

## CHAPTER 4

### CHARACTER PORTRAYAL IN MAREDI'S DRAMAS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Authors comment on the worlds they write about through characters they create. These characters are used as tools for communicating ideas. How the author chooses his characters is of great importance because they have the duty to reveal the central concerns of the play. To substantiate the role of characters in any work of art Barton says:

“Most of the major themes of a play are woven through the motives and actions of characters and their relationship to one another. Thus the power of a play lies in the way a writer is able to develop his characters and to integrate them into the total dramatic structure” (1985:23)

In his dramas, Maredi combines African and Christian cultures in creating his characters. Generally his plays are dominated by characters who are familiar with their African culture. He develops his ideas through the juxtaposition of both the traditional and modern characters, thus revealing the values of his culture through contrasts. It is therefore the antagonism between opposed forces, namely African and Christian/Western cultures, that cause conflict between characters. In *Mo go fetileng Kgomo* we come across Namane who is portrayed as a traditionalist who still clings to his old cultural norms. On the other hand, there is Reratilwe who represents modern Christian beliefs. It is because of the juxtaposition of these two opposing characters that there is a serious confrontation between them. In *Lapa ke Mosadi*, Mmateme and Maakopi are the respective counterparts of the main characters already mentioned in *Mo go fetileng kgomo* because of the roles they play. His characters can be grouped according to the categories illustrated below:

	<b>Traditionalists</b>	<b>Modernists</b>	<b>Both Cultures</b>
<b>Mo go fetileng kgomo</b>	Namane	Reratilwe	Babuni Moruti Malapeng
<b>Mošwang wa Matuba</b>	Matlakale	None	None
<b>Lapa ke Mosadi</b>	Mmateme	Maakopi	Moruti Meta

All dramas mentioned above are set in Sekhukhuneland because it is the place where Maredi grew up. All characters are portrayed according to their cultural beliefs and the times in which they live. Maredi combined African and Christian habits in creating his characters and his ideas are developed through the polarization of contrasting characters. Characters in *Mo go fetileng kgomo* have their counterparts in both *Mošwang wa Matuba* and *Lapa ke mosadi* and they portray living human beings acting in an environment imitative of the real world.

What follows is Maredi's techniques of character portrayal.

## **4.2 SPEECH AND ACTIONS**

We learn more about characters through their relations to and interactions with their physical and social environments. Speech and actions are therefore the most common external reflectors of a character. The introductory dialogues of characters set the tone for subsequent dialogues in the plays. It is through these dialogues that we get to know more about the characters.

### **4.2.1 Mo go fetileng kgomo**

#### **4.2.1.1 Namane**

Namane is depicted as a vibrant character who uses forceful language. He is characterized by the words he utters and how he uses them. In the scenes he appears, he makes such a considerable impact that the reader is likely to be

fascinated by him.

Our first encounter with Namane in this play displays the lowest esteem in which he regards the Christian people. After he was made aware of the letter from his sister, Babuni, he reveals his lack of trust in the form of a message presented on a piece of paper. His negative attitude to Western innovations makes him mistrust letter-writing.

He says,

*“E, kootse o a rereša ke kile ka kwa ba mpotša gore matšeketšekana ao a lena majakane a realo. O re nna ke be ke a kgolwa? Ke be ke sa kgolwe selo, bjalo šefao, lehono, a boletše nnete” (1968:13).*

(Yes, by the way you are right I was informed about what those writings of you Christians said. You think I thought it was true? I did not believe a thing, but now there it is, at last they spoke the truth.)

When his sister remarks about the severe cold she was exposed to when alighting from the taxis, his response is

*“Yeo yona ke ye nkego e ka be e romeletšwa majakane le basadi fela ba ke ba lahle go hlwa ba ratharatha, ba kgopela ba sa fetše’ (1968:13).*

(That is the kind that should only be attacking Christians and women, so that they should always stop chattering and begging without stopping)

Namane has no mercy for Christians and women folk. His wish is that severe winter colds could only attack Christians and women. The fact that he sees them as people who always beg stems from their habit of praying. Namane’s attitude is also influenced by the great numbers of women that are followers of Christ. In order to emphasize the fact that he does not share Christian beliefs, Namane uses the structure of a possessive concord followed by a pronoun as in

*“...a lena Majakane”*

and

*“Modimo wa lena”*

*(Your God)*

In the first expression, the usage of both the pronoun and the noun serve the purpose of emphasis. The two expressions, however, emphasize the fact that he is not part of the Christian culture because he talks about “*your God*”.

The dialogue between Namane and Babuni is a wonderful example of the polarisation of characters. For example: the closing of eyes during prayer is interpreted by Namane as weird, thus prompting him to say:

*“...a go ntshe motho yo a kago thaba ge nako e nngwe le e nngwe ge o bolela le yena o ponya, mola rena re re ditaba di tšwa mahlong?”(1968:14).*

“...is there really a person who will feel happy when you have to close your eyes whenever you talk to him, whereas we believe in having to talk face to face?”

Namane’s utterances portray him as a man who is not easily convinced by Christian beliefs and practices. Babuni’s response on the other hand reveals her brother’s stubbornness when she says:

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

(My brother, are you still raw? [has not changed] I thought that these days I would find you having changed.)

Babuni’s comment shows her beliefs differ from those of her brother. Figuratively

she uses the words “*motala*” (*something unripe*) and “*budule*” (*to be ripe*), thus best describing her brother’s character.

The dialogue between Namane and Babuni reveals many facts that substantiate Namane’s hatred for Christianity. Their dialogues also reveal the perception he holds that Christianity turns young girls into spinsters. According to African culture a person’s life cycle is not complete if s/he does not get married. One wonders on what ground he bases his argument.

Namane is a man that does not change with the times. He is again depicted as the man who shuns educational improvement in his community. What he hates most about school is its indiscriminate admission of both young and old people. As far as he is concerned there should be a clear distinction between a child and an adult. He does not see any logic of having both children and adults going to school. He is again portrayed as a representative of a certain group of people brainwashed into believing that Christianity stigmatises African society. To show his stereotypical way of thinking, he tries to justify his stance by using the analogy of a typical African social structure in which people are divided according to ranks such as the chief, the king’s men, the initiated and the uninitiated. He asserts that in a school situation the abovementioned type of classification does not exist. Of importance to the school is to see to it that people are equipped with education rather than promoting issues that do not contribute to improving their standards of living. Namane portrays the kind of person that cannot distinguish between what is right or wrong. He tells Babuni:

*“O kile wa bona kae koma ye e sa tsebego kgoši le molata, ye e sa hlaolego, lešoboro, legaola le monna, go yona ba fo go swana, mo e rego kgoši e boletše, e botšwe ge e šaeditše? Kgoši e kile ya šaetša ge e tla kae? Ge e re: “Morula o na le meetlwa” go opša legoswi. Re godile re tseba seo (1968:14).*

(Where on earth have you ever heard about the initiation

school that does not discriminate between the chief and the kins-man, the initiated and the uninitiated, a boy and a man, in it all are equal, where if the chief has spoken, it is told that it has made a mistake? How can a chief be wrong? When he says: "Morula tree has thorns all applaud. That is how we were taught to believe.)

Namane is a traditionalist. He represents people who are conditioned to believe that the chief or king is the only person who can think rationally. This attitude robs people of their ability to fulfill their mental potentials. This is really not justifiable. The fact that times have changed is manifested in the statement that shows that subordinates are no longer afraid of expressing their feelings and thus have the temerity to correct their seniors whenever they are in the wrong.

Namane is an intransigent old man. His emphatic way of expressing his feelings reflects this character trait. In addition to the fact that he does not want to change with changing times, we come across the incident in which he does not want his son to put on Western type of clothing. His wife bought their son a pair of trousers but it was unfortunately eaten by a cow as he left it hanging on a tree while he was attending to nature's call. Namane swears he won't give his wife money to buy another pair of trousers for his son. He says it in strongest terms,

*"Ge e le go mo rekela ka ya ka tšhelete, tate monna wa Leswene a ka tsoga" (1968:17).*

(To take my own money and buy it, my father a man of Leswene age group will rise from the dead.)

He swears once more that he won't buy him another pair by saying

*"...gomme kgaetšedi ke a go enela, le yo mogadiboago ke mmoditše, gore ke ntšhe ya ka ke ba neele ba ye ba mo rekele tšhila tšeo tša bona, gomme a tle a di fe dikgomo tša Mmakola! Nka se e dire, ga ke gafe" (1968:18).*

(...and I promise you my sister, I even told your sister-in-law,

that for me to pop out my money and give it to them so that they buy him that rubbish of theirs, so that he gives it to Mmakola's cows! I will not do it, I am not mad)

Namane uses strong words that mark his unwillingness to reconcile with the Western mode of dress. His constant use of the expression, "*O tlile ka kgomo*", distinguishes him as an intransigent male chauvinist who adheres to his African culture at all costs. In his culture a married woman has no right to argue with men. A woman is always expected to submit to her husband's authority. Proof of this is found in the following extracts:

*"Mo, yena o tlile ka kgomo, gomme o swanetše go dira fela se ke se bolelago"* (1968:19).

(She is only here because of a cow, and as such she has to act according to my instructions.)

His wife's silence reassures his power over her. The dialogue between him and her sister continues as if his wife is not with them. After noticing the rising temper of her husband, Malegelele remains silent until the end of the scene.

Edgar V Roberts in his discussion on "How is character disclosed in fiction" says:

"Sometimes, however, a speech may be made offhand, or it may reflect a momentary emotional or intellectual state" (1987:123).

Namane's response after Babuni's words shows as a fleeting change in him. He makes this promise:

*"Ke kwele mmane, nka se hlwe ke boeleditše, ke lahlile, ngwana Dimo"* (1968:20).

(I have heard you mom, I will never repeat that. I won't do it again, child of Dimo)

It is only through Babuni that Namane sees the other side of things and, as a result, promises his wife to change his behaviour and agrees to buy his son another pair of trousers. Namane's sudden change of heart simply shows what Roberts (1987:123) calls "a momentary emotional state". By this it implies that we cannot always rely on characters' statements as reflectors of their traits.

Namane's abovementioned speech reflects his guilt and this can influence the reader to accept his statements that "*Nka se mo rekele ka ya ka tšhelete*" and "*O tlile ka kgomo*" reflect his character. It is therefore important to consider the situational context of the character's statements when analysing his traits. Namane loses his temper because his son refused the traditional attire his father made for him. He believes that had it not been for his son's recklessness he would not have had to pay for another pair of trousers. The situation in which he is placed forces him to behave in that particular manner.

Namane's attitude again reflects that he is an autocrat. He does not want to enter into any form of discussion or negotiation with womenfolk. He is not enthusiastic about going to the wedding of Moshabane's (his younger brother) daughter because he asserts that his (Moshabane's) wife acts as the head of their family. His paternalistic perceptions of Moshabane's wife is well captured in Malegelele's remarks:

*"eupša ke kwele a ngongorega a ratharatha, a bolela gore ge e le gore lapa la monyanana le laolwa ke mosadi, yena a ka se hlwe a beile leoto la gagwe go lona ka gore ga a rate go rera melato a tsenwatsenwa ganong ke basadi"* (1968:31).

(...but I heard him complaining, saying that if his younger brother's family is controlled by a woman, he will never set his foot anymore there, because he does not tolerate the interference of women when he discusses serious matters).

Namane would rather stay behind than find himself solving problems in the company of women. In his opinion women are not capable of coming up with brilliant ideas when it comes to serious thinking. His belief is that only men have adequate intelligence when it comes to the discussion of weighty issues. Namane's derogatory attitude towards women implies that he views women to be mentally inferior.

It is said that "actions speak louder than words" but it does not seem to be the case in some of Namane's actions as we later see him contradicting his own beliefs when he joins Babuni to attend the wedding. Namane's submission to Babuni's plea could be interpreted as the realization of his pettiness and thus the appearance of having been inconsistent in his thoughts and actions.

Throughout the play we notice that Namane's speeches are exact expressions of what is on his mind. He is not going to allow the Christians to talk as they wish in his house. His interpretation of the Lord's Prayer reveals his negative attitude towards Christians. He reacts negatively to his sister's suggestion that women who are his wife's fellow church goers should come and hold a prayer meeting for him as a lot of South African women have introduced afternoon services during the week. He contends:

*"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 a e direge" gomme ba tle mo, ba tle 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 want to see them here. Recently they had gathered at the place of my friend Seopela, saying they pray for him, now where is he? He is gone. Therefore, I say this from personal experience, I heard them

with these ears of mine saying: “Thy will be done” and so to let them come here, and say: “Thy will be done” instead of Namane’s “be done”, No my sister. We will be at loggerheads.)

The condition on which Namane will only allow the women to pray for him is if only they rephrase the expression in question thus:

*“Thato ya Namane a e direge” (1968:30)*

(Namane’s will be done)

The language Namane uses gives the reader an impression that he is a strong man. The ease with which Babuni persuades him during their argument about how the Lord’s Prayer should be said portrays his inclination to submit easily. Babuni stated in no uncertain terms that she is not going to say the prayer in a different manner. She says:

*“Nna ga ke rate go go fora ka lefela, ke tlile gore: “Thato ya gago a e direge” ke šupa ya Modimo...” (1968:35).*

(I do not want to lie to you, I will say: “Thy will be done” referring to God’s)

Although Namane did not sound keen to have women at his house, Babuni made it possible for them to come and pray for her brother.

These kinds of actions reveal that Namane can sometimes be easily influenced. His behaviour is an indicator of his cultural and moral standpoints. The fact that he falls into a deep sleep during the prayer meeting proves his lack of interest in Christian affairs. He only wakes up when he hears them singing as they were leaving. His behaviour is a sign that he does not believe in prayer. His wish is also that when they come to the phrase, *“Thato ya gago a e direge’*, all the women should keep quiet so that it could be uttered by his sister only. On realizing that his

wish could not be fulfilled he consoles himself by thinking that his condition has improved because God only heard his sister's prayer and not those of the other women.

Namane's cultural and moral standing is again portrayed when he fights tooth and nail for the observance of the customary rites as demanded by their African society. Namane's problem is based on the African maxim, "*Boyakgomoke boboakgomo*", which implies that Moshabane must not expect to receive anything without giving something in return. All that Namane yearns for is to have Moshabane give Babuni the cow that is due to her. He wants Moshabane to pay off old scores and thereby treat Babuni as she has treated him. The payment of the cow owed to Babuni is an issue on which he will not compromise. His involvement in this issue shows that he is familiar with his African culture and is therefore prepared to place Moshabane into the right frame of mind. The strong language he uses to reveal his anger with his brother, convinces the reader that Moshabane is not going to escape scot-free. He says:

*"A ke re ke le boditše ka re yo nnake [o šupa Moshabane],  
le mosadi yola wa gagwe ga ba ikemišetša go lokišetša  
kgadi ka kgomo ye ba e tsebago, ba e llogo. Šo, ga ke mo  
sebe, ke be ke filo homola, ke hlompha mantšu a lena,  
eupša se ke ratago go mmotša pele ke dira seo se  
ntebanego, ke gore a tsebe ga go lapa leo le swanetšego go  
ja le lengwe, e sego ke sa phela, garetsego ge ke šetše ke  
hwile. Lehono ke tloga mo ke swanetše go be ke lokišetše  
tšohle, go se yoo a hunnego lehuto ka pelong. Wo [o retha  
molamo] o tlo be o e gapa ge ke tloga mo"*

(1968:76).

(Isn't it that I told you that this younger brother of mine [he points at Moshabane], and that wife of his are not prepared to settle the debt of aunt's cow which they are aware of, which they have also consumed. Here he is, I do not speak behind his back. I only kept quiet, respecting what you said, but what I want to tell him before I do what is expected of me, is that he must know that there is no household that benefits out of

another, not when I am still alive, unless when I am maybe dead. Today when I leave this place everything should be in order, without anyone bearing a grudge in his heart. This [he shakes a knobkerrie], will be driving it when I leave here).

Namane's statements show that he is not accusing his brother and his wife of something they all do not know about. The fact that he says "he does not want to speak behind his brother's back" is enough evidence. His words therefore justify the drastic action he is prepared to take if Moshabane and Reratilwe are not going to give Babuni the cow they owe her. His emphasis is on the fact that, "give and take is a fair play". This time it appears as if Namane's speech is not made unpremeditated. The action that follows proves to us that his attitude concerning this matter does not 'reflect a momentary emotional state'. What he said earlier is that

*Lenyalwana le le tlo fela...*" (1968:73)

(This lousy wedding will come to an end)

and

*"...nka dira gore ba šulelwe ke lenyalwana le la bona"*

(1968:61)

("...I can turn this lousy wedding into misery)

is realised when he finally loses his temper. He arms himself to teach Moshabane and his wife a lesson. He causes chaos as he unloads the wedding presents from the car that was to transport the bride to her husband's place. The following command reflects his autocratic behaviour:

*Ke mang a le boditšeng gore le laiše phahlo ye ya ngwanake ke se ka le laelela bjalo? Ga go poopedi mo, poo ke nna ke nnoši. [o šupa ka petlwa]. Ye e tlo ja motho lehono le. (O bolela a bea petlwa fase a di laolla. Bjalo di fase ka moka) Le di tlogeleng gona moo go fihlela ke le botša gore le dire eng ka tšona" (1968:77).*

(Who told you to put this load of my child in a car without my

instruction? There are no two bulls here, I am the only bull here. [He points with battle axe] This will eat a person this very day. [He talks as he puts down and unloads them. They are all on the floor now] You leave them just there until I tell you what to do with them.)

There is no doubt that Namane is in full control of the situation. He cracks his whip by saying:

*“... Yoo a hlologetšego go lomegwa a a di kgwate šedi, a leke mahlale, a di laiše koloing, o tlo nkhunela” (1968:78).*

(...Let anybody longing to be beaten dare touch them, here they are, let him try his tricks, and load them in the car, he will pay for this.)

Namane’s state of mind shows that his patience is stretched to the limit. He goes berserk and almost ruins the jovial wedding atmosphere. No one is prepared to risk his/her life in order to calm him. People stop singing and they all listen to him. This time Namane resorts to action. He is not prepared to enter into any negotiations, he wants to prove who he really is. What he says is congruous with his actions. Even Babuni, his sister whom he respects so much, cannot calm him down. He sticks to his words and won’t be calmed until the matter is settled.

Namane employs his talent of using rhetorical language as an accessory to cause the priest to understand his excitable character. He says,

*“Ge ba ba lapa la nnake ba ka be ba ntira seo ba kago thabela ge ke ba dira sona, gona go ka be go se molato,...”(1968:79)*

(If my brother’s family could do to me what they could want me do unto them there wouldn’t be any problem)

Instead of saying his usual statement, “...*ga go lapa leo le jago le lengwe*”, Namane uses the golden rule as stated in Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31 (King James version)

which states,

“And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also  
to them likewise”(1982:936)

Namane knows the kind of language to use when he wants the priest to have the background information of the story. Although the priest understood the point Namane was making, he did not encourage his intended actions. Reratilwe, in particular, does not understand the language of “give and take is a fair play” and Namane will speak to her in the language she, perhaps, best understands, which is physical punishment. He cracks his whip as he chases after her but the priest comes to her rescue. On the other hand, the words he utters when making the priest understand the situation can be interpreted as a premonition of his acceptance of God. He confesses:

*“Ke wele pelo, gomme le nna ke a bona ke tlo ba ka itahlela  
ka mo komeng ya gagwe, ke be lejakane...”* (1968:81).

(I am satisfied, and I think I will also throw myself into his  
initiation school and be a Christian.)

Throughout the play we see Namane as a traditionalist who fights against that which he believes interferes with his cultural norms. It is evident in his actions that he pledges his unwavering devotion to the rights of his culture and does not want foreign norms and values to be impressed on him.

#### **4.2.1.2 Reratilwe**

Throughout the play Reratilwe is portrayed as Namane’s adversary. The reason for them to disagree all the time is because of their allegiance to their respective conflicting cultural beliefs. Maredi uses language as an indicator of the strength and weaknesses of his character in their interpersonal relations. Reratilwe’s manner of speaking dominates that of her husband. When her husband, Moshabane, summons her to discuss briefing his brother and sister on how the wedding

occasion will be run, she responds thus,

*“O tlo nkwa, o se ke wa ntsholeka, nna ga se nna wena seebaeba tena, o hlwago o gogwagogwa ka nko”* (1968:42).

(You listen to me, do not annoy me, I am not an ass like you who is always pulled by your nose).

Reratilwe’s anger towards her husband when he tries to convince her, reflects his weakness. It is not surprising that Namane feels that his (Moshabane’s) mind needs adjustment. Her dominance is substantiated by the following stage direction:

*Moshabane: (o boifa go rera mosadi wa gagwe a se gona, ka go tseba bogagapa bja gagwe, ...) (1968:41).*

*Moshabane: (He is afraid to discuss in the absence of his wife, because he knows his wife’s bulliness)*

Her rebellious character undermines the image of her husband. It is for this reason that one of her friends, Lefentše, comments that Reratilwe’s statements depict her as *“mosadimonna”* (1968:39) which implies that her character embodies both male and female characteristics. That is why we often come across Namane’s constant repetition of *“nnake ga se monna, monna ke mosadi wa gagwe”* (*My younger brother is not a man, the man is his wife*)

Reratilwe is insensitive to her husband and other people’s feelings. How she talks to her husband’s relatives shows her exploitation of important aspects of her traditional culture. She does not believe in the values of her community any longer. Her traditional culture expects of her to give her elder brother-in-law and sister-in-law the respect they deserve. She calls Namane by abominable names such as *“morwalo”* and *“moleko”* (*burden and trouble*). Her words show the contempt with which she regards him. Her open disrespect for her traditional values can be deduced from the following words.

*“Ga a tsebe ge rena re le badumedi, tšeo tša sehetene re sa hlwe re na le taba le tšona?...” (1968:42)*

(Doesn't he know that we are Christians, and no longer concerned with such heathen matters)

Reratilwe sees her traditional culture as barbaric. According to her, Christian values are superior while those of the traditionalists are inferior. Although there are many other Christians in the book, Reratilwe is the only one who shares this kind of thinking. Reverend Malapeng, Babuni, Lefentše, for example, are also Christians. Phogole, Reratilwe's neighbour, corrects her attitude by saying,

*“Ba bangwe ba rena mo ba ikgafetše sedumeding, gomme ga ke tsebe gore a seo wene o ikgafetšego go sona le seo ba bangwe ba ikgafetšego go sona, di fapana bjang” (1968:49).*

(Some of us here have commended ourselves to Christianity, but I do not know how the one you commended yourself to differs with that which others have commended themselves to)

From what Phogole says about Reratilwe, one is inclined to conclude that she is betraying the Christian faith. Her statements and actions do not convince us to see her as a true Christian who is supposed to “do unto others as she'd like them do unto her”. Her attitude and behaviour show that Christianity is not deeply rooted in her. She appears to be confused by contact with Christianity for her attitude towards her traditional culture is completely different from that of Reverend Malapeng. In church the priest was impressed to see Namane in his traditional crupper sitting among the congregation. Reratilwe on the other hand sees Namane's traditional attire as evidence for his backwardness when she says,

*“Ga o bone wena, le ge e re e le kgate ga lešaba le le kaaka, monyanyeng, yena a sa tla a tšwere lekgeswa” (1968:39).*

(Can't you see, even in the midst of so many people, at the wedding, he still wears the crupper.)

Reverend Malapeng sees matters differently:

*“Go feta moo, ke thabela go bona putswa ye, ... e le mo kgauswi le lena, e sa ikaperetše segologolo” (1968:54).*

(Above all, it pleases me to see this old man, ...next to you, sporting his traditional clothes).

The fact that the Reverend’s opinion towards Namane’s dress differs from that of Reratilwe, shows that he sees the need for traditional and Christian cultures to come together whereas she has no respect for her traditional culture. She is therefore a disappointment to the Christian society because of her disrespect for the values of her traditional culture. She finds herself embroiled in the controversy of failing to settle a long overdue debt which is the cow she owes Babuni. Her hostility towards what she calls pagan cultures leads to unpleasant consequences. Her daughter’s wedding celebration almost came to an end when she refused to let her husband give away the cow due to Babuni. Her provocative behaviour and manner of speaking influenced Namane to an extent of waiting to assault her physically. She runs for cover when premonitory signs of danger appear instead of correcting the mistakes she and her husband committed. Had they settled this debt long ago, they would have spared themselves the humiliation of being labelled false in their society. It is therefore through her adamant attitude that she subjected herself to such an embarrassing ordeal in the presence of the priest, whom the community regards with high esteem. She is a real disappointment to her Christian society and to the readers as well. This was her day of reckoning because she and her husband were forced to fulfill their obligation. She also appears to have little understanding of the religion she has embraced. Her attitude is inappropriate and not appreciated even by her own priest and she does not show any remorse for her inadequacies.

Reratilwe is very selfish. This is revealed in her earlier acceptance of a cow, a cultural practice, from Babuni and when her turn comes to return the good gesture

she bursts out and claims that she is not part of pagan cultures. She is also disrespectful. This is proven by the way she regards both her in-laws and her husband. Her behaviour is not commendable she considers her traditional culture to be barbaric and outdated.

In Reratilwe, Maredi criticises religious hypocrisy. She exemplifies the triumph of narrow and bigoted Christianity over traditional African culture.

## 4.2.2 MOŠWANG WA MATUBA AND LAPA KE MOSADI

### 4.2.2.1 Matlakale and Mmateme

Matlakale and Mmateme appear as Namane's counterparts in *Mošwang wa matuba* and *Lapa ke mosadi* respectively. They all appear as traditionalists who do not want Christian rules to be imposed on them. Although Mmateme appears only in the first two scenes of *Lapa ke mosadi*, his character is worth commenting on. The link between the expressions they all make about Christians whom they all refer to as "*Majakane*" indicate their commitment to their African culture.

Mmateme's reaction after Chipane's death shows that he does not accept certain realities and facts of life. The following statement he utters at Chipane's funeral justifies the notion he holds that his death could not have been caused by natural causes like it has been reported. He asserts:

*"Le kwele ka seo se diregilego mo lapeng la ngwana mogolle, eupša Bahunoto ba re e be e le gore ke tiro ya badimo. Le gopole, rena Bahunoto re bana ba tau, ga re jane, gomme ge e ka ba e le gore yo mongwe mothwana o lekile go bapala diketo gona mo, ... le nkwe, ga ke bapale, ..."* (1997:6)

(You have heard about what happened at my elder brother's family, but the Bahunoto say it would rather have been the

ancestor's will. Remember, we Bahunoto are children of the lion, we do not eat one another, but if anyone tried to play dirty tricks here,...you listen to me, I am not playing).

Mmateme's statement shows his belief that the ancestors are the ones who control human fate and destiny. He can only come to terms with Gobetse's death if it were willed by the ancestors. On the other hand, his last statement suggests that he is going to enquire whether Gobetse's death is a result of witchcraft or not, so that he can take necessary steps to take to task whoever is responsible. Mmateme's attitude shows that Africans attribute all bad things to the work of witchcraft.

The language Mmateme uses makes him appear as an unyielding enthusiast for tribal ideals of solidarity. He also emerges as an impostor who oppresses women. He says the following to Maakopi after Gobetse's (her husband) death:

*"...o tsebe, lebitla la mosadi le bogadi, Bahunoto ba go nyetše, gomme lebitla la gago le be kgorong ya bona Bahunoto. Gape o tsebe, mo go šoma molao wa Bahunoto e sego wo o tšwago thoko ye nngwe...sa gago ke go obamela seo se beakanywago"*(1997:7).

(...you must know, the grave of a woman is at her in-laws place. Bahunoto have married you, and you as a result your grave should be here at Bahunoto's kraal. Again, you must know, here, only Bahunoto's law applies and nothing from elsewhere ... yours is just to submit to whatever is decided upon.)

His address to Maakopi shows that chauvinist prescriptions are common in this society. His admonition indicates that he will not allow Maakopi to make decisions about issues that concern her. Mmateme's speech is the most eloquent representation of his intimidating and oppressive inclinations. He instructs Maakopi to submit to the Bahunoto's laws and demands. As a representative of the Bahunoto, he imposes on poor Maakopi and thereby suppresses her feelings and reactions. The laws he reminds Maakopi about enforce the inequality of

male/female relationships in their society.

Mmateme's intransigent attitude is again noticed when Maakopi refuses the idea of an arranged substitute for her late husband. His strong words show his anger when he contends,

*“Eng? A se kwešiše? Ke tšhila ya eng yona yeo? O tlo kwešiša mang? Rena Bahunoto ra re, “Ntoo!” yena a re, “Dibedi!” (1997:12)*

(What? She did not understand well? What kind of rubbish is that? When we Bahunoto say, “one!” she says “two!”)

The kind of language Mmateme uses portrays a society that subjects women to male oppression. Mmateme has no room for Maakopi's opinion regarding this matter. This is the result of the conservative tradition of Bahunoto society. When Maakopi voices her feelings, Mmateme labels her sentiments as rubbish. What he and the Bahunoto male society expect of the womenfolk is to be obedient to their husbands at all costs.

Mmateme flatly refuses to accept Maakopi's opinion. Even when Manyaku, Maakopi's mother-in-law, tries to calm him down he does not respond positively. He responds thus:

*“E tshwe lebja? E sego nna....Fela, nna o sa nkhweditše ke bina tau e sego mosela wa yona” (1997:13).*

(Let it spit out the blood?...Not me, but, they will find me. I venerate a lion and not its tail)

Mmateme equates his fierce temper with that of a lion, especially because of the fact that it is his totem animal. It is said that the lion is the king of the jungle and therefore has the power to control all animals. It is maybe by virtue of the powers vested upon Mmateme and therefore the Bahunoto (the lions) that they encroach

on the rights of other people.

Big is Mmateme's voice and audacity is his tone when he attempts to break the natural bond between Maakopi and her son, Thema. He boldly instructs her thus:

*Ge e ka ba o dira bjalo, a a sepele, eupša a tlogele ngwana yo wa rena, Thema. Fela ge a itseba e le ngwetši ya rena, a se ke a ba a re botša selo, a theetše molao wa Bahunoto, a sepele ka wona. Ke feditše nna morwa wa Thomo. Nxa! (Ge a realo, ke ge a tšea lepara la gagwe le jase a emelela a leba seferong) (1997:13).*

(If she does that, let her go, but she must leave this son of ours, Thema, behind. But if she considers herself our daughter-in-law, she must not dare tell us a thing, she must just listen to Bahunoto's law, and follow it. I have spoken, me, Thomo's son. Nxa! (As he says this he was taking his stick and coat, stood up and walked towards the gate)

Although the kind of language, Mmateme uses portrays him as a stronger person in his relationship with other characters, he does not intimidate Maakopi. It also appears that he makes empty threats because we subsequently see Maakopi taking her son along to Witbank where she is to take up the work sought for her. Mmateme is a possessive man. Although Maakopi is Thema's biological mother, Mmateme behaves as if he has absolute control of him. He says Maakopi can leave but she should leave their son behind. He does not refer to Thema as Maakopi's son but as "our child". The fact that he concludes his speech with "*ke feditše nna morwa Thomo*", leaves us with the expectation of him taking drastic action against Maakopi if she defies the Bahunoto's laws. When realizing that nothing was done to Maakopi after defying the Bahunoto's harsh law, we can deduce that Mmateme's speech is inconsistent with the reader's expectations. After Maakopi had left we do not hear anything from Mmateme. We are also not told of any drastic action taken against her. What the Bahunoto say is contradictory. Their bark is worse than their bite.

Like Namane and Mmateme, Matlakale is also portrayed as a tradition-bound character in his dramatic context. He is also the idolater of badimo. The fact that he brought Kodi, his son, into this world makes him think that he has power to control his fate and destiny. He says to his son:

*Afa o a lemoga gore o bolela le mang? Ke nna modimo wa gago, ge nka se go phuthollele pelo ye ya ka, ga go selo se se kago go lokela, ...? (1982:3)*

(Do you know whom you are speaking to? I am your ancestor, if I do not open up this heart of mine to you, nothing will come right for you,...)

Matlakale considers himself the driver of his son's life. He expects his son to count his words whenever he talks to him lest he (Matlakale) casts a spell on him. He is again portrayed as being domineering because of his questioning character: he always undermines any type of work performed by his son. When his son goes on a hunting spree with his friends he comments:

*“Gona ke phoofolo mang yeo e kago bolawa ke yena? Goba e tlo ba e ipabjetšwa, e šetše e hloka mofotšiši?” (1982:3).*

(Besides, what kind of animal will be killed by him? or will it maybe be ill, just waiting for someone to come and finish it off?)

Unlike Namane and Mmateme, Matlakale believes that a woman earns the respect of her people if she is married. Had it not been for cattle paid to marry his wife, Lehlelehlele, he would have punished her for giving him food (dished out) in a porcelain plate. He says to her:

*“Ge nka be ke sa go nyala ka dikgomo, nka be ke go phaphatha gona bjalo, morwago a re a fihla a hwetša o boetše gageno, eupša ka gore ke go nyetše, di fedile mogatšaka” (1983:18).*

*(If I had not married you with cattle, I would now punish you, so that when your son arrives he should find you gone back to your home, but because I married you, let bygones be bygones my love).*

Namane believes that a woman should always do whatever her husband expects her to do because of the brideprice paid out to marry her. Matlakale does not share Namane's sentiments because in his opinion the brideprice paid out makes a woman earn the respect she deserves. We learn that Namane believes in corporal punishment as he once abused his wife physically whereas Matlakale won't do it because of the cattle he paid to marry his wife. Mmateme's morals and actions are inconsistent. The kind of language he uses does not correspond with his outer characteristics. He talks too much and acts too little. He has failed to prove to us that he resembles the lion he venerates.

#### **4.2.3 MO GO FETILENG KGOMO AND LAPA KE MOSADI**

##### **4.2.3.1 Babuni and Maakopi**

Both Babuni and Maakopi are portrayed as being strong willed. They respect and observe the traditional culture of their people but at the same time reject those aspects which seek to oppress their personalities. Their actions and attitudes to patriarchy show that they have a connection with feminist ideology. What they do and say advocate the rights of women. They are depicted as self -assertive characters. They can analyse situations from their individual perspectives. Although both women have high moral standards and also a show of high regard for the reasonable norms of their societies, they can reject the questionable norms or oppressive policies rather than accept tendencies that deny them control of their own lives. Maakopi, for example, accepts the traditional custom of mourning her husband's death but rejects the idea of a substitute from his family to fill up the gap created by his death. As this issue concerns her own life, she is quick to make her own independent decision. When her mother-in-law tells her Bahunoto's decision

that it is time for her to get a substitute for her late husband she responds thus:

*“Eng, Mologadi? Nna yo! Go tsenelwa? Afa o re ke go kwele gabotse, ngwana wa Mmaswi?”* (1997:10).

(What, Mologadi? This myself? A substitute for my late husband? Did I hear you well, Mmaswi’s child?)

What Maakopi says in this regard shows her moral standing. She analyses this tense situation critically from her individual perspective in order to voice out her feelings to the Bahunoto’s limitations that are imposed on her. She finds herself in a dilemma and, as a result, replaces her cultural beliefs with foreign ones. She does not visualize herself as part of the relationship of being a secondary wife. She makes her point clear by saying:

*“Mowe, mma ga re tlile go kwana. Modimo o be a mphile Chipane, gomme ge a mo tšere, o mo tšere, go fedile. Gore ke ye ke tsoše phapang lapeng la bao Modimo a sa ba adimilego go phela mmogo, ga se se nka se dirago. O gopole, mma, Mohumagadi wa yoo nka abelwago yena, o tlile go ntebelela ka leihlo le lešoro, e le gore nnete ke tlo be ke mo aroletše seripa se sengwe sa tšeo di kago be di mo lebane, gomme le go yena monna yoo, le tsebe ya tšea mebila ye mebedi e phatloga noka. Ga go ka mo gongwe tlhokomelo ya lapa la gagwe e ka se hlwe e sa na le maatla go swana le pele a itlema ka bothata bjowe. Ka gona, mma, ke kgopela gore taba yeo e be kgole le nna”* (1997:10-11).

(On that one, mother, we are not going to agree with each other. God gave me Chipane, and if he took him away, he took him away, that is over. To go and cause conflict in the families of those whom God has given the chance to live together, is something which I am not going to do. Remember, mother, the wife of the man who can be my partner is going to look at me with a negative eye, and in reality I would have taken a portion of what belongs to her, and even to that very man, you must know two wives in one house never agree. There is no other way the care he gave to his family will be like before making this commitment. As such, mother, I am making a plea that this matter should be far

from me).

Maakopi applied common sense to defend her cause. Her positive thinking shows that she believes in a more cordial relationship between husband and wife than that she would have had. The decision she takes portrays her as an intelligent young woman who is capable of determining what is good for her. She is well aware of the consequences of agreeing to have a substitute for her late husband. She is not prepared to be an accessory for causing tension in another woman's family. One wonders as to whether Bahunoto ever thought of the negative effects of their policy of substitution of husbands before putting it into practice. Mmakopi's breach of Bahunoto custom shows her revulsion against restrictions placed on her liberties by a masculinist tradition. She defies embedded Bahunoto patriarchy by saying that God has taken away the man he gave to her and she is therefore going to face life alone.

Maakopi is a responsible and determined woman whose priorities are appropriately ordered. After her husband's death, she is aware that she is the only one left to fend for her family. She is also worried about taking her son to school. To prove that she has control of her own life she goes to Witbank to look for a job. She takes along her son, Thema, to show Mmateme's unsuccessful attempt to intimidate her. When she finds that the work at the Van der Merwe's house denies her son the opportunity to go to school, she is equally decisive.

*“...Bjale, ka lebaka la go tshwenyega ka ge ngwana a sa kgone go tsena sekolo, ebile ke bone bokaone e le go leba mowe a ka kgonago go se tsena (1997:31).*

(...Now, concerning the issue of the child not being able to go to school, I saw it better to go to a place where he can attend it)

To Maakopi education and the well-being of her son come first. She is depicted as a model to all women who find themselves in conditions of great oppression.

Babuni is also depicted as a woman who shows high regard for the reasonable norms of her society although she is a Christian fanatic. Like Maakopi she is also capable of critically analysing problematic situations from an individual perspective. She is quick in correcting her elder brother who is fond of abusing his wife emotionally because of the powers vested upon him by the cattle he paid to marry her. Babuni takes strong exception to this kind of attitude. Her interpretation of a cow as a brideprice shows her intelligent way of thinking. She exposes Namane's negative attitude by highlighting the fact that a woman only earns the status of being called mother of the nation only if she has been married by cattle ritual. She shows her belief in a cordial relationship between husband and wife by the statement:

*“Mo e fetilego e tliša leago...”* (1968:19)

(Where it has passed there is a bond of togetherness)

Babuni reacts negatively to conditions that oppress women, for she aims at showing how these negate basic human values. As the embodiment of the culture of her people, she makes the nation at large aware of unacceptable human behaviour.

Babuni and Maakopi's actions and attitudes to patriarchy show that they have a connection with feminist ideology. Their attitude advocates for the rights of women. Their oppositional reactions to objective problems show that they are not going to be defeated by oppressive conditions in order to obtain eligibility for marriage. Their feminist inclinations, however, do not hamper any woman's role as a wife or mother. They are depicted as models to all women of the nation to help them rid themselves of all complexes that make them the underdogs of their societies. They are strong willed and respected and observe the traditions of their people but at the same time reject those aspects which seek to oppress their personalities.

#### **4.2.4 MOŠWANG WA MATUBA, MO GO FETILENG KGOMO & LAPA KE MOSADI**

#### 4.2.4.1 Malegelegele, Lehlelehlele and Manyaku

The roles played by these three women reveal the difficulties of women in traditionally patriarchal societies. All these women live in perpetual fear of the fiery tempers of their husbands/males in their societies. The general inclination to believe that a woman is always regarded as a man's subordinate so overpowers them that these women do not have the freedom to defy forces external to them. It is therefore not surprising to observe how Malegelegele, Lehlelehlele and Manyaku respond to the commands of Namane, Matlakale and Mmateme respectively.

Unlike Babuni and Maakopi all three women mentioned above cannot analyse situations from their individual perspective. All three women toe the lines prescribed to them by their societies. The ideologies of patriarchy have resulted in these women's negative self image. In the various contexts of the dramas in which they appear, they are portrayed as yielding to their husbands' emotional assaults.

According to Barton R F, such characters as the three women mentioned above represent flat characters. He says that round characters have a series of choices or alternatives. According to him round characters have the ability to act inconsistently because they have a certain freedom. He therefore says the following about flat characters:

“The responses of a flat character are, on the other hand, predictable precisely because he is allowed so little freedom”  
(1975:33)

Malegelegele, Lehlelehlelele and Manyaku's behaviour is predictable because their characters are suppressed by chauvinist prescriptions.

Malegelegele, for example, tolerates her husband's abusive behaviour because of the notion that '*o tlile ka kgomo*' (She belongs there because of a cow). She

says:

*“Ge e be e se gore bešo ba lle tša ba gaMmotlana, e ka be e le kgale ke iphile lešoka” (1968: 31-32)*

*(Had it not been of the fact that my parents consumed goods belonging to Mmotlana’s, I would have long left).*

On the other hand, Manyaku advises her daughter-in-law to submit to the demands of their culture by saying:

*“...Ngwanaka! Gape wene o sa le ngwetši ye nanana ka mo kgorong ye. Rena e lego kgale re di orela, ga re sa di botšwa, re šetše re fo inama sa re tshela. Fela, ge nywaga e eya, o tlo ba tlwaela...eupša, banna ba gona ditšhiritšhiri ba galaka e se digopha” (1997:13-14).*

(My child, you are still a very young daughter-in-law in this clan. We have long endured the hardships of them, we are not told about them, we simply submit ourselves to their instructions, but, as time goes, you will get used to them ... but the men of this clan, are very fierce, they are bitter though they are not aloes.)

These women are always obedient to their male counterparts. They find themselves in bondage because of the “*magadi*” given to their parents. They are therefore not allowed to take part in issues that affect their personal lives. They see marriage as every woman’s source of wish fulfilment. Manyaku, for example, sheepishly chooses to please the Bahunoto by urging her daughter-in-law to submit to the custom of accepting a male relative to substitute for her deceased husband. She tries to convince Maakopi by saying:

*“Mo gongwe o be o tlo okeletša Chipane thorwana yeo a e tlogetšego” (1997:14)*

(Maybe you could make another child to add on what Chipane had left)

On the other hand, Matlakale in *Mošwang wa Matuba* is worried that he has only one child. This notion proves to us that in our African societies the woman's value is based on her reproductive capability.

The subjugation of the three women mentioned above to male oppression makes their responses very predictable. They cannot critically evaluate their positions in their marriages. To put it in Barton's terms, they can neither 'act inconsistently' nor can they be seen as 'exerting freedom of choice'. Barton then continues to say the following about flat characters.

"They do not act ...they are acted upon. It is clear that a character cannot be convincingly inconsistent if its behaviour is preordained by forces beyond his control" (1975:34)

By accepting the cultural prohibition of answering back when a man talks as being considered rude, these women yield to their male counterparts' assault on their emotions in order to maintain their eligibility for marriage and also to gain recognition in their societies. These women are the underdogs of their societies and are portrayed as naive, unintelligent and incapable of determining what is good for them.

#### **4.3 PERSONAL SPACE AND TERRITORIALITY AS INDICATIONS OF BEHAVIOUR**

Robert Sommer (1969:26) says:

"Personal space refers to an area with invisible boundaries surrounding a person's body into which intruders may not

come”.

From the above definition it is evident that every human being would, at certain times, like to maintain a certain distance between them and the next person. Once an individual's personal space is invaded, he/she is likely to respond adversely to such an intrusion.

As far as the concept of territoriality is concerned, Marthalee Barton quotes Robert Ardery as defining it as follows:

“A territory is an area of space, whether of water or earth or air, which an animal or group of animals defends as an exclusive preserve. The word is also used to describe the inward compulsion in animate being to possess and defend such a space” (1975:77).

To add to what Ardery says, Martin Glassner maintains that:

“Obviously, individuals exhibit territorial behaviour in those small, confined places where they spend most of their time, home...” (1996:20).

Gestures and signs are examples of human behaviour that impart messages to other people about the space owned by a person. Territoriality can therefore be used as a tool that helps in observing human behaviour. In analysing Maredi's works, we come across characters who want to maintain distances and to defend intrusions and invasions into their territories. According to Barton, territorial encroachment could be on the 'physical, the psychological and the professional levels' (1975:77). An example of territorial encroachment on the physical level, for instance, is seen when policemen invade Matlakale's home in *Mošwang wa Matuba*. Matlakale's behaviour displays a strong sense of a physical territory which is his private property. He has personal control of this property and his home, and resents any form of encroachment by invaders. This is how Matlakale responds when policemen try to force their entry into his house.

*“Lephodisa 1: Ke rena ba Mmušo kgoši, re modirong  
Matlakale: Ba Mmušo? Modirong? ka mo ga ka? [O  
šikinya hlogo..] A o rata go tsena ka kgang? Ge e le ka ga  
gago, gona tsena (O boela morago a omana) Ditlhokwa!  
šebao, ba bone (1982:22).*

(Policeman 1: We are Government officials, we are on duty.  
Matlakale: Government officials? On duty? At my house? [He  
shakes his head...] Do you forcefully want to enter? If it is your  
house, then go ahead. [He goes back into the house swearing  
at them] Ditlhokwa! There they are, attack them.)

Matlakale's aggressive verbal response to the police invasion into his physical territory shows his assumption of his right to privacy. As the owner of his territory he feels he is not going to allow them to search his house. The expression “my house”, as it appears twice in the abovementioned excerpt, shows Matlakale's sense of the territory in which he lives. By setting dogs on the police, he establishes boundaries to prevent police encroachment into his physical territory. His violent refusal to allow them into his house shows his inborn behaviour of resenting encroachment into his physical territory. Barton mentions that:

“...intrusion into a person's territory threatens one's very  
identity” (1975:80).

It is true. Matlakale's emphasis on the expression ‘my house’ portrays the instinct of owning and that he is the only boss in his house.

The attempt to encroach Matlakale's physical territory provokes the aggressive drive in him to get out of hand. Hence, the reason why he sets his dog on them. His aggressive emotion is an expression of his sense to preserve the territorial integrity of his private property and to defend it.

Matlakale's domineering behaviour is clearly expressed by Victor Hugo's declaration as quoted by Sommer. The declaration states:

“Everyman a property owner, no one a master” (1969:12)

What is implied by the above quotation is that it is not possible for an individual to dominate in an individual territory that is possessed by everyone. Matlakale's private territory is possessed by him only. That is why he always uses the possessive formative 'my'. He therefore has absolute control over his private physical territory. Matlakale then has the powers to display a domineering behaviour in his 'my house'. Matlakale's domineering behaviour therefore makes our tasks of understanding Sommer's discussion on human behaviour which states that territoriality and dominance behaviour complement each other very easy.

Salbert Schefflen (1972:40) in his study discusses certain movements referred to as gestures. He says:

“The gesture replicates or mimics the form of some idea which the speaker is trying to depict in his verbalization” (1972:40).

From what is said above, we can conclude by saying that gestures are used to substantiate or emphasize what a character says. Matlakale's verbal response to the policemen's invasion is complemented by the gesture of shaking his head to stress his attitude concerning his physical territory over which he has control

In his discussion of territoriality Barton holds,

“The city, the office, the home... all represent territories, increasingly more private enclaves whose boundaries are zealously guarded yet easily invaded” (1975:80).

Although Matlakale has a sense of protecting his physical territory from invasion, Sergeant Kgobalale's tactfulness and guise betray him and therefore make him fail to maintain and defend its integrity. Kgobalale is aware of the fact that every person is entitled to secrecy and therefore humbled himself to Matlakale with the aim of

winning his confidence. His tactfulness and his pretence that he has been fired from work, makes Matlakale relinquish the boundaries of his personal and physical territoriality. Kgobalale's frequent visits to Matlakale's home arouses the emotion of suspicion and uneasiness on the part of his wife, Lehlelelele. Matlakale's submission expresses how his emotional territoriality is threatened. By allowing Lekgoloane into his personal space he exposes his vulnerability to be tracked down as far as the growing of dagga is concerned. His emotional walls are compromised when he promises Kgobalale to take him to the actual dagga dealer. This kind of step Matlakale takes shows how he is betrayed by his failure to maintain the territorial integrity of his inner self or psyche.

Like Matlakale's wife, Masellane's mother is also not at ease with Kgobalale's invasion into her son's personal space and territoriality. Kgobalale again lies to Masellane by pretending to be out of work so that it becomes easy for him to encroach into his personal territory. He also pretends to be the smoker of the drug so that he does not jeopardize the success of the quest for the whereabouts of its growth.

Matlakale and Masellane's indiscretion has left them vulnerable to Kgobalale's carefully engineered surveillance. Masellane's relinquishment of personal boundaries gives Kgobalale all the information he wants. It is because of Masellane's failure to observe what Ardrey calls "Territorial Imperative" that he divulges all the information and even takes the detective to Leolo mountain, the place where dagga grows. Had Masellane taken heed of his mother's precautions he would have resorted to a defensive behaviour and thus avoided his subsequent appearance before the court of law.

Kgobalale's strategic way of encroaching into the two men's personal territories rendered their inner aggressive drives dormant. It is because of their unsuspecting behaviour that Lekgoloane later visits Leolo mountain to obtain a full study of that environment. Matlakale and Masellane's weaknesses are exploited when

Kgobalale changes his role to prevent the two men from predicting his motives. Although Lehlelehlele and Masellane's mother give testimonies to Kgobalale's unpredictability, Masellane's love for money is taken advantage of. Kgobalale gives Masellane money in order to get a few bags of dagga. By accepting money from Kgobalale, Masellane failed to preserve the territorial integrity of his emotions. His love for money makes him fail to maintain distance from strangers. He allows his private dagga trafficking profession to be undermined by his emotions. Kgobalale's report to his senior back at work shows Masellane's susceptibility to his (Kgobalale's) surveillance, Kgobalale says:

*“Aowa mong ‘aka gape, gore ka tloga mo, ke boletše ge ke rakilwe modirong ka baka la ge ke se ka swara mokgalabje yola ka go mo tlogela a swere lebaki gona moo ya ba e le ge ke hweditše botseno, ba nkwela bohloko. Gomme go tlaleletša moo, ka ba botša ge ke bone bokaone e le go ithekišetša lona. Ka baka la kwelobohloko yeo, ka sepedišwa, ka ba ka fihla moo sekgotlong, le yena morekiši yo mogolo wa lona ke mo hweditše, ke mmone, gomme re bile re beelane mabaka, ke šetše ke mo neile ya go beeletša mekotla ye lesome” (1982:115).*

(No my lord, when I left here, I said I had been fired from work because of not arresting the old man I found dagga in his possession, and that is how I found dagga in his possession, and that is how I found my way through, and they sympathised with me. To add on that I told them that I saw it fit to sell it for myself. Because of that mercy, they took me, and I arrived at its hiding place, I even found the great dealer thereof, I saw him, and we even set an appointment, I have already something so that he could put aside ten bags for me).

By pretending to be part of Masellane's profession, Kgobalale finally arranges for his arrest. It is therefore because of Matlakale and Masellane's failure to ward off encroachments upon their physical and emotional territories that Masellane's dirty games are uncovered.

We notice that Kgobalale changes roles to prevent Matlakale and Masellane from predicting his motives. His role changing therefore make Matlakale and Masellane relinquish their boundaries because we see them providing him with all the information he wants about dagga.

#### 4.4 DRESS AS A MEANS OF CHARACTERIZATION

##### 4.4.1 Mo go fetileng kgomo

Reratilwe's constant references to Namane's traditional attire highlights and multiplies external details confirming his character of being tradition-bound. She says:

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

(Don't you notice, that even in the midst of so many people at the wedding, he still sports the crupper ? He is still very raw. As for being ripe, he flatly refuses)

Reratilwe mentions Namane's mode of dress in order to emphasize his “primitive” mode of being. She uses the antonyms “*motalatala*” (*still very green*) and “*butšwa*” (*becomes ripe*) to explain how far Namane is removed from civilization. The antonyms she uses are aimed at giving the women she talks to a clear picture of Namane's backwardness.

Reverend Malapeng, on the other hand, comments on Namane's attire. His personal perspective about Namane's crupper is different from Reratilwe. He views Namane as someone who does not want to lose contact with his roots. In the eyes of Rev Malapeng, the presence of Namane in church with a crupper on, symbolises

that traditional and Christian cultures complement each other.

#### **4.4.2 Lapa ke mosadi**

The Reverends' clothes in *Mo go fetilego kgomo* and *Lapa ke mosadi* reveal their religious commitment. Reverend Malapeng, for example, impresses Namane when he blesses the marriage between Shoki and Kgetlepe. The Reverend's speech shows that he is the spokesman of common sense in religion. His attitude and behaviour are not dissociated from his profession. Although the Reverends in both plays are always seen with their clothes on, they still feel that cultural values should be preserved.

### **4.5 TAG NAMES AS INDICES OF BEHAVIOUR**

A tag name is not a person's proper name. A person can be called by such names to express their character or attributes. In some incidents in his plays, Maredi uses tag names as a means to reveal his character's reputation or propensities.

#### **4.5.1 Mo go fetileng kgomo**

Reratilwe repeatedly calls Namane "*morwalo*" to reinforce the impression she has already created that he is a pest or a burden. When analysing the authenticity of Namane's motives as a guide for his conduct, we come to conclude that she labels him as such because she is a Christian who does not want to "do unto others as she would like them do unto her". All that Namane fights for is for her and her husband to settle their long overdue debt.

#### **4.5.2 Mošwang wa matuba**

Matlakale calls his son by abominable names. He refers to Kodi as “*seota*” (fool) “*seebaeba*” (useless fellow) and “*serokoroko*” (a person who spends most of his time sleeping). He associates his son with nouns belonging to class 7 because they all have the prefix *se-*, This shows that he has reduced Kodi to nothingness. Such names show his lack of confidence in his son. However, Kodi proves his manhood when he comes home with a lot of animal meat he procured during the hunting expedition.

### 4.5.3 Lapa ke mosadi

Manyaku refers to the Bahunoto as “*ditšhiritšhiri*” (very fierce fellows) and “*dikokobolo*” (very intransigent fellows). Manyaku is quite right about the Bahunoto. The names he uses to call them summarise their reputation.

As far as Kodi and Namane are concerned, we notice that the abominable names ascribed to them are no clues to revealing their characters. We therefore cannot rely on tag names as indices of character.

## 4.6 A PERSON’S JOB AS AN EXTERNAL REFLECTOR OF CHARACTER

### 4.6.1 Mo go fetileng kgomo

Attire portrays himself as a messenger of God. The statement he makes in church when he notices Namane among the congregation convinces us that he is performing his task of teaching people to the best of his ability. It is through him that Namane sees the positive perspective of Christians. It is through him that we hear Namane confess thus:

*“O rerešitše kgaetšedi, eupša ke itše ge ke tsene ka mola,*

*ka kwa monna wa go apara roko bjalo ka mosadi a bolela, ka ba ka re mola ke be ke gana ge o nkgopela go go felegetša nka be ke kwele kae lejakane le bolela setho wa mohuta ola, motho a ka re a re phakga, a hwetša a šetše a mo dirišitše tše di sa tlego, e le lejakane” (1968:56)*

(You are right my sister, but when I entered in there, I heard a man in a dress typical of a woman’s talking, then I told myself that had I refused to come with you, where could I have heard a Christian talking sense. Men of his calibre can easily lead one astray causing one to be a Christian)

Reverend Malapeng is portrayed as a peacemaker because he always appears at times of high emotional intensity and is the only person that creates peace between conflicting characters. All the speeches he makes have a prescriptive aim. At the end of the play he reveals to Reratilwe and Moshabane their unfair treatment towards Babuni by saying,

*“Aowaaaaowa...!A ba se ke ba rata go itšhireletša ka Sedumedi ge ba dirile bošaedi. Sedumedi ga se kwane le bošaedi, ke sethakga, se kwana le wene gabotsebotse, se re o dire motho seo o tlogo thabela ge a go dira sona. Ke bošaedi bjo bogolo bjo ba bo dirilego. Sedumedi se nyakana le go dira go loka, e sego go dira maraga. (O lebiša lentšu go Moshabane le mohumagadi). Le a mmona mokgalabje yo, o rata go le agiša, o dira seo se nyakwang ke Modimo, gomme ge le sa kwane le seo a le eletšang gore le se dire, ke gore ga le kwane le Modimo yo a le bopilego. Ntšhang tšeo di lebanego bao ba le diretšego, le tlišeng khutšo lapeng le: le ruteng bana setho” (1968:80).*

(Nooo,Nooo...! Let them not make Christianity their shield when they have made a mistake. Christianity does not agree with doing wrong, it is good, it agrees exactly with you, it says you must do unto others as you would like them do unto you. What they have done is a grievous mistake. Christianity agrees with doing the right things, and not doing a mess. [He directs his words to Moshabane and wife] Do you see this old man, he wants to create peace between you, he does exactly what God wants, but if you do not agree with what he advises you to do, then your implication is that you do not agree with

God who is your creator, Render unto those that have done you good what is due to them, so that you bring peace to this family: teach your children your culture).

Reverend Malapeng has said a mouthful. Unlike Reratilwe, who has no respect for traditional culture, the Reverend sees the need for traditional and Christian cultures to come together. The language he uses is an indication of his moral standing. Although he is a man of God, he is the spokesman of common sense and religion. He illuminates the ignorance and follies of the likes of Reratilwe. He plays the role of the mentor of characters and readers as well. His speeches are typically religious in nature. They also reflect his exposure to the tradition he is also a part of. He believes that the ideals of both Western civilization and African culture should be promoted for the benefit of all people. He strongly condemns faulty manners and says it is tantamount to heresy. He strongly warns the likes of Reratilwe not to masquerade behind Christian religion, which is at variance with their true characters.

#### 4.6.2 Mošwang wa Matuba

The judge in *Mošwang wa Matuba* is portrayed as a symbol of authority. His inclusion in this play is vital because he is used to reiterate an awareness that killing wild animals is forbidden as it results in the extinction of animals we all would like to see in future. This play, as a whole, revolves around the idea of promoting an awareness that killing wild animals and smoking dagga are criminal offences. The judge therefore is included not to fill a place in the spectrum of characters but to recapitulate the moral of the story. He appears in two scenes only where he respectively sentences the accused on offences of killing wild animals and smoking dagga. Before pronouncing sentence he says:

*“...Bjalo le tsebe, ba Mmušo ba itše go lemoga taba ye ya go hubišwa ga diphoofole, ba bea Molao wa go šireletša diphoofole le mašoka...”* (1982:58).

(Then you must know, after noticing the fact about the extinction of animals, the Government made the Law that protects wild animals).

About smoking dagga the same judge at the end of the play says:

*“...Lebaki ke kotsi, ke lehu bathong, ka gona moo ke hwetšago motho molato ka lona, le ge go ka bonala e le wo monnyane ga ke na kgaugelo. Molao, ka go lemoga bošoro bja lona, o beile kgati ye bohloko, gomme ka mo seatleng sa ka, e phetha modiro wa yona, le nna ga nke ke oma ka yona, eupša ke otlā gore bao e sego ya ba nwa, ba lemoge bogale bja yona, gomme ba se ke ba hlwe ba leka mahlale.... (1982 :132)*

(...Dagga is dangerous, it is death to people, and as such I find a person guilty thereof, it does not matter how small it may be, I do not have mercy. The law, after discovering its danger, has set a very painful whip, and right here in my hand, it is doing its task, and I do not give warnings but I mete out the punishment so that those that are not punished, should realise its severity, so that they should not try it to play dirty tricks).

The two scenes in which the judge appears contribute to the portrayal of the nature of the law of the country and they contribute little to his individual character. This inclusion of the judge in this play reminds us of what Barton says about characters whose roles are not applicable to all situations. According to him the number of occasions a character appears is not an issue. *“Clearly what counts is how well one plays a given role” (1975:94).*

Looking at the roles played respectively by Reverends in *Mo go fetileng kgomo* and *Lapa ke mosadi* and the one played by the judge in *Mošwang wa Matuba*, we realise that these characters are not seen as beings who have what Barton calls

*“...a strongly individuated psychic identity (or core) which provides the motivation in and which largely persists through,*

a variety of situations” (1975:93).

We therefore cannot penetrate their minds in order to give an account of their individual thinking as autonomous beings. Their characters are therefore defined in terms of the particular roles they play in the context of the plays in which they appear. How they act the roles they are designated for will determine their worth in their respective dramas. Barton therefore contends that,

“thus any given role has little intrinsic merit, its value is based primarily upon its rhetorical effectiveness, that is, it is determined by the degree to which it produces the desired impression upon an audience” (1975:93-94).

Barton’s statement takes us back to what we have said that the Reverends and the judge are symbolic, one-dimensional characters. They are used to serve the didactic purpose of the author. To go back to the judge’s statement it is noticeable that substance abuse is still one of the major problems in the whole world. Today every right thinking citizen of this country is concerned about drug abuse. This shows that the judge is the mouth piece of the Law because it (the Law) is also concerned about the welfare of its citizens and focuses on serious issues such as drug abuse and killing of endangered species.

#### **4.7 CONCLUSION**

Before ending the overall discussion of character portrayal, it is worth mentioning the fact that the manner in which characters play their given roles is of great importance in any work of art. Maredi’s characters therefore fit well into the roles ascribed to them. The priests, judge and detectives appear in scenes where they recapitulate the morals of the dramas in which they appear. Their roles contribute nothing to their individual characters. The judge and the detectives represent the justice system and Reverend Malapeng for example is a messenger of God because he always emerges during times of high emotional intensity and restores order out of conflict. Detective Kgobalale’s breakthrough in his investigation

about dagga is the result of the expertise he has displayed in the role he plays.

The least important characters in Maredi's dramas are all included to serve particular purposes. Their roles have what Barton calls "situational validity" (1975:95). In *Mo go fetileng kgomo* the women at the wedding fill in the slot required to substantiate the fact that there is nothing wrong if a person clings to the mores of his society. These women reacted negatively to Reratilwe's attitude of despising Namane's mode of dress. The inclusion of Phogole and Maboja emphasizes the importance of having one's next of kin present during important events like marriage.

In *Lapa ke Mosadi*, Photo, Maakopi's elder brother appears only at the beginning of the play just after his brother-in-law's death to show that his presence is vital in making funeral arrangements. The Van der Merwe family portrays the dehumanisation of black people by the whites for we see them instructing Maakopi's son to work in their pigsty instead of affording him the opportunity to go to school like their own children .

Maswene group in *Mošwang wa Matuba* portrays ardent smokers of dagga who do not want to have laws imposed on them. Mashilo, the son of Masellane, is also slotted in to portray the victimization of youngsters by dagga. His over use of dagga renders him helpless and justifies the reason for being expelled from school.

Reverend Malapeng and Evangelist Mosehle in their respective roles are portrayed as apostles of non-violence and icons of peace.

Although the Reverends, the judge, and other less important characters are frozen in roles which are not applicable in all situations, of importance is how well they perform such roles. All the roles of the abovementioned characters, harmonize with the respective scenes in which they appear. It is therefore through them and the scenes in which they appear that we are able to get the message of the author.