

CHAPTER 2

CLASH OF CULTURES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The lives of a group of people are easily influenced by their surroundings. The biotic environment in Maredi's dramas has played an influential role in the lives of his characters. The availability of resources such as wild animals and dagga in *Mošwang wa Matuba* for example, stimulated characters in their society to devise means of meeting their subsistence needs. Wild animals trapped as food resources were too scarce. Shops where food could be bought were also very scarce. In most cases husbands had migrated to the cities and were only able to send their wives money after a long period of time or during Christmas holidays as that was the only time they could visit their families. People in the villages therefore did not always have money. Accordingly, dagga was sold to obtain money.

When groups of people that have different cultures come into continuous contact the result is a clash of cultures. In his works Maredi depicts conflicts between African traditional and Western cultures in typical Northern Sotho-speaking society.

This chapter focuses on the clash of cultures as observed in African traditions and Western Cultures. Leon Portilla Miguel(1970:7) views cultural identity as the awareness of the self. He further argues that cultural identity denotes a consciousness shared by members of a society who consider themselves in possession of characteristics that make them distinct from other groups, who, in turn, think of themselves as having a unique culture.

The main elements Miguel(1970 :7) refers to are language, sets of traditions, beliefs, symbols, possession of an ancestral land and a certain moral orientation of a culture.

All the abovementioned elements play an important role in the preservation of cultural identity. These elements cannot be common in all people of the whole world.

David Hicks et al (1994:46) define culture in general explaining it to include all the things people think, do, say and make; in other words, their ideas, behaviours, languages and artifacts. These include institutions (such as marriage) political ideas (such as democracy) religious beliefs (such as witchcraft), customs (like decorating Christmas trees), rituals (like saluting the flag) art styles, games, stories, and much more.

Jenks quotes Tylor (1993:33) as viewing culture to be that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by people as members of their society.

In conclusion, let it suffice to say that culture is the customary manner in which human groups learn to organize their behaviour and thought in relation to their environment (Kroeber and Kluckhohn(1989 :4-5)

That being the case, Maredi's chosen drama works could be assessed according to the notion of culture as being a way of life of a particular society in a specific environment.

The assessment will focus mainly on aspects that portray culture and conflict among people who belong to different nations.

2.2 MOŠWANG WA MATUBA

The terms *dagga*, *cannabis* and *Mošwang wa Matuba* will be used interchangeably throughout the analysis of *Mošwang wa Matuba*.

In *Mošwang wa Matuba*, Maredi refers to Act 24 of 1910. The Act, according to him, provides for the protection of forests and wild animals. The aim of this Act is to conserve

wild animals and forests. In outlining the practice of hunting and killing of wild animals, Maredi conveys a message of awareness about nature conservation. Laws have been decreed to protect animals which have survived extermination. To make people aware of this law, they were summoned to *Mašišing* (Lydenberg) where all the headmen were present. On that particular day they were informed that henceforth no wild animals or even birds should be killed. They claimed that a knobkerrie and a dog are a hazard to the land. Therefore, hunting of animals in hunting parties is supposed to have ended. Hunting parties that are still constituted are done so in secrecy as they are forbidden.

Maredi uses one of his characters, the judge, to explain fully why the law against the killing of wild animals has been introduced. Awareness campaigns were held to make people conscious of extermination of different species of animals as a result of them being hunted and killed. Matlakale acknowledges that such meetings were held. The judge and the accused therefore represent western laws and the African traditional way of life respectively. Maredi juxtaposes Mashilo, an accused law student, to a group of offenders who are oblivious of the existing act against the killing of wild animals. The reaction of the offenders to the abovementioned act could be attributed to their ignorance and inability to read and write. One of the co-accused describes Mashilo as an educated fellow whom he regards as the person who opens their eyes. As a law student, Mashilo read about the act. He could only make them understand the precise year during which the act was passed by quoting the year during which the Makwa group were initiated. It was only after this explanation that his co-accused realised that the act has long been in existence. The fact that they neither used calendars nor dates to give a specific date shows that they have never been to school. On the other hand, the prosecutor supported the statement of the judge that regular meetings were held to make people aware of the existing act prohibiting the killing of animals. The reason that people were not aware of the act was not accepted as an excuse.

Genetic depletion of fauna and flora is a cause for concern to everyone who has the interest of the natural world at heart. To achieve conservation and sustainable management of wild life, the government has imposed laws which explain that a person

commits an offence if he intentionally hunts a wild animal. Any person who commits such an offence is arrested by police officers as long as evidence is found on the offender. Police officers are required to seize the animals which may serve as evidence for the purpose of the court proceedings. Officers are therefore given powers to enter houses in search of evidence. Any person found guilty is to be fined accordingly. Although there are laws in place, people choose to ignore them. This inertia of some people, who also do not understand the importance of sustainable use of natural resources, place the fate of animals at risk.

It has been a habit since time immemorial for African folk to depend on meat of hunted wild animals. Their perception being that God made such animals for them to feed on. To some extent severe human poverty causes people to kill for the purpose of obtaining meat for food. They place snares or leg-hold traps at night knowing very well that animals move more freely then. In the early hours of the morning they go and check if there are any wild animals trapped. Alternatively, these people use dogs to stalk and hunt animals.

When people are apprehended for contravening the law they appear before a court and often found guilty. The judge says the following to the accused who are charged with killing wild animals:

Le tshetše molao, le sentše, le bolaile diphoofolo tša lešoka, tše e sego tša lena... (1982:49)

(You have violated the law, you have been destructive, you have killed wild animals, which do not belong to you...).

Leseilane does not plead guilty because he sees no wrong in killing wild animals which are not anybody's property. His opinion is that Western laws are imposed on him. He emphasizes his belief thus :

Bona ba rata go gapeletša gore molato ke ge re bolaile

diphoofole tša Modimo (1982:44)

(They want to complicate matters by claiming that the main problem lies in us for having killed God's animals)

To him Westerners are exaggerating matters. As long as he did not murder anybody then there is no case against him. He does not understand why he should be charged for killing the animals that belong to God.

Westerners perceive game killing without a licence as a criminal offence whereas Africans believe that God created wild animals as a source of food. The following dialogue where the judge cross-examines Leseilane, reveals contrasting views among people with different cultural backgrounds:

Moahlodi: Diphoofole tšeo o di bolailego tšeo o reng di ntšhitše tšhego ka lapeng ke tša mang?

Leseilane: Tša Modimo mong 'aka

Mohlodi: Ge e le tša Modimo, e se tša gago, a o tšo kgopela tumelelo ya go di bolaya go Modimo?

Leseilane: Aowa, Mong'aka (1982:41)

Judge: To whom do the animals you killed, claiming that they have helped you to stave off hunger in your family, belong to?

Leseilane: They belong to God my Lord

Judge: If they belong to God and they are not yours, did you go and ask for permission from God to kill them?

Leseilane: No my Lord

It is a fact that most Africans are ignorant of the laws concerning nature conservation. This shows that there are already enough differences between Africans and Westerners as far as wild animals are concerned. Many people condemn the use of dogs for hunting and also want to have traps and snares banned and regard this practice as unethical and cruel.

When asked whether he wanted to say anything before judgement could be pronounced Lesilane says,

Mong'aka ga ka utswa sa motho, ga ka senyetša motho selo, le madi a a bonwago mo molamong, ga se a motho, eupša ke a tšona dišebana tšeo Modimo a mphilego go šebiša bana, bjalo ke maketše ge ke bona maphodisa a re gogagoga, nna ka bonna ga se ka ba ka senya selo sa motho (1982:43)

(My Lord I did not steal from anybody, I did not wrong anybody, even the blood stains which can be seen here do not belong to any person but to the animals which God gave me to serve as relish for my children, Now I am surprised to see the police harassing us, as for me, I did not wrong anybody)

Leseilane tries to prove his innocence by referring to the animals he killed as relish which God has freely provided. His repetition of the negative formative ga- in the abovementioned dialogue emphasizes that he sees nothing wrong in hunting and killing animals. The repetition of the verb stem -goga (drag) emphasizes his feeling that they were forcefully arrested and imprisoned.

A clash of ideas is again observed between African traditional beliefs and Western laws because both have different perceptions about handling of wild animals. Leseilane is not the only one with this negative attitude towards Western laws. Motale also supports Leseilane's sentiments in the following manner:

Nna ga ke sa tseba gore makgowa a napa a reng, ke gore ba napile ba gaketše, ba re re fo bolawa ke tšhego diphoofolo di le gona. E, e ba gopola gore Modimo ge a re direla tšona o be a di dira ka botlaela? (1982:31)

(I fail to make sense of white people's logic, are they really

serious that we should starve amid so many animals. Do they think that when God created them for us he was being stupid?)

Like his fellow countryman Motale also does not understand the idea of being arrested for killing wild animals. To him whites are unreasonable. The whole situation sounds ridiculous to them. The reiteration of the word “*makgowa*” (*whites*) as expressed by the accused characters who represent African traditionalists, shows that they do not come to terms with the laws which were promulgated by white men. From what they say, one cannot but conclude that the Western laws have undermined their ancient way of life. During the period before contact with Westerners the aboriginal people saw their traditional society as a haven of freedom because they hunted and killed animals as they wished.

The tone in the abovementioned dialogues suggests that black traditionalists do not enjoy life like they did before, as they are now subjected to foreign laws and, to aggravate matters, these are implemented in their own ancestral land.

Leseilane and Motale had never been to school. They could neither read nor write. They knew nothing about the law against the killing of wild animals. It is only after the young boy Mashilo, the co-accused, opened their eyes by making them aware of the existing Act on animal conservation. He explains to them that the law states that any person acting in contravention of the abovementioned law shall be liable, on conviction, to a penalty. Mashilo further reveals to them about the prohibition of killing birds, as well as the chopping down of trees. The very law explains that in the past there used to be a large number of different species of both wild animals and birds, as well as trees, and that they are now becoming extinct. Only a few remain whilst some are totally extinct.

Today, hunting is a sport for Westerners whereas killing an animal for sport is not an African idea. Africans hunt for food. For Westerners, hunting is easy because in most cases they do not walk and stalk but shoot animals from the back of a vehicle. There is

also a practice known as “canned hunting”. These are hunting expeditions where wealthy tourists shoot drugged game in small fenced areas . “Canned hunting” is legitimate and it is said that this practice can be beneficial for conservation efforts.

According to this view, animals that are sold can be placed in private game reserves until they are too old to breed. Those that are old are sold for tourists to shoot.

In general, the government has made a firm commitment to root out those responsible for hunting practices which show lack of respect for life of animals and to get rid of all inhumane hunting methods.

Today species of animals that have reached dangerously low numbers can be cloned as long as there is frozen DNA that could be used for this process but it is essential that the habitat for the animals in question be secured.

In *Mošwang wa Matuba* again Maredi laments over the abuse of dagga. In this work his aim is to increase an awareness concerning the drug problem in our society. The abuse of dagga has become a menace in the whole country because it is used by all tiers of society. Maredi uses cultural conflict to bring out the theme of this work.

Dagga is a green plant whose leaves are harvested and dried. The plant from which the drug is derived is called hemp or cannabis sativa. Among its leaves, there are many pips and twigs. Its street names are grass, joint, boom, zol , skyf, weed and majat poison. Rastafarians use the name ganja. Today the street value of dagga is R1,00/1g. Smoking and dealing with dagga is illegal in South Africa after the government banned the whole cannabis plant in 1930.

There is a group called The Religion of Jesus Church whose main religious text is the Urantia Book. The group says that from childhood Jesus was raised in a religion which used cannabis as a Sacrament. To support the fact that cannabis is a holy herb they refer us to the research conducted in 1936 by Sula Benet. According to Benet, the name cannabis appears several times in the Old Testament and it originates from Semitic languages like Hebrew. Bennet continues to say that the word appears in Exodus 30:23,

where Moses asked God the question, “Can the Holy be made Holy, even Most Holy?” In response to the question God commanded Moses to make a holy anointing oil that consisted of myrrh, sweet cinnamon, *kaneh bosm* (also appearing as *kannabus* or *kannabos* in Hebrew) .The word also appears in Isaiah 43:24, Jeremiah 6:20, Ezekiel 27:19 and Song of Songs 4:14.

The Religion of Jesus Church gives a quotation from Cannabis and Culture (Vera Rubin Editor) and The Book of Grass (edited by Andrews and Vinkenoog) that says,

*The error occurred in the oldest Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, Septuagint in the third century B.C, where the terms *kaneh, kaneh bosm were incorrectly translated as ‘calamus’ And in the many translations that followed, including Martin Luther’s, the same error was repeated.*

(1995:4)

To put more weight on their argument the group again mentions that Latimer D in “Crimes of the Ancient Mariners” says that the word translated in King James version of the Bible as ‘calamus’ was in fact Cannabis.The group believes that cannabis is a Holy Sacrament and it is for this reason that they venerate it. They also call it the holy smoke because they say that during the times of Moses the Hebrews worshipped God in the tents that were filled with the smoke of Cannabis.

2.2.1 Dangers of dagga

Researchers have revealed that dagga plants contain more than 300 active ingredients many of which have unpredictable side-effects . Some of its known dangers include the following:

- It is hallucinogenic and affects the central nervous system. It attacks the central nervous system and causes depression.

- It causes toxic psychosis - poisons the body and creates dependency.
- It impairs short term memory and the ability to concentrate
- It causes lung cancer and chromosome damage
- It damages reproductive genes and can lead to sterility
- It causes the long term clogging of the arteries and increases the risk of a blood clot which can suddenly block an artery and result in a heart attack or stroke forming.

Contrary to these dangers, there are past studies that revealed medicinal properties of dagga. Rev Dennis Shields of The Religion Church of Christ mentions that the medicinal value of cannabis plant dates back to 2000 -1400 B C. Shields says that according to Dr Lee Hamilton and William Eidleman (both researched on the healing properties of cannabis) the cannabis hemp plant produces seeds which are the highest sources of oils called Essential Fatty Acids. In their research Hamilton and Eidleman used those essential oils in the treatment of AIDS. Generally, researches report that substances in cannabis can:

- ease the symptoms of multiple sclerosis
- prevent nausea and off-set side effects of cancer chemotherapy
- prevent weight loss in AIDS patients
- ease spinal injury pain
- slow the advance of the eye disease glaucoma
- treat Parkinson's disease and schizophrenia
- destroy life-threatening brain tumours

Shields shares with us personal experiences of some of the members of The Religion of Jesus Church's use of cannabis as medicine. In his affidavit dated 9 March 1994, Affiant John Earl Robinson II (diagnosed with Acute Lymphocytic

or Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia on November 1992) reported that his reaction to chemotherapy and cobalt radiation to both his brain and spine was uncontrollable nausea, vomiting and loss of appetite. He says the legally prescribed drug (Marinol) was of little help. Affiant reports that it was only after taking cannabis concurrently with the course of chemotherapy treatment that his condition improved. He emphasises

Whether it be cancer, Multi Sclerosis, A.I.D.S, Glaucoma, etc as a sufferer of the disease I know that any person who has to deal with going through chemotherapy and/or radiation (that is chemically made) should have that right to use any natural God given herb of this planet to help/cure their disease.

(www.hialoha.com/konagold/church/holyherb:34)

The information above shows the controversy surrounding dagga. As time passes, there are new developments reported. Every time we encounter conflicting information. Heather Ashton of Newcastle University says recent studies warn that dagga is becoming more powerful and can lead to severe long term health damage due to more sophisticated cultivation and plant breeding (Star Thursday 1 February 2001).

Sowetan, 22 October 1998, p13 mentions a 1998 report of Observatoire Geopolitique des Drogues (OGD- Geopolitical Observatory for Drugs) which confirms that since the end of 1980s, Africa is becoming an increasingly important hub in the international drug trade. The report further says that more and more cannabis is being grown in all regions of Africa in response to the economic crisis in general. Africa is not only the drug transit point but also a large production and consumption area. In KwaZulu - Natal and the Eastern Cape, growing of dagga is the sole means of livelihood for most peasant farmers.

OGD continues to say that cannabis is grown worldwide on some 35 000

hectares which can yield a total of 22 140 tons with a street-value of around R24 million or R1 per gram. It is also said that dagga is less demanding on the soil and furthermore people can still grow it in areas of low rainfall.

The Statutes of the Republic of South African Criminal Law and procedure describes dagga (cannabis) as “an undesirable dependence producing substance” (1984:373). According to the Western culture it is a criminal offence to smoke and deal with dagga. Various scholars have carried out researches on dagga and found that it is a dangerous substance which if frequently taken may damage the human mind.

In the play we come across typical African traditionalists like Matlakale, Mogase and Nkopeleng in whose society the smoking of dagga is prevalent. These men wake up early in the morning and converge in privacy at a designated spot where they smoke dagga. To them smoking dagga the first thing in the morning is a good way of starting a day. These men regard smoking dagga as their cultural heritage and use it on a recreational basis. This habit results in a clash of cultures as the Westerners had already promulgated the Law against the use of such a drug.

The police were on duty, raiding houses, when they found Matlakale smoking dagga. This is how he responds to sergeant Kgobalale who pretends to have interest in *Mošwang wa Matuba*.

A ba ye kua! Ga ba tsebe selo, ba ipolelela tša hlogo tša bona. Nna o a mpona, ge nka se o re ka gonnyane “šwaa” ga ke lokelwe ke selo Maswene! Go nna o bjalo ka kofi Maburung. Ga o bone, le nkgapele ge bašemane bale ba gago ba fihla mo, ke itše ka bolela le bona, ka hwetša go le thata, gwa pala, leleme la rarana, ka ba ka tla ka o re “šwaa” ya ba gona ke kwago gore ke motho (1982:27-28)

(Let them go to hell! They are ignorant, they always talk

foolishly. Look at me for instance, if I don't take a puff, I never function properly Maswene! To me it (dagga) is like coffee to the Boers. For instance, a while ago when your boys arrived here I tried to talk to them but all in vain as my tongue became sticky, I even had to come and have a puff, thereafter I felt like a person)

What Matlakale says reveals his feeling about Western laws. Maredi uses imagery where “*Mošwang wa Matuba*” is compared to coffee. To Matlakale smoking “*Mošwang wa Matuba*” is like a white man's habit of drinking coffee every morning. He can neither think nor talk if he had not smoked his favourite blend. This belief makes one ponder Shield's statement that says,

‘Cannabis is an influence capable of rendering assistance in helping gain a spiritual receptivity via the completion of open neurotransmitter receptor sites, by the addition of the good thought provoking neurotransmitter cannabinoids, which have their greatest concentration in the frontal lobe region of the brain in a spot corresponding to that area known from the ancients as ‘the third eye.’

(www.hialoha.com/konagold/church/holyberb)

Matlakale claims that it is only after having a few puffs that he is able to think rationally. He believes that “*Mošwang wa Matuba*” induces wisdom and reasoning. He therefore does not agree with the Law that prohibits people from smoking “*Mošwang wa Matuba*”, especially that this blend has been a part of the native way of life. He believes Westerners are blundering and as such he will not forgive them for passing this Law. He expresses this feeling as follows,

Mo ba šaetšago, nka se ba swareleng, ke ge ba swarela batho “Mošwang wa Matuba” ona, aowa ba a gafa, ke sejo sa rena, go swana le kofi go bona. Le ge ba ka rata ba ka se re kgone, ba ka se re lahliše. Se ba ka bego ba se dira, ba ka be ba swara ba bangwe le balata ka gore bona ga o ba bone. Ge e le rena beng ba ona, ga ba tsebe se ba se dirago (1984:20)

(Where they err, and I will not forgive them for it, is when they arrest people for smoking dagga. Honestly they are mad, it is our food just like coffee to them. Even if they try, they will not deter us. What they should do perhaps is to arrest other people particularly commoners, because they become easily drugged. But when it comes to us, its owners, then they don't know what they are doing)

The extract above consists of two ideas. The first one reveals the entrenched customs which cannot be easily eradicated by strange Western beliefs and laws. Matlakale's steadfastness about smoking dagga further reveals the idea that "thaka ye tshela" (white people) - who are the custodians of the Western culture and its oppressive and subjugatory laws - are a confused lot as they deny them the freedom of smoking dagga.

The impression one gets is that Matlakale's statement that "*ba ka se re kgone, ba ka se re lahliše*" (They will not succeed, and they won't cause us to give it up) was, in a way, a prophecy of what the situation would be like today. It is difficult to rid smokers of their dagga smoking habits. Prisoners for example do not have a problem in getting dagga.

The smoking of dagga has resulted in a controversy around the world. Khulekani Sithole, Prison Commissioner, made remarks during a meeting of the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) Security and Justice Committee that dagga should be decriminalised in prisons because it helps keep prisoners passive. He claims:

"There is no way the Department of Correctional Services could prevent the use of dagga in prisons"
(PTA News 7 May 1998)

This proves Matlakale's statement that Westerners won't stop dagga smokers from practising this habit.

Sithole's remarks infuriated committee chairperson Mohseen Moosa, African National Congress delegate from Gauteng. Moosa responded negatively by saying,

"It is the duty of the Department to rehabilitate its prisoners and not produce drug addicts." (PTA News 7 May 1998)

Many researchers share the sentiments of Khulekani Sitole. In one of the 1998 issues of the daily newspaper, *Pretoria News*, South Africa's top dagga researcher, Professor Frances Ames, supports the call of the commissioner of Prisons to decriminalise dagga. *Pretoria News* 20 September 2001, reports that Daniel Ncayiyana, the editor of the South African Medical Journal, made a call for dagga to be decriminalised and permitted for personal consumption in small quantities. His argument is based on studies from Britain and America, which concluded that smoking dagga does not cause any known adverse effects on health. The South African Police Service classifies it under "gateway drugs" which also include tobacco and alcohol (*Sunday Sun* 5 2003, p 24). This implies that maybe dagga is not worse than other intoxicating substances.

According to Norman Mabasa, spokesman for the *South African Medical Association*, dagga acts as an antidepressant. He agrees that smoking is a danger to one's life and therefore recommends that dagga should be administered in tablet form or as a syrup. On the other hand, the British Medical Association supports the use of cannabinoids in drugs research but is against the legislation of cannabis for medicine.

The *Sunday Times* 5 March 2000 p10, reports that experiments conducted on rats in London have revealed that chemicals found in cannabis can destroy life-

threatening brain tumours. It is said that the scientists have found that the main active ingredient in marijuana halts the growth of malignant gliomas-the deadly cancerous growth in the brain.

In her research entitled - "Cannabis Sativa" - a plea for decriminalization, Prof Ames also does not see dagga as a criminal problem. This supports the then Minister of Correctional Services, Dr Siphon Mzimela statement when he told parliament in 1995 that he saw no reason to imprison dagga smokers. To him smoking dagga is just a practice of a part of what our forefathers used to do.

Mzimela's precise statement is

*Don't forget our grandfathers and grandmothers used to smoke and it was respected
(PTA NEWS:1998)*

The statement "it was respected" is proved by the way Matlakale and others in *Mošwang wa Matuba* addressed dagga. Nkopeleng refers to it as

*"dijo tše tša banna" (1984:5)
(This food for men)*

Mzimela's usage of the terms "grandfathers" and "grandmothers" explains that he is also still part of the African tradition. As a minister of correctional services, nationwide, he is expected to comply wholly with the demands of Western laws. It is interesting to note that he made this statement in Parliament. This is enough evidence that he still subscribes to traditional customs. Mzimela's comment supports Mafori Mphahlele right when he gave his views about missionary teaching as follows:

"Unfortunately customs and traditions do not die easily

(1978:862)”

On the one hand, researches mentioned that dagga is a potentially dangerous drug but, on the other hand, there are claims about its curative effectiveness in *Mošwang wa Matuba*. Matlakale makes claims for the efficacy of this drug when he says that it is a remedy for migraines. Due to the legislation that prohibits the smoking of dagga, scientific studies cannot be made to establish its efficacy. Certain potential hazards as observed by dagga researchers are noticed in *Mošwang wa Matuba*. Prof. Ames states that the effects of cannabis are cumulative and dose-related, and prolonged heavy use or less frequent use of a more potent preparation are associated with many different problems (1995:1269). Maswene’s group had full knowledge and experience of the effects of **Mošwang wa Matuba**. To take precautionary measures against intoxication they first sipped water, which was kept in the mouth for a while and then puffed their stuff. They did this to reduce **Mošwang wa Matuba’s** potency. When Mogase puffed without sipping water first, he became intoxicated and immediately asked for it.

A ko mphe meetse ao thaka, ke a di kwa di a mpherelela
(1982:8)

(Please pass me the water my friend, I can feel them
causing me some discomfort)

The statement that dagga is a hallucinogen tallies with the statement made by Edward Burmin as quoted thus by Shield,

.....it has traditionally been used not as a stimulant but as
a spiritual soporific ‘producing quiescence of the soul’
which is known as keyf or kaif, which translates as
intoxication, carouse or placid enjoyment.
(www.hialoha.com/kanagold/church/holyherb :27)

The following stage directions informs us about Mogase’s behaviour after a few

puffs,

Di šetše di mo ngangile, gomme o hwa ka disego

(1982:9)

(They have intoxicated him and he starts laughing)

This statement explains Mogase's euphoric feeling.

Maredi here provides a persuasive moral duty for our society to heed the call concerning the control and abuse of drugs such as **Mošwang wa Matuba**.

It is because of the substance's side effects that there are bodies like the South African Alliance for the Prevention of Substance Abuse (SAAPSA) whose aim is to increase awareness of the problems of drugs. Such organisations, however, seem to have difficulties as the likes of Matlakale in our contemporary society do not heed this call.

Some say smoking dagga is part of their religion. Garreth Anver Prince, a candidate attorney, who is a Rastafarian, was refused permission to register with the Law Society of Good Hope in 1997 because of two convictions of dagga possession. He appealed against the sentence imposed on him, basing his argument on the belief that the use of dagga is a "fundamental religious right" (*PTA NEWS* 17 May 2001) of all Rastafarians and he refers to it as "holy herb" which he says encourages insight and inspiration. Perhaps Gareth bases his argument on the study by L. E. Barret, an anthropologist, as reported by Shields. According to Shields, Barret's study was about the relationship of the Rastafarians with ganja. Barret is then quoted as saying,

...The Rastafarian sees ganja as part of his religious observance. He sees ganja as the smoother of mental

balance and as a medicatory influence. Ganja is really used to bring forth a peaceful and complacent aspect within man...

We do not find ganja as a mental depressor, ganja sharpens your wit, and keeps you intellectually balanced...Even in Trinidad today, ganja is used by the East Indians in their worship without any Government interference or restrictions. If ganja was not available in Jamaica as a sedative to keep the poor calm, the island would have experienced anarchy already.

(www.hialoha.com/konagold/church/hoylherb:30)

Mr Garreth asked the court to grant an exemption to “bona fide” adult Rastafarians from dagga - related prosecution and also stated that children under 18 would not be allowed to smoke it. But he also failed to supply the court with the affidavit outlining dagga usage and the Law Society could also not produce sufficient evidence to determine whether a religious exemption was possible. In March 1998, the Cape High Court ruled that the prohibition on cannabis use was not unconstitutional, and dismissed Mr Prince’s application for a review.

While still at the Centre for Applied Studies at Wits University , Professor Shadrack Gutto said that if the law condoned the drinking of wine as part of some church services, it had to respect the needs of other religions too, including Rastafarians. He says,

My own view is that dagga ought to be decriminalised with very stringent regulations put in place on how and where it is used and by whom. (*PTA News* 16 May 2001,P6)

The ruling of Gareth’s case would create an impression that certain religious practices are favoured above others but we have to bear in mind the fact that South Africa is a signatory to three United Nations drug conventions that barred the Constitutional Court from legalising dagga. The United Nations lists dagga

as a controlled drug and for this reason it cannot be legalised. Leaders of the SADC are also committed to eradicating illicit drugs in the region because they realise that drug trafficking hampers regional investment and growth.

Drug trafficking is a world-wide problem. Iran, for example, is one of the countries that have best policies in finding drugs but it also suffers from drug problems. It is a key transit route for drugs smuggled from Afghanistan to Europe and the Gulf Arab States. Because of drug problems Iran has bought sniffer dogs from France to help curb this problem despite, Islamic taboos against dogs. Muslims traditionally consider all breeds of dogs to be unclean and thus avoid them.

Maredi continues to show how people see **Mošwang wa Matuba** as a means to make money. Masellane earns a living by selling and trafficking dagga. This is another instance of the clash of cultures. Western law also prohibits the selling of dagga. Masellane, the drug dealer pretends to own a business by the name “MASEL & CO.LTD”. He pretends to be selling clothes whereas the actual business is that of selling “*Mošwang wa Matuba*”. He sells dagga as far as Cape Town. Two obstacles made it difficult for him to achieve his goal, which are the police and his lover who stole all the money accumulated when dagga was sold. By running this type of business Masellane says he is merely continuing the same business his own father owned before. Even though the Law is against the selling of this substance he feels that nothing will stop him from selling dagga. To him, selling dagga created the wealth his father laboured for and, as a result, he would not allow it to disappear. Now that he is in charge of all the operations, he has since discovered how much money is being made and how to accumulate it. The idea that he will not allow his father’s wealth disappear, suggests that Western laws will not make him stop what has been long practised by his fathers.

The financial crisis Masellane finds himself in has caused him to see “*Mošwang*

wa Matuba” as the only way out. The proceeds from the sales of “*Mošwang wa Matuba*” have left an evident mark. He is able to send his children to school with money from drug sales.

We learn that smoking dagga attacks the central nervous system and causes depression. This fact is realised when we learn of Masellane’s son, Mashilo, who suffered health problems and experienced serious side effects. Research has revealed that dagga poisons the body and creates dependency. We therefore see Mashilo showing symptoms of the drug addict. His school work deteriorates, drops out of school and finally develops an antisocial personality. Many youngsters hold the notion that dagga is safe to use but Garreth emphasised that The Rastafari National Council shares the belief that children must be protected from any activity or conduct that can be seen to cause them harm. So even Rastafarians do not encourage children to smoke dagga.

To convey the concept that crime does not pay, Maredi states that Masellane is ultimately jailed for five years. Even after spending those years in jail, Masellane still regards “*Mošwang wa Matuba*” as a source of income and will therefore not abandon it.

In the discussion of hunting wild animals we are told of characters that saw nothing wrong in killing wild animals. To them animals were killed so that their children could have something to eat. The conclusion one arrives at is that Western laws interfere with traditional African parent’s efforts to take care of their children.

The biotic environment in *Mošwang wa Matuba* has played an influential role in the lives of the people of this area. The availability of resources such as wild animals and “*Mošwang wa Matuba*” influenced this society to devise a means for meeting their subsistence needs. Wild animals were trapped as food resources

were too scarce. “*Mošwang wa Matuba*” was also sold to make money.

Western culture now dominates African culture, that is why we see characters such as Masellane being jailed.

2.3 MO GO FETILENG KGOMO

In *Mo go fetileng kgomo* (Where a head of cattle has passed), Maredi brings forth Christianity as another cause of cultural conflicts. The term “*Majakane*” which refers to Christians, is common in most of his works. Namane is a character that represents an African traditionalist. The Christian religion does not have a place in his heart. He is dismayed by the lifestyle of Christians. When Christians close their eyes to pray he interprets this as a habit of complaining. He wonders whether there is any person who can be pleased that you always close your eyes whenever you talk to them whilst it is a well known fact that in our culture we talk face to face. He really does not see the significance of closing one’s eyes when one talks to the other person. To show that he does not belong to this type of group of people he refers to God as “*Modimo wa lena*” (Your God). The abovementioned statement shows that Namane is not part of the Christian folks . His sister, Babuni, remarks:

*E kgaetšedi o sa le yo motala? Nna ke be ke gopola gore
matšatšing a bohono ke tlo tla ka hwetša o budule
(1968:14)*

(My brother are you still raw? I thought these days I would find you a changed person)

The antonyms “*tala*” (raw) and “*budule*” (ripe) represent the difference between the old ways of living and people who have abandoned their customary beliefs respectively. Babuni implies that Namane is resistant to change. On the other hand, Namane feels he is not prepared to lose his individuality and his culture by adapting to the Christian religion. When Babuni asks him whether he has ever been to church he responds like

this:

Kerekeng? Ga ke gafe! (1968 :14)

(Church? I am not mad!)

The above statement best describes Namane's stance as far as the Christian religion is concerned. As a typical African traditionalist, he also does not see the importance of the school. He says the following about both institutions:

O kile wa hwetša kae koma ye e sa tsebego kgoši le molata, ye e sa hlaolego, lešoboro, legaola le monna, go yona ba fo swana mo e rego kgoši e boletše, e botšwe ge e šaeditše? Kgoši e kile ya šaetša ge e etla kae? Ge e re "Morula o na le meetlwa" go opša legoswi. Re godile re tseba seo. Gomme ye ya lena, ya sejakane, aowa kgaetšedi (1968 :14)

(Where have you ever seen an initiation school which does not differentiate between the uninitiated, the semi-initiated and a man, there all the people are equal, a place where the king's word is challenged? Where has the king ever gone astray? When he says "the marula tree has thorns" we all clap hands. We grew up knowing that. And now your kind of Christian initiation, no my sister yours is a wrong one)

To show his attitude to Christianity, he does not even want to refer to the leader of the church as the reverend or priest. He uses the term familiar in his own cultural term "kgoši" (chief) for a leader. In this way Maredi brings to light some social prejudices in African traditions. Namane equates the church with "koma" (initiation school). He sees the church as an institution where the young and old are on the same rank. In his tradition there should be a difference. That is why he uses the terms "lešoboro" - a male that has not been to the circumcision school - "legaola" - a male that has completed the first part of the circumcision - and "monna" - a male person who is regarded as a full-fledged man because he has completed all phases of circumcision. He also distinguishes

between the status of “*kgoši*” (king) and that of “*molata*” (subject). The church, which Namane also refers to as “*koma*”, does not discriminate because according to its culture all people are equal before the eyes of God.

Namane is a representative of a typical African traditionalist. The way he still dresses tells it all. He still puts a crupper on and this is totally against the modern mode of dress. The following comment he makes about the trousers his son puts on emphasizes his abhorrence for them.

*Ke itše ke mmošša ke re o mo tsenya bolwetši bja
majakane ka mašelana ao a lena, a gana go ntheetša*
(1968 :16)

(When I told her that she was infecting him with the
Christian illness of wearing a cloth, she refused to listen to
me)

We observe with interest how the writer employs imagery wherein the cloth is compared to a contagious disease. The Western mode of dress does not impress Namane. To him, wearing Western clothes is tantamount to contracting a disease. The traditional mode of dress is according to him an ancestral heritage. He calls the traditional crupper “*kobo ya botatane, kobo ya badimo*” (our forefather’s cloth, our ancestor’s cloth). He frequently talks about “*diaparo tša majakane*” (Christian’s attire) and “*tša borakgolo*” (those of our forefathers) to refer to Western culture and traditional culture respectively.

Namane again equates Christianity with witchcraft. When his family members close their eyes to pray, he doesn’t. “*Bolo*” (witchcraft) is an unacceptable phenomenon. To express his disregard of Christianity, he uses this term whenever he refers to a prayer. His response to Babuni’s question whether he prays before he eats, he says,

“Nna? ke a gafa ?” (1968:29)

(Me? Am I mad?)

Namane uses words that have undesirable connotations when he talks about Christianity. This time he says “*ga ke gafe*” (I am not mad) to show that Christianity does not have any room in his heart and that he scorns everything about it. He has no interest in prayers. When his family members start praying he would just go away and leave them to pray alone. He is a rigid character who does not want to involve himself in a culture he does not know. One learns with interest how he views a group of church women who meet on Thursdays for their weekly prayers. The metaphorical usage expressed in the following excerpts depicts his negative attitude towards them:

*Ge e le magukubu ao a lena, ga ke rate go a bona mo.
Maloba a be a kgobokane mola go mogwera wa ka,
Seopela ba re ba a mo rapelela, bjalo o kae? O ile
gomme, ga ke re ba re ke ba kwele ka tše tša ka ditsebe
ba re : “Thato ya Gago” e sego ya Namane” “a e direge”,
aowa kgaetšedi re ka se kwane (1968 :34)*

(As for those crows of yours, I do not even want to see them. The other day they had gathered at the place of my friend Seopela, claiming that they are praying for him, where is he today? He is gone and I do not say it is being rumoured but I heard them saying, “Let Thy will be done” now that they should come here and say “your will and not Namane’s “ will be done” no way my sister, we won’t agree)

In the above excerpt, this group of women is compared to crows by virtue of their black attire and white collars. These two colours resemble those of a crow. What Namane does not understand is the expression “ Thy will be done on Earth.” As an African traditionalist, he is the head of the family and, as a result, only his will shall be done in his house and no one else’s. Although these group of women prayed for Namane’s friend he still died. Namane’s interpretation of the above expression is that the women asked “their” God to kill his friend. To support how evil he thinks these women are he says,

Wa bona legokobu felo, go setopo (1968:34)

(Once you see a crow somewhere, then there is a carcass)

Babuni defends the Christian religion by referring to God as,

“Modimo wa go loka” (1968:34)

(The good Lord)

Namane can only allow these women to come and pray at his house if they can say,

“Thato ya Namane a e direge” (1968 :34)

(Let Namane’s will be done)

The idea of changing the wording of the Lord’s prayer is a clear indication of two conflicting cultures and how they usually despise each other.

2.4 LAPA KE MOSADI

In *Lapa ke mosadi*, Maredi conveys a picture of church members where a memorial service was held after the death of Gobetse, Makopi’s husband. Mmateme behaves just like Namane. He also shares Namane’s sentiments as far as Christianity is concerned. Like Namane, he also compares Christianity with witchcraft. To him the motive of this memorial service was to indoctrinate Maakopi so that she no longer conforms to her cultural norms. The excerpt below explains what is in Mmateme’s mind,

Majakanenyana ale a lena, lona letšatšing lela a bego a dirile morerwana wowe a bego a re a gopola Gobetse ka wona, ke lemogile gore e be e le maano le bohvirihwišana bja go phereketša ngwetši ye ya rena, ke bone gabotsebotse tšeo di bego di direga. Ga ke sefofu.(1997:13)

(Those good for nothing Christians of yours, on that day that they had that lousy function during which they said they commemorate Gobetse, I realized that it was merely a smoke screen to contort our daughter-in-law, I really noticed what was going on. I am not blind)

Mmateme uses the diminutive forms of the words “*Majakanenyana*” (good for nothing Christians) “*morerwana*” and “*bohvirihwirišana*” to emphasize their derogation. The pronoun “*lena*” (yours) implies that Mmateme distances himself from the so-called “*Majakane*” and “*rena*” (ours) means Maakopi who has been married according to traditional law is now influenced by the so-called “*majakane*” to belong to a foreign culture. In *Mo go fetileng kgomo* Namame uses the same words used by Mmateme. He also says, “*Modimo yoo wa lena (1968 :35) (That God of yours) and sejakane seo sa lena (1968 :36) (Your type of Christianity)*. The underlined pronouns show that he dissociates himself from the Christian culture.

The contact between missionaries and African traditionalists have caused most of these traditionalists to alter their customs and practices. The theme of culture-contact and change is therefore noticed in Maredi’s works. The conflict between African traditions and Western cultures have also torn members of a family apart. In *Mo go fetileng kgomo* a row brews between Namane and his brother Moshabane. Moshabane and his wife Reratilwe are Christian fanatics: The couple’s son is getting married and Namane expects the whole occasion to be run according to their original cultural dictates. When it is reported to him that the couple would be blessed in church the following morning he retorts:

Nna tša sejakane sa lena, tša banna ba go hlwa ba abudiša diroko ga ke rate go tshwenyana le tšona, ka gore ga ke rate ge di ka tshwenyana le tša segagešo. Tša sejakane seo sa lena o tlo di begela majakane a geno, nna mpegele ka tša gae. (1968:41).

(On matters pertaining to your Christian conduct, of men wearing frocks/dresses, I do not want to get involved in

them, as I do not want them to interfere with my cultural value system. About your Christian matters you will report to your fellow Christians, I, for one, I want you to inform me about our own family matters.)

Namane, refers to the priest's robe as a woman's dress. He does not want to hear a thing about Christian's marriage procedures. He is only interested in knowing whether his traditional procedure has been followed.

Reratilwe, on the other hand, as a representative of the Christian culture, comments about Namane's attire. She says:

Ga o bone wena, le ge e re e le kgathe ga lešaba le lekaaka, monyanyeng, yena a sa tla a tšwere lekgeswa, E sa le yo motalatala. Ge e le go butšwa gona, o gana nnangnnang (1968:39).

(Can't you see that even in the midst of such multitudes, at a wedding, he still comes wearing loin- skins. He is uncouth. As for change, he is flatly refusing to progress)

The abovementioned excerpts bring another cultural conflict as portrayed by the two African men who are differently dressed, each one representing a contrasting culture. Namane's perception is that Christianity has affected his younger brother's thinking ability. In *Lapa ke Mosadi*, Mmateme also has the same mentality, as he believes the Christians had a bad influence on her daughter-in-law. From what Mmateme and Namane say the impact of Christian culture on Africans is devastating for it seems to have affected the fundamental and most cohesive forces in these peoples' traditional system. Namane and Mmateme have a deep emotional identification with their culture. Their protest conveys their views on strange attitudes. Reratilwe consequently sees Namane as one who is resistant to change. Furthermore she is seen as a Westernized person that diminishes her traditional culture and does not see its importance. She is merely hiding behind Christian sentiments.

The act of converting Africans to Christianity has resulted in them paying scant attention to their own African customs and traditions. Thus conflict is caused by the contact between white and black races. This kind of contact causes one cultural group to condemn and discredit another and also discourages adherence to tradition.

2.5 Conclusion

We learn that one of the aims of the missionary teachings is to make the Africans alter all their traditional habits and institutions which were in conflict with Christian morality. After reading Maredi's works, one realizes that he is still an African ancestor worshipper. He did not swallow everything the missionaries did and said. In his opinion there is nothing wrong when two cultures come into contact as long as none of the two looks down upon the other. This fact becomes evident in some of his works where he depicts the convergence of traditional African and Western cultures.