

**THE DEPICTION OF WOMEN CHARACTERS IN SELECTED
VENDA NOVELS**

by

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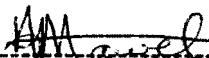
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Date submitted: November 1994

DECLARATION

I declare that ***THE DEPICTION OF WOMEN CHARACTERS IN SELECTED VENDA NOVELS*** is my own work and that all the sources that are used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference.



A. MAWELA

SUMMARY

This study is a comparison of female characters portrayed by different authors in selected Venda novels.

Chapter One comprises the aim of the study, approach, life history of authors, comments on their work, a short summary of the selected novels, cultural fulfilment of a Venda woman, and the scope and composition of chapters.

Chapter Two deals with characterization. The definition and methods of characterization are discussed in this chapter. The merits and demerits of various methods of character portrayal are also examined in some detail.

Chapter Three discusses the different female characters portrayed in the selected novels.

Chapter Four comprises a comparison of female characters in the selected novels.

Chapter Five is the general conclusion to this study.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the following people:

My parents: the late Mukondeleli John Mawela and Molelekeng Franjeni Mawela.

My aunt: Munzhedzi Mawela.

My children: Naki, Tami and Tendi.

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to examine the role of female characters as portrayed by some Venda authors in their novels, and assess their contribution towards the image of females in society. Special reference will be made to TN Maumela, ES Madima, ET Maumela and TJ Manenzhe and their novels *Elelwani*, *A si ene*, *Philiphise* and *Dengetenge*.

Gaidzanwa (1985:10) states that:

What is of concern here is the basic assumption of women's nature and being as outlined in writings.

Thus this study aims at evoking a sense of curiosity about the portrayal of women characters by writers and at the same time opening a way for critics who may be interested in the delineation of female characters in literature in general.

Gaidzanwa (1985:10) also states:

There are other instances where the writers may also

construct characters with the aim of changing societies' view of women for better or worse. Ibid.

As stated above, some writers may portray characters in order to influence the attitude of society about women, whether it be for better or worse. Some writers tend to portray real women, though reluctantly, while others portray women as bad characters to give women a bad name.

This study will therefore compare how Venda male authors have depicted female characters during the initial stages of novel writing in Tshivenda and also show the influence of time and place on the creation of characters. The researcher will determine whether the authors mentioned above have simply portrayed female characters for the sake of writing or whether they have portrayed female characters with the aim of making propaganda.

1.2 Approach

The approach which will be used in this study is primarily comparative. Various literary terms will be defined, and then an evaluative study of character delineation will be carried out, after which a comparison of female characters in the selected novels will be undertaken.

Nichols et al (1968:12) defines comparative study as:

... the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country, and the study of the relationships between literature on the one hand and the other areas of knowledge and beliefs such as arts, philosophy, history, the social sciences, religion etc. on the other.

Since this research is on female characters in selected Venda novels, the comparison of the female characters will not only be confined to literature as such, but will also take into account other areas such as the culture, religion, social background and environmental background of such characters. This type of approach is supported by Gerard (1994:13), who states that:

Comparative literature as a specific branch of learning (...) arose out of revulsion against the narrow national chauvinism and linguistic parochialism that had long remained characteristic of literary studies.

In other words, the comparative study of literature should not be confined within limits, be they linguistic or anything else, but should be allowed room to expand as much as possible.

Thus in this study, the female characters in the selected novels will be viewed in the broad sense, rather than merely as female characters in the selected Venda novels. Reference will also be made to novels other than the selected ones and other literature books which are relevant to the subject.

The selected authors will be interviewed to find out what message they really wanted to convey when they wrote about the female characters such as the ones they wrote about in their respective novels.

Gaidzanwa (1985:10) states that:

... the images of women as presently portrayed need examination in terms of their sources, their veracity according to women's experiences, and their potential for positive transformation in future.

In order to obtain different views of women's experiences, a few elderly women will be interviewed in order to understand girls/women of the older generation whose main role as women was to get married and bear children. The younger generation of women will also be interviewed in order to determine what becomes of a modern woman who is expected to play a double role, i.e. that of a provider and a housewife.

Gaidzanwa further mentions that:

... in the exercise, one cannot overlook the writer's own input in the characterisation of these women and the construction of images. Obvious questions such as the writer's intentions, beliefs and values arise. Ibid.

The textual analysis will consist mainly of reading the four novels and other books that have relevance to the topic, and then comparing the relevant contents. The comparison and criticism of different sources will help the reader to see how excellence is attained. This is supported by Daiches (1948:251):

Evaluative criticism tend to use the comparative method as a device for establishing degrees of excellence and indeed it can be maintained that a purely normative criticism, which aims at giving so many marks to each work and placing it in a scale, cannot go very far without having brought together the work in question with other or worse done elsewhere and by showing this helping the reader to see how excellence is attained.

So by comparing the works of the selected novelists, this study will show how the individual authors have attained excellence or how they have failed to portray ideal cultural female characters or ideal modern female characters.

1.3 Life history of the authors and comments on their works

1.3.1 *TN Maumela*

Titus Ntsieni Maumela was born on 25 December 1924 at Mathaga, near Sibasa. He received his primary education at Gooldville Primary School from 1934 to 1942. He then proceeded to the Bethel Training Institution in 1943. From 1944 to 1945, he attended Lemana Training Institution, where he qualified as a teacher. He completed Standard 8 and 10 privately in 1947 and 1952 respectively, and then obtained a BA degree from the University of South Africa in 1961.

He started serving as an assistant teacher at the then Gooldville School in Vhufuli from 1946 to 1956. In 1957 he proceeded to Vhufuli school, where he was appointed principal from 1958 tot 1962. From 1963 to July 1964 he became assistant teacher at Tshivhase Secondary School. From August 1964 to June 1970 he became principal of Tshivhase Secondary School. From July 1970 to March 1983 he was Organiser of Culture in the Venda Government. In April 1983 he was appointed inspector of schools at Mutale Circuit in Venda, where he served up to March 1984. From April 1984 to 1985, he served as an Inspector of Psychology at Dzanani and Mutale Circuit. From 1986 he became an inspector of schools at Mutale Circuit until 1989 when he retired.

TN Maumela is also a well-known writer of Tshivenda books. His works include:

fourteen novels, six dramas, eight short stories, one essay anthology, three folklore books, twelve language manuals and one translation of a novelette.

He has also won several literary awards. He won first prize in the Novel Writing Competition in Tshivenda Language of the Department of Bantu Education for his novel entitled *Musandiwa na khotsi vho Liwalaga*. In 1967 he was awarded the Samuel Edward Mghyayi prize of Die Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns. In 1971 he won first prize in the short story writing competition held by Radio Bantu for his short story *Vhasadzi ndi Vho-Mavhulaise*. On 17 March 1989 he was presented with a diploma for being one of the pioneer writers of Tshivenda books. In 1990, JL van Schaik, who had published most of his work, awarded him a diploma for being one of their first authors. In 1992 he won second prize in the De Jager Haum Competition for his anthology of essays entitled *Maanea a pfadzaho*.

The Tshivenda Language Board again awarded Mr TN Maumela with a third prize for his folktale book titled *Dzingano na dzithai dza Tshivenda*, and two consolation prizes for the following books: *Maanea a pfadzaho* and *Sosi Mvuvhu i toda Vhutope*. Unfortunately Maumela could not be reached to hear about his comments on a character like Elelwani, the researcher was only able to obtain his biography.

1.3.2 *ES Madima*

Itani Silas Madima was born on 5 August 1922 at Vhufuli in the Sibasa district. He

started attending school at Gooldville in 1931 and passed Standard Six in 1939. In 1940 he served as a private teacher in the same school. He was trained as a teacher at Lemana Training Institution from 1941 until 1943.

In 1944 he started teaching at Muhuyu, but was transferred in April to teach at Gooldville Primary School until 1955. From March 1955 to September 1965 he taught at Tshivhase High School. He then joined the Vhembe School Board in September 1965 until 1967 when the Vhembe School Board was dissolved. He was then transferred to the Mutale School Board where he became secretary up to 1970. From 1970 to 1976 he was employed by the Department of Education in Venda as a translator. Thereafter he returned to teaching at Mphaphuli High School from March 1976 to 1979. He then went back to translation for the Language Services until his retirement in 1987.

Madima's contribution to Tshivenda literature varies from novels, dramas, poetry and short stories. His novels are *A si Ene*, *Mmanga Mawelewele*, *Maduvha ha fani* and *Maambiya ndi one*. His short stories are entitled *Vha lila ngae* and poetry *Ndi vhudza nnyi*. He also wrote a language manual titled *Ifa la Muvenda*.

He obtained first position in the literary competition which was organized by Unisa for his drama *Hu na Savhadina*. In 1972 he won a prize with his novel *Maduvha ha fani* in the Bantu Education competition and in 1973 his short stories *Vha lila ngae* also won a prize in the same competition.

Madima also wrote articles for several magazines and is a well-known school choir conductor.

When asked why he portrayed two contrasting characters like Muhanwelwa and Adziambei in *A si Ene*, Madima said he only wanted to show that even during those old times there were women who refused to be oppressed by men, because of their intelligence. Madima explained that he had gathered knowledge of the setting on the Reef and the lifestyle of the people there when he visited his uncle in Alexandra in 1947. That is why he was able to write about places like Germiston, Hammanskraal and Benoni and also about characters like Fanyana. Madima maintains that Adziambei was very intelligent as compared to Muhanwelwa, who was rather submissive.

1.3.3 *ET Maumela*

Edward Thinandavha Maumela, who is the author of *Philiphise*, was born in April 1950 at Vhufuli in the Tshivhase district. He obtained his teacher's diploma at the then Vendaland Institution, and after ten years as a teacher he joined the Venda Development Corporation and became the first manager of the dairy-farming enterprise at Tswinga.

He is presently employed as Chief State Buyer and registry overseer of the Venda National Development Corporation (VNDC), business division. He is the author of four

volumes of short stories (*Zwa Maramani*, *Fhasi ha murunzi wa Duvha*, *Vhurikiriki* and *Vha khou amba yavho*), three volumes of poetry (*Mutakadzi*, *Tshiwandalani* and *Zwiombo Ngomani*) and two novels, viz: *Philiphise* and *Muthu kha pfe!*

Mr ET Maumela has won three prizes in the Tshivenda Literary Prize Giving Competition, viz: 3rd prize for his novel *Philiphise*, 3rd prize for his short stories *Vha khou amba yavho* and 2nd prize for *Zwa Maramani*, another short story. *Vha khou amba yavho* also won 1st prize in the De Jager Haum Competition. He won another 1st prize in the Maskew Miller Longman Competition for his short stories *Vhurikiriki*.

On trying to find out from Mr ET Maumela why he wrote about two contrasting female characters like Zodwa and Tibani, he said he wanted to show the effect of racial differences, cultural and environmental background. For example, Zodwa did not hesitate to accept a proposal by Mukandangalwo, even when she knew that he was Tibani's fiancée, yet with Tibani it is different because she took some time before she accepted Mukandangalwo's proposal., That is why Vho-Vusani, Mukandangalwo's mother confirmed that Tibani represents a true Venda girl, and that Zodwa represented a typical town girl who was very rough and daring.

1.3.4 *TJ Manenzhe*

TJ Manenzhe was born in January 1952 at Muhuyu in the Tshivhase district, where he completed his primary education. He obtained his secondary education at

Tshivhase High School in 1971 where he passed his Junior Certificate.

He worked at Vhufuli Post Office from 1972 to June 1979. While he was there he managed to obtain matriculation by correspondence in 1975. From July 1979 until 1982 he worked at Barclays Bank in Thohoyandou. Since then he has been employed by the Venda Government, where he is working as a deputy director in the Department of Public Service Commission.

His novel *Dengetenge* has obtained second position in the De Jager Haum Literary Competition in 1993. He has also written a radio serial called *U lovha ndi u tevhela nzhivha mutevhela thadu u do la mazhana*.

He says he wrote about a woman like Vho-Raele to show that women of today are not like women of the past generation. He gave an example of Vho-Nyamutshagole, a character in *Dengetenge*, who was much older and tried to preserve culture. So she would not let anybody interfere into her son's marriage, that is why she became very furious when she found Thengiso and his mother talking about Vho-Raele's affair with another man. She told Thengiso not to talk about her daughter-in-law as he had not been invited to look after her. Manenzhe emphasized that it was according to Venda tradition that elderly people should not listen to petty gossip.

He also referred to Vho-Raele as typical of today's women who he said were liars and unfaithful. He blames the little knowledge that Vho-Raele had as the cause of her

misbehaviour.

1.4 A summary of the selected novels

1.4.1 *Elelwani: TN Maumela*

This is the story of Elelwani, a young lady whose parents have already chosen a spouse for her according to accepted Venda tradition. The spouse is an old man who is a chief in a neighbouring village by the name of Ratshihule.

On her way to Sibasa, accompanied by her friend Mutshekwa, Elelwani meets two young men, viz. Vele and Nthambeleni, his friend. The two young men asked for snuff from the young women, of course ,which is the traditional Venda way in which men approach women to establish an armorous relationship. In actual fact, Vele is interested in Elelwani. But, most unfortunately, there is nothing which Elelwani can do as her parents have already found her a husband. She is also interested, yet because of these unforseen circumstances, she has to conform to her father's demands. As Blacking (1964:39) says, marriage in Vendaland is more of a union than of the two individuals, so the marriage between Elelwani and Ratshihule was negotiated by parents without even consulting Elelwani.

On the day of her wedding ceremony, Elelwani was honoured by the company of a number of girls, including a girl called Thambatshira. When they reached Ratshihule's

kraal, a beast was slaughtered for the reception. One day when the girls were swimming in the river, Thambatshira, the daughter of a certain Mr Nemavhulani, drowned and died. This was a mishap which had serious repercussions for Elelwani.

After a considerable period of staying with Chief Ratshihule, Elelwani, being the favourite of all the chief's wives, was accused of witchcraft by a zionist who was invited to the chief's kraal after discovering an owl and a bowl of blood in front of the chief's hut (Pfamo).

At first, diviners were consulted but the witch was never found out. But then, after Mr Nemavhulani had advised the chief to call a zionist from a neighbouring village, Elelwani had to leave the chief's place for her home because she was accused of witchcraft.

One day, while she was at home, she went to the river, where she met Vele, who told her he was the one who pretended to be a zionist. He did it in order to win back his beloved Elelwani. In Venda culture, witchcraft was a strong ground for divorce and so Vele knew that Elelwani would be sent away for him to woo and they could be re-united.

1.4.2 A si ene: ES Madima

This novel tells the story of Adziambei, a beautiful young lady, whose parents,

Nyadzanga (mother) and Mukona (father) were very unhappy about her unbecoming behaviour. When the book begins, Adziambesi's mother is quarreling with her, and Adziambesi answers insolently. Fortunately her father was just coming into the homestead when he heard how his daughter was speaking to her mother. He then grabbed a stick and started to beat his daughter who afterwards ran away.

Adziambesi had already made arrangements to elope with Maluta, a young man from a neighbouring village. He had come home from the urban areas in order to marry his fiancée Muhanewa. Muhanewa, who stayed near Adziambesi's home, delayed the procedure of leaving her home for Maluta's home.

In the evening when the young men and young women gathered at Muhanewa's home to spend time together with the couple, Maluta and Muhanewa, Maluta fell in love with Adziambesi. (The procedure of entertaining a bridegroom is an acceptable procedure according to Venda custom.) Maluta and Adziambesi eloped to Hammanskraal. When Maluta returned to Germiston, where he worked, Adziambesi was left at Hammanskraal with a family friend of Maluta, Vho-Ranwane.

Adziambesi, with her dazzling beauty, became the talk of the town, and many young men tried to win her, but failed. One day Maluta brought a friend, Fanyana, along from Germiston. Fanyana was also fascinated by Adziambesi. After returning to Germiston, Fanyana sneaked away from Maluta and headed for Hammanskraal to Ranwane's home where he found Thavhani, Ranwane's daughter, together with

Adziambei. He then lied to them that he was sent by Maluta to collect Adziambei. Unusually Adziambei accompanied Fanyana, who, instead of taking her to her beloved Maluta, took her for a wife.

Adziambei was very unhappy with what Fanyana did to her because she did not love Fanyana, who looked ugly and ferocious. Fanyana had a lot of money which he won from the racing course in the city. He opened a butchery in Benoni. He tried all he could to make Adziambei feel comfortable at his home, but failed. Through bitterness, Adziambei conspired with Matshaya and killed Fanyana.

Adziambei, thereafter, ran away and found her way back home to Venda. On arrival, she helped her parents to pay back the lobola they had long spent on her abortive marriage. It was a great joy for Adziambei's parents to see their daughter. However, rumour was rife among the neighbours. Adziambei did not feel at ease anymore, and returned to the urban areas where she secured herself a job in a restaurant in Germiston.

Meanwhile, Maluta made arrangements for his bride Muhanewa to join him in Germiston, but before she arrived, Maluta met Adziambei at the restaurant when he went to buy some cigarettes. He was very happy and they later reunited. Unknowingly, Muhanewa went to town to see her husband, as everything had been arranged. Unfortunately Maluta was no longer ready for her as he had found his beloved Adziambei, with whom he was besotted.

Maluta then hired thugs to kill Muhanewa. Unbelievably the thugs decided not to kill her, but instead gave her money to return home to Venda. They took a dog's heart to Maluta as a proof of their success in killing Muhanewa. Maluta later fell ill and he did not recover. Adziambei then decided to send him to his parents. As Maluta approached home, he saw Muhanewa coming to meet him. He collapsed in disbelief and died.

1.4.3 *Philiphise: ET Maumela*

Philiphise is about the story of Mukandangalwo, a young man who had to take care of the business of his deceased father. Mukandangalwo got engaged to a young lady teacher, Tibani Matibe, who was staying at Madombidzha near Louis Trichardt. Unfortunately Tibani became ill and was admitted to the Rishile Hospital in Giyani. Mukandangalwo then fell in love with Zodwa, one of the nurses who was working in the ward in which Tibani was admitted. He ended up marrying Zodwa.

At a later stage, Mukandangalwo discovered that Zodwa was a crook. She was not even a nurse, but had forged her nursing certificates and was busy planning to kill him and take over the business. Mukandangalwo's life was saved by his half-brother, Maradzhe, who intervened in Zodwa's plans by alerting the police. It was then that Mukandangalwo thought of Tibani, but most unfortunately, Tibani was busy with preparation for her wedding with Mukhwandala, who was one of Mukandangalwo's friends.

His mother reminded him how she used to warn him against involving himself with strange women, but by then it was too late for tears.

1.4.4 *Dengetenge: TJ Manenzhe*

Dengetenge exposes the background of an unfaithful woman, Vho-Raele, who runs about with different boyfriends without even considering the fact that she was a married woman. People around her place of abode gossiped about her behaviour, but her mother-in-law refuted the allegations, thinking that people were lying because they were jealous of her son's stable family. At last, Masakona, Vho-Raele's husband, discovered her clandestine love affairs. At first, he tried to talk to his wife to improve her behaviour, but Vho-Raele denied all allegations and continued with her affairs.

Later on Vho-Raele encouraged her husband to let the family move away from their old home to go and settle at Tshivhuya, a township which was quite far from home. She did this in order to escape from the glares of relatives who were then beginning to realize her nasty behaviour. Even Vho-Nyamutshagole, Masakona's mother, was beginning to believe what people were saying about her daughter-in-law.

At Tshivhuya, Vho-Raele ran a shebeen, and this aggravated the unstable situation in her family and eventually led to her husband's insanity. Masakona ended up at Weskoppies for treatment, which failed, and he subsequently died. From then onwards, Vho-Raele's life became more complicated, she caused fights between her

boyfriends,, Rolitshana and Marannda. Finally, Rolitshana kills Marannda with the help of his brother, who was a policeman and had a gun. Both Vho-Raele and Rolitshana found themselves behind bars.

It is important to have a basic knowledge of the culture of a Venda family, in order to have a better understanding of the female characters that will be analysed in this study. This next section will therefore discuss some aspects of Venda culture which affect women.

1.5 Cultural fulfilment of a Venda woman

There are certain cultural rights which are to be followed by children in order to see them to adulthood. When a Venda girl reaches puberty she is no longer considered a child. She is immediately taken in for initiation (Vhusha), where elderly women and girls who have been previously initiated prepare such a girl for womanhood. She is now called a 'Khomba', which is a stage above a young girl (Musidzana) and one below a woman (musadzi).

The initiation (vhusha) is held at the village of the 'Gota' (Headman). It is often delayed until there are two or more girls ready for initiation. The girls are taught the tribal rules of etiquette and obedience. They are also subjected to some strenuous exercise and periodic punishment for a period of at least six days. This is done in order to make them submissive, tolerant and mature women of tomorrow.

They are also warned against becoming deflowered before marriage and are taught techniques of having premarital unions without indulging in real sexual intercourse.

According to Stayt (1968:111):

The Venda attitude towards these premarital unions conforms with the ideas of most of the Southern Bantu. No misdemeanour is committed unless defloration occurs and pregnancy results.

After this initiation ceremony, girls are subjected to other initiations, such as the 'domba' for further training. These initiations are conducted according to many norms.

This is where lots of them come out having attracted young men who aim at having them as prospective wives, because this is where they are given a chance to display their beauty and charm. Yet such interested men will have to draw parents of both the young man and the girl to negotiate for their marriage. It may happen that the girl in question is already betrothed to someone else, and in that case this third party must be taken into consideration and compensated. But sometimes such affairs become complicated and usually the two end up eloping.

Stayt (1968:145) states:

As a rule, the marriage arranged between parents is

accepted by the young people without demur, although, if the girl expressed a strong dislike for the chosen man, her feelings are sometimes considered and new arrangements made, subject to the consent of the man to whom she is betrothed.

In the case of Elelwani, the father was the one who insisted that his daughter marry the old man Ratshihule, completely undermining his daughter's feelings, which is why disastrous consequences followed.

When a girl is getting married, and she has been deflowered, she is scolded and spat at in the face. A small pierced calabash is borne before her on her wedding day as a sign of disgrace.

Girls are subjected to periodic inspection to assess if their hymen have been penetrated. When she gets married while still a virgin, she is given an unpierced calabash to give it to her parents-in-law, who in turn thank the girl's parents with a goat as a sign of appreciation.

When she is supposed to join her husband, a Venda girl does not easily agree to do so, she resists first, just like Muhanewa in Madima's novel, who would not join Maluta at his first attempt at taking her. Unfortunately these kind of weddings are diminishing gradually and the women inspecting the girls only do so in order to satisfy themselves

that the girls are not pregnant. Now of late, everybody does as they wish.

Van Warmelo (1960:48) puts it as follows:

*The kind of wedding has also disappeared, because many
girls are spoilt by 'mudavhu'.*

This means that many girls lose their virginity to their boyfriends.

As far as providing food for the family is concerned in the Venda family, the traditional Venda man distributed his fields amongst his wives. The women in turn plough the fields together with the children and get food to feed the entire family.

Stayt (1968:142) supports this when he says:

*It is her duty to feed her husband and support her own
family and she may dispose her surplus produce as she
wishes.*

With the background knowledge given in this chapter, it will be easier to understand the portrayal of female characters by the selected novelists. After giving the background and steps to be followed in this research, it is necessary to outline what will follow in order to let readers know what to expect and to evoke their interest. The

following chapters will be as follows:

1.6 Scope and composition of chapters

1.6.1 Scope

The scope will cover novels written by different authors, which may be grouped into two different generations, namely: the older generation whose characters are influenced by the conservative Venda culture, namely TN Maumela in his novel *Elelwani* and ES Madima in *A si ene*. The authors of the younger generation, whose characters are influenced by the modern Western culture, are ET Maumela in *Philiphise* and TJ Manenzhe in *Dengetenge*.

The images of women which will be analyzed and explored in this study will be those of mothers, wives, single, divorced and widowed women, rural and urban women. There are positive as well as negative images of women. It also considers the similarities and differences which exists in the way different authors portray and construct images of women.

Although some novels written by other novelists may be referred to, in order to ensure consistency and relevance, emphasis will be placed on female characters that play important roles in the four novels that were mentioned above.

1.6.2 *Composition of chapters*

Chapter II

This chapter deals with composition of characterization. The definition and methods of characterization are discussed in this chapter. The merits and demerits of the various methods of character portrayal are examined in some detail.

Chapter III

This chapter examines the female characters in the selected novels. The portrayal of female characters by the selected novelists are discussed in detail. The effect that the different environmental and social backgrounds have on the female characters have also been detailed.

Chapter IV

This chapter consists of a comparison of female characters in the selected novels. The difference between female characters of the older generation and female characters of the younger generation is detailed in this chapter. The influence of environmental and social background on the different female characters portrayed by the selected novelists will also be outlined.

Chapter V

This chapter comprises the conclusion and recommendations. The general attitude of the selected novelists towards the female characters they portrayed in the selected novels will also be outlined.

CHAPTER 2

2. CHARACTERIZATION

2.1 Introduction

When an author creates characters in his book, various factors are involved. These factors include the following: his imagination, his knowledge of people, his ideas concerning how people will act in certain situations and various other factors. Such characters are created in such a way that they may seem believable.

Characterization is defined by different authors through different approaches and in different words, amongst them we have the following definitions ,to quote a few:



Shaw (1972:71) says:

*The creation of Images of imaginary persons in drama,
narrative poetry, the novel and the short story is called
characterization.*

He goes on to say:

... in effective narrative literature, fictional persons, through

characterization, become so incredible that they exist for the reader as real people. (Ibid).

By saying that fictional persons become so incredible that they exist as real people, Shaw refers to the verbal expressions and actions of fictional characters that appear real to the readers. This means that the dialogue amongst characters, the manner in which they do things and the way they are presented depict them as people that we might encounter in our daily lives.

Raselekoane (1991:13) supports this when he says:

A skillful writer manipulates his language to portray vivid and believable characters. With language as a literary medium, a writer is capable of infusing life into imaginary characters.

In real life people are contented with life if they are exposed to favourable circumstances, and they are sad when faced with difficulties, so the same is expected of characters in fiction.

Real people grow physically and mentally, thus it is also expected that characters that we read about in fiction should develop in some way. For instance, a baby character seen at the beginning of a narrative can never remain a baby up to the end of the

story. If so, then there must be something wrong with such a character. Somehow or other such a character will be handicapped. The growth of characters in narrative fiction is seen through the development of the plot and through the actions and language of the characters. For it is only through action and language that the reader can come to know and understand characters.

It is, therefore, very important for an author to use language that readers will understand, so as to have the characters appeal to the reader's imagination.

Serudu (1987:329) agrees with the idea cited above when he says:

*Characters in a novel become known through the contact
the novelist established with his reader by means of
understandable though at times highly codified, language.*

(1) Cohen (1973:37) argues that characterization is the creation of images of imaginary persons in literature, and then goes on to say:

*Since literature portrays almost conceivable human action,
thought, attitude, emotion, situation or problems, people
are, therefore, basic to the literary imagination.*

Cohen through his argument, still confirms that characterization has to do with human

actions. When he states that people are 'basic' to literary imagination, he is trying to show that even if an author can use animals as characters of his narrative, those animals will still be empowered with human traits.

In his definition of character, Abrams shows that the readers of a narrative, although looking on characters as imaginary persons, still expect them to have moral qualities like those of real people.

He says:

...the author merely presents his characters talking and acting and leaves the reader to infer what motives and dispositions lie behind what they say and do. (Abrams 1981:21).

In actual fact, the moral and dispositioned qualities of a person can never be seen on the outside, i.e. they cannot be seen through the physical description of the character. Therefore, the reader has to know both the physical and mental description of a character before making a final judgement about his real person.

Roberts (1983:55) confirms this when he says:

Always try to get from the outside to the inside, for it is on the inside that the character resides.

While the reader looks at both the inside and the outside of a character, he has to remember that there are many other factors that influence both the inside and outside of the character. Amongst them we have the social background and environment. The two factors named above play a very significant role in influencing character. For instance, the manner of dressing, talking, perceiving things, eating or even walking, of a person who stays in urban areas differs from that of a rural person. E.g. the manner in which Adziambei looked before she left home for town differs from the way she appeared when she came back from town, for instance the way she walked, her way of dressing, and many such things changed her outside appearance. Her experiences both at Hammanskraal and Benoni changed her inside. That is why we find everybody remarking about her, since the change in her was very remarkable because she differed from people around her homestead both outside and inside.

Qangule (1974:69) agrees with this point when he says:

The sharper the differences we are shown in the social backgrounds from which the characters emerge, the more fully we shall understand the differences in their personalities.

He goes on to add that character and environment are so closely interrelated that we have to consider them as inseparable. If one is faulty, it affects the other, just as an affected member in one part of the body may cause the whole body to suffer.

Therefore, characters' mannerisms are in most cases influenced by their social backgrounds. For instance, a spoilt child in most cases is caused by the way he has been brought up.

(2)

Joseph (1974:44) puts it as follows:

... characterization depends on the nature of the story, that is to say, the actions of his characters must be consistent with the happenings of his story.

In pointing out that the actions of a character have to be consistent with happenings of the story, Joseph implies that a character has to maintain his objectives and purpose. I contend that time factor and locality cannot be left out, for whatever happens to a person will always happen at a certain location and during a certain period. So characterization can never stand in isolation, it is always related to the two factors mentioned above.

For instance a modern literate woman staying in urban areas will always look different from a rural woman, irrespective of whether she is literate or illiterate. Their presentation differs. So in order to maintain consistency, a writer will always portray a character who hails from rural areas differently from one who is from urban areas, hence the "makgoweng motif. E.g. in ET Maumela's *Philiphise* the way Zodwa is portrayed as compared to Tibani shows the different effects that social background

and environment have on a person's character. Zodwa is portrayed as a cunning, witty and cruel character, while Tibani is portrayed as a cool and calm lady. Of course, this is often the case in real life; people from towns usually behave the way she does, while people from rural areas are in most cases very reserved.

In this regard, Qangule (1974:70) states:

Products of different social background must have distinctive traits and must inevitably conflict with one another.

Above consistency, a character has to be portrayed in such a way that whatever is revealed about him is done in an orderly manner, i.e. the sequence of events should be such that they are believable to the reader.

If a character is portrayed as a hero the reader has to see through a series of well developed events how it came about that a hero became a hero.

It is very interesting to start with a character, see him go through different circumstances, sometimes pleasant and at other times difficult, then at the end he becomes a hero. Just as a parent nurtures and brings up a sickly child, who sometimes has to stay away from school because of ill-health, but through all the difficulties this child manages to get a profession and becomes independent. While

he marvels at his success, parents will look upon such a child with admiration. So, since characters in a narrative fiction are created with human traits in order to impress the readers, authors have to portray them in such a way that readers remember them with admiration. For example, it is very encouraging to find a character like Tibani, who was disappointed by Mukandangalwo, who ditched her for another woman, ended up being happy in life, the author showing through his story that things turned upside down for Mukandangalwo, who was the one who ended up disappointed, while Tibani got engaged to Mukhwandala.

Most authors and scholars tend to agree that dialogue and action, together with the exposition given by a writer of prose go hand in hand in creating character. In other words, without interactions of characters there would be no plot.

Yet Serudu (1987:306) states that dialogue is not a very important element of prose. He alleges that:

Essentially it belongs to the dramatic art.

But in this author's opinion, narrative prose without dialogue would be a very dull work of art, for, readers would be compelled to depend solely on the description of the author, who at times might even take sides, i.e. say good things about a character he favours, and use bad language to describe those characters that he dislikes. Serudu (1987:306) mentions that good prose writers use dialogue very efficiently and

effectively to enhance the process of communication with their readers. This author is in agreement that all prose writers have to consider using dialogue in order to make their prose more challenging and interesting.

All in all, authors and scholars seem to agree on the point that characterization is about human behaviour portrayed by writers of narrative prose, drama and short stories. Such mode of behaviour is portrayed through actions, dialogue between characters, comments of some characters about others, and descriptions of the characters by the authors.

Authors also emphasize that both physical and mental characteristics should supplement each other to create a complete character that represents a real person. Social background and environment of a character is also a contributing factor to the well-being of characters, hence some authors have pointed out the importance of such factors.

2.2 Methods of character delineation

Character delineation is the method of creating persons in fiction, letting them act like real people, say things like what live people would say and do things the way real people would do.

There are several methods of character delineation given by different authors. Mafela

(1988) and Raselekoane (1991) agree on the use of three main methods, viz: the expository, the dramatic and the naming or name-giving technique. The novelist unlike a dramatist, has the advantage of being able to use all three methods in developing his character. This makes the characters of a novel most easily conceivable, for they can be viewed through their actions, dialogue and commentary by other characters and by the author himself.

Hudson (1965:194) confirms this when he says:

The immense scope of the novel, its freedom of movement, and its indifference to considerations of time and place, combine with the advantage just mentioned to give it a special power of dealing with the character in the making.

When mentioning *the indifference to considerations of time and place*, Hudson alleges that characters in a novel can easily move from one locality to another without restrictions, save that the places they move to must be within the scope of the story. The time factor is also unrestricted as far as a novel is concerned for a character can be portrayed within any space of time, eg from birth to puberty to old-age, as long as it is within the scope of the story.

2.2.1 *The Expository Method*

In the expository method of characterization the author tells the readers about his characters. The characters are revealed by what other characters say about them, what the narrator says about the way their physical features and built should be, their manner of dress, their accent, their social positions or status, their attitude towards life, their education, their habits and/or their mood.

What is expected of the reader is to go through the story and assess the descriptive portrayal given by the author. For the author has the freedom to say whatever he feels like saying about a character, and may even describe his physical appearance and may comment about his emotional reactions towards different circumstances. In this method of characterization one might also find other characters describing, or commenting on others. One character's comments about another is what Kerman (1968:8) terms a *double perspective*, where the first character tells us something about the second, but he also tells us a great deal about the way he himself thinks.

Although the novelist can mingle freely with the characters of his story, take them to places from inside to outside, lay their thoughts and feelings before the readers, pass judgement upon them, this technique still has a disadvantage of tending to forfeit the vividness of drama, and it gives the reader very little scope for imaginative participation. At times the author may find himself telling the reader what to feel and think about particular characters.

Raselekoane (1991:100) supports the above statement when he says:

... a narrator may be subjective and lead a reader into adopting a particular attitude towards a character(s).

By being subjective a narrator will automatically take sides. Even if anything about a particular character might be wrong or faulty, he will always have a protective way of putting it across in order to prevent such a character from falling into disfavour with the readers.

Raselekoane (1991:100) goes on to say:

Another demerit of the expository technique is that it discourages the readers' imaginative participation.

By discouraging imaginative participation of the reader, the scholar means that since everything about a character will be said, nothing will be left for the reader to question or even try to find out about the character. So it is worthwhile to portray characters through all the methods of character portrayal in order to let the readers be able to make up their own minds about such characters.

As far as female characters are concerned, there are suppositions that some writers portray women objectively, while others, perhaps, no less talented, simply 'make propaganda'. Some even give images derived from mother figures.

It is not very long since female authors first emerged. As a result, one would strongly suspect that female characters were not always portrayed sympathetically, as they were only drawn by men, who often already had a negative attitude towards females.

The question about the authenticity of the above statement is its legislative force. It is indeed true that women characters were mainly portrayed by men in the past, for women have only recently begun to write books, especially in African literature, where only men were given the opportunity to be educated.

Nevertheless the expository technique lends clarity quickly, since it allows the author to describe his characters with all the freedom of words, freedom of time, freedom of location and freedom of almost everything required to expose a character. Other scholars call this method the discursive method.

2.2.2 *The dramatic technique of characterization*

The novelist sometimes allows his characters to reveal themselves through speech and action, and to reinforce their self delineation by the comments and judgements of other characters in the story. In a novel, dialogue is often used to fill the place and do the work of analysis and commentary. We may regard dramatic dialogue as a means of characterization in that conversation with others denotes what kind of person the character is.

Mafela (1988:18) puts it as follows:

Dramatic technique is the means whereby an author merely presents his characters, leaving them to do the talking and acting.

This means that the readers will have to infer what kind of a person the character is from what he does, what he says and what he thinks. It is true that a person's action shows what type of character he is. For instance, the manner in which Vho-Raele in Mapenzhe's *Dengetenge* talks to her husband shows that she does not have any respect for him, and the way she behaves shows that she is a very cheap woman. As a result, even if the author had said anything odd about this character, no reader would take it into consideration because her actions have already depicted her real image. After all, actions speak louder than words.

Hudson (1965:252) maintains:

Through the very movement of a story, and particularly through its great crisis and situations, the larger intellectual and moral qualities of the person who takes part in it are necessarily impressed upon us. We know them by what they do, as the tree is known by its fruit.

This statement confirms the fact that through actions the reader is able to know the characters of a narrative prose. As a result, action also connotes and implies character. Above action, Hudson (1965:256) adds that while the reader considers this indirect evidence, one must obviously keep steadily in mind its essentially dramatic quality. Therefore, every utterance must be tested with reference to the character of the particular speaker, his own situation and relation to the action, the possible bias given by his sympathy, his antipathy.

For instance, it is unlikely that a drunk person will express rational and logical thoughts. Any bad and wrong behaviour is liable to come from people who use alcohol excessively. Hence a character's actions and speech are characteristic of what he actually is. Shipley (1970:4) agrees to the above when he says:

It is this self activity of the characters that draws the reader more fully into the flow of the narrative. What the characters do, think and even dream, provides enormous insight into their make-up. It allows the reader to form his opinion about the characters by observing their actions and behaviour.

So it indicates that by understanding the actions of a character, the reader does not only understand the type of character he is reading about, but also the flow of the narrative.

According to Mabley (1972:20), the simplest scheme to follow our discussion on the components of dramatic character, is physical features, clothing, movements and gestures. Therefore, the reader simply judges what the character looks like or what the character does and then one will be able to understand not only the events of the story, but also the characters as well.

The dramatic method, just like the expository method, has its weaknesses. For if the author presents all his characters through action, expecting all the other traits to unfold naturally from the actions and gestures, and dialogue, then the whole procedure may be tiring and less interesting.

There could also be too many different opinions about a particular character, for different people might give different interpretations of the actions and dialogue of a particular character. While, with some comments of the author and other characters opinions would be more or less the same. Mafela too is of the opinion that dramatic technique can never compose a narrative for, he says:

If it is not supplemented by the use of the expository technique, the narrative will acquire the characteristics of a drama. (Mafela 1988:20).

For it is true that a successful narrative has to employ the use of both the expository and dramatic technique in portraying its characters.

2.2.3 *The name-giving method*

In the name-giving technique of characterization the author gives a character a name which has a bearing on the person's behaviour. This usually occurs in African literature, for a name in the African tradition always has a meaning, be it a name of a person, of an object or a place. For instance, children amongst some Africans bear names of a grandparent, it might be that a particular child was born soon after the death of that grandparent, a woman can also give her child a derogatory name in response to the bad treatment she receives from her in-laws. For example the name 'Musandiwa' which is an extract from a Venda saying *Musandiwa nguvho ya pfene i no sandwa na nga vhaambari* meaning a blanket which is not even liked by those who use it, i.e. one who is hated by his own people.

Raselekoane (1991:157) says:

In African culture a child is not just given any name. Many factors come into play when a child is given a name. Circumstances surrounding or prevailing during the birth of a child are also taken into consideration when deciding on the name.

To show that naming a child is very important in African culture, some people even hold a child-naming ceremony, where sometimes a traditional doctor is invited to come

and perform some rituals, or an aunt performs these rituals. Sometimes people bear names that relate to their physical appearance. The name 'Molangaphuma' in Venda, for example, is the name of a clan situated somewhere in Tshakhuma which relates to the significantly light complexion of their forefather who encountered the Zulus during historical wars, and hence named 'mulangaphuma' which means sunrise 'langa' (sun) 'phuma' (rise) from Zulu. Such a name relates to both physical appearance and historical background. As indicated by Stayt (1968:88) when he says:

Any important event in the life of the tribe, coinciding with the birth, may also influence the name given.

Satyo (1977:49) agrees with this when he says:

... the name given may be a description of that particular person's physical appearance, his psychological make-up, his peculiar actions, etc.

As far as naming of places is concerned, one finds that a place may be named following a historical experience, political affiliations or sometimes the name of a place can be indicative of some natural resources.

For instance, squatter-camps that are mushrooming nowadays are named after political personalities hence Mandelaville, Slovo Camp or Dr Mangosuthu. One finds

people attached to a certain political party being influential in naming these squatter camps, in honour of their leaders.

As far as natural resources are concerned, a place which has many boabab trees in the Northern Transvaal for example, is called Biaba - coming from the word boabab.

Mafela (1988:80) states:

However the few character revealing names that are used help the development of the various themes.

For instance, the Name 'Adziambei' - comes from 'u amba' which means to talk and Adzi - which is a form of negation. Therefore, it means 'Not to talk about'. Therefore, it might imply that the things done by this character are so bad that it is difficult to talk about them. *Dzindavha dzawe a dzi ambei, dzi a kond^a* (Her behaviour is beyond what words can say.)

In other words, through a name of a character, a reader can be able to understand the theme of a story. Even the title of a book can be indicative of the theme. For instance 'A town like Alice' by Neville Shute, where it is easy to deduce from such a title that the story has something to do with the town 'Alice'.

Buchi Emecheta, an author of several novels of African origin, has a novel titled *The*

Price of Motherhood. She uses this name-giving technique to signify the actions of some of her character,.e.g. 'Ma-Palagada' - which explains the name of a woman whose slave-girls has named her 'palagada' following the manner in which she moves as she throws her heavy body on the wooden floor of her house.

In African tradition names have a very great significance. However, this is not always the case, for some authors simply name their characters without attaching any meaning to the names.

2.3 Conclusion

Since the author is the creator of characters, he has a very great influence over his characters. If he wants a character to be popular, he has all the liberty to dress him up with all the wonderful adjectives, praise him, place him at an advantage in all pleasant situations and places, honour him with all good statuses and names. Yet if he wishes to make a character unpopular, the opposite will be the case.

Therefore, if an author has created a particularly outstanding or individualistic character, then we, as readers, will find that character interesting regardless of whether or not we sympathise with him or her, because the readers cannot just pass without noticing or observing outstanding or individualistic features.

This shows that the individualistic behaviour of a character is purposely portrayed by the author in order to make him interesting to the reader.

The author makes characters look the way he wants them to look and say whatever he wants them to say. In some instance one might find authors giving their own moral obligations through characters. So it is likely that a conservative author will write favourably about conservative characters and negatively about liberal characters.

At other times an author might even write about his own life experiences, bitter or sweet. The only thing he does will be to disguise names and/or locality to avoid the narrative becoming an autobiography.

All in all, characterization solely depends on the writer of a work of art. So whatever becomes of the narrative depends on the mood, temperament and circumstances of the author, for all components of a narrative are interdependent. The plot, theme, milieu/setting and characterization depend on the existence of one another. Characterization being the focal point, for throughout its lifespan a narrative prose carries characters, in actual fact it is about characters.

The points highlighted in this chapter will now be applied specifically to the characterization of females in chapter Three.

CHAPTER 3

3. THE DEPICTION OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN THE SELECTED NOVELS

3.1 Introduction

After looking at the theoretical background of characterization in the previous chapter, it is now much easier to apply these insights to the female characters in the selected four novels, viz: *A si ene* by ES Madima, *Dengetenge* by TJ Manenzhe, *Philiphise* by ET Maumela and *Elewani* by TN Maumela.

Different authors have their own ways of portraying women characters in literature. Some authors portray traditional women as conservative and submissive to their male counterparts, while others portray modern women, as learned, extrovert and aggressive. It all depends on what the author thinks are valuable aspects of life and on the time when such characters are depicted.

Stimpson (1987:155) says:

A question that inevitably emerges is how and why some women accept traditional submissive roles while others resist them and proclaim modernity.

Different people will have different answers to a question such as the one posed above. Some people, especially conservative women, are in some degree an accretion of past beliefs about the nature of women.

It is true that people at a particular time do have their own perception about certain aspects of life, for instance, it is believed that women during the Victorian era used to put on long dresses and hats because they were conservative. Yet clothes are not the main factor according to which one should judge a person's character. For there still exist very conservative women who through the evolutionary process cannot necessarily wear clothes such as those which were worn by the Victorian women.

Yet some modern commentators believe that many major female characters of ancient literature should be classified as either 'good-mothers' or 'terrible mothers'; the former category consisting of nurturing, supportive women and the latter of sorceresses, betrayers, murderers and femmes fatales.

Since some people ascribe the submissiveness of some women to time, then one should compare the women characters portrayed in literature written some few decades ago with women characters portrayed in literature of today. It is true that some evident changes can be observed in these characters. The women characters of the past looked upon the male as heroes, they did not generate income, their main role was to perform duties in the kitchen, get married and bear children. In contrast, the female characters who are portrayed in modern or more recent literature do

compete with male characters in all spheres of life. They are self-assertive and very confident.

As we go on with this investigation, the two categories of authors which belong to both the olden and modern times respectively do portray female characters of two types, and there is a lot of evidence that time is a major contributory factor in the way in which characters are portrayed.

Stimpson (1987:164) on the other hand says:

The woman who resists female subordination no matter how instantaneous she believes her consciousness of the wrong of subordination to be, may have had a long engagement with some signals from her culture. In a self-praising gesture that is no less valid for being that texts and textualizers warn us of their patience and their own sly, peculiar power.

It seems that Stimpson believes that a person who has had enough of rules and norms laid by society would easily defy them if they obstruct his/her interests. So this is the case with a female who will resist subordinating herself to a male because of the urge she might be having to reach a certain goal. For example, Adziambei, in Madima's *A si ene* would not resist [^]Maluta because she loved him so heartily, so she

ignored all the rules and regulations and decided to elope with him.

3.2 Female characters in TN Maumela's *Elelwani*

TN Maumela has portrayed the kind of female characters that are old-fashioned, traditional and submissive. They all behave in the same manner, not a single one of them raises an eyebrow and objects to anything whatsoever that is imposed upon them.

3.2.1 *Elelwani*

At the beginning of the story, the author describes Elelwani as a very beautiful young woman. He says:

*Musidzana wa phaphathe vhukuma, wa tshiiimo tsho
linganelaho zwavhudi tsho tswititi, e si mulapfulapfu ngeno
a songo pfufhifhala. E mutswuku vhukuma a sa vhuyi a
vhudziswa. Lukanda lutete-tete lwo tou thaho tshothe, uri
ndi lwa tshisadzi zwi sa vhuyi zwa hangisa. Khofheni ho
daho zwavhudi... (Maumela 1954:3).*

(A very beautiful girl, who is of a medium size, she was not very tall yet she was not short. She had a very light

complexion with a very soft skin, which you could see belonged to a woman. Her face was so pretty.)

Looking at the manner in which the author describes this girl, one would expect a lot of wonders from her. But instead she is very cold and submissive.

Cohen (1973:37) says:

An author has many means whereby he can communicate the traits, feelings and thoughts of his characters. He usually employs physical descriptions of varying exactness and fullness. So that the character can be visualized by a reader.

On the contrary, the description of Elelwani does not have anything to do with the story. Even if she was a very ugly girl, or just an ordinary woman, it would have not have made any difference to the story, because the physical description given does not communicate any traits, feelings and thoughts of this character. Vele, who is determined to get Elelwani for himself, never mentioned anything about her beauty. It would appear like Vele was a type of person who would not accept defeat, that is why he had to make sure that he followed Elelwani up to Chief Ratshihule's kraal. Had Elelwani been as beautiful as the author's description, one would have heard other characters commenting about her beauty. It seems even Chief Ratshihule

seemed to prefer Elelwani to his other wives because she was much younger than them. After all, a new broom sweeps clean!

When Elelwani's father compelled her to get married to Chief Ratshihule (an old man), she tried to object, but she did not exert enough force to show her father that she was not interested. She gave in without much struggle. When she informs Vele about her father's arrangements to marry her to Chief Ratshihule and Vele suggests that they elope together and get to the city, she objects, saying that her father would follow her and kill her there.

*'Tsha khwine tshine nne nda tshi vhona', ndi Vele,
 'n̄taheleni, ha ri vhusiku honoho, ri mbo di namela rothe ri
 ye makhuwani'. (Maumela 1954:12).*

(It is better if you could run away from your home and join me so that on the same day we elope and get to the city together, said Vele.)

*'Naho zwo ralo, khotsi anga vha zwi pfa zwauri ro
 shavhela makhuwani vha do tevhela'. (Maumela 1954:12).*

(Even if we can do that, when my father finds out, he will follow us.)

*'Naho vha tevhela, vha do zwi ^Xdivha na uni ri ngafhi,
nahone vha ^Xdo vha vho pfa nga nnyi?' (Maumela
1954:12).*

(Even if he follows us, how will he know our whereabouts
and who will tell him?)

*'Ha! fhedzi ^Xnne mbilu i a tata ... U fa ndi tshi tou ^Xthavhiwa
nga pfumo sa kholomo? Ha, ebo mma!' (Maumela
1954:12).*

(Oh no! I am scared ... I don't want to die like a beast
being stabbed with a spear.)

From this conversation, one hears how shallow-minded Elelwani was. For the mere fact that her father threatened to kill her made her believe that he would kill her. Vele tried to show her facts that ought to diffuse what she believed will happen, but she did not want to listen.

This shows the way she hero-worshipped her father and believed she belonged to him.

The statement above is confirmed when Elelwani and her friend met Nthambeleni.

Elelwani said:

Arali na vhona Vele ni mu vhudze uri ndo vhingwa...

(Maumela 1954:16).

(If you see Vele tell him that I am now married.)

Nthambeleni asked the following:

... Zwino hone inwi ni khou malwa nga vhone Vho-Ratshihule naa? .(Maumela 1954:16).

(... Does it mean that you are getting married to Mr Ratshihule?)

Ee, ni ni muñwe ndi nnyi? said Elelwani.

(Yes, who else can it be?)

A tshi ralo a mbo di thoma u tungufhala zwe zwa mbo di vhonadza,...

(When she said that she visibly became sad.)

As Elelwani told Nthambeleni that she was getting married to Chief Ratshihule, one

would believe that she also loved him, but when one reads further and hears that Elelwani visibly became sad, then one will start to realize that she was doing this much against her will.

When one looks at Elelwani when she was already at the chief's kraal, nothing shows that she was a living character who also had her own reasoning power and integrity, to the extent where she was blamed for witchcraft and expelled from the chief's kraal.

Elelwani did not object to the accusation which in Venda culture was the worst insult which one could bear. Elelwani was so submissive that she did not even try to prove to the people that she was not a witch. It would seem she was portrayed as a kind of woman who men say were:

... created as playthings for men, that they were brainless, mindless, and easily pliable. Emecheta (1977:99).

It would seem Chief Ratshihule had enough of her, so he wanted to discard her.

Elelwani did not even accuse Vele of blackening her name when he told her that he was the one who pretended to be Matshinyise, the prophet, and that he had done everything in order to get her back. This might be because she also loved Vele and maybe was relieved. But when one compares an earlier statement by Elelwani when she refused to elope with Vele at the beginning of the story, one tends to doubt if a person of Elelwani's character could be brave enough to take it all that easy. More

especially when one looks at the way Elelwani was receiving special treatment from Chief Ratshihule, she definitely would not let Vele get away with it so easily. It would be more understandable if it was pre-arranged between Vele and Elelwani. So Elelwani seems to be portrayed as a caricature; a person without brains, just like a parcel which is removed from one place to another.

3.2.2 *Elelwani's mother*

Elelwani's mother is a very submissive and traditional woman,. She hero-worships her husband. She will never oppose anything said by him. When one looks at the way she talked to Elelwani when Elelwani tried to explain to her father that she did not want to get married to Chief Ratshihule, then one will see how much she honoured her husband's words.

"Kani ni khou hangwa zwauri avha ndi khotsi aŋu vhe vha tou ni beba". Ndi mme awe-vho nga fhalo thungo, "vha na pfanelo ya u ni nea munna. Arali ni tshi zwi divha zwauri ni ḥwana wavho, ni do ya". (Maumela 1954:11).

("Have you forgotten that this is your father of whom you were born", that is her mother on the other side. "He has all the rights to choose a husband for you. If you know that you are his child, you will go".)

Statements such as the one cited above show that this woman was not ready to listen to reason. As long as what was said came from her husband, then it was correct.

The manner in which Elelwani's mother handled this situation shows that during that time no democracy was observed. It would seem she wanted to instill in her daughter's mind that a man's word was always final. This was actually what happened, for the manner in which Elelwani was dominated by Vele confirms this. Under normal circumstances, Elelwani should have been given a chance to air her views about her reluctance to marry Chief Ratshihule. One would have expected her mother to be the one who should be more sympathetic than any other person but the contrary was the case. She instead, does not understand that Elelwani too is an individual, who has the right to choose whatever she would like to have. Irrespective of whether she is a child or not, she still deserves the right to choose.

3.2.3 *Chief Ratshihule's wives*

Not much was said about the chief's other wives, except that the chief had other wives. Most surprisingly is the manner in which these women accepted Elelwani, for no mention is made that they became jealous of Elelwani. Normally one would expect a woman to be jealous of a co-wife, especially a young and beautiful woman like Elelwani. Instead the wives just accepted change as if there was nothing wrong. For example:

"*Kha vhafumakadzi vhothe, a hu na we musi e muhanuni
 a tavhanya u fariswa gungwa sa Elelwani. Vhege yeneyo
 ya musi a tshi kha di tou bva u talukanya vhafuwi vhawe
 i sa athu na u fhela, la litshiswa mufari walo Vho-
 Nyambeni la kumedzwa ene*". (Maumela 1954:27).

(Amongst all the wives, there is not a single one who held the chief's tray (gungwa) when she was still as new as Elelwani did. As soon as she started knowing her husband the tray was transferred from Nyambeni to Elelwani.)

It appears as if things became a bit abnormal after the arrival of Elelwani at Chief Ratshihule's kraal. For under normal circumstances, when the chief received a new bride she would not immediately hold the chief's tray as stated above. But, funnily enough, the other women did not seem to care about this. The author just made a comment about this, as far as other characters are concerned, it seems like it went unnoticed because they never ever commented about it. One would even conclude that they did not really care about their husband. Normally these women should have expressed some jealousy in one way or another.

This seems to reveal the author's attitude as far as females are concerned, especially when the readers look at the same author's depiction of all other female characters in this novel and more of his works, e.g. *Musandiwa na khotsi Vho-Liwalaga, Maele*

wa Vho-Mathavha, to name only a few. When one observes carefully how female characters are portrayed, one can easily conclude that the author's perception of womenfolk in general is that they are always portrayed as inferior and submissive. They have very little to say at all, especially to a man, be it a husband or a son.

3.2.4 *Mutshekwa*

Mutshekwa , Elelwani's friend, is a simple traditional woman. She is portrayed with her friend Elelwani dressed in their traditional clothes. They attend functions together and travel together even when they go to town. Mutshekwa, just like Elelwani, seems to be submissive. One would expect to hear her advising her friend about marrying old man Ratshihule but instead she says nothing. Since there is a saying which says 'silence means content' then perhaps Mutshekwa is content about what is happening to her friend. Normally a friend would comment in one way or another; she ought to have either encouraged her friend or discouraged her.

It seems the author was writing about objects, not human beings. Surely if these women were regarded as people, they would be portrayed as people with some human traits that exist in people, for instance with emotions, brains and feelings.

3.3 Female characters in Madima's *A si ene*

The female characters in Madima's novel can be classified into two categories, viz:

the so-called 'good mothers' and 'terrible mothers'. Since the good mothers are said to be submissive and traditional, then Muhanelwa and Vho-Nyadzanga will fall under this category. Adziambeni, who is not at all submissive, will automatically be classed in the category of terrible mothers.

3.3.1 *Muhanelwa*

Muhanelwa is a traditional and conservative young woman who is very faithful and loyal. From the beginning of the story, Muhanelwa, an orphan, who is portrayed at her aunt's home where she grew up, is very kind to her aunt and cousins. The manner in which she speaks and jokes with her cousins Ndiambani and Mafune when they come back from school shows how close they are to one another. For in most cases, elderly people, according to Venda practice, show some form of hostility in order to command respect. It is generally believed that if one shows some friendliness to younger people, they might take advantage.

"Tshibulebule tshanga ndi mini Muhanelwa?"

(Can you guess what I have Mahunelwa?)

*"Ndi nga divha hani zwithu zwa henengei zwikoloni ndi
henefano hayani?"*

(How can I know the things that happened at school while
I remained at home?)

"*Ndi nga bula!*" *Ndi Mafune a no ralo.* (Madima 1993:4).

(I can tell her! says Mafune.)

Such a conversation shows the healthy relationship existing between Muhanewa and her cousins, as she is much older than them but can still share some jokes with them.

After Maluta, who was Muhanewa's fiancée, eloped with Adziambei, Muhanewa did not give up hope. She did not try to get herself another man. All she did was to stay at home until she was sent to Maluta's home to wait until he came back. After a long period of waiting, Maluta came back, and when he went back to the city, he arranged for Muhanewa to follow him as he lost contact with Adziambei.

Indeed, Muhanewa followed the husband without any queries. But instead of taking her where he stayed after he met her at the station, Maluta left Muhanewa in a shack and told her that was home, he would come back in the evening as he was going to work, only to go and organize thugs to kill Muhanewa. Fortunately those thugs did not kill Muhanewa, they took a dead dog's heart to report back to Maluta and were paid.

Even after such an incident, Muhanewa went back to Maluta's home, where she stayed with her in-laws. It was not long after the incident, when Maluta was sent back home by Adziambei because he was ill. Muhanewa, together with Maluta's mother, went to meet him at the station. But unfortunately, on seeing Muhanewa

alive, he collapsed and died.

Had Muhanewa been a modern woman, she would not have gone to stay at Maluta's home after he eloped with Adziambei, not to talk about getting back there after being told by those thugs that they were hired by Maluta to kill her. But because of her conservative nature and belief that a woman should belong to someone, Muhanewa felt it was better to wait for Maluta than stay without a husband. This is confirmed by Buchi Emecheta's statement which says:

Every woman, whether slave or free, must marry. All her life a woman always belonged to some male. At birth you were owned by your people, and when you were sold you belonged to a new master. (Emecheta 1977:112).

It would appear that Muhanewa now belonged to her new master Maluta because he had paid a dowry to own her. This meant that she felt obliged to tolerate whatever bad things that occurred from Maluta's side. In actual fact, Muhanewa was not portrayed as a stupid character, she was just submissive because she respected the cultural heritage. She, like many women, only wanted to have a stable marriage and family. One would rather look upon her as a conservative character.

3.3.2 Vho-Nyadzanga

Vho-Nyadzanga, Adziambei's mother, is also portrayed as a very conservative and traditional woman. Her conservative character is seen when she quarrels with Adziambei for the bad things said about her. She uses very derogatory words in referring to her daughter, as she feels that her daughter's behaviour leaves much to be desired. She fails to understand the fact that Adziambei was not actually what she thought she was, but that she was doing all that she did because of the love she had for Maluta.

*Pheleha yeneyi! U ḥwana wa muthu vha twa nga iwe, vha
 ja miladza nga iwe. Na zwine muthu a fara thano mutani
 a zwi tsha pfadza. Vhudabadaba fhedzi vhu no itwa.*
 (Madima 1993:1).

(This adulterer! Do you think its normal for someone's child to be a topic when people have their meals? Even things which you do here at home do not have value. It is only rubbish and nothing else.)

Vho-Nyadzanga respects and honours her husband. This can be proved by listening to her as she talks to her daughter. She says:

"Na khotsi ^{Anu} ndi vhuya ndi tshi vha vhudza; zwo anza".

(Madima 1993:1).

(I am going to tell your father when he comes back; that is too much.)

This shows that she is warning Adziambei that her father, who is the most superior person in the family, will not stand for her behaviour. Statements such as the one above suggest that Vho-Nyadzanga feels that her husband is more powerful than herself, so he will be able to discipline Adziambei.

3.3.3 *Adziambei*

Adziambei, who is regarded as an outcast in her society, is a beautiful young woman, who is very brave and an extrovert. In actual fact, the way she is portrayed differs from what could be expected of a woman who lived during those days. She fell in love with Maluta from the day she saw him and made an effort to let him know about this. She could not resist him, so she made a plan to meet him on his way back home from Muhanwelwa's place. On seeing that she might not get a chance to express her feelings to Maluta because she was travelling with her friend Ntsieni, she dropped to the ground pretending that she had fainted. Maluta carried her on his back, then Adziambei got a chance to whisper into Maluta's ear that she loved him.

After this incident, Adziambei eloped with Maluta. People who saw Adziambei with

Maluta on their way to the city thought she was not a Venda because of her looks and the way she was dressed. At the station Maluta and Adziambei met with some young men who were coming from Johannesburg. One remarked about Adziambei:

"Nne ri sa vhuyi makhuwani ri liwa nga vhathu vha fanaho na hoyu a re afha phanda". (Madima 1993:55).

(We sometimes fail to come back home from Johannesburg because of people like this one who is in front of us.)

This young man believed Adziambei was one of those women he had seen in Johannesburg and who have the power of cheating men because of their looks. It seems that she appeared to be very clever and advanced as far as social life was concerned.

Adziambei showed her intelligence and independence when she managed to cheat Matshaya and let him kill Fanyana. She did not hesitate to shock Matshaya by the way she answered when he greeted her.

("Lumela musali wa Fanyana!")

("Lumela munna waka".)

("Wena u tsivha byang gore ke nna musali wa muthu ola?") (Madima 1993:63).

(Good day Fanyana's wife)

(Good day my husband)

(How do you know that I am that person's wife?)

This is how Adziambei started to win Matshaya so that he could help her get rid of Fanyana.

Adziambei fought tooth and nail to avoid Fanyana who captured her in order to make her his wife. She organized Matshaya and gave him Fanyana's gun to kill him (Fanyana). Irrespective of the riches that Fanyana had, Adziambei was not impressed by him, and she did not love him or his wealth.

In the past a woman was not expected to fight for her rights or defend herself against any threats. But Adziambei would fight for what she believed in. It seems Fanyana was under the misconception that Adziambei would accept him for his riches. This is an idea which most men used to believe in. Buchi Emecheta confirms this through one of her characters when she says:

He was one of those big, manly males who would not hesitate to tell you that women were created as playthings for men, that they were brainless, mindless, and easily pliable. (Emecheta 1977:99).

It is very clear that not all women were playthings for men. For, a character like Adziambei who was not even educated, was portrayed as a brave and brainy woman who could fight against all odds to get her rights.

Besides defeating Matshaya and Fanyana, Adziambei managed to get back home to Venda without the assistance of Maluta, who took her to town. She defied her parents warning against Maluta by eloping with him. On reaching Hammanskraal with Maluta, Adziambei did not have much trouble in fitting in with town society. She became a very good friend of Thavhani who was a member of the family that hosted her and Maluta at Hammanskraal. Usually a young woman like Adziambei, coming from Venda would have suspected that Maluta meant to do her harm by leaving her with strangers. She would have had a lot of difficulties to fit in that society as their life-style differed much from the life-style in Venda.

In fact Vho-Raňwane, Thavhani's father and his family loved Adziambei very much. If Adziambei had not been adaptable and intelligent, she would definitely have problems in adjusting in to town life. There Madima has proved to the world that even during the past eras, not all women were submissive. He actually showed that there are exceptions to the rule in every society, i.e. people can never be all the same.

3.4 Female characters in ET Maumela's *Philiphise*

The female characters portrayed by ET Maumela in *Philiphise* are enlightened and

independent, except one. They are enlightened because both Zodwa and Tibani are educated and they both know what they want in life. Both have their goals clearly defined in this novel. The one exception is Mukandangalwo's mother, Vho-Vusani, who is of an older generation and still believes she can have a say in her son's affairs.

3.4.1 *Tibani*

Tibani was a young lady-teacher who was very well-mannered and respectful. At the beginning of the story, Tibani met Mukandangalwo in town. Mukandangalwo was a young man who was not yet married. Tibani had lost her purse, fortunately Mukandangalwo had picked it up earlier. As she realized that her purse was no longer there, Tibani screamed:

*Mmawe, ndo xedza tshipatshi tshi re na tshelede nga
ngomu!*

(Oh no! my purse which had money is lost!)

After giving back her purse Mukandangalwo had a chance to express his love to Tibani who did not give him a definite answer. After seeing Tibani, Vho-Vusani was very impressed and encouraged her son who complained that Tibani had not told him if she loved him or not. Vho-Vusani told Mukandangalwo that by delaying to answer, it showed that Tibani was not an easy conquest. She says:

Nwananga, houla ndi ene musadzi. Nne ndi pfa na mbilu yanga yo sokou mu tshenela. Dzi si hedzi phiranawe dzine vhoiñwi na takalela u khadela hayani lini. Hezwi zwine a si ni bulele uri u a ni funa nga tshihadu, u khou toda u vhona arali ni tshi khou mu funa zwi mbiluni. Vhananyana vhakale ro vha ri tshi tou ralo. Inwi zwino ni ri u khou ni tongela? Bubuthe langa ili! (Maumela 1985:7).

(My child that is a real woman. I just felt happy when I saw her. She is not like these funny women you guys would like to bring home. For the mere fact that she does not tell you right away if she loves you or not, it shows that she first wants to see if you really love her. She reminds me of girls during our days. You stupid son of mine, you think she does not love you!)

Such a statement confirms the respectful nature of Tibani.

Although Tibani and Mukandangalwo ended up being engaged, and they had a child, Mukandangalwo got married to Zodwa, who played a good samaritan by befriending Tibani when she was admitted at Rishile Hospital after an accident. That did not make Tibani lose her integrity, instead she held her chin up, and finally married

Mukhwandala who was Mukandangalwo's friend. She did not imprison herself by the mere fact that she was having a child with Mukandangalwo. Generally, women become very frustrated if a man leaves them with a child, just like one of Emecheta's characters, in her novel *The Joys of Motherhood*, who says:

*On her way back to their room, it occurred to Nnu Ego that
she was a prisoner, imprisoned by her love for her
children, imprisoned in her role as the senior wife.*
(Emecheta 1979:137).

With Tibani it was a different story. Even after separating with Zodwa, when Mukandangalwo tried to get Tibani back, she did not even hesitate to object when Mukandangalwo offered to marry her, it never even crossed her mind that Mukandangalwo was her child's father. Therefore, this shows that Tibani was never a victim of circumstances, she always knew what she wanted in life. Here Maumela proves that a woman can still get another man to marry her if the father of her child does not love her.

3.4.2 Zodwa

Zodwa was a very cunning young woman who would not hesitate to go out of her way and do anything to achieve her projected goal.

It was only discovered after a long time that she was not a qualified nurse and had served at Rishile Hospital under a pretext, after forging her twin sister's certificates. She went out of her way to befriend Tibani in order to take her man away from her.

She got married to Mukandangalwo when she did not even love him and she knew she had her own husband. All she wanted was to rob him off his riches. Unfortunately this arrangement did not succeed ,as Maradzhe, Mukandangalwo's half-brother, had overheard her arrangement and warned the police. The police came to the rescue of Mukandangalwo.

All these efforts made by Zodwa show the brave woman in Zodwa. It also shows that she knew what she wanted in life and would fight tooth and nail to get it. Above all, in order to be able to make all these plans, one has to be intelligent, so whoever says women were "brainless" is proved wrong.

Everything that Zodwa did in this novel shows that she was very brainy, the only problem being that her intelligence was misdirected. Had she been a sober character, Zodwa would have reached very high on the status ladder. If one can imagine how difficult it can be for any person to be able to cheat the whole hospital administration and work unnoticed for a considerable time, then it proves that this character was very brainy indeed.

3.4.3 Vho-Vusani

Vho-Vusani is a woman who still clings to past beliefs. Tuttle (1987) refers to such characters as having a belief in a uniquely feminine essence, above and beyond cultural conditioning, a feminist version of the old fashioned eternal female and as such, a mirror image of the Biologism which for centuries justified the oppressing of women by proclaiming the natural superiority of men.

This feminine belief of man's superiority is seen in Vho-Vusani when she tries to suggest to her son Mukandangalwo that Tibani is a suitable woman for him. She believes this because Tibani is believed to be a local girl who knows the Venda custom of hero-worshipping men.

She fears and rejects Zodwa because she believes people from outside Venda are town people, and there is a belief that girls from town are not well-mannered, and as a result her son will not have much to say to such a woman. That is why Vho-Vusani says this to Mukandangalwo:

"Mukandangalwo ḥwananga, uyu musidzana wanu wa libunyu, kana ndi musadzi zwi ḫivhiwa nga nnyi, ni vhonungu ni do dzudzana wa tshena-shu? Ni mmbulahiselani mbili ḥwananga? Muthu wa hone na u mu ḫivha a ni mu ḫivhi u mu fhedza". (Maumela 1985:12).

(Mukandangalwo my son, this 'libunyu' (derogatory word

for Zulu) girl of yours whether she is an elderly woman or not who knows, do you think you will stay together and have a sound family? Why do you give me heartaches my son? You don't even know her well.)

It is clear that Vho-Vusani feels that Zodwa can never be a submissive wife. It is generally believed in Venda culture that a woman who is a non-Venda is not a good woman. All this proves the conservative nature in Vho-Vusani's character.

3.5 Female characters in TJ Manenzhe's *Dengetenge*

The main female characters in ^AManenzhe's novel are Vho-Raele and Vho-Nyamutshagole. Both these women are illiterate. The only difference is that Vho-Raele, though illiterate, is a more modern woman and young, while Vho-Nyamutshagole is older and traditional.

3.5.1 *Vho-Raele*

Vho-Raele was a young woman married to Masakona. She was a modern woman, which becomes clear when she moves to Tshivhuya Location. She did not just sit on her laurels and do nothing. She, like many other modern women, felt that she had a right to contribute ideas to build the family, that is why she was the one who suggested that they should move to Tshivhuya.

Another thing which strengthens her modern life is the kind of life style she led at her house in Tshivhuya. Masakona, her husband, confirms this when he says the following to his mother:

"... Hafhu vha songo humbula uri hoyu musadzi wanga u fanelu u tshila nga ndila ye vhone vha tshilisa yone na munna wavho lini". (Manenzhe 1983:41).

(... You must not expect my wife to live the same way as you lived with your husband.)

Such a statement shows that Masakona accepts the fact that a modern woman has to contribute ideas in the family set-up. His mother, on the other hand, believed that such a woman was out of hand.

Vho-Raele was a modern woman because she had decided to be away from her in-laws' place for she wanted to stay with her nuclear family but not an extended family.

The way in which Vho-Raele behaved was a subject of concern among the local residents. She indulged in extra-marital affairs and she had no respect for her husband. She started her bad behaviour while she was still staying with her in-laws, by the time she went to her own house at Tshivhuya things became worse. She was involved with other two men, Rolitshana and Marannda. Things came to a boiling

point when these two men fought for her until Rolitshana killed Marannda. The behaviour of Vho-Raele was not what was expected of a woman.

Gaidzanwa (1985:11) says:

As wives, women are expected to behave in comforting non-aggressive and nurturant ways. They are there to make life manageable for husbands and children. Wives are expected to be faithful, both physically and socially to their husbands. When wives refuse to do so, they are disapproved off...

At the beginning of the story, the neighbours were critical about the affair of Vho-Raele and Rasithi. Although Vho-Nyamutshagole tried to protect her son's marriage by denying allegations that Vho-Raele was having an affair with Rasithi, towards the end of the story she confessed to her son that all what was being said about Vho-Raele was true. Therefore, at the ultimate end Vho-Nyamutshagole started to disapprove the behaviour of her daughter-in-law, like other people did.

Vho-Raele failed dismally to make life manageable for her husband, to the extent where Masakona ran mad and died at Weskoppies. She was aggressive and went to an extent of experiencing the death of Marannda who died for her sake. Such cruel behaviour is not expected from a woman, especially a married woman who is looked

upon as wife and mother. Vho-Raele was the type of woman who was problematic.

Gaidzanwa (1985:11) says the following about such women:

In literature, the bulk of the problem women are those who fall down on their wifely duties and responsibilities. These duties include bearing children, subordinating themselves to husbands, remaining faithful to their husbands and deferring to the husband's mother, father or other relations. Childless domineering or assertive, unfaithful and insubordinate women are despised and socially disapproved.

Vho-Raele was exactly like the second type of woman described above. She was unfaithful, assertive and insubordinate. That is why she was resented by the society and her in-laws. She failed in her wifely duties because she was rather too busy with boyfriends to be able to take care of her family.

3.5.2 *Vho-Nyamutshagole*

Vho-Nyamutshagole was a traditional old woman. Her traditional ways and beliefs are seen at several instances in this novel. At the beginning of the story, one hears how she protects her daughter-in-law when people dispise her for her wayward behaviour.

She says:

*Hu khou pfī Masakona vha do mu itani? Isani phanda na
 hezwo zwine na khou langana na mme. Ndi khou ri kha
 zwa Masakona muthu kha sokou hangwa. Hoku kukoro
 kwavho na ḥwana ku do fhele. Vha todou ri Masakona a
 fane na uyu ḥwana wavho a no dzula nga u pandela
 vhasadzi? Ene uyu Thengiso o vha o tholwa nga nnyi
 hune a sokou enda a tshi lutanya vhathu vho didzulela
 midini yavho? (Manenzhe 1983:20).*

(What are you saying about Masakona? Go ahead with what you have been saying with your mother. I say people must just forget about Masakona. You want him to be like your son who is always expelling women? In fact who has invited Thengiso to go about poking his nose into other peoples' affairs?)

Vho-Nyamutshagole found Thengiso and his mother busy talking about the affair between Vho-Raele and Rasithi. For, in Venda an elderly person is expected to ignore funny things even if she knew such or has seen them - with reason. There is a Venda saying which reads: *Muhulwane u kanda mupfa a tshi u vhona* meaning, an elderly person walks on top of thorns while he/she sees them. Therefore, a thorny issue like a daughter-in-law having an extra-marital affair was ignored for the sake of

saving the marriage.

Vho-Nyamutshagole could not accept the fact that her son should go and start his own family at Tshivhuya. She tried to resist and warned her son against the behaviour of his wife. She only did this as a last resort for she wanted to keep the traditional way of staying together as a clan. She tried to find out who came up with the idea of moving to Tshivhuya, because she felt a woman was not supposed to initiate anything in the family. In Venda they say *Khuhu ya phambo a i imbi mutsho* meaning a hen can never crow. In African tradition when a cock crows it reports dawn, therefore, a hen can never report any dawn. So, Vho-Nyamutshagole felt that it was wrong that Vho-Raele should initiate the idea of moving to Tshivhuya.

3.6 Conclusion

The issue of female characters in our discussion is clearly dependent upon time and age, which means that time and age are great contributors towards an individual's character. As one looks at female characters discussed in this chapter, one realizes that women of a certain age category, during a specified time have more or less the same ideologies. They set almost the same standards in certain aspects of life, their manner of dress is more or less the same, they have principles that are almost the same.

Daiches in Calderwood's and Toliver's *Perspective on Fiction* says:

... a psychologically accurate account of what man is at any given moment can be given neither in terms of a static description of his character nor in terms of a group of chronologically arranged reactions to a series of circumstances. (Calderwood and Toliver 1968:347).

In all the novels referred to in this research, the authors give an account of chronologically arranged reactions to a series of circumstances. For example:

In Madima's novel, Adziambei starts to show her intelligence at the beginning of the story, and as the story proceeds, things become more complicated and she also reacts accordingly. This shows that through more complicated experiences, Adziambei had to be able to solve more complicated problems, for instance, the manner in which she planned to get rid of Fanyana shows that she had to sit down and think hard.

It was also not an easy task for Adziambei to get back to Venda, which shows that she grew psychologically through the experiences she encountered in life and managed to get her way back home. Had she been the way she was when she first went to Hammanskraal, things would have been very different.

The manner in which Manenzhe gives the character of Vho-Raele shows that she never had the same personality from the beginning to the end of the story. At first there was only one boyfriend spoken about, viz: Rasithi. But as the story went on,

Vho-Raele's behaviour became worse. She excelled in whatever she was doing. She went to the extent of sleeping with a boyfriend at Tshipise. The number of boyfriends she had increased to three. She got involved in murder cases and so on.

In ET Maumela's novel, the psychological growth in characters is also clear as the story unfolds. For Tibani, who first appeared as a young single lady teacher grew, she got engaged to Mukandangalwo, she got a baby, she faced the disappointment of not marrying Mukandangalwo and ultimately married Mukhwandala. Through such experiences it is clear that Tibani grew mentally and was mature enough when she decided not to go back to Mukandangalwo. Had she been a naive young girl, she would have been frustrated by what happened between Mukandangalwo and Zodwa. Maybe she would not have been able to resist the second offer by him.

TN Maumela in his novel has portrayed characters that grow, but not in the expected manner. For, it is true that before Elelwani got married to Vho-Ratshihule she was a young woman, and when she got expelled she was chronologically older. But in reality Elelwani did not seem to have grown psychologically, for she was very inactive. Whenever she met challenges of life, she did not react as a normal being. She was just like an object which was moved from one position to another.

As far as the issue of common objectives that relate to time are concerned, the female characters portrayed by both TN Maumela and Madima have much in common. The manner of dress of Elelwani and Mutshekwa is very much alike with the manner of

dress of Adziambei before she went to town and the way Muhanelwa and other girls used to dress at Tshilapfene. The type of entertainment shown by Maumela in *Elelwani* is the same as the entertainment shown by Madima in *A si ene*. The youngsters used to spend time together drinking liquor at a common venue. For instance, when Vele and Elelwani spoke of Elelwani's marriage to Chief Ratshihule, they were gathered at the home of Mutshewa drinking liquor. As far as Madima's book is concerned, the young generation gathered at Muhanelwa's home to while away time with her fiancée during his visit, they enjoyed liquor together, that was when Adziambei and Tshibalo started arguing.

On the other hand, ET Maumela's women and Manenzhe's do also share common elements like using the same type of transport for undertaking journeys, viz. travelling by car, the same type of behaviour of some of the characters. Vho-Raele in Manenzhe's *Dengetenge* had extra-marital affairs, just like Zodwa who got involved with Mukandangalwo and married him while she had Themba. Seemingly the type of women portrayed by the two latter authors are modern women and they both project cruelty in their characters. Both the women are involved in serious murder cases.

So, it shows that time is a seriously contributing factor towards human behaviour. Therefore, when scholars like Tuttle refer to time factor as a great influence towards the moral behaviour of women they are partly right, although there are exceptional cases like Adziambei, who seemed to be too much ahead of time, as the way she was behaving did not agree with the environment from which she came, and the time at

which she lived.

| Traditionally a Venda woman was never expected to be able to explore things on her own, she was only expected to comply with the standard regulations which were set for women, i.e. to remain at home, plough the fields, cook for her family and bare children.

Yet, characters like Adziambei, Vho-Raele and Zodwa are not portrayed in that manner. They are not representative of traditional women as described above.

Characters that suit the description above are Elelwani, Muhanwelwa, Vho-Vusani and Vho-Nyamutshagole. Elelwani and Muhanwelwa were symbolic of traditional women because they were very kind and tolerant, the latter ladies still believed in the traditional way of living where parents had a say over their children's marriages, and they both have the same expectations that daughters-in-law should be submissive and subordinate to their husbands.

After the above exposition of the female characters in this chapter, the comparison of these characters will follow in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

4. A COMPARISON OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN THE SELECTED NOVELS

4.1 Introduction

The information about female characters which was gathered from the previous chapter will facilitate the comparison envisaged in this chapter.

The first two selected authors viz. TN Maumela and ES Madima, who are pioneers in the writing of Tshivenda novels, wrote in the early fifties. Makhado (1980:21) supports this when he says:

*The appearance of the real novels in Luvenda began in
1954 after the emergence of 'Elelwani' by TN Maumela
and 'A si ene' by ES Madima.*

The other two selected authors, viz. ET Maumela and TJ Manenzhe, wrote much later,
i.e. in the eighties.

There is a great difference between the novels of the two groups of authors, for instance, the storyline, characters, the setting etc. Since our main concern in this chapter is the difference between female characters, all the other characteristics of the

novel will not be taken into consideration, except where there is a need to refer to them.

4.2 Comparison

Elelwani *A Sizwe*

As it is already stated above that TN Maumela and ES Madima are the first writers to write real novels in Tshivenda, then it is not surprising to find them portraying old fashioned female characters who are very conservative and submissive. It is difficult for them to ignore the traditional way of living which is so much part of their lives.

TN Maumela's female characters, viz. Elelwani, Mutshekwa, Elelwani's mother (whose name was never mentioned) and Chief Ratshihule's wives (whose names were also not mentioned), as compared to ES Madima's female characters, viz. Adziambei, Muhanewa, Thavhani, Vho-Nyadzanga (Adziambei's mother) and Maluta's mother, have some similarities as well as differences.

The common element existing in all the female characters mentioned above is that they were not educated and were somehow or other traditional and submissive. They differ in that some of them, like Adziambei and Thavhani, are more clever and self assertive, while others seem to lack confidence and the ability to fight the life challenges they encounter. There are younger female characters as well as older ones in both these novels. Female characters in ET Maumela's *Philiphise* and TJ Manenzhe's *Dengetenge* also have their own similarities and differences

There are both young and old female characters in both these novels. The difference between the young female characters is that some are educated, e.g. Tibani in *Philiphise* who is a lady teacher, and Zodwa who, although she is not a professional woman, is somehow or other enlightened, because she could manage to pretend to be a nurse after forging her late twin sister's certificates. While Vho-Raele in ^AManenzhe's *Dengetenge* seems to be illiterate, her educational qualifications were never mentioned. But by her behaviour one can see that she is not educated. The common element among the three young women is that they appear to be more or less of the same age group and they all have confidence in themselves.

The other female characters depicted by ET Maumela and TJ Manenzhe are elderly women who are old fashioned and traditional viz. Vho-Vusani in *Philiphise* and Vho-Nyamutshagole in *Dengetenge*. They would like to adhere to the old traditional norms that existed in the Venda culture. So when comparing the two groups of authors the aspects described above will give us a framework of supporting facts surrounding the female characters.

4.2.1 *Eletwani and Muhanelwa*

Muhanelwa, who, although young, behaved in the traditional way, in clinging to the old traditional norms of being submissive, was a true replica of what a traditional Venda girl was expected to be. Simply because Maluta had paid lobola for her, she felt that she had to tolerate all what Maluta did. She stayed with Maluta's parents waiting ^A

patiently for him to return home, irrespective of whether he communicated with her or not. She knew very well that Malu^{ta} had eloped with Adziambei, but she never lost hope. When, at last Malu^{ta} came back home after losing contact with Adziambei in town, Muhanewa accepted him as if nothing was wrong. After arranging for Muhanewa to follow him when he returned to work in town, Muhanewa accepted the invitation, only to go and meet with a mob of thugs which was organized by Malu^{ta} to kill her and report back to him with her heart in exchange for a fee. Fortunately, these thugs felt pity for Muhanewa and gave her money to return to Venda. But instead of going back to her people, Muhanewa still went to stay with Malu^{ta}'s mother. This shows the submissive nature in her and the kind of commitment she felt towards her husband and his people. It would appear that Muhanewa was not sure of her security without a husband, or maybe she was doing it for the sake of preserving culture, as it is not culturally accepted for a woman to remain unmarried.

Perhaps Muhanewa thought it would be a shame to be looked upon as a returnee (*Mbuyavuhuhadzi*). For, in the Venda culture, a person who has returned home or who is divorced is looked down upon or is regarded as a failure. Although slavery is not practised in the Venda culture a man pays something for a bride. So that is why a woman feels that she owes the husband some loyalty even if she is unhappy with her life. Therefore, the issue of lobola becomes tantamount to slavery. And this seems to encourage men to take advantage of women because they know they have paid something for them.

Muhanelwa's submissive behaviour is just like Elelwani's in TN Maumela's novel. Elelwani, who gave in to marrying Chief Ratshihule against her will, shows her submissive nature by acceding to her parents' demand without much resistance. Even when Vele tried to convince her against her parents' will he failed. Elelwani felt that Chief Ratshihule was too old for her and that she never loved him at all.

But, as put by another character in Emecheta (1977:71):

How can a woman hate a husband chosen for her by her people? You are to give her children and food, she is to cook and bear the children and look after you and them. So what is there to hate? A woman may be ugly and grow old, but a man is never ugly and never old. He matures with age and is dignified.

This selfish statement, from a male character, shows how men regard women. It is confirmed by statements such as the one uttered by Elelwani's mother who says to her daughter:

'*Kani ni khou hangwa zwauri avha ndi khotsi anu vhe vha tou ni beba?*' Ndi mme awe-vho nga fhalā thungo, 'vha na pfanelo ya u ni nea munna. Arali ni tshi zwi divha zwauri ni nwana wavho ni do ya'. (Maumela 1954:11).

('Have you forgotten that this is your father?' That is her mother on the other side, he has all the right to choose a husband for you, if you know that, then you will do as he wishes.)

This clearly shows that women feel obliged to be obedient to men. Elelwani's mother, just like any other woman of that time, respected and believed in her husband. She wanted to show her daughter that her father had complete control over her.

Even after settling with Chief Ratshihule, Elelwani retained her submissiveness. This she did until she was accused of witchcraft, but even then she did not show any form of resistance. Even when Vele tried to convince her to run away with him, she objected, saying that her father would follow them and kill her. This shows that Elelwani gave in to his father's instructions because she feared him more than respecting him.

Elelwani did not feel bad when Vele told her that he was the one who pretended to be a prophet and accused her of witchcraft. It seems she did not even care about her image, which would be tarnished by such accusations. She should have at least showed some concern in one way or another. It is as though Elelwani was a person without any feelings.

Both Muhanwelwa and Elelwani were depicted as traditional Venda girls who adhere to

the culture and norms of Venda. They are so submissive that one would think they have no feelings. For, even if a woman has to adhere to norms laid down for her, she is not supposed to be illtreated in order to prove that she is obedient. The manner in which Muhanwelwa and Elelwani were depicted projects the general misconceptions about women that prevailed in the past. For although the two female characters came from different books, their mode of behaviour is more or less the same, and they were described by both the authors and fellow characters as good women. For instance, Madima said the following about Muhanwelwa:

Ene o vha e musidzana we milayo ya vha yo tou nwelela khae. O vha o vuda khakhathi a songo vhuya a i dowela.
Tshawe o vha e maseo, u semana na muthu a sa zwi koni. U amba nae hu uri a gwadame a loshe. O vha a tshi shuma o takala misi yothe... (Madima 1993:3,4).

(She was an obedient kind of girl who was very quiet and was not quarrelsome. She enjoyed laughing and was always in a happy mood. When she spoke to elderly people she used to kneel down to show them respect.)

When one looks at the submissive way in which TN Maumela portrayed Elelwani, one does however see that her character was rather exaggerated, for even if a woman is supposed to be submissive no one would allow anybody to get away with issues such

as the one stated above where Vele told Elelwani that he was responsible for accusing her of witchcraft. In fact, Vele did it because it was in his own interests, not because he cared about Elelwani's image. He ought to have paid heavily for such an act.

It appears that, according to TN Maumela and ES Madima, female characters like Elelwani and Muhanelwa should be regarded as a yardstick of what they, as male authors, think good females should be.

4.2.2 *Adziambei compared to Muhanelwa and Elelwani*

To confirm the above statement one should compare the remarks on Adziambei's character, from both the author and the other characters. Adziambei, who was depicted at the same time as Muhanelwa and Elelwani, is a different type of character. She is as beautiful as Elelwani, but it is Adziambei who is the talk of the town. Yes, Madima has talked a lot about Adziambei's beauty, one would even think that she has been exaggerated. But as one reads through the novel and observes the reactions of other characters towards Adziambei, Madima's description begins to be justified.

Adziambei, unlike her counterparts, Muhanelwa and Elelwani, was not submissive at all. She knew when to say yes or no. She did not allow any man to impose himself upon her, be it her father or any other man.

Even when her father stormed into the hut to beat her, she never stood for that, but simply ran away and left, never to be seen again. Such behaviour is not accepted in the Venda culture, especially from a girl. Had Adziambei been a normal Venda girl, she ought to have gone to one elderly person who would come and ask for an apology on her behalf. But instead she decided to elope with Maluta. This clearly gave Adziambei a very bad name, especially after other people confirmed that they saw her being carried by Maluta on his back.

To prove that Adziambei was not an ordinary girl, when she found herself in a difficult situation in Benoni (where Fanyana had taken her after stealing her from Hammanskraal where her beloved Maluta had left her) she made plans to get away from this 'beast' (Fanyana). She regarded Fanyana as a beast because he was very ugly and she never liked him. Although Fanyana used every possible means to show Adziambei how much he loved her, she never gave in. He offered her all the money and treasures he had, hoping to win her love, but he failed. In the end she organized Matshaya, who made friends with her in order to use him to get rid of Fanyana. She stole Fanyana's gun and gave it to Matshaya, who used it to kill Fanyana. Then she fled back to Venda.

The sophisticated manner in which Adziambei eliminated Fanyana is comparable with evidence that we read about today. For example:

One of the stories by an American - Psychiatric Martin Binder, M.D., where a fifteen

year old girl called Bobbie killed her father in desperation. This man, who continuously illtreated her mother, cruelly reveal to Bobbie that she was actually not their real daughter, but that she was only adopted. An issue which her mother explained that she was prepared to explain to her only after she turned eighteen.

Bobbie says:

Right then and there something had to be done, I didn't want to kill my dad, but I didn't want him alive anymore either. I couldn't stand any more of what he was doing. I decided if I wanted to be a good daughter and love my mum, I'd have to do something to my dad. (Blinder 1985:69).

The psychological testing reported that Bobbie suffered from some immediate situational depression when she killed her father. I believe Adziambei was also suffering from some kind of depression when she decided to organize Fanyana's death, for she found herself placed in a predicament. She did not know what else to do in order to get herself out of the difficult situation.

Ndo sokou tshoko vhukati ha vhathu vhane ndi si ^{divhe} na muthihi wavho. U luvhelela zwi do vhuya zwa nndina nda vho do disumbedza zwine nda vha zwone. (Madima

1993:63,64).

(I am just thrown amongst the people I don't even know.
I feel tired of begging, I think I'll end up showing my true
colours.)

It appears that Adziambei had pretended to be content, but was not happy at all.

Adziambei was actually not as bad a person as people made out; she was only a victim of circumstances. She did what she did because of her loyalty to Maluta. That is why she did not stay in Venda and enjoy whatever she got from Fanyana's money. After seeing her parents she made her way back to town in the hope that she might meet Maluta. And indeed by sheer luck they met at a restaurant where Adziambei had secured herself some employment. At home Adziambei was referred to as a terrible woman e.g.:

Mathungo a Adziambei ha tsha ambea, A si ene!
Tshitukutuku tshi ngomu... Ene u tonga hani-ha ano
maduvha? (Madima 1993:80).

(There is now too much news about Adziambei. She is not doing it on her own! She must be a bit mad... Nowadays she is so proud.)

This is a general attitude which prevailed among people who were prejudiced against women. It was only those who had not yet developed this attitude who thought Adziambei was wonderful. That is why a young boy who was standing near Natal House Restaurant remarked that he wished Adziambei could have been his sister.

'Nŋe ndi tou funa e khaladzi-anga!' a raloho ndi muňwe mutukana wa Tshidimbini we a vha o rumiwa u renga muno vhengeleni. (Madima 1993:72).

('I wish she could have been my sister.' The one who said that is a young boy from Tshidimbini who was sent to buy salt from the shop.)

But everyone else had fixed ideas about what a good woman should be and spread vicious rumours about Adziambei's bad behaviour. They could not even see her beauty and admire her ventures. Hence the title of this novel, *A si ene*, meaning that 'she is not on her own or she is not herself' i.e. maybe Adziambei was not normal or maybe she was bewitched. Even the author seems to support what the other characters say about Adziambei's character, to the extent of giving the novel this title. Another aspect that supports the statement above is the comments of the author about Adziambei as compared to his comments about Muhanwelwa.

For instance, Madima (1993:2) says:

*Mulingo muvhi we u si lenge u dela Adziambei ndi wa u
 tonga na u di-funa,. Vhahwe vhathu o vha a sa vhuyi a
 amba navho...*

(The bad thing about Adziambei was pride. She even chose who to speak to....)

Maybe, if the author had been a woman, she would have understood Adziambei better, for she would have been able to understand what prompted her to behave as she did.

But most unfortunately he is a man, and men have their own preconceived ideas about what a good woman should be. In actual fact, they seem not to realize that circumstances alter cases. Adziambei could not in fact have done anything else except what she actually did in order to save herself. She was a victim of circumstances, and had it not been for the love she had for Maluta, maybe the situation would not have been what it turned out to be.

4.2.3 *Vho-Nyadzanga (Adziambei's mother) and Elelwani's mother*

The manner in which TN Maumela and ES Madima depicted Vho-Nyadzanga (Adziambei's mother) and Elelwani's mother also confirms their expectations of what a good woman should be. Both these characters hero-worshipped their husbands, for

instance, when Vho-Nyadzanga was quarrelling with her daughter Adziambei, she warned her and told her she was going to report her to her father who would sort her out. Vho-Nyadzanga said this because she knew that Adziambei's father was the right person to discipline her. She did not feel that as a parent she should be equally responsible towards her daughter, much like Elelwani's mother, who warned Elelwani that she should not argue about marrying Chief Ratshihule because her father had ordered it. It would seem that had it not been for her father, perhaps Elelwani would have had the option of choosing a husband of her own choice. What this means is that a man's word was not supposed to be opposed or reasoned against, it was supposed to be taken as final. This was the format which these two mothers wanted their daughters to follow.

But, most unfortunately, due to changes brought by the time factor, both daughters did not totally agree with their parents. Although Elelwani ended up marrying Chief Ratshihule, it was much against her will. For Adziambei, things were very different, she just could not take it, so she acted against her parents' will.

On trying to find out from several teenagers about their attitude towards parents choosing their spouses, almost all of them said they felt that it was not an ideal thing for them; some even felt they could do without marrying. Elderly people, on the other hand, seem to feel that the practice of choosing partners for their children had a lot of advantages, because in most instances parents used to choose partners from families whose backgrounds they knew best.

4.2.4 *Tibani, Zodwa and Vho-Raele*

The female characters portrayed by ET Maumela and TJ Manenzhe differ from the female characters portrayed by the older authors in that they are not submissive at all. Vho-Raele in ET Maumela's novel differs from Zodwa and Tibani in that the latter two are educated. Tibani, who is a teacher by profession, is more reasonable and very cool in handling her affairs. Zodwa, who pretended to be a nurse by profession, demonstrated that she had also had some exposure to education in the way that she handled things. The only problem is that she was a crook by nature and would not settle down to what she had. She always wanted to do things dishonestly. Vho-Raele, whose educational qualifications were never mentioned, behaved typically of an illiterate woman who claims to be wise, but was just lost.

The manner in which all these young women protested against oppression by men shows that the time factor is a very important influence over people's behaviour. In other words, the main difference between the female characters of the first two authors and those of the latter two authors is the time during which the novels were written and place where the incidents occurred. As far as milieu is concerned, almost all the events occurred in rural areas, although there were some isolated incidences in towns, viz. at Benoni where Fanyana took Adziambei after kidnapping her and in Germiston where Adziambei and Maluta rediscovered each other. Other events which happened in town occurred in Boksburg, where Marannda was working, in Louis Trichardt, where Tibani and Mukandangalwo met for the first time and in Vereeniging, where Themba,

Zodwa's boyfriend used to stay.

What Zodwa and Vho-Raele also had in common was the fact that they became involved in criminal offences. Zodwa became involved with Mukandangalwo while Tibani was a patient at Rishile Hospital, pretending to be a friend. The friendship led to the marriage between Zodwa and Mukandangalwo. His mother, who did not approve of the relationship failed to convince her son to forget about Zodwa.

After marrying Mukandangalwo, Zodwa decided to advise her other boyfriend, Themba, to kill Mukandangalwo and rob him of his business and money. But, most unfortunately, her plans failed.

Vho-Raele, who had several extra-marital affairs, became involved in a murder case when she, together with Rolitshana, one of her boyfriends, killed Marannda who would never leave her alone. The two incidents described above show that both Vho-Raele and Zodwa were the kind of women that would never let a man override them. Seeing that Marannda was a threat to her life, Vho-Raele decided to free herself from him by killing him, while Zodwa tried to get rid of Mukandangalwo because she felt that he was a stumbling block between her and her beloved Themba.

Therefore, Zodwa and Vho-Raele also had a common objective like that of Adziambei. Although Adziambei was a character depicted much earlier than the other two young women, her behaviour is very similar to that of these two others. Hence my comment earlier on that Adziambei was rather too advanced for the period during which she was

depicted. So all of these three women would not let any man stand in their way or assert his manhood over them. One could easily ascribe this kind of behaviour to the little knowledge that Zodwa had, coupled with exposure to town life, while with Adziambei and Vho-Raele one could perhaps say that their exposure to town life contributed to their behaviour.

Although, Vho-Raele was not actually staying in town, her visiting relatives in town and staying at Tshivhuya township might have contributed to her crude character. After all, unlike in rural areas where people live as one in a community, people in towns thrive on the law of the jungle, i.e. survival of the fittest. Hence the Makgoweng Motif.

As far as Tibani is concerned there was much difference between her behaviour and that of her peer group. She was more content and steady in character. The manner in which Mukandangalwo disappointed her should have made her react in a very bad way, but instead of reacting impulsively she kept a low profile. And that paid off in the end for Mukhwandala, a bosom friend of Mukandangalwo, proposed marriage to her.

It was only when Zodwa had let Mukandangalwo down that he thought of going back to Tibani. Most unfortunately Mukandangalwo would not get Tibani back. Had Tibani been like Vho-Raele or Zodwa maybe something more serious would have happened to Mukandangalwo. The manner in which Tibani reacted towards Mukandangalwo's disappointment does not at all reflect her as a submissive woman. She managed to

show her disapproval of man's domination by not running after Mukandangalwo, thinking that since he had fathered her child, she should chain herself to him, irrespective of what wrong he did, then she would really suffer.

Another thing is that Tibani did not change her mind about marrying Mukhwandala even when she saw that Mukandangalwo was then desperately in need of her. Had she done that, then Mukandangalwo would have thought that he was indispensable.

One could sum up the character of Tibani as a 'well-adjusted' woman. For according to one of Freudian theories:

... women who are not passive, who are not content with their roles as mothers and wives, are maladjusted. (Simon 1975:3).

Tibani has proved that she was not maladjusted because she never tried to compete with Mukandangalwo or fight with him. She accepted that Mukandangalwo had lost interest in her and relaxed. Because as Simon goes on:

The source of maladjustment is penis envy. (Simon 1975:3).

He goes on to justify the statement above by quoting Millet (1968:180) when he says:

(Freud's) entire psychology of women, from which all of modern psychology and psycho-analysis derives heavily, is built upon an original tragic experience, born female. To be born female is to be born castrated.

Perhaps it was the fact that Tibani had a career of her own which helped to keep her cool, unlike the other female characters who did not have anything concrete to lean on. Hence Simon goes on to explain this Freudian theory as follows:

Given this basic assumption, Freud explained manifestations of deviance in women, whether they were expressed by a desire for a career, a lack of interest in marriage and/or motherhood, or participation in criminal acts, by the presence in such women of a masculinity complex. (Simon 1975:3).

So this might be a good explanation of the character of a woman like Vho-Raele who went to extent of killing Marannda. Maybe it was because of lack of a career or some sort of this masculinity complex. For it was mentioned in this story, that Vho-Raele had Marannda's money. In actual fact the name Marannda means 'Mr Rands', which means he had a lot of money. The same applies to Zodwa who seemed to be a very ambitious character, which is evidenced by her efforts to forge her late sister's nursing certificates and later on her effort to take over Mukandangalwo's wealth. It is quite

clear that both Zodwa and Vho-Raele were not content with what they had. As a result we could easily conclude that according to the Freudian theory, these women were maladjusted.

Seeing that the four novels referred to in this work were written by male authors, it suffices to suggest that female authors should write in Venda, for if there were novels written by female authors, it would be interesting to compare their portrayal of female characters with those of their male counterparts.

It is high time that the faded myths surrounding sex-distinctions be avoided, such myths should be treated historically, especially in literary criticism and in literature itself, for all women writers should realize that they too are forming the future, for good or for ill, in accordance with their designs.

Therefore, by realizing the need to contribute their literary works, female authors will be able to portray the true feelings and mood of female characters.

4.2.5 *Vho-Vusani and Vho-Nyamutshagole*

The other female characters portrayed by ET Maumela and TJ Manenzhe, viz: Vho-Vusani (Mukandangalwo's mother) and Vho-Nyamutshagole, are both old fashioned and traditional women. They both believe strongly in the traditional way of living, i.e. parents have to have a say over their children's marriage. It would appear that both these women wanted to impose their own ideas on their sons. For Vho-Vusani encourages Mukandangalwo to marry Tibani instead of Zodwa, stating that Tibani's character resembled a character of girls as they were during her days. She (Vho-Vusani) tried to discourage Mukandangalwo from marrying Zodwa because she suspected that Zodwa might be a crook as she was a foreigner. Her (Vho-Vusani) prediction turned out to be true at a later stage. Perhaps Mukandangalwo did not listen to his mother's advice because after all, she was a woman, and because there is a tendency for men not to respect women irrespective of whether she was his mother or not. The same applies to Masakona, who went to the extent of explaining to his mother that his wife was supposed to contribute towards decisions in the family, when his mother, Vho-Nyamutshagole was trying to advise him not to move to Tshivhuya merely because Vho-Raele had suggested that they move to Tshivhuya.

4.3 Conclusion

The illustration above shows that TN Maumela and ES Madima agree on certain aspects of their character portrayal and differ in other aspects. They both presented

their female characters as typical traditional women that conform to the rules laid down for women by culture. Madima has been more explicit and clear when depicting his characters, and has also given latitude for exceptions to the rule, for instance, a character like Adziambei, who was regarded as an outcast by the community in which she lived.

TN Maumela's female characters are not at all interesting. They are depicted in such a way that one would even doubt that they had life in them. In actual fact, they are just like caricatures. For instance, Elelwani was described only physically, her real character was never depicted neither in action nor by comments from the author or fellow characters.

Qangule (1974:75) says:

Problems arise in depicting a character's appearance because outward appearance does not always correspond to the inner self. As the proverb says 'Easy to know a man's face, hard to know his heart'.

It is true that one cannot judge a good book by its cover, but usually people tend to believe that a person's outward appearance tend to project his innerself. So, merely by following Maumela's description of Elelwani one expects great things either from her or from those who interact with her. One cannot be convinced that Elelwani was

very beautiful by seeing only Vele's reaction towards her. I should think several other characters ought to have reacted the same way as Vele did in order to give readers enough information to confirm the author's comments.

Yet with Adziambei, who was described by Madima in a similar manner as TN Maumela described Elelwani, there is enough evidence from fellow characters that supports the author's description.

Tshibalo wanted to have Adziambei for himself, that is why he showed sour grapes towards her because she looked down upon him. See Madima (1993:1,13).

Maluta decided to leave his fiancée behind and eloped with Adziambei because he could not resist her beauty.

Yet with Elelwani, it seems Vele only had her in mind and nobody else. Maybe, if Vele had been given a chance he could have had any other girl for himself.

Fanyana went to the extent of kidnapping Adziambei because he could not help it but felt he'd rather lose the friendship between Maluta and himself than leaving Adziambei alone (Madima 1993:54).

The young boy at Natal House commented about Adziambei's beauty (Madima 1993:72).

Qangule (1974:75) says:

*Characters that depend for effect on our imaginations
make little impact in the mind of the reader.*

Since TN Maumela has given us very little information about Elelwani's character, this means that readers have to make their own stories in their heads in order to bring her to life. Meaning that several different stories could be created around such a character, whilst, if the character was portrayed in action, then readers' imaginations would have a certain trend or pattern to follow, and this would have a great impact on the characters.

ET Maumela and ^AManenzhe too agree in certain aspects of their characters and disagree in others. Their younger female characters are modern and older female characters cling to traditional values. Although these younger female characters are all modern they differ in that some were educated and others were illiterate. Tibani, who was depicted by ET Maumela as a lady teacher was properly portrayed, for sober mannerisms agree quite well with what she is said to be. Zodwa, who pretends to be a nurse was also very well presented, for her actions confirm the saying 'little education is dangerous'. She might have been to school to a certain extent, but it shows that she was not properly groomed, she claimed to know much more than she knew. Vho-Raele on the other hand has been portrayed as a very fast character. Although her educational background was not given, one can easily conclude that she

was illiterate. The manner in which she handled herself leaves much to be desired. So Manenzhe has managed to give a clear portrayal of a street woman who thought she was clever, while she landed herself in dangerous corners. Both ET Maumela and Manenzhe have portrayed their characters in action. Readers will never have any problems in figuring out the type of characters they portrayed.

As far as the elderly female characters they portrayed are concerned, they have portrayed typical traditional women, who would like to adhere to cultural norms, for instance, having a say in their sons' marriages.

There is a very big gap between the characters portrayed by the pioneer authors and the two modern authors. The pioneers have shown their expectation of what a good woman should be, and disapproved of female characters that could not adhere to cultural norms laid for women. This was shown by comments made by both the authors and the characters. Although TN Maumela has not depicted a so called 'way-out' female character, the way in which he regards Elelwani shows that he would disapprove of any woman behaving contrary to Elelwani's behaviour. Well, with Madima, although, at the beginning of his novel he seems to be in favour of Adziambei, one realises how he really feels about Adziambei from the comments of other characters, to sum it up his comments on the last page when he says: *A si ene.* (It is not herself/she is not the correct woman.)

Then this shows that Madima, just like people in Adziambei's community, believes that

there is something wrong with Adziambei.

Well, the modern authors have shown how much things have changed since the early fifties. Their female characters differ with the other characters in many respects. They are very competitive and active. They compete with men in most spheres of life, for instance, unlike those female characters portrayed in the fifties, the modern woman competes economically because she does not depend upon a man for income, e.g. Zodwa who was a 'nurse', then later on went into business with Mukandangalwo, Tibani was a lady teacher, and Vho-Raele sold liquor. The modern female characters are not as submissive as the female characters of the fifties. They know when to say no to a man when he wants to take them for granted, e.g. Tibani would never allow Mukandangalwo to feel like he is indispensable, she told him off when he went back to her after ditching her. Vho-Raele put her foot down to convince her husband to move to Tshivhuya when she was tired of staying with his parents. Zodwa managed to lure Mukandangalwo and made him to drop his fiancée and take her instead. All this shows how women of today can overpower men with their zeal and talents.

CHAPTER 5

5. GENERAL CONCLUSION

The research which was conducted on female characters as depicted by selected authors in their novels has shown different attitudes of these authors as far as female characters are concerned.

Since all the authors of the selected novels are men, their general viewpoint is that female characters should be submissive to male characters. It is clear in all the novels that those female characters who are somewhat reluctant to subordinate themselves to their male counterparts are portrayed as 'bad mothers'.

Traditional women like Muhanwelwa and Vho-Nyadzanga in *A si ene*, Vho-Vusani in *Philiphise*, Vho-Nyamutshagole in *Dengetenge* and Elelwani in *Elelwani* were portrayed as submissive and obedient women. They never tried to compete with male characters even where it was justifiable to do so. Therefore, it would seem that the authors of the selected novels have the same misconception of believing that submissive women are more acceptable and agreeable. For instance, when interviewing Manenzhe, he stated that he portrayed a character like Vho-Raele to show that today's women are not faithful and reliable, and that these women are capable of having deep secrets.

For, when one looks at how these very same authors depict female characters that are competitive and not submissive, then one will understand the general feeling of these authors.

A character like Adziambei in *A si ene* has been a victim of circumstances, she was compelled to elope with Maluta because she loved him, but the whole idea of this novel seems to portray her as a bad woman. It would seem she ought to suppress her real feelings in order to please other people. This would have meant that she was unfair to herself. Since Adziambei went all out to make herself happy, she should be pardoned for hurting other people like Muhanwelwa for she did not mean to do so, - everything she did was because of her love for Maluta. Even when she killed Fanyana she did not intend to do it; it was simply the only thing she could do to set herself free from him.

As a result, Adziambei only needed to be understood, then whoever had bad feelings towards her should forgive her.

A character like Vho-Raele in *Dengetenge* could be regarded as a bad woman, for it is not acceptable for a woman to have extra-marital affairs. All what she did against her husband was very bad. Manenzhe managed to portray a real bad female character. Even if Vho-Raele had not been a married woman, her behaviour would still have been unacceptable to society, for no person is allowed to have more than one partner. There are many disadvantages to that effect, viz: it could cost other

people's lives (like what happened between Marannda and Rolitshana) and it could bring sexually transmitted diseases. No one can respect a person who behaves in such a way, as she is looked down upon and regarded as a person with low morals.

The two female characters depicted by ET Maumela, viz: Tibani and Zodwa, do differ in the way they behave.

Tibani, who, despite not being submissive and traditional, still deserves respect; she was portrayed to represent those females that maintain their dignity. She never allowed Mukandangalwo to take her for a ride. So, ET Maumela has at least managed to show that a woman may not be submissive but still have respect for men and also deserve the same respect for herself.

ET Maumela also showed that some women do not have dignity because of their weak characters. Zodwa, who was portrayed as an unfaithful woman who loved money, ended up landing herself into trouble as she was arrested for trying to kill Mukandangalwo and rob him of his wealth. It is practically always true that crooks come to a bad end. So ET Maumela's Zodwa was properly portrayed to show readers that bad deeds always land people in trouble. ET Maumela has also shown that advice from elderly people should never be ignored. For Mukandangalwo landed himself into trouble by ignoring his mother's advice, that elderly traditional women are good.

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