed, a housewife, very good in a reproduction role and very beautiful just like the princesses in the folktales. Just like the princesses, she cannot save herself from the manipulations by Pekwa. She awaits somebody to rescue her. The only place of rescue is her parents' home after everything is taken away from her. She knows she cannot make it in life without a man. Through her name, the reader can detect what is going to happen in her life. Old Matlapeng is against the fact that Kedisaletse must stay unmarried. He is a typical traditional man. He strongly believes that a man should take care of a woman.

Throughout these four short stories, the names are used to refer to the main characters. It is known that names are very supporting when it comes to revealing the characters to the readers. These four main characters are women with different ways of living. It is evident that there is a thin line between rural and urban culture at the work place and the university. In this case, the rural culture is represented by home and urban culture by the work place and the university. At home Tselane has one boyfriend. She starts double-crossing men at university. Tselane is easily influenced by the environment. Malešwane does not change at the workplace or at home. She has a backbone. Morongwe's character is changed by the circumstances. Kedisaletse has never had an experience with the urban culture. She grew up in a very protective and traditional family. Each short story has its own unique characters.

#### **4.2.1.2 Age**

In "Bodiba jo bo jeleng ngwana'a mmaago" [Once bitten, twice shy] MmaMmualebe, the old woman, tells the story in a traditional perspective to a young woman, Morongwe, about today's generation. The fact that the narrator is an old woman concretizes the above-mentioned fact. The way the short story is narrated helps to reveal the interaction of traditional culture and modernity. This short story teaches this young woman how to go about in life.

In “Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng” [Secrets have their own way of coming out] old Ditsele is used to give orders to the young generation. The short story is written in a complex way. Some of the events takes place in an urban area. The young people's use of time relies on a clock. In rural areas, the old people use the sun for time. They do not use the exact time. For example, it is sunrise instead of it is six o'clock.

In “O re tshegisa ka baditšhaba” [You are letting other nations laugh at us] the young woman is used to break the shackles of oppression of the Batswana women. The short story is full of urban culture. Traditionally, a woman is not supposed to confront men and in this short story the opposite is done. This shows that the short story refers to modernity.

In “O nkutlwe” [You must listen to me] the narrator shows how stubborn young women of today can be. The narrator emphasizes it that young people do as they wish and end up in trouble. Old man Matlapeng tries to put the traditional cultural values into the young generation's minds and he fails.

In “Bodiba jo bo jeleng ngwana'a mmaago” [Once bitten, twice shy] and “O nkutlwe” [You must listen to me] the narrators who are old people, are passive participants. In “O re tshegisa ka baditšhaba” [You are letting other nations laugh at us] and “Le fa o ka e buela lengopeng” [Secrets have their own way of coming out] the narrators, also the old people, are actively involved.

#### **4.2.1.3 Marriage**

In “Bodiba jo bo jeleng ngwana'a mmaago” [Once bitten, twice shy], the main character is married but she has marital problems. These marital problems lead to concubinage. Tselane is married for status and not for love. She loves her concubine more than her husband. To her marriage is a status. Tselane proposes to Moatlhodi. Traditional culture does not allow a woman to propose marriage to a man thus Tselane acts in contradiction to her culture. It is evident that Tselane is influenced by the peer group pressure from the urban culture (university) to be unfaithful to her home boyfriend. She wants people to think she is faithful to her husband and she is not. This pretence of her being honest in her marriage leads to her unexpected



death. Tselane is educated and a social worker by profession but still believes that she must have a husband.

In “Le fa o ka ebuela lengopeng” [Secrets have their own way of coming out], the main character is in a childless marriage. Her husband gets involved in an extra marital affair. To Malešwane, the main character, marriage is a commitment. She is very honest in her marriage but things do not work out. There is an inconsistency between what she believes of her husband and what her husband really is. She experiences her husband as an honest man which he, in reality, is not. Malešwane is a housewife. She is working but cannot get it in her mind that she can afford a house and a car because she believes that it is the duty of a man to buy these things.

In “O re tshegisa ka baditšhaba” [You are letting other nations laugh at us], Morongwe is about to get married. She pretends to love Modisaotsile in order to get her salary. To her, marriage is a two-way process. She focuses on her career.

In “O nkutlwe” [you must listen to me], Kedisaletse, the main character, is married and then the husband dies. After the husband's death, she is introduced to a new culture of which she does not have experience. She gets involved with Pəkwa, her late husband's best friend. To her marriage is for the sake of a luxurious life. She knows, for example, knows her husband must work for her. Kedisaletse is a traditional, uneducated, married woman.

The main characters are married for different reasons. In the first short story, Tselane is married for status. Malešwane in the second short story is married for commitment and love. In the third short story marriage is a cultural custom. It is highly influenced by the careers of the particular characters. In the fourth short story, Kedisaletse, the main character takes marriage as a ticket to a luxurious life.

#### **4.2.1.4 Religion**

In “Bodiba jo bo jeleng ngwana’a mmaago” [Once bitten, twice shy], life is associated with modernity. The characters in this short story are influenced by urban culture. The characters, being the young adults, arrange marriages without involving their parents and that is culturally wrong as a parent is the one who should arrange marriage for his or her child. Parents serve as the authority and after their death, they are

ancestors, so if they are not involved problems and difficulties can be expected. The characters do not have a problem with Christianity as there is nothing negative about it in the short story.

In “Le fa o ka ebuela lengopeng” [Secrets have their own way of coming out], the main character believes in ancestors and traditional culture. They do follow some of the traditional values that do not inconvenience their lives. For example, traditionally, when there is a funeral the family and relative members should come on Monday for the Saturday funeral to help with the funeral, but Makeketa’s wife arrives at the funeral on the Saturday of the funeral. Makeketa does not involve parents in his problem of not having children in his house, but simply assumes that his problem can be solved by getting involved with another woman.

In “O re tshegisa ka baditšhaba” [You are letting other nations laugh at us], the main character breaks the silence. She confronts male characters in the education department. Morongwe believes in traditional religion but she does know that there is God.

In “O nkutlwe” [You must listen to me] the young generation characters go for Christianity and the old generation characters go for traditional cultural religion. It is evident that these differences in religion create a gap between the older generation and the younger generation. Those from the younger generation do not want to do some of the things that those from the older generation want them to do, for instance, when Kedisaletse refuses to be married to Tholo, Mofeti’s younger brother, after the death of Mofeti. The main character is a Christian.

The main characters in these four short stories have different religions that govern their lives.

#### **4.2.1.5 Communication and language**

The narrator in “Bodiba jo bo jeleng ngwana’a mmaago” [Once bitten, twice shy], uses imagery symbols as simile, metaphor, hyperbole, idioms, proverbs and cultural features as values and morals. MmaMmualebe communicates to Tselane in a polite way and a way that teaches.



In “Le fa o ka ebuela lengopeng” [Secrets have their own way of coming out], the language that is expected by society is used, i.e. traditional language.

In “O re tshegisa ka baditšhaba” [You are letting other nations laugh at us], no imagery is used. Communication is conducted in a traditional and a dominating way. Some of the words are borrowed from the English language. It might be the fact that she lacks the Setswana vocabulary because in this new generation, the language is deteriorating.

In “O nkutlwe” [You must listen to me], simile, hyperbole and metaphor are used. It is evident that the young woman is still afraid to confront the old man and to exchange words with him.

As far as communication is concerned there are a few minor problems. Women characters cannot speak out. The silence of women is often a sign of underlying problems in relationships.

#### **4.2.1.6 Gender roles**

Tselane, in “Bodiba jo bo jeleng ngwana’a mmaago” [Once bitten, twice shy], cannot be trusted as a married woman. She can only be trusted as a career woman. She is educated and a social worker by profession.

In “Le fa o ka ebuela lengopeng” [Secrets have their own way of coming out], Malešwane is a very honest married woman. She values her marriage more than her job. She respects her husband even when he is wrong. She is traditionally the married woman expected by the community. She is a respected woman who does not ask her husband about his whereabouts.

Morongwe in “O re tshegisa ka baditšhaba” [You are letting other nations laugh at us], is unmarried but will be married when her boyfriend graduates from university. It seems marriage is not her priority. Morongwe is a career woman who fights for the rights of other women. She wants changes but does not act radically. She realizes that women are in shackles of oppression and she wants to change this state of oppression, but at the same time she endeavours to avoid unnecessary conflict which could result because of traditional customs and beliefs.

In “O nkutlwe” [You must listen to me], Kedisaletse, the main character, is married and her husband dies. She cohabits with her late husband’s best friend. She is a very good housewife. She misjudges men by comparing them to her late husband. She is too trusting. She can have children and is good at rearing them. When the cohabitation does not work, she goes back to her parents to be supported by them, because she cannot maintain herself and both her children.

#### **4.2.2 SYNTHESIS**

There are significant differences between these four short stories. The titles are different, the names of the characters are different, aspects of time and space differ. It is also evident that the themes to these four short stories are different.

There are also many similarities between these four short stories. Accordingly the constants which are evident in a comparison of the four short stories will be discussed.

### **4.3 CONSTANTS OF *MMUALEBE*’S FOUR SHORT STORIES**

#### **4.3.1 CULTURAL ASPECTS OF GENDER IDENTITY**

The cultural aspects of gender identity being the name, age, marriage, religion, communication and language, and gender roles are discussed with the focus on the constants between the four short stories. These constants are listed in a tabular form and discussed in more detail and with gender identity development integrated.

**TABLE 4.2: Constants**

ASPECTS OF CULTURAL IDENTITY	TITLES OF SHORT STORIES			
	"Bodiba jo bo jeleng ngwana'a mmaago" [Once bitten, twice shy]	"Le fa o ka e buela lengopeg" [Secrets have their own way of coming out]	"O re tshegisa ka baditšhaba" [You are letting other nations laugh at us]	"O nkutlwe" [You must listen to me]
<b>Name</b>	Importance of names and their meanings	Women and men's name-giving	Women and men's name-giving	Women and men's name-giving
<b>Age</b>	Older generation and younger generation	Older generation and younger generation	Older generation and younger generation	Older generation and younger generation
<b>Marriage</b>	Marriage is important	Marriage is important	Marriage is important	Marriage is important
<b>Religion</b>	Traditional religious values as well as Christian values	Traditional religious values as well as Christian values	Traditional religious values as well as Christian values	Traditional religious values as well as Christian values
<b>Communication and language</b>	The characters communicate in a respectful way with each other, but the female characters are expected not to confront male characters	The characters communicate in a respectful way with each other, but the female characters are expected not to confront male characters	The characters communicate in a respectful way with each other, but the female characters are expected not to confront male characters	The characters communicate in a respectful way with each other, but the female characters are expected not to confront male characters
<b>Gender roles</b>	Male characters dominate female characters	Male characters dominate female characters	Male characters dominate female characters	Male characters dominate female characters

#### 4.3.1.1 Name

It is evident that all the main characters in the four short stories are women. There are both men and women characters in these four short stories. Name-giving to both



men and women plays an important role in the short stories. All the names used in these four short stories do have meanings. All women main characters in the four short stories have problems in their lives. The women in these four short stories are dominated by men. There is much more to this name-giving: a name gives a person a certain idea of his own identity. In a short story, names determine the identity of that character.

#### **4.3.1.2 Age**

The female main characters are of the same age group that ranges from 18-25 years. In these four short stories both an older generation and a younger generation are presented. In these short stories there are some aspects that prove to the readers that those from the older generation do have a developed gender identity as their ideas and behaviour do not lead them to problems. The younger generation should in some way follow and respect the traditional customs to be on the safer side.

#### **4.3.1.3 Marriage**

The main characters are women and are of the same age group. Marriage as well as concubinage is included in these four short stories. Marriage is regarded as important and its importance is illustrated in these four short stories. It can be argued that these women in the short stories still have the mentality that men should be there and help them through their lifetime. Gender identity development can be affected by marriage in the traditional sense of the word, as some of the women do not understand the reason for marriage and do not see the necessity of having a career, because they reason that the husband will assume responsibility for taking care of her and the family.

Male characters in these four short stories believe in having a wife and an affair. They like going around, cheating on their partners. Like the women they do, however, believe that marriage is very important.

#### **4.3.1.4 Religion**

The main characters in these four short stories do have religion that governs their lives. These main characters do know and believe in God. With the above-mentioned statement it can be said that they are Christians. There are some ways of Christianity that the traditional characters feel are wrong and not to be followed. Some traditional characters feel that the Christian characters prefer Christianity to traditionalism.

According to most of the religious approaches, beliefs and practices distinguishable roles and positions are allocated to the men and the women respectively. This also applies to the inherent and fundamental religious approaches and practices of the Africa traditionalism and the Christian belief. It is when these two religions exercise a mutual influence on a continuing basis that conflict can so often be counted among the consequences, especially as a result of changed and changing times and circumstances. In the stories included in *Mmualebe* such religion-related problems are brought to the fore. In the presentation the emphasis is placed on the ways in which both male and female characters react, whether it be to ignore or respect Africa tradition or the Christian approach. In the stories of *Mmualebe* there are suggestions and indications that an acceptable reconciliation of the two religions poses quite a challenge, especially to the ways in which the Batswana communities actually lead their lives, or should lead their lives according to the Batswana traditional culture. It would seem that the simultaneous positioning of both these religions in the immediate environment of the Batswana people, makes it difficult to altogether rule out conflict between the older generation and the younger generation, or inner conflict due to uncertainties in any of the two groups separately, also with regard to gender identity.

#### **4.3.1.5 Communication and language**

Different kinds of imagery is used. The narrators of the four short stories use language in a respectful and acceptable way, a way that would meet the requirements of the Batswana society and tradition. The characters talk to each other in a polite way. It is also evident in the comparison of the stories that there are communication problems between the male and female characters.



#### **4.3.1.6 Gender roles**

In the four short stories, main characters do have a variety of choices. The male characters are expected to take care of the female characters and they are doing just that. The female characters function as part of a binary opposition with the male characters who are their husbands or, in the case of Morongwe, a lover.

#### **4.3.2 SYNTHESIS**

Those from the older generation want the new generation to live with the values and the beliefs of the past. They say the modern style adopted by those from the more modern generation leads them into trouble. The emphasis is on the modern ways perceived by the old generation as wrong ways of life.

#### **4.4 SUITABILITY OF THE SHORT STORIES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG ADULTS' GENDER IDENTITY**

Young adults can use these short stories to help themselves develop a positive gender identity. They could read the short stories, interpret them and then try to identify with the characters in whom they are interested. It is necessary for young adults to read these short stories under supervision of a mediator who is familiar with the cultural background and gender identity issues. These four short stories should be read with a positive attitude by young adults.

The short stories in *Mmualebe*, by R.M. Malope could exercise a negative influence on boys and a positive influence on girls. Girls can be positively affected as they can choose not to identify with the female characters of these four short stories. They can choose to stand up for their rights especially when it comes to gender identity. Boys can choose to identify with the male characters in the stories and continue with the domination of women. Even though there are well-trained mediators of these short stories, some of them might be male mediators who feel that dominating women is their right, and then the problem of developing a healthy and balanced gender identity still remains. This issue calls for further research.

## 4.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

There is a vast contrast between the traditional cultural beliefs and modern ways of thinking. The traditional culture allows a person to have a second wife if there is a need, but in most cases modernity does not. For example, if the first wife cannot give birth then the second wife is an option. In the modern way, medication is an option. Traditionally, when a husband dies, the widow is then remarried by the deceased's brother. It is believed that if the widow gets married to another family, disaster will fall on her. The universal problematics of the generation-gap between the older generation and the younger generation manifests very explicitly in the representation of gender identity within the context of the contrast between traditionalism and modernity.

People should give their children names with a positive meaning. When one gives a name to a person it should not be with a diminutive meaning. For example, a name like Phenyio (meaning *victory*) is a good name because the person who possesses the name can have the self-concept of being victorious in life. Being married is not wrong. One of the wrong things about marriage is the reason one gets married for. If one gets married for reasons other than love and commitment then that marriage is wrong. Getting to know other people and living with them in a healthy way is achieved through communication. A lack of proper communication results in a lack of proper understanding. It should be emphasized that communication may be either verbal or non-verbal. Gender roles must be taken into consideration. The constitution of South Africa must be used as the guiding material and all genders must be respected. But most of all religion should be regarded as the foundation and governing principle in people's lives, as it offers direction in the development of gender identity.

It does not mean that the younger generation should be accused of throwing away the traditional cultural ways, but rather that they are not well informed. The old generation should realize that the new generation is living in a new era with new information and new equipment. It is necessary that people know where they are from and use the background as the compass of their lives. The cultural traditional background should be upgraded to accommodate the modern ways of life. Religion should be there to govern people's lives. It offers direction in a person's life.

In conclusion, it is evident that most men and women need workshops where the fixed ideas about gender identity can be dealt with. There should be sponsors to the projects of awareness workshops. They need to be made aware of gender equality and equity and at the same time not to abuse their gender rights. These gender awareness projects need to start at institutions from early age. Institutions such as home, kindergartens, schools, at tertiary levels and lastly at work places, should all be involved.

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