

THE DEPICTION OF MASCULINITY IN SELECTED SESOTHO DRAMA TEXTS

by

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DECLARATION

I, Pulane Moyana, declare that this master's dissertation title: **The depiction of masculinity in selected Sesotho drama texts**, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements in respect of Master's Degree in African languages, Department of African Languages in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Free State, is my own work, and that all sources cited have been acknowledged in-text as well as in the list of references.

SIGNED:

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my mother, Tabita Mmamolokisi Moloi, my son, Lehlohonolo Blessing Motsoeneng, my husband Emmanuel Moyana, my brother, Thabo Moloi, and my late father, Keresemese Motsoeneng, whose guidance keeps me going and strong.

ABSTRACT

This study intended to investigate the depiction of masculinity in selected Sesotho drama texts: Maaake's *Malefane* (2015), Letshaba, *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015), and Mokhele's *Diphetoho* (2015). The study employed a qualitative method and thematic analysis to explore the depiction of masculinity in the above selected Sesotho drama texts. The related literature review revealed a gap in the studies of scholars who have examined masculinity among the Basotho, particularly in the context of Sesotho drama texts. Literary masculinity theory was utilized to answer the research questions of this study. This study determined that hegemonic masculinity is depicted through the abuse of power, language that depicts masculinity, assassination, infidelity and aggression. This study contributes to the postgraduate studies within the fields of literature and masculinity to enrich the possibility of research in areas where these fields converge.

Keywords: abuse of power, infidelity, literary masculinity, masculinity

KAKARETSO

Phuputso ena e sekasekile ka moo bonna bo hlahisitsweng ka teng dingolweng tse kgethilweng tsa terama tsa Sesotho e leng tsa: Maake, *Malefane* (2015), Letshaba, *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015) le Mokhele, *Diphetoho* (2015). Boithuto bona bo sebedisitse mokgwatlhalosi le mokgwaqhaqhollo ya ditaba ho ya ka meoko ya ditaba ho hlahloba tsela eo bonna ho hlahisitsweng ka teng dingolweng tse kgethilweg. Lewa la *Literary masculinity* le sebedisitswe ho araba dipotso tsa boithuto bona. Phuputso e sibollotse hore bonna bo hlahisitswe ka ditlha tsena: tshebediso e mpe ya matla, puo e bontshang bonna, dipolayano ho tsa dipolotiki, le ho hloka botshepehi. Phuputso ena e na le seabo mafapheng a dingolwa le ditabeng tsa bonna ho ntlafatsa menyetla ya ho etsa diphuputso moo mafapha ana a nang le kamano.

Manstwe a bohlokwa: bonna, bonna dingolweng, ho hloka botshepehi, tshebediso e mpe ya matla.

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CHAPTER ONE: ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Background

This study aimed to analyse the depiction of masculinity in three selected Sesotho drama texts, namely *Malefane* (2015), *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015), and *Diphetoho* (2015). This study did not intend to compare the depiction of masculinity in these texts. This study is primarily concerned with the depiction of masculinity in the above-mentioned selected Sesotho drama texts.

Masculinity is often stereotypically associated with traits attributed to men, such as strength, assertiveness, bravery, and independence (Connell, 2005; Schippers, 2007; Abrams, 2009). However, Connell (2005), Schippers (2007), and Abrams (2009) also remind us that masculinity is inherent in both males and females. Khotso (2017) states that masculinity in the African context is about the stereotypical portrayal of males and that masculinity is not about sex, but a socially constructed concept about how men are expected to behave in society, adding that language and culture are related to masculinity. In support, Zuma (2009) indicates that it is through language that one conveys a message. In this study, culture is viewed in the context of patriarchy, thus influencing how men are portrayed in selected Sesotho drama texts. In line with the views of Khotso (2017), the description of masculinity is dependent on the unique stereotyping patterns of each society.

Some authors have written texts to define and explore the concept of masculinity, among them Millman (1980), Gilmore (1990), Connell (1995), and Kimmel (1996). Millman (1980), in his text *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, defines masculinity as a balance of physical strength and spiritual wisdom. Gilmore (1990), in his *Manhood in the Making*, defines masculinity as a socially constructed concept associated with characteristics such as toughness, aggression, stoicism, and sexuality. Connell (1995), in his text *Masculinities*, concurs with Gilmore (1990) by asserting that masculinity is not a singular entity, but a plurality of masculinities shaped by social, cultural, and historical contexts. Kimmel (1996), in the text *The Way of the Peaceful Warrior*, agrees with Millman (1980) and Gilmore (1990) by reiterating that masculinity is influenced by historical, social,

and economic influences, and is defined in opposition to what it means to be female or non-masculine. Connell (1995) confirms this by stating that masculinity is formed by components such as culture, class, race and sexuality.

Many scholars have contributed to the study of masculinity through various genres. Among them are Zhuwarara (2016), Armengol (2007) and Crous (2005). Crous (2005), in his study of male-authored novels from the post-apartheid period in South African writing, depicts masculinity in both white and black men to include their men's interaction with women. Crous (2005) discovered that in the post-apartheid literature, there is a positive element of masculinity. Zhuwarara (2016), who studied female-authored texts, observes that masculinity is associated with violence and that there is a demonstration of the dominance of masculinity that suppresses women, making their lives unbearable. Armengol's (2007) *Gendering Men, Revisions of Violence as a Test of Manhood in American Literature* illustrates that men are not expected to expose their emotional vulnerability, but resort to violence as a form of expressing their opposition. Crous (2005) reveals that there is positive masculinity, while Zhuwarara (2016) and Armengol (2007) contend that negative masculinity also exists. The above studies are significant for this research project, as they inform the researcher about both positive and negative masculinity. However, although there are commonalities, they differ from this study's aim, which is about the depiction of masculinity in selected Sesotho drama texts.

Scholars in Sesotho literature, such as Zulu (2004) and Mosia (2021), have studied masculinity. Zulu (2004), in the analysis of a novel by Mafata (1991), *Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha*, states that Western education is seen as a threat to traditionalism, as women are given the power to protect themselves against injustices inflicted upon them. Moreover, initiation schools as cultural practices are presented as a way of qualifying men to become powerful and important. Zulu (2004) focused on the analysis of *Mosikong wa lerato* by Mafata (1988) and found that male characters are depicted as being violent. For example, Lesedi beats his wife and kicks her out of the house. Physical abuse perpetrated by men on their wives is associated with the stereotypical thinking that men turn violent because of the bad behaviour of their wives. Mosia's (2021) study of patriarchal expressions in modern selected Sesotho texts, *A feminist perspective*, focused on the

analysis of the text *Hei ke tsamaile* by Tsephe (2008), which represents male characters such as Snoeky as cheating husbands who regard and exploit females as sex objects. In the same study, masculinity is depicted as being positive, where a male character, Nonyana, is presented as a respectful man who is not weak, as demonstrated when a schoolgirl, Sepapatlele, tries to date him while he is her teacher. Nonyana is depicted as a man who is not easily tempted, someone who knows what he wants in life. The above literature informed this study, as it empowered the researcher with rich information on masculinity in Sesotho culture, which facilitated the topic explored.

This study was underpinned by the Literary Masculinity Theory (LMT), which enabled the analysis of depicting masculinity in selected Sesotho drama texts. Bhatti (2022) states that the literary masculinity theory is relevant to the field of study that helps critics to understand masculinity and how it is executed and maintained through language and culture. This study examined how men are portrayed in selected Sesotho drama texts, and how literature contributes to their understanding of what it means to be masculine. Horlacher (2015) elaborates that in literary masculinity theory, the focus is associated with representations of masculinity. This theory allows scholars to comprehend how masculinity is constructed in literary texts. Reeser (2020) indicates that literary masculinity theory focuses on masculinity portrayed in films, books, and drama by focusing on masculine characters rather than gender norms. This theory enabled the researcher to analyse masculine behaviour, language, and culture as illustrated in selected Sesotho drama texts.

1.2 Problem Statement

The depiction of masculinity in Sesotho literature has often been a subject of scholarly inquiry. Despite this, it remains relatively underexplored, particularly in selected Sesotho drama texts. This gap in Sesotho literature exposes a significant deficiency in understanding effectively how masculinity is portrayed in Sesotho drama texts; hence, the necessity for this study. The main question of this study is: How are masculine characters depicted in *Malefane* (2015), *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015), and *Diphetoho* (2015)?

1.2.1 Research sub-questions

- What is the culture of masculine characters in selected Sesotho drama texts?
- What is the language of masculine characters in selected Sesotho drama texts?
- How do masculine characters behave in selected Sesotho drama texts?

1.2.2 Aims and objectives

The aims of the study were as follows:

- To analyse the depiction of masculinity in three selected Sesotho drama texts: *Malefane* (2015), *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015), and *Diphetoho* (2015)

The objectives of the study were:

- To discover the culture of masculine characters in selected Sesotho drama texts.
- To explore the language of masculine characters in selected Sesotho drama texts.
- To examine how masculine characters behave in selected Sesotho drama texts.

1.3 Theoretical framework

Literary masculinity theory informed the present study. It was chosen for specific reasons: to ground the study and identify key factors that guided the study.

The literary masculinity idea was developed in American academia during the early 1990s. Literary masculinity theory proponents include Connell Raewyn, Judith Butler, Michael Kimmel, Judith Halberstam, and Arthur Brittan. Literary masculinity theory, according to Harlacher (2015), examines the representations of masculinity in literature. This means that literary masculinity theory enabled the researcher to understand the representations of masculinity in the selected Sesotho drama texts. Literary masculinity theory, according to Kimmel (1996), is concerned with how literary texts depict the power

dynamics of masculinity and how masculinity is associated with the suppression and control of women. This statement elaborates that literary masculinity theory helped the researcher to identify and analyse the power dynamics that lead to dominance and control over women in selected Sesotho drama texts.

The literary masculinity theory, according to Connell (1995), should investigate how masculinity is constructed in literary texts. Literary masculinity theory examines how masculinity can be separated from biological maleness and expressed by women and non-binary people. Halberstam (1998) states that the literary masculinity theory examines how masculinity interacts with other identity categories like sexual orientation, race and class. The above-mentioned proponents contributed to the current study by providing a thorough comprehension of literary masculinity theory and how to apply it to address its research questions.

The scholars mentioned above state the following key aspects of literary masculinity theory.

- Literary masculinity theory can be used to analyze how masculinity is performed, as it is something that is acted out or depicted.
- The concept of literary masculinity is effective because it demonstrates how to transgress masculine standards through language, culture, and performance.
- Literary masculinity theory is used to examine the power dynamics that sustain authority and dominance over women.
- The way that language maintains masculine standards like power over women can be examined using literary masculinity theory.

The literary masculinity theory examines how cultural norms reinforce masculinity and aid in challenging prevailing male customs and creating avenues for possible opposition.

- It is possible to examine how cultural norms define, perform, and sustain masculinity by using the theory of literary masculinity.
- The literary masculinity theory focuses on analyzing different masculinities in literary texts.

- The concept of literary masculinity can be used to highlight how masculinity manifests itself in all relationships, behaviors, and practices.
- The idea that masculinity is socially created rather than inborn can be investigated using literary masculinity theory, which also identifies issues with masculinities for both men and women.

Literary masculinity theory was utilized to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the language of masculine characters in selected Sesotho drama texts? To respond to this research question, literary masculinity theory was used to explore how language upholds masculine standards, like power over women can be investigated using literary masculinity theory.
2. What is the behaviour of masculine characters in the selected Sesotho drama texts? To respond to this research question, literary masculinity theory has been applied to emphasize how masculinity is portrayed in all interactions, practices, and behaviours.
3. What is the culture of masculine characters in selected Sesotho drama texts? The aspect of literary masculinity theory that has answered the research question is that it was applied to investigate how cultural norms define, perform, and perpetuate masculinity.

It was in the best interests of the current study to utilize literary masculinity theory to explore how culture shapes the construction of masculinity, as well as how masculinity is culture-specific and differs across different cultural contexts. Literary masculinity theory played a vital role in identifying the communication styles, such as tone and vocabulary, which are associated with masculinity and how language perpetuates dominance in selected Sesotho drama texts. Literary masculinity theory helped the researcher to analyse how masculine characters portray their masculinity through their behaviours and actions in the selected Sesotho drama texts.

1.4 Research Scope

This study is limited to the analysis of three selected Sesotho drama texts: *Malefane* (2015), *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015), and *Diphetoho* (2015). The focal point of this study is how masculinity is depicted in each text, but this study was not interested in comparing these texts on how each delineates masculinity. To achieve its objectives, this study focused on the behaviour, culture, and language of the characters that depict masculinity. These selected Sesotho drama texts are crucial in this study, as they depict the notion of interest, namely masculinity.

1.5 Ethical Considerations

Since this is a desktop study, no research participants were involved. Relevant data were gathered from texts selected for this study. Pertinent sources of information were gathered from sources such as book reviews, theses, journals, the internet, and dissertations to strengthen triangulation and the authenticity of results. This study is free of plagiarism by acknowledging sources of information. The researcher has applied for ethical clearance from the University of the Free State.

1.6 Value of the Study

The selected texts, *Malefane* (2015), *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015), and *Diphetoho* (2015), are prescribed for schools in South Africa. Learners and students who study these texts may benefit from this study. This study may help other scholars to pursue examining masculinity in Sesotho literature. Also, this study may benefit the researcher by enabling the understanding of issues about masculinity in selected Sesotho drama texts. Lastly, this study will benefit the researcher to get a deeper understanding of how masculinity is depicted in selected Sesotho drama texts: *Malefane* (2015), *Lejwe ka kgopiso* (2015), and *Diphetoho* (2015). The researcher endeavoured to gain insight into the culture, language, and behaviour of masculine characters depicted in selected Sesotho drama texts. The researcher would benefit from this study by gaining insight into the societal and cultural norms that shape the depiction of masculinity in selected Sesotho drama texts.

1.7 Chapter Outline

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Related Literature Review and Theoretical Review

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Findings

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the structure and framework of the entire study. Among the aspects central to this study are the problem statement, research questions, objectives, and research methodology. The scope of the study has also been outlined. It was explained in this chapter that this study aims to investigate the depiction of masculinity in the selected Sesotho drama texts: *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015), *Malefane* (2015), and *Diphetoho* (2015).

CHAPTER TWO: RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provided a discussion of the relevant review of literature of previous studies by other scholars about depictions of masculinity in literary texts and the review of the theoretical framework.

2.2 The Depiction of Masculinity in Literary Texts

The following category discusses the relevant studies of previous scholars who analysed the depiction of masculinity in literary texts. These scholars were arranged from the most recent to the least recently published studies.

Chisoko (2024) examined how Zambian women authors depict female characters concerning gender-based violence in their literary texts, specifically in *All of Love*, *A Silent Cry*, and *Daze*. Chisoko (2014) discovered that women are shown in a few short stories, like *A Silent Cry* and *Daze*, as both demonstrating their strength and resiliency and facing the harsh reality of violence. Chisoko's (2024) research contributes to the ongoing investigation into how female characters in Zambian literary works, including *All of Love*, *A Silent Cry*, and *Daze*, persevere and confront gender-based violence. The current study is different from Chisoko's (2024) study because the latter focused on the representation of female characters in Zambian literary texts written by female authors. Therefore, the current study looked at how masculinity is portrayed in selected Sesotho drama texts.

Tokunbo (2024) investigated how men are portrayed, especially in literary texts written by women, such as *Maman* and *The Little Prince of Belleville*. Tokunbo (2024) discovered that following the conventional feminine belief associated with hegemonic masculinity, male characters in the female-authored literary text *The Little Prince of Belleville* are portrayed negatively and as cheating on their wives. This study on how female authors portray male characters from a feminist perspective is informed by Tokunbo's (2024) research. The present study, however, investigated how masculinity is depicted in selected Sesotho drama texts.

Awor (2023) investigated how gender norms and stereotypes are portrayed in the literary works of both male and female authors, particularly those of *Houseboy*, *Footprints of the Outsider*, *The First Daughter*, and *The Invisible Weevil*. Awor (2023) found that in literary works by male authors, particularly in *Footprints of an Outsider* and *Houseboy*, female characters are depicted as quiet, immature, and obligated to concentrate on their domestic duties as housewives. In literary texts written by women, including *The First Daughter* and *The Invisible Weevil*, women make independent decisions that showcase women's empowerment and education while challenging gender stereotypes and prejudices. The study of Awor (2023) informs the current study on how gender norms and stereotypes are portrayed in literary texts by both male and female authors, namely: *Houseboy*, *Footprints of the Outsider*, *The First Daughter*, and *The Invisible Weevil*. Nevertheless, Awor (2023) disagrees with the current study that looks at how gender norms and stereotypes are portrayed in literary texts by both male and female authors, specifically *Houseboy*, *Footprints of the Outsider*, *The First Daughter*, and *The Invisible Weevil*. The culture of masculine characters in selected Sesotho drama texts was examined in this study.

Mosia (2021) investigated how male dominance, control over women, and the continuation of gender inequality are portrayed in Sesotho literary texts, particularly *Bophelo ke dihaeya* and *Hei ke tsamaile*. According to Mosia (2021), male characters are shown as the heads of households and the main decision-makers, while female characters are expected to conform to conventional norms of obedience and submission. Mosia (2021) sheds light on the connection between masculinity, male dominance, and authority in Sesotho literary texts, particularly *Hei ke tsamaile* and *Bophelo ke dihaeya*. The current study and Mosia's (2021) study, however, are different, since Mosia's (2021) study concentrates on how male characters in selected Sesotho novels had authority, domination, and control over women in selected Sesotho novels. This study investigated the depiction of masculinity in selected Sesotho drama texts.

Mutekwa (2019) looks at how Zimbabwean writers portray masculinity in a few post-independent works, specifically *Prophet of Zimbabwe*, *Those Years of Drought*, *Lemon's Ivory*, and *The Uncertainty of Hope*. According to Mutekwa (2019), Zimbabwean writers

present masculinity as erratic and contentious. Male characters in *Lemon's Ivory* and other chosen Zimbabwean literary works are portrayed as risk-takers, breadwinners, and more materially oriented. The study of Mutekwa (2019) informs the current study on how male characters are depicted in Zimbabwean post-independence literary texts. However, the study of Mutekwa (2019) differs from the current study, as the study of Mutekwa (2019) focuses on the depiction of masculinity in selected Zimbabwean post-independence literary texts, in particular *Lemon's Ivory*, *Those Years of Drought*, *Prophet of Zimbabwe* and *The uncertainty of Hope*, while this study focused on the depiction of masculinity in selected Sesotho drama texts.

Dlamini (2015) specifically looks at the relationship between culture and masculinity in contemporary Black South African literary texts, in particular *A Man Who Is Not a Man*, *Behind Every Successful Man*, *After Tears*, and *Dog Eat Dog*. Dlamini (2015) discovered that circumcision is a cultural practice that is linked with being a true Xhosa man. Dlamini (2015) states that men from initiation school possess masculine qualities, including power, authority, and the position of protector, demonstrating the connection between masculinity and culture. This study was informed by the study of Dlamini (2015) on the relationship between masculinity and cultural practices and what it means to be a truly masculine Xhosa man as depicted in contemporary Black South African literary texts such as *A Man Who is Not a Man*, *Behind Every Successful Man*, *After Tears*, and *Dog Eat Dog*. The study of Dlamini (2015) differs from this study in examining the relationship between culture and masculinity in literary texts, namely *A Man Who Is Not a Man*, *Behind Every Successful Man*, *After Tears*, and *Dog Eat Dog*. This study, however, looked at the language, culture, and behaviour of male characters in selected Sesotho drama texts.

The goal of Zulu's (2004) study was to identify the traits that are ascribed to men and women in Mafata's literary texts, specifically *Mosikong wa lerato*. Zulu (2004) claims that Mmalekupa and other female characters are shown in Mafata's literary texts, particularly in *Mosikong wa lerato*, as envious wives who ruined their marriage because of their paranoid inclinations. Lesedi, the male character, is shown as a decent man who is undermined by his wife's jealousy. Zulu's (2004) research provides insight into the characteristics of women and men in Mafata's literary texts, specifically in *Mosikong wa*

lerato. The current study and Zulu's (2004) study are different because Zulu (2004) examines how female characters are portrayed in Mafata's text, *Mosikong wa lerato*. The current study investigated how masculinity is depicted in selected Sesotho drama texts.

2.3 Theoretical Review

The following category provides a discussion of the relevance of previous scholars who utilize literary masculinity theory in their studies. The information is arranged from the most recent to the least recently published.

Chisoko (2024) uses language as a crucial component of literary masculinity theory in a few Zambian literary works written by women, particularly *All of Love*, *A Silent Cry*, and *Daze*, which include female characters. To investigate how language perpetuates dominance, power dynamics, and control over female characters, Chisoko (2024) uses language as a crucial component of literary masculinity theory. Chisoko (2024) asserts that language can be used to confirm power, control, and dominance, and that male characters are generally portrayed as inherently violent, aggressive, and in charge of female characters. As a result, female characters are portrayed as helpless, enduring ongoing struggles in their daily lives. The current study was informed by Chisoko's (2024) research, which reveals that language, a crucial component of literary masculinity theory, contributes to the illustration of dominance, control, and authority in literary texts. In contrast to the current study, Chisoko (2024) uses language as a crucial component of literary masculinity theory to investigate how language is linked to power dynamics, dominance, and control over women in the context of selected Zambian literary texts, most notably *All of Love*, *A Silent Cry*, and *Daze*. Using language as a key component of literary masculinity theory, the current study shows how masculine characters in selected Sesotho drama texts utilize language to promote masculinity and establish control or domination over others.

The behaviour and cultural portrayal of masculinity in Namibian literary texts are implemented by Boulton (2023) as essential characteristics of literary masculinity theory. To investigate the effects of masculine behaviour on both male and female characters, as well as how cultural representations affect the behaviour of both male and female

characters in a few Namibian literary texts, Boulton (2023) uses the language and cultural representation components of literary masculinity theory. The actions of male characters, such as those who commit acts of aggression, are incapable of expressing their feelings, and exercise control over women, harmful to both men and women, according to Boulton (2023). Furthermore, cultural representations of masculinity influence the behaviour of both men and women in real life, and cultural norms and attitudes contribute to unfavourable ideas of male behaviour (Boulton, 2023). This indicates that bad male behaviour that affects both men and women is encouraged by cultural norms and attitudes. The current research on the behaviour of male characters in literary texts and how culture shapes such behaviour is informed by Boulton's (2023) work. However, by excluding the behaviour and cultural representation elements seen in a few chosen Namibian literary texts, the current study departed from Boulton's (2023) paradigm. The current study investigated different aspects of literary masculinity theory that are more in agreement with the culture and behaviour of male characters in a few Sesotho theatrical works.

As a crucial aspect of literary masculinity theory, Ncube and Chipara (2022) use the creation of masculinity in selected francophone and Lusophone literary texts. To investigate how masculinity is constructed in selected francophone and Lusophone literary texts, they use elements of masculinity construction. According to Ncube and Chipara (2022), masculinity is a socially constructed identity rather than one that is defined by biology. The notion of masculinity may be deconstructed by challenging the notion that men are the primary carers and are always in charge, while women are portrayed as being able to take charge of their families, have a voice, and be carers (Ncube & Chipara, 2022). The study of Ncube and Chipara (2022) informs this study on how to use aspects of the construction of masculinity to understand that masculinity is not inborn but socially constructed. Their study (2022) differs from this study in utilizing the aspect of the construction of masculinity, particularly in selected francophone and Lusophone literary texts. This study employed culture as an important aspect of literary masculinity theory to explore cultural ideas of masculinity, such as strength, courage, and power, in selected Sesotho drama texts. Furthermore, the current study intended to look

at how male and female characters in selected Sesotho drama texts are culturally expected to conduct themselves.

In a selection of isiZulu literary texts, Mthembu (2019) uses patriarchal dominance as a key characteristic of literary masculinity theory. To investigate the social and cultural elements that sustain men's authority and control over female characters in a few isiZulu literary texts, Mthembu (2019) employs the patriarchal dominance aspect, and asserts that in certain isiZulu literary texts, men's power over women is maintained by social and cultural factors, including strength, bravery and dominance, exerting control over women and providing for their families. The current study was informed by Mthembu (2019), who offers comprehensive details on the social and cultural elements that support men's dominance and control over women in particular literary works. This study, however, departed from Mthembu's framework in that it examined the culture of masculine characters in selected Sesotho drama texts by examining alternative aspects of literary masculinity theory that are culturally relevant rather than using the patriarchal dominance property in the context of isiZulu literary texts.

In selected contemporary literary writings, Harlacher (2015) uses the portrayal of characters as a crucial component of literary masculinity theory. Harlacher (2015) examines the relationships, behaviours and characteristics of male and female characters in a chosen literary text by examining how they are portrayed. Harlacher (2015) discovered that in certain literary texts, male characters are shown as employing aggression, control and emotional suppression to express their masculinity. In contrast, female characters are shown as rejecting being objects of men, exhibiting empowerment, and opposing masculine dominance. The study of Harlacher (2015) informed the current study on the exploration of character traits, behaviours and relationships of characters in contemporary literary texts. Thus, this study deviated from Harlacher (2015) by not using the concept of character depiction in contemporary literary texts. Alternatively, this study employed behaviour as an important aspect of literary masculinity theory to analyse how social and cultural factors influence a character's masculine behaviour and performance of masculinity in selected Sesotho drama texts. This study further utilized behaviour as an important aspect of literary masculinity theory to explore the emotional expression of

masculine characteristics, dominance, or control over others in selected Sesotho drama texts.

According to Caughtry (2011), the link between masculinity and violence is an important part of literary masculinity theory. Caughtry (2011) uses the element of the relationship between masculinity and acts of violence to learn more about the relationship between violence and masculinity and the negative impacts that violence has on both men and women. The violent actions of male characters show that men are expected to conform to dominant masculine norms, which often lead to aggression (Caughtry, 2011). According to Caughtry (2011), men are harmed psychologically and emotionally by masculinity, particularly the repression of vulnerabilities, because they are required to conform to harmful masculine norms. The study of Caughtry (2011) informed the current study on the connection between masculinity and violent acts, as well as the fact that violence affects male and female characters in literary texts on an emotional and psychological level. Nonetheless, the current study did not utilize the link between masculinity and acts of violence as aspects of literary masculinity theory; instead, it opted to explore alternative facets of literary masculinity theory that align more closely with the research questions posed herein.

Gqolo (2009) investigated the performance of masculinity in a few post-apartheid literary texts using performativity, a crucial component of literary masculinity theory. Gqola (2009) discovered that when masculinity is combined with privilege and power, male characters acting in ways that conform to traditional masculine ideals are a means of surviving. Male characters frequently respond to post-apartheid living stresses by displaying their masculinity in highly conspicuous ways. The current study used performativity to examine acts and behaviours that perpetuate privilege, violence and power in particular literary texts is informed by Gqola's (2009) research. Performativity examines how the male body can be utilized to display masculinity through postures, gestures and physical activities. The current analysis differed from Gqola (2009) in that it did not make use of the performativity property in South Africa after apartheid. To examine how male characters in a selected Sesotho drama text adhere to social norms and behave in ways that are

associated with being male, this study employed behaviour as a component of literary masculinity theory.

To determine how patriarchal power dominance sustains injustice and inequality, Armengol (2006) uses dominance as a crucial component of literary masculinity theory in American literary texts. Armengol (2006) found that male characters in selected American literary texts exhibit dominance by being strong, controlling women, autonomous, and emotionally dominant. The current study did not examine literary depictions of masculinity and domination in American literary works as informed by Armengol's (2006) research. The study of Armengol (2006) diverges from the current study, as Armengol (2006) employs the aspect of dominance in American literary texts to analyse how dominance establishes control over and oppression of female characters by male characters. The current study employed language as an important aspect of literary masculinity theory in selected Sesotho drama texts.

Zulu (2004) examined how culture is portrayed in a few of Mafata's literary works using culture as a central component of literary masculinity theory. According to Zulu (2004), women who talk excessively are viewed as a social shame. In Mafata's literary works, women are oppressed through the usage of respect. According to Zulu (2004), male characters are anxious to be married, get initiated, and have children. The current study on how male and female characters in Mafata's literary works exhibit culture is informed by Zulu's (2004) research. In the literary texts of *Mafata*, the current study will not employ culture as a characteristic of literary masculinity theory. Rather, the current study used culture as a valuable attribute. To investigate cultural conceptions of masculinity that influence expectations for the behaviour of masculine characters in selected Sesotho drama texts, such as strength, courage and domination, the current study also used culture as a significant component of literary masculinity theory.

To determine whether masculinity is socially or genetically formed, Traister (2000) examined the production of masculinity as a key component of literary masculinity theory. According to Traister (2000), masculinity is socially created, varies between cultural and historical eras, and is something that is learned, acted and reinforced by societal norms. Current research on demonstrating that masculinity is socially produced rather than

biologically determined is informed by Traister's (2000) study. However, the current study departed from Traister's framework by choosing to examine various viewpoints on literary masculinity theory that are more in line with the behaviour, language, and culture that are significant components of literary masculinity theory, rather than using the construction of masculinity property.

2.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, following a review of the relevant literature and theoretical framework, there is proof that societal norms about masculinity and gender roles are reflected. Women are shown as opposing gender-based violence committed by male characters in literary works written by women. Male characters are shown as being in charge and dominant. Male characters are portrayed as risk-takers, family providers, devoted husbands, and materially prosperous in literary works written by men. According to the various scholars already mentioned, the key aspects of literary masculinity theory are dominance, character portrayal, culture, language, masculinity and violence, the social construction of masculinity, and the performance of masculinity. Masculine characters' actions are motivated by social norms, which encourage aggression and power. This chapter emphasized the relevant literature study by examining several aspects of depictions of the theory and discovering the aspects of the theory that would help to answer the research questions thereof. In this chapter, the gap that is identified is that the review of previous studies by other scholars on the depiction of masculinity in literary texts and the review of the theoretical framework did not include the selected Sesotho literary texts, *Malefane* (2015), *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015) and *Diphetoho* (2015).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes how the research was conducted. Creswell (2014) defines research methodology as the methodical strategy that researchers employ to gather and examine data to address research issues. The methods for gathering data, the kind of sources from which the data were gathered, and the methods for analysing the data are all covered in this chapter.

3.2 Research Design

Following Salkind (2010), research design is the plan that provides the systematic structure that guides the investigator in addressing research problems and answering research questions. The research design is the guide that helps the researcher to answer the research questions or research objectives. Thus, the current study employed a cross-sectional design.

3.2.1 Cross-sectional design

As per Creswell (2014:147), a cross-sectional design is a type of research design where information is gathered from a sample of participants at a single point in time. This clarifies that, in a cross-sectional design, the data are not collected over time but on a single occasion. Cummings (2021:2) states that researchers who use cross-sectional designs document data without changing factors. The statement makes it clear that the researcher recorded and observed current data using a cross-sectional design without changing any of its characteristics. Setia (2016) indicates that the benefit of a cross-sectional design is that data are gathered at a single moment in time and are less costly. In the view of Mann's (2003:57) opinion, the primary advantage of a cross-sectional design is that it requires fewer resources to conduct and does not require any follow-up. Schmidt and Teti (2005:4) state that a cross-sectional design is quick, easy to do, and clarifies the hypothesis of the research. Because cross-sectional design data collection is less resource-intensive, less time-consuming, and requires no follow-up than other types of

inquiry, it is therefore appropriate for the current study. In line with Creswell (2014), the researcher will benefit from a cross-sectional design because it is less costly, time-consuming, and resource intensive. As stated by Creswell (2014), a cross-sectional design aids in the analysis of themes and patterns in particular Sesotho literary texts at a given moment in time. Bryman (2016) states that cross-sectional design enables researchers to compare literary texts from different genres, periods, or cultures, highlighting similarities and differences. For the current study, a cross-sectional design helped the researcher to use not many resources for research and to conduct the research quickly. The researcher benefited from the cross-sectional design by being able to compare different Sesotho literary texts and find the ones that have relevant information for the study. Creswell (2014) mentions the following steps to follow when using a cross-sectional design:

- Define the research questions.
- Select a sample for the research.
- Collect data from the sample at a single point in time.
- Analyse data.
- Interpret the results in the context of the research questions.

The researcher employed a cross-sectional design by first defining the following research questions:

1. What is the culture of masculine characters in selected Sesotho drama texts?
2. What is the language of masculine characters in selected Sesotho drama texts?
3. What is the behaviour of masculine characters in selected Sesotho drama texts?

The researcher selected a sample of different Sesotho drama texts, written by different authors in different years. The researcher collected data from the sample Sesotho drama texts at a single point in time. The information gathered from the selected Sesotho drama texts was analysed by looking at relevant themes and concepts related to the research questions. The selected Sesotho drama texts were *Lejwe la Kgopiso* (2015), *Malefane*

(2015) and *Diphetoho* (2015). The researcher interpreted the results from the selected Sesotho drama texts in the context of the research questions.

3.2.2 Qualitative approach

As noted by Creswell (2014:15), qualitative research is a method that uses non-numerical data, such as texts, to comprehend a circumstance better. Rot (2008:2) defines the qualitative approach as one that presents the findings as descriptions and suggestions rather than using numerical statistics. Rot (2008:2) urges that the advantage of a qualitative approach is that it is easy to assess and reasonably priced. According to Hollstein (2011:405), "The qualitative approach stresses that comprehending the other is always necessary to make sense of action and meaning (verbal utterances are also speech acts)." Creswell and Potch (2018) define the qualitative approach as an investigation method that seeks to understand human experiences, behaviours, connections, and the meanings that individuals or groups assign to things. These descriptions indicate that information is regarded as qualitative if it cannot be analysed numerically and through statistical analysis. Rot (2008) claims that the qualitative technique is more adaptable and simpler to use. It is reasonable that the qualitative technique be used in this study based on these explanations of the qualitative approach. The qualitative approach was the most suitable strategy because the current study was centred on written literary texts. Therefore, the qualitative method was applied to analyse the depiction of masculinity in selected Sesotho drama texts. The researcher was able to understand the significance of masculine characters' actions, behaviour, culture and language use that depict masculinity in selected Sesotho drama texts.

3.2.3 Purposive sampling

Rai and Thapa (2015) define purposeful sampling as a grouping of different non-probability sampling techniques. According to Rai and Thapa (2015), purposeful sampling, also known as judgmental, selective sampling, relies on the researcher's judgment while selecting units. As per Jacqueline and Barrios (2006), purposeful sampling entails the researchers' selecting units at random without replacement and leaving out data that are not required for the investigation. The above statements mean

that purposive sampling is a sampling technique that involves the researcher selecting participants based on judgment to address the research questions. The researcher used purposive sampling in a current study by selecting Sesotho drama literary texts that explicitly address themes of masculinity. The researcher targeted Sesotho literary texts written by different authors and not specific to their years of publication. Through the purposive sampling approach, the researcher selected three Sesotho drama texts that provided relevant information on the depiction of masculinity. The selected Sesotho drama texts, *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015), *Malefane* (2015) and *Diphethoho* (2015) provided the researcher with themes related to the research questions and met the research objectives.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

Data collection, as noted by Creswell (2014:145), is the process of obtaining and evaluating information from multiple sources to obtain an understanding and address research questions. As reported by Chaleunvong (2009:2), the data-collecting technique enables researchers to gather information on the study's objects and the environments in which they are found.

3.3.1 Primary data

Hox and Boeije (2005) describe primary data as first-hand information obtained through observations gathered directly by the researcher with the express intent of solving the current study topic. Kothari (2004:17) asserts that primary data can be collected through texts. Kothari (2004:17) further elaborates that data can be collected by observation, whereby information is obtained by the investigator's observation. Bryman (2016:156) states that the advantage of primary data is that the data are collected in real time, providing the most up-to-date information to the researcher. Seidman (2013:20) states that in primary data, the researcher has control over the data collection process, allowing researchers to make sure that the data is collected consistently and reliably. For the current study, the researcher collected data from Sesotho literary texts, namely *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015), *Malefane* (2015) and *Diphethoho* (2015) as primary data, read them, and extracted relevant information for the research topic and objectives. The selected Sesotho

drama texts as primary data were analysed, and meaningful conclusions were made by the researcher.

3.3.2 Secondary data

As stated by Hox and Boeije (2005), secondary data are information that has already been gathered by another party for uses unrelated to the current research project. Examples include books, journals, theses and dissertations, and the internet. Secondary data are the information that has already been collected from other sources to address the research objectives. For that reason, the current study collected data from secondary sources. Hox and Boeije (2005) state that the advantage of using secondary sources is that they can be used to compare findings from different studies, providing a broader context for analysis. In the current study, secondary data were employed to back up the primary data and enhance the research study. The researcher searched for information in libraries and online websites with relevant information. The researcher assessed and analysed the relevance of secondary data.

3.3.3 Journals

Journals were significant for the current study as they are very informative. In line with Day (1998), journals serve as a platform for distributing new research, theories and critiques, contributing to the advancement of knowledge within a discipline. Through journals, the researcher found information on various literary theories and could choose relevant theories for this study. The ways of using the chosen theory were made crystal clear by journals. Journals contributed to the growth of knowledge in the current study.

3.3.4 Books

To learn more about the key ideas of the study, the researcher read a variety of literary texts. The researcher read a variety of books to gain insight into how masculinity is depicted. Hardcopy books as well as e-books were used. A book, as stated by Feather (2006), is a written work that is used as a recording medium. Feather (2006) adds that a book is usually written to provide thoughts on a certain topic and to convey a story. Books were important for this study because they provided the researcher with relevant

information about how masculinity is portrayed in selected Sesotho drama texts. Therefore, the books, *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015), *Malefane* (2015) and *Diphethoho* (2015) were utilized to help the researcher answer the research questions. Books are important because they offer a variety of information and introduce readers to sources that shed light on masculinity.

3.3.5 Internet

Consistent with Kurose and Rose (2017), the internet is a platform for information access and dissemination, which makes it a crucial research tool. The internet is a research tool that can be utilized to access information for research. The benefit of the internet, according to Kurose and Rose (2017), is that it enables researchers to disseminate their findings more effectively and access a substantial number of scholarly materials. The researcher accessed online books, journals, theses and dissertations via the internet. To assist the researcher in using the appropriate terminology, an online paraphraser was used.

3.2.6 Theses and dissertations

In the words of Kirkpatrick (2020), a thesis is a thorough report that summarizes the author's investigation and conclusions for a master's degree. Kirkpatrick (2020) further states that a doctorate requires significant and original research. Theses and dissertations help researchers to establish the gaps between other scholars and contribute new insights and information to the current study. The researcher read various theses and dissertations with relevant information for the current study.

3.2.7 Computer and software

As noted by Flick (2018), computers and software help researchers to manage and analyse textual material in qualitative research. According to Flick (2018), a computer is an electronic device that performs a range of functions, such as data processing, calculations, and communication, using mechanical or electronic components. A computer is an electronic device that performs several functions, including data processing, communication, and computation, using both mechanical and electronic

components. Dennis and Wixom (2007:12) state that “software is a set of instructions that tells a computer what to do”. In other words, software offers a set of instructions that direct a computer's actions and allow it to carry out tasks.

In this study, the computer and software were used in the following ways:

- The researcher used writing tools such as Grammarly to enhance the clarity and grammar of their work, as well as to record and store information gathered from other online sources.
- The transcribed data from the Sesotho drama texts were typed using Microsoft Office.
- The researcher used Microsoft Word to write, analyse data, and create presentations.
- To arrange and format references, the researcher utilized programs like EndNote and Zotero.

3.4 Content Analysis

This study employed content analysis as the study is textual; the study is based on written texts. Content analysis, as stated by Berg and Lune (2017), is a methodical research technique used to examine the content of written texts and other types of communication. Berg and Lune (2017) further indicate that content analysis is a systematic research method used to analyse the content of various forms of communication, such as written texts. Stemler (2015:1) urges that content analysis can be used for a broad range of data sources, such as textual sources. Content analysis, as noted by Gheyle and Jacobs (2017:3), is a research methodology that interprets textual messages. The above-mentioned statements mean that content analysis is a method used to analyse the content of written texts and other forms of communication thoroughly. Halleson and Visen (2016) urge that an advantage of content analysis is to analyse the meanings, themes, or concepts of written texts. This means that content analysis helped the researcher to make an expressive interpretation of themes and meanings of selected Sesotho drama

texts that address the research questions. Content analysis helped the researcher in the present study to conclude the depiction of masculinity in selected Sesotho drama texts.

Krippendorff (2018:84) mentions the following components of content analysis:

- Context definition: determining the goals, research questions, and analysis factors.
- Data selection: choose which texts to study.
- Dividing the data into manageable pieces like words, phrases, or sentences.
- Data analysis that looks at relevant concepts, themes, and patterns.
- Interpretation: using the analysis to obtain conclusions and judgments.

The researcher defined the following research questions:

1. What is the culture of masculine characters in selected Sesotho drama texts?
2. What is the language of masculine characters in selected Sesotho drama texts?
3. What is the behaviour of masculine characters in selected Sesotho drama texts?

The researcher selected Sesotho literary texts that are relevant to the research questions and broke down the information gathered into manageable sections, such as phrases that are relevant to the research objectives. The researcher analysed and summarized the data from the literary texts to look for relevant themes and concepts for the current study. The researcher made interpretations from the analysis and connected the results to the research questions. Lastly, to make sure the results are correct and generalizable, the researcher evaluated the findings' reliability.

3.5 Thematic Analysis

As stated by Jason and Glenwick (2016), thematic analysis comprises a series of steps intended to identify recurring themes or concepts in a textual data set. This suggests that to identify important concepts in data, thematic analysis systematically investigates the meanings found in literary texts. Finding the underlying meanings of concepts and ideas in data is the aim of thematic analysis. As noted by Joffe (2011:215), researchers who use thematic analysis must study the complete set of data several times over to develop

a conceptual tool that will allow them to categorize, comprehend, and analyse it. Thematic analysis, as stated by Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2011:21), focuses on finding and characterizing both implicit and explicit ideas; that is, themes in data rather than just counting words or phrases. This makes it obvious that thematic analysis finds the underlying themes and specific claims from words and phrases in addition to analysing them.

The following stages comprise thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clarke (2006):

- Become familiar with data.
- Produce the first code.
- Create preliminary themes.
- Examine the themes.
- Identify and characterize themes.
- The creation of the report.

To investigate how masculinity is depicted in selected Sesotho drama texts, the researcher employed thematic analysis. To find meanings and concepts that align with the research topic and research questions, the three selected Sesotho drama texts, *Lejwe la Kgopiso* (2015), *Malefane* (2015) and *Diphetoho* (2015), were read several times. As relevant ideas are found in three selected Sesotho drama texts, they were systematically listed and grouped into potential themes. The researcher analysed each theme and collected any applicable data extracts related to the research questions. These extracts were then evaluated to ensure that they provided logical and significant answers to the research questions. Through this evaluation process, the researcher identified and characterized the themes, examining their significance and connection to the investigation of how masculinity is depicted in selected Sesotho drama texts. Following a thorough examination of the themes, a final analysis was provided, offering detailed perspectives on how masculinity is depicted in selected Sesotho drama texts. A thorough report that logically and simply describes the findings was produced at the end of the in-depth investigation.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research strategy and processes employed in this study. The researcher provided an explanation of the data collection process, the location of data collection, and the application of both thematic and content analysis. The advantages of the selected approaches were examined critically. A qualitative cross-sectional method was selected to analyse the portrayal of masculinity in selected Sesotho drama texts. This method, which avoids altering variables, was designed to observe and document current data systematically. To address the research questions and objectives, the cross-sectional approach was rigorously structured. Thematic analysis was utilized to examine data sources in depth, uncovering key themes linked to the research questions. Furthermore, the steps involved in content analysis were explored, with an emphasis on their practical application in the current study. The content analysis was expected to provide thoughtful perspectives, enabling the researcher to interpret selected Sesotho drama texts meaningfully and draw conclusions on the depiction of masculinity in selected Sesotho drama texts.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The analysis and interpretation of the data gathered are presented in this chapter. The content of three selected Sesotho drama texts, *Malefane* (2015), *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015) and *Diphetoho* (2015), was examined and interpreted using content analysis. The study aimed to analyse and discuss the depiction of masculinity in these texts.

The research questions for the study were:

- What is the language of masculine characters in selected Sesotho drama texts?
- What is the culture of masculine characters in selected Sesotho drama texts?
- What is the behaviour of masculine characters in selected Sesotho drama texts?

The study was conducted using literary masculinity theory to respond to research questions and objectives. The following aspects of literary masculinity theory were utilized:

- The performance of masculinity in all interactions,
- practices, and behaviours,
- how cultural norms define, perform, and perpetuate masculinity, and
- how language upholds masculine standards, like power over women.

The following themes were identified in each text. In the literary text *Malefane* (2015), themes identified were bravery, power dynamics, the language that depicts masculinity, and assassination. In the literary text *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015), themes identified for scrutiny were emotional stoicism, courage, infidelity, aggression, abuse of power, homicide, and family provider. In the literary text *Diphetoho* (2015), themes identified were authority, violence, family headship and toughness.

The analysis followed the following pattern: firstly, the summaries of the selected literary texts, *Malefane* (2015), *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015) and *Diphetoho* (2015), are provided to give an overview of what the selected texts are about. Secondly, the identified themes for each selected Sesotho drama text are discussed and analysed. The literary masculinity theory is employed with the relevant aspects for the identified themes in the selected texts. Lastly, the researcher's conclusion is provided on the analysis of the themes that depict masculinity in the selected Sesotho drama texts.

4.2 *Malefane*

The following category will illustrate how masculine characters depict masculinity in *Malefane* (2015). The following themes were established and will be analysed in this category: bravery, power dynamics, the language that depicts masculinity, and assassination.

4.2.1 Summary of *Malefane*

Malefane is a literary drama text written by Maake Nhlanhla in the year 2015. This literary text, *Malefane*, is about a young man named Malefane who is of marriageable age and is a teacher in one of the local schools in his village. Malefane arrives at his home, and his father, Letshela, is waiting for him. Letshela tells Malefane that there is a certain place that they need to go to finalize what he has just told Malefane. Letshela explains to Malefane that the issue that they are going to discuss is very crucial and should be finalized at the place where they are going. According to Malefane's father, Letshela, they should leave immediately for Nkubu's house to finalize this matter, regardless of whether Malefane is hungry or has some commitments.

Mmamalefane, who is Letshela's wife, does not know anything about the matter that Letshela, her son Malefane, and Nkubu are going to discuss at Nkubu's place. Mmamalefane has no idea about the matter. Letshela is not willing to disclose to Mmamalefane what is going to happen at Nkubu's place. While Mmamalefane is surprised by this secret matter, Mmamalefane advises her son Malefane to open his ears and eyes and be cautious, because Nkubu is known for fighting people for political positions in the village for no valid reasons. Mmamalefane states that Nkubu is not

educated, does not even know a school classroom. Mmalefane wonders what it is that Nkubu wants from her son, Malefane, because Nkubu undermines and looks down on educated people.

On the other hand, Mapule, who is Malefane's girlfriend, is very worried that her father does not want her to marry Malefane, while she and Malefane have been dating for a long time. Mateboho, who is Mapule's mother, tries to explain and comfort Mapule by saying that it does not mean that her father is against her and Malefane getting married. Her father is trying to protect her and is worried that their marriage is happening so soon. But Malefane's father, Letshela, has already told his son Malefane that they should postpone the lobola negotiations, as the news that will be shared by Nkubu needs Malefane's complete focus.

Furthermore, Malefane visits Mapule's workplace to see her. Malefane intends to share the news with his girlfriend, Mapule, regarding what was happening at Nkubu's place. When Malefane arrives at Mapule's workplace, he cannot share the news with her but rather suggests that they talk later when they come back from work.

Coincidentally, when Mapule arrives home, her father, Makgabane, receives a letter from Malefane's father, Letshela, regarding the postponement of the finalization of lobola negotiations for Mapule and Malefane. Mapule's father, Makgabane, is angered by the letter from Malefane's father, Letshela, that indicates that lobola negotiations would no longer take place, as Makgabane and his wife, Mmateboho, have already prepared for the lobola negotiations of their daughter Mapule and future son-in-law Malefane. When Malefane goes to see Mapule at her workplace, they plan to meet in the evening to discuss what has happened at Nkubu's place. According to Malefane, his father, Letshela, wrote the letter without consulting Malefane first. Malefane meets with his girlfriend, Mapule, to tell her that it is true their lobola negotiations have been postponed.

Malefane and his father, Letshela, go back to Nkubu because during their first meeting, Nkubu, Malefane, and Letshela had planned to meet again. Nkubu explains to Malefane what is expected of him and gives a clear picture of what Malefane's life would be like if he agrees to be part of Nkubu's political party.

Malefane, after meeting with his friend Thabiso to get information about Thabiso's father, who is a political leader, agrees to join the political party. Thabiso is the biological father of Nkubu. Malefane joins politics, and the lobola negotiations are postponed as Malefane dedicates himself fully to politics.

As time passes, Malefane finds himself unimpressed with the members of the political party where he is serving as one of the leaders. Malefane is given a letter of suspension from the political organization. There is a plan by Nkubu and other political members to kill Malefane, but the plan does not work out. Nkubu's goal is to use Malefane to win political elections, and then, when he wins elections, he would get rid of Malefane because he would have achieved what he wanted. Malefane ends up losing his mind, and that does not sit well with his father, Letshele, but it is too late; not much could be done about Malefane's mental condition.

On the day of the political party's meeting, where Malefane is dismissed, Malefane is not invited to be part of the meeting, and Malefane decides to go to that meeting anyway. On the way to the meeting, Malefane meets with Mapule, who advises Malefane not to attend the meeting because of the condition Malefane is in. Mapule rushes to talk about this matter with her mother, and Malefane departs secretly for the meeting. When Mapule notices that Malefane has secretly gone to the meeting, even after she has advised him not to go, Mapule is very worried about Malefane. At the same time, Mapule hears a gunshot and looks through a window. She sees someone lying on the ground. That person is Malefane. That is the end of Malefane.

The themes identified from the text *Malefane* (2015) that were relevant to the study questions were identified, organized into manageable data, and examined. Literary masculinity theory was used to analyse the selected Sesotho drama text. The selected Sesotho drama text's summary was provided to have an overview of what the selected text is about. The themes that emerged from the data collection were analysed. The analysis would explore the central themes that shape the narrative of the depiction of masculinity in the selected Sesotho drama text *Malefane*, which are bravery, language that depicts masculinity, power dynamics, and aggression.

4.2.2 Bravery

Bravery is an important theme, particularly through the depiction of masculine characters who represent this trait. The way masculine characters display bravery gives a clear understanding of bravery and how bravery is depicted, as expressed in the literary text *Malefane*.

The study understood bravery as the state of having the strength and courage to face danger, fear, or difficulty without fear. Some scholars, amongst them Kinsella, Ritchie, and Iqou (2017), Levy (2022), and Voigt and Dew (2024), define bravery. As per Mitchelle and Levy (2022:656), “A brave person is never intimidated, is willing to die for a cause, or is not afraid of any enemy.” According to Voigt and Dew (2024), bravery is frequently used in combination with the term ‘courage’ and can be considered an essential component of heroism. Kinsella and Iqou (2017:2) state that the character traits that allow people to act in the face of fear or misfortune are an element of bravery. Kinsella et al. (2017) and Mitchel and Levy (2022) view a brave person as fearless, and one who can face dangerous situations without fear. Voigt and Dew (2024), in addition to Kinsella et al. (2017) and Levy (2002), state that bravery is an important component of heroism. The definitions of Kinsella et al. (2017), Voigt and Dew (2024), and Mitchel and Levy (2022) clarify that bravery depicts attributes of courage, risk-taking, fearlessness, and not being afraid of their enemies. This study employed the definitions of Kinsella et al. (2017) and Mitchel and Levy (2022) to investigate masculine characters who are depicted as fearless and can face dangerous situations without fear, while Voigt and Dew (2024) describe bravery as associated with heroism.

Some characters are depicted as brave in the literary text *Malefane* (2015). Those characters are Mmamalefane and Malefane. Mmamalefane is depicted as a brave character as Mmamalefane confronts her husband, Letshela, who wants his son Malefane to leave his job and join politics. Mmamalefane stands up for her son Malefane, disputing the idea of him going into politics.

Bravery is evident in Mmamalefane’s words when confronting her husband, Letshela, about the issue that needs to be discussed at Nkubu’s place regarding her son, Malefane. In her utterances, when she talks to her husband, Letshela, she says:

Mmamalefane: *Ebile di ilo buelwa ha Nkubu? Ke a bona ke a di tshaba. Nkubu ekare a se na taba le ntho tsa sekolo yaba o bitsa ngwanaka hore a tle ha hae ho ya buuwa ditaba teng? Kannete dikgolo di sa tla. Ntho eo boNkubu ba tadimaneng le yona ke tsona polotiki tsa mona motseng tsa ho dulela ho tsekisana ditulo le boMabalane. Hosane mona ho tla be ho thwe Malefane o kenakena taba tsa bobota tsa motse ona* (Maake, 2015:3).

[Mmamalefane: Are they going to be discussed at Nkubu's place? I have a bad feeling about this, and I am afraid of it. Nkubu has no educational background but dares to call my son to go to his house to discuss issues there. Indeed, a lot is about to happen. Nkubu is busy fighting for political positions in the village with the Malebanes. In the future, it will be said that Malefane is interfering in the village's board affairs.]

From the above citation, Mmamalefane is depicted as a brave character because she confronts her husband, Letshela, about the issue of encouraging Malefane to join politics, which needs to be discussed with Nkubu at his place. Mmamalefane depicts masculine characteristics as she has no fear of how her confrontation could cause conflict with her husband. She confronts Letshela and makes it clear that she does not approve of what Letshela is planning with Nkubu about Malefane. Mmamalefane, in her confrontation with her husband, Letshela, says:

Mmamalefane: *Mmangwana o tshwara thipa ka bohaleng. Ha ke sa eletse ngwana enwa waka wa ho fejana ke mang ya tla ntlhokomella yena. Ha ke batle ho ithwala modi hloohong ke ntse ke re hoja ka etsa tjena* (Maake, 2015:7).

[Mmamalefane: Mother holds a knife on its sharpest edge. If I do not advise my lastborn child, who else will take care of him? I do not want to regret and blame myself for not doing something.]

From the above quote, when Mmamalefane talks to her husband, Letshela, she says that she would fight in the best interests of her son, Malefane. Mmamalefane is against the idea of her son, Malefane, joining politics, as Letshela encourages Malefane to agree to

take a political position. Mmamalefane is brave to fight for her son Malefane; she does not care about what Nkubu could do if Malefane does not take up the political position, but is only concerned with his son, Malefane's future. This Sesotho proverb, *o tshwara thipa ka bohaleng* (Makala, 2020), is explained by scholars, among them Moleleki (1988), Mohatle (2015), and signifies a mother's willingness to face danger and hardship for her child. This proverb is articulated by Mmamalefane to her husband, Letshela. The proverb is interpreted as a mother of the child holding a knife on its sharpest edge. It reveals Mmamalefane as a brave mother who is not afraid of anything but protective of her son, Malefane. The proverb, *Mmangwana o tshwara thipa ka bohaleng*, is explained by Moleleki (1998) and Mohatle (2015). Moleleki (1998) interprets this proverb as one that means a mother is a protective, self-sacrificing, and risk-taking person. Mohatle (2015) concurs with Moleleki (1998) that the proverb highlights the strength, perseverance, and selflessness of mothers who go through danger to defend their families. From descriptions of Moleleki (1998) and Mohatle (2015), the proverb *Mmangwana o tshwara thipa ka bohaleng* refers to a mother's willingness to face danger and hardship for her child. It suggests that mothers are expected to endure pain, risk, demonstrate resilience, and selflessness for their families in the Basotho society. The proverb is not just about holding a knife as a weapon but illustrates Mmamalefane's willingness to endure harm to herself for the sake of her son Malefane. Another proverb in the Basotho society that alludes to bravery by women is *Mosadi ha na Morena*. According to Sekese (1975:39), the proverb is translated as a woman has no king. According to Machobane (1996:39), this proverb means that a woman will not hold back from reprimanding or fighting her husband, regardless of his position. Mmamalefane does not hesitate to oppose her husband, Letshela, about wanting her son to join the politics of Nkubu, who is depicted as a dangerous, uneducated man.

As noted by Possa and Makgopa (2010), proverbs are short sayings that express a general truth or advice about different things in life and contain essential facts about life and human nature. Seema (2012:130) concurs with Possa and Makgopa (2010) that proverbs serve as the foundation of wisdom, from which the Basotho can learn or reinforce important realities like love, peace, and social harmony. Mieder (1993:5) adds to Possa and Makgopa (2010) and Seema's (2012) opinion that proverbs are typically

brief statements from the folk that convey values, wisdom, truth and traditional viewpoints. Bravery in women among the Basotho is also seen in music, as exemplified by Mokala, Matee and Khanyetsi (2023:4) from the song produced by Puseletso Seema: *Ke batla basadi ba thata*, translated as “I want strong women”. This song is about women who are brave enough to face difficult situations and endure pain. This trait of bravery was illustrated in the song *Ke batla basadi ba thata*. Even though Puseletso Seema is a woman, her song *Ke batla basadi ba thata* depicts masculinity. The trait of bravery that is illustrated in the song, “I want strong and brave women”, even though Puseletso Seema is a female song producer, her song depicts her as fitting well into masculinity, because she stands up against women's oppression and depicts women as strong in her songs. Mmamalefane is a female character who depicts masculinity by putting herself in a situation where Mmamalefane disagrees with her husband, Letshela, for encouraging her son Malefane to join politics. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) state that bravery is a component of traditional masculinity, with masculine individuals expected to demonstrate bravery and resilience during difficult situations. Mmamalefane exhibits masculinity through bravery by demonstrating confidence in her judgment about Malefane joining politics as a bad decision to take. This study encourages the bravery that is seen in Mmamalefane, as bravery is presented in a positive light, where Mmamalefane is brave enough to stand up for what is right for her son, Malefane. Mmamalefane opposes her husband, Letshela, who encourages Malefane to join politics.

Apart from Mmamalefane, bravery is also seen in the character Malefane. Malefane's action of going to challenge Nkubu's decision to remove him from his political leadership job proves his bravery. Going to Nkubu, Malefane demonstrates the masculine trait of being brave and fearless, even though Nkubu is known as being dangerous.

Malefane's bravery was demonstrated in his words when he confronted Nkubu and said to Nkubu;

Malefane: *O bona ntate a o tshaba o nahana hore le nna ke a o tshaba? Re tla kopana hosane ntjeng tse pedi, mme re tla bona hore ho nna le wena ke mang ntja e kgolo. Ebile ke tla o isa ho mohatsa ka, a o pshemole meno ana kaofela, ke a bona ke ona a etsang hore o mpohole tjena. Feela ha e le hosane*

teng, o tla ntseba. Ke batla ho o leleka mokgeng ona wa ka, ho sale ntja e le nngwe feela, “Na o a tseba mantswe a reng ha ho poho pedi sakeng, poho ke nna feela?” (Maake, 2015:78).

[Malefane: You realize that my father is afraid of you, and you think I fear you, too? We will meet tomorrow like two dogs, and we will see between you and me who is the bigger dog. Furthermore, I will take you to my wife to forcefully extract all those teeth out; I can see that they are the reason you look down upon me like this. But as for tomorrow, you will know me. I want to chase you out of this political party of mine so that only one dog remains. Do you know the words that say, “There cannot be two bulls in the same kraal, I am the only bull?”]

The above excerpt presents Malefane as brave by confronting Nkubu and making it clear that he is not afraid of Nkubu. Although Malefane had a feeling that his father was afraid of Nkubu, Malefane is not afraid of what Nkubu could do to him, even though Nkubu is depicted as a dangerous man in the village. These words by Malefane to Nkubu, “*Na o a tseba mantswe a reng ha ho poho pedi sakeng, poho ke nna feela?*” display that Malefane is not afraid of Nkubu, regardless of his capability of being dangerous. In the Basotho context, when a man is attributed to the trait of being *poho*, translated as ‘bull’, as mentioned by Malefane to Nkubu. According to Kabaji (2009:37), such a man is seen as rough, strong, and masculine. Pitikoe (2017) adds to Kabaji (2009) that the masculine qualities of a real man are bravery, resilience, aggression, and self-protection. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) concur with Kabaji (2009) and Pitikoe (2017) that bravery is linked to hegemonic masculinity, especially when it comes to control, risk-taking and power. Reeser (2023) adds to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) and Pitikoe (2017) that bravery is associated with stereotypically masculine concepts like risk-taking, fearlessness, and the performance of masculinity. Malefane does not care about Nkubu being the founder of the political party, but rather because he has worked so hard for the political party, as seen from the words of Malefane when communicating with his father, Letshela. The words, *Ke o sebeleditse mokga ona, mme o phahame tjena ka baka la mofufutso wa phatla ya ka* (Maake 2015:72), prove that Malefane has worked hard for

the political party. Malefane's words are translated as, "I worked so hard for this political party; this political party is high because of my sweat." Malefane feels that he is the one who should be in charge, and Nkubu should be submissive to him. Malefane is very brave and refuses to be frightened by Nkubu. The depiction of characters representing bravery highlights societal norms of masculinity, where bravery is linked with masculinity. In the context of the selected Sesotho drama text, *Malefane*, bravery is seen in Malefane as he overcomes his fears of Nkubu, who is depicted as a dangerous man. Malefane overcomes fears and vulnerability by confronting and challenging Nkubu's decision to remove him from the political party as a leader. Malefane depicts the masculine trait of bravery as he is able to stand up for himself clearly and firmly against Nkubu's decision to remove him as a leader in a political party, regardless of how dangerous Nkubu could be to him. Therefore, the act of Malefane confronting Nkubu, removing him as a leader of the political party, depicts masculinity, as Malefane embodies masculine traits such as a strong sense of self-belief in his abilities to work for the political party, the willingness to face danger and risk, and the ability to make the difficult decision of being removed from the political organization by Nkubu. The depiction of masculinity through bravery reveals the characters who assert themselves, expressing their thoughts and feelings without fear. The depiction of masculinity in this instance promotes a positive form of masculinity, emphasizing assertiveness and confidence.

4.2.3 Power dynamics

In *Malefane* (2015), power dynamics are another theme that is utilized to depict masculinity. The theme is particularly relevant in understanding how power is used to oppress or manipulate individuals and groups of people.

Therefore, the question is: What are power dynamics? The study understood power dynamics as the relationships and exchanges between individuals or groups of people in which power is applied. Power dynamics involve one who possesses authority, influence, or control over others and how that power is exercised. Some scholars, such as Munduate (2003), Crewe (2010), Farr (2018), and Kovach (2020), describe power dynamics as follows. Munduate (2003:6) states that power dynamics involve people who have the power to describe power dynamics, influence other people, and expect people who

believe they have the power to accept their influence. Kovach (2020) states that power dynamics is the potential influence that one has over something the person or group desires. Crewe (2010:30) concurs with Kovach (2020) that people who possess power could change or manipulate the behaviour of others. Farr (2018:6) adds to Kovach (2020) and Crewe (2010) views by stating that power dynamics are associated with power's misleading traits, where a more powerful person's interests may be internalized and demanded as one's own. The descriptions of Crewe (2010), Farr (2018), and Kovach (2020) clarify that power dynamics are associated with individuals who possess power, utilize their power to manipulate, influence, and control a person or group of people. This study employed the descriptions of Crewe (2010), Farr (2018), and Kovach (2020) to define power dynamics clearly as the way people who have authority manipulate other people's behaviour and control them. The study analysed the depiction of masculinity by looking at how power dynamics are exemplified in the literary text *Malefane*. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005:832) state that the pattern of behaviour permits masculine people to dominate other individuals or groups of people.

The power dynamics are revealed in the selected literary text, *Malefane* (2015), by Nkubu and Malefane. Nkubu is seen as a character possessing power dynamics because he makes demands and influences other people's behaviours. For example, in Nkubu's utterances to Malefane, Nkubu says:

Nkubu: *ke re haeba mora o ikemiseditse ho kena mokgeng ka setotswana, a ka nna a dihela mosebetsing a sebetse kgwedi tseno tse tharo tsa tsebisyo ya ho dihela mosebetsing. Taba ya pele o tla fumana mmotokara o motjha wa mmokga, empa oo o ka o sebedisang jwalo ka wa hao* (Maake, 2015:41).

[Nkubu: Son, if you are willing to join this political party, you can resign and serve a three-month notice. What is important is that you will get a vehicle from the political party that you can utilize as your own.]

The above extract shows that the character named Nkubu uses his political powers to manipulate Malefane into joining his political party. Nkubu utilizes power by offering material benefits, which is a vehicle for personal use in return for Malefane to be in the political party. Nkubu depicts masculinity through political power to influence Malefane to

resign from his current job. Connell (1995) states that power dynamics are exercised and maintained through social relationships, organizations, and cultural norms. Nkubu manifests the traditional masculine trait of power dynamics by manipulating Malefane's decision to leave his job as a teacher and join politics.

Nkubu continues to use the power he possesses to dominate Malefane. Power dynamics are illustrated when he talks to Malefane:

Nkubu: *Ere pele o bula molomo ke hle ke o hlalose hore le mora wa ka, enwa motswalle wa hao, Thabiso, o se a kene mokgeng. Empa setulo se phahameng ka ho fetisisa se behetswe wena, hoba diputswa tsa mokga di hlile di ntswe leng hore ke wena motjha eo e leng mohlala o motle motseng ona wa heso* (Maahe, 2015:39).

[Nkubu: Let me stop you before you open your mouth, to explain to you that even my son Thabiso, who is your friend, has also joined the political party. But the highest leadership position is for you because even elderly members of this political party are all in agreement that you are a good example in this village.]

The above demonstrates how Nkubu used his powers to change Malefane's decision by leaving his job to join politics. These words from Nkubu to Malefane, "*Ere pele o bula molomo*", are equivalent to "let me stop you before you open your mouth". Nkubu depicts masculinity through domination and power dynamics. Nkubu does not allow Malefane to speak but asserts control over him by dictating the flow of information. Nkubu's actions of manipulating Malefane to join politics depict him as a character who possesses a higher level of power and authority over Malefane. Nkubu uses his son, who is Malefane's friend Thabiso, to create a sense of pressure for Malefane to join his political party. Nkubu even makes Malefane believe that the elderly political members share the same view of wanting him to enter politics. Nkubu demonstrates power dynamics with his interest in using Malefane to win the political elections. Consistent with Connell (1995), power dynamics are a form of hegemonic masculinity that promotes power and dominance over subordinates. Nkubu depicts the masculine trait of abuse of power by controlling and dominating Malefane to decide to join politics.

Nkubu is also seen as using his political power to manipulate Malefane in his conversation with Malefane when he says:

Nkubu: *Monna Malefane e re ke o bolelle. Ha monna a tshwanetse ho kgetha pakeng tsa matla a dipolotiki le mosadi, o tshwanetse ho kgetha matla a dipolotiki. Rona le ha re sa di bale buka tsena tsa lona, re a utlwa hore dinatla tse kgolo mehleng ya kgale di ile tsa wa ka baka la hona ho kgetha basadi bakeng sa ho kgetha matla a dipolotiki* (Maake, 2015: 43).

[Nkubu: Man, Malefane, let me tell you. When a man is supposed to choose between a wife and power, he is supposed to choose political power. As for us, even if we are not educated like you, we hear that old heroes in the past were defeated because they chose women over political power.]

The above reference points out that Nkubu is shown as being in a position of authority and preparing to share what he believes is important information with Malefane. The information Nkubu wants to share with Malefane is that he wants Malefane to leave his job as a teacher and join his political party. As noted by Ramathula (2023:30), power is the ability to influence others to perform certain acts. Nkubu utilizes his power to persuade Malefane to join politics and leave his teaching job. The words, “*re a utlwa hore dinatla tse kgolo mehleng ya kgale di ile tsa wa ka baka la hona ho kgetha basadi bakeng sa ho kgetha matla a dipolotiki*”, are equivalent to when we hear that old heroes were defeated in the past because they chose women over political power. Nkubu believes that personal relationships are not important, but rather political dominance and power. Nkubu views manhood through a singular perspective, which is political power. Nkubu shows no regard for formal education but suggests that political power without education means being powerful and influential in society. In the Basotho culture, as Maundeni (2010) clarifies, men often dominate in significant political positions of power and decision-making. Makanya (1999:56) adds to Maundeni (2010) that Basotho politics are generally viewed as a field for men in which women are ineffective. Molapo (2005) concurs with Maundeni (2010) and Makanya (1999) that, in Basotho culture, women are expected to be politically apathetic and passive. The descriptions of Makanya (1999), Maundeni (2010), and Molapo (2005) denote that power dynamics in the politics of Basotho are where political

positions are dominated by men, and the decision-making processes are the responsibility of men. In line with descriptions of Makanya (1999), Maudeni (2010), and Molapo (2005), the women in Basotho politics are expected to be passive and not question the leadership of the dominant leaders in politics. Therefore, in some of the Basotho societies, women are not allowed in politics. Mmamalefane is not allowed to take part in a discussion about politics by her husband, Letshela, and her son Malefane. Connell (2005) asserts that power dynamics are associated with hegemonic masculinity, which is regarded as a high form of manhood that allows men's dominance. Nkubu depicts hegemonic masculinity through the power dynamics. Nkubu expresses the masculine norms that depict manhood associated with power and dominance.

Malefane also illustrates power dynamics when he says:

Malefane: *Tjhe, ha ke dule fatshe. Ha nka bua le wena hona jwale o tla ntlhola, hobane ke sa le moshemane. Jwale ke batla ho tsamaya pele ke yo hapa matla a dipolotiki. Ha ke se ke qetile, ke hona ke tla bua le wena, re le banna ka bobedi* (Maake, 2015: 74).

[Malefane: No, I will not sit down. If I speak with you right now, you will defeat me, because I am still the uncircumcised male, the one who is going to be circumcised. So now I want to go and first get my political power. Once I am done, then I will speak with you when we are both men.]

The quote depicts Malefane as refusing to be in a submissive position, refusing to back down. Malefane displays his ambitious goal to accumulate significant influence and political power. Malefane's words, "*Ha ke se ke qetile, ke hona ke tla bua le wena, re le banna ka bobedi*", depict Malefane's desire for future power dynamics, and he will be regarded as a real man, according to him. The aspect of literary masculinity theory, power dynamics, is defined by Kimmel (2005) as constructed through social control, where men feel pressured to conform to certain masculine norms and expectations. Power dynamics in *Malefane* are depicted in events where Nkubu and Malefane conform to societal expectations of exercising power over people who do not possess power. The character who possesses power, Nkubu, uses his powers to manipulate and control Malefane's decisions and behaviour to serve his political interests. Malefane feels pressured to

conform to the masculine expectation of believing that being a real man means one should hold a political position.

4.2.4 The language that depicts masculinity

The language that depicts masculinity is a theme that is significant in understanding how it demonstrates and reflects societal expectations of masculine characters and masculinity.

Humans employ language, which is a system of communication made up of meaning-conveying words, symbols, and gestures. Language that conveys meaning via the use of letters or characters is known as written language. Nonverbal cues like gestures can be used to express ideas, intentions and feelings. Sign language, body language, facial expressions, and hand gestures are a few types of gestures. People use language to express their thoughts, feelings and ideas to other people. Some scholars have explained language, amongst them Halliday (2003), Nunan (2007), Larsen-Freeman (2011), Fromkin and Rodman (2014), and Khotso (2017). Nunan (2007) states that language is a tool for communication, and its purpose is to convey meaning and promote interpersonal contact. Larsen-Freeman (2011) concurs with Nunan (2007) that language is a tool for communication and a way of representing one's thoughts and meaning-making entity. Halliday (2003:2) adds to Nunan (2007) and Larsen-Freeman (2011) that language can create and convey meaning through the combination of its language parts. Khotso (2017:4) indicates that language can be classified as either feminine or masculine. This study used a description of Khotso (2017) by looking into the masculine language exhibited in the literary text *Malefane*, and how masculine characters utilize language that depicts masculinity.

In *Malefane*, the masculine character Letshela utilizes the language that depicts masculinity. Letshela's use of language that depicts masculinity becomes evident when he talks to his wife, Mmamalefane:

Letshela: *Mosadi, ke bona ho ka ba molemo hore o ke o re suthela hanyane feela, re tla o bitsa ha re se re qetile* (Maake, 2015: 27).

[Letshela: Woman, I think it is important for you to excuse us while we are talking. We will call you when we have finished talking.]

The above extract represents Letshela as a masculine character who uses language that depicts masculinity when excluding his wife from their discussion with Malefane and making the decisions alone, as indicated in the above-mentioned words from Letshela, which reads as a demand rather than a plea or suggestion: “*Mosadi ke bona ho ka ba molemo hore o ke o re suthele hanyane feela.*” These words translate as, “Woman, I think it is important for you to excuse us while we are talking.” These words illustrate Letshela’s dominance over the circumstance and direct his wife’s behaviour. In Basotho culture, some proverbs depict men as secretive and not talking in the presence of their wives, for example, as noted by Machobane (1996:37), *Monna o pata sehlotsa*, which translates as “a man conceals his limp”. According to Khotso and Mashige (2023:111), the interpretation of this proverb, *Monna o pata sehlotsa*, means that a man is never expected to reveal secrets. Letshela decides to keep his conversation with Malefane about politics a secret from his wife because he silences Mmamalefane. Mmamalefane says: “*Ke a thola he, ke tla utlwa hore hore ngwanaka o tla fumana Karabo na*”, [I will keep quiet, I will hear if you give my son an answer]. These words mean that Mmamalefane is silenced by Letshela, who does not want to hear Mmamalefane’s views regarding Malefane joining politics. As per Rapeane (2003:110), in the Basotho society in the Sesotho language, silence is imposed on women. Rapeane (2003) provides an example, namely that, when a Sotho man says *thola*, which is equivalent to “shut up”, it means a man is the one who has the power to speak. This description by Rapeane (2003) clarifies that Basotho women are not supposed to say anything when they are not given a chance to talk. There are certain practices in Basotho culture where women are excused during the discussions. Among them is *khotla*. As stated by Phohlo (2011:98), *khotla* is described as a traditional Basotho place where men gathered with the chief, among others, to deal with public affairs, lawsuits, and criminal cases. Makoa (1997) indicates that men in *khotla* are conditioned to believe that they are superior to women and that they are different from them. Phohlo (2011:100) reveals that women’s presence in *khotla* is viewed as a form of relegation that causes a profound sense of shame and identity loss. Basotho women are also released during the *lobola* process. According to Letseka and Koenane (2017), *lobola* is a means

of strengthening the bonds between two families. Letshela wrote a letter that suggests the postponement of the *lobola* negotiations for his son, Malefane, and Mapule. He wrote the letter without the consent of his wife, Mmamalefane, and his son, Malefane. In the political organization of Nkubu, in the meetings that are held, men are the only ones who hold significant and dominant roles in such meetings, not women. In the context of the Basotho, the mother of a daughter who gets married is excluded during her daughter's *lobola* negotiations. Some of the Basotho men do not speak about some of the issues with their wives because they avoid getting into a fight with their wives. Levant (2001) signifies that men prefer discussing certain topics with other men, not their wives, to avoid conflict. Connell (2016) clarifies that the language that depicts masculinity, which excludes women from discussions, reflects traditional masculinity norms, which encourage dominance and control. Letshela uses language that depicts masculinity through traditional masculinity and excludes his wife from discussions. The language from Letshela that depicts masculinity is used as a way of asserting dominance and control over Mmamalefane by denying her a chance to speak. The language that depicts masculinity in this context is discouraged by this study, because it is a form of traditional masculinity that suppresses women from expressing their feelings.

Letshela uses the language that depicts masculinity to underpin societal expectations around masculinity and how masculine characters are supposed to be strong and recover from physical pain when he says to Mmamalefane:

Letshela: *O tla fola, ke ngwana monna* (Maake, 2015:29).

[Letshela: He will heal; he is a male child.]

The above citation presents Letshela using language to depict masculinity, which displays that male characters are supposed to be strong and endure physical pain. The Basotho proverb noted by Sekese (1975:135), "*Monna ke nku h'a k'a lla*", is interpreted by Machobane (1996:36) as "a man depicted as strong and capable of enduring pain and suffering". In line with McIntosh (2013), endurance is the capacity to continue performing a challenging, disagreeable, or painful task for an extended period. McIntosh (2013) defines endurance as the ability to sustain difficult, unpleasant, or painful conditions for a long time. The Sesotho proverb proves that the male character Malefane, as his father

Letshela mentions, “*O tla fola ke ngwana monna*”, is equivalent to “he will heal, he is a male child”. Letshela depicts Malefane as having the ability to endure pain and suffering. Kimmel (2004) denotes that traditional masculinity emphasizes physical toughness, aggression, and emotional stoicism. This description highlights that masculinity is associated with physical power, the ability to withstand physical pain, and emotional toughness. Consistent with Nursanti (2022:250), language is the component of literary masculinity theory that may be utilized to demonstrate dominance, which is connected to hierarchy and power. The language used depicts masculinity through stereotypical traits such as enduring physical pain, emotional toughness and aggression. Therefore, the language that depicts masculinity reveals that men should withstand physical pain and suppress their emotions.

4.2.5 Assassination

Assassination is another theme in the selected literary text, *Malefane* (2015), which explores the complicated and challenging implications of assassination on individuals, societies and politics.

This study understood assassination as the act of killing someone, mostly a prominent person such as a politician, public figure, or a leader, for political or financial reasons. Assassination is intentional and premeditated by individuals, groups, or organizations and has significant consequences that affect individuals and the community. Scholars, among them Fisher (2006), Iqbal and Zorn (2008) and Banka (2017), define assassination as follows. In line with Fisher (2006), assassination is the deliberate murder of a particular public figure, political leader, or notable individual, typically done in support of political ideologies. Iqbal and Zorn (2008) claim that assassination is the intentional killing of a prominent person for political or strategic reasons. Banka (2017) concurs with Fisher (2006) and Iqbal and Zorn (2008) that assassination is considered normal behaviour, a standard practice of states to achieve political ends. Descriptions of assassination by Fisher (2006), Iqbal and Zorn (2008) and Banka (2017) inform this study as they emphasize that assassination is associated with the intentional killings of individuals who are public figures or leaders for political reasons or other strategic reasons. This study used the descriptions of Fisher (2006), Iqbal and Zorn (2008), and Banka (2017) to

analyse the depiction of masculine characters assassinating individuals to achieve political gain as expressed in the literary text *Malefane* (2015).

The character who depicts masculinity through assassination is Nkubu, a political leader. Nkubu's actions of committing an assassination are evident from the words that he says the following to Malebela:

Nkubu: *Maya moshemane enwa a fihla, kapa a etswa Shongweni, ho tla be ho sa bonahale ka ntle. Jwale ke batla hore wena le Malebela le mo sale morao. Moo le tla mmona teng, le hlokomele hore le se bonwe, le mo ise moo Mojela re mo isitseng teng. Ka potlako* (Maake, 2015:79).

[Nkubu: When this uncircumcised male arrives from Shongweni, it will be dark outside. Now I want you and Malebela to follow him. Where you see him, be careful not to be seen, and take him to where we took Mojela. Do it fast.]

The above quotation demonstrates that Nkubu has been planning to assassinate Malefane, just the same way he has assassinated Mojela. Nkubu involves other characters, such as Malebela, to help him assassinate Malefane. The main reason for Nkubu to assassinate Malefane is that Nkubu has achieved his political power through Malefane, so Nkubu is now done using Malefane for his political gain. The act of assassination planned by Nkubu and Malebela was not their first act, but they are used to those assassinations, as they have already assassinated Mojela.

Nkubu plans how Malefane would be assassinated with the following words to Mojela:

Nkubu: *mamela mona. Ke batla hore o nke ntho e teng ka seifing ka mono. Ha bo esa ba hosane moshemane enwa o tshwanetse ho ba moo Mojela a leng teng, ba nwe letsina lena le ba tahang mmoho. Ke mang ya tla kgathalla hore lehlanya le ile kae? Hona le moo ke tatetseng teng. Ke batla le phethe mosebetsi ona ka makgethe le bokgabane bo tsotelang* (Maake, 2015:79).

[Nkubu: Listen here. I want you to take something from the safe over there. By dawn tomorrow, this uncircumcised male should be where Mojela is. Drinking the dregs of sorghum malt and getting drunk together. Who will care about

where the crazy man went? I am rushing somewhere. I want you to complete this task with diligence and excellence.]

The above citation about Nkubu's command, "*Ke batla le phethe mosebetsi ona ka makgethe le bokgabane bo tsotehang*," translates as "I want you to complete this task with diligence and excellence." The ruthless and precise execution of his plan is to assassinate Malefane, just like they have assassinated Mojela. Nkubu plans to assassinate Malefane for political reasons, without considering how the assassination would affect Malefane's loved ones. Makoa (1996) states that in Lesotho, politically motivated assassinations are driven by the militarization of politics that creates a culture of violence where individuals and groups of people are assassinated to settle their political scores. This study consulted the study of Makoa (1996), because the act of assassination by Nkubu in the selected literary text, *Malefane*, is for political gain for Nkubu. Connell (2005) adds to Makoa (1996) that assassination, as a component of masculinity theory, is linked to extreme manifestations of male characteristics like aggression, dominance, control, and power, in which a person aims to kill a target to establish control or power. The actions of Nkubu reveal a relationship between masculinity and assassination, as his ruthless assassination of Malefane serves as a manifestation of political power and control. Through the character Nkubu, negative aspects of traditional masculine ideas are portrayed; that is, assassination and the consequences, such as the trauma that Mapule goes through seeing her boyfriend Malefane lying down, being assassinated. Connell (2005) denotes that assassination is a form of toxic masculinity, which can influence power dynamics and behaviour. Nkubu's act of assassination is a means of asserting masculinity and power. This study discourages the depiction of masculinity through assassination, as it is a form of toxic masculinity that depicts masculinity in a negative light and denies individuals their right to life.

4.3 *Lejwe la Kgopiso*

The second section of this chapter is focused on the literary text *Lejwe la Kgopiso*. This section provides a summary of *Lejwe la Kgopiso* and the depiction of masculinity as expressed through the themes of emotional stoicism, courage, aggression, family

provider, abuse of power, and homicide. The themes were analysed with evidence from the literary text *Lejwe la Kgopiso* (2015).

4.3.1 Summary of *Lejwe la gopiso*

The literary text *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015) is a drama written by Teboho “Yster” Letshele in 2015. Poverty in the village of Katlehong drives Tsietsi and Thapelo to work for the abusive Mohlouwa. The situation of poverty worsens when Tsietsi’s wife, Naledi, cheats on Mohlouwa.

In Katlehong village, the heavy rain has just stopped. Naledi finds herself in trouble due to the heavy rain that has just stopped some minutes ago. The water has leaked into her shack, and she has to take care of the mess made by the water in her shack. Naledi states that every room in the shack has roof leakage, and she has to clean up the water. As Naledi is dealing with the leakage, her friend Seipati comes into her home. Seipati is rain-soaked, which is why she has stopped by Naledi’s place. Seipati criticizes Naledi’s home, calling it worse than a pig pen. Seipati emphasizes that Tsietsi is an irresponsible man because his family is suffering; he is the man of the house who is supposed to provide for his family.

At this point, Mmabato confronts her husband, Mohlouwa, for not firing Thapelo and Tsietsi. She is angry that Mohlouwa is lenient with them despite their role in the strike protesting about Mohlouwa’s ill treatment. After heavy rain in Katlehong, Thapelo and Tsietsi discuss their problems. Tsietsi is frustrated that his government housing application has been ignored while others have been approved. Their talk shifts to their employer, Mohlouwa, and the harsh words from him and his wife, which have left them fearing for their jobs. Given their shared poverty and lack of opportunities, Thapelo encourages Tsietsi to fight for their right to a better salary.

Tsietsi and his wife, Naledi, are having a conversation. In their conversation, Naledi complains about how Tsietsi does not do enough to take them out of poverty and the shack they are living in. Naledi threatens to leave Tsietsi and return to her home in Maokeng if Tsietsi does not provide for their needs with the kids.

In morning traffic at Katlehong village, Mohlouwa sees Naledi and offers her a ride in his expensive car. During the drive, Mohlouwa proposes to Naledi that they have an extramarital relationship. Naledi rejects the proposal but takes Mohlouwa's phone number.

While working, Tsietsi confides in Thapelo about his wife Naledi's hurtful words regarding his failure to take them out of poverty. Tsietsi believes that the ancestral ceremony is the solution to his problems. But Thapelo believes that they should fight for better salaries. On the other hand, Naledi tells her friend Seipati that she is troubled by romantic advances. Seipati encourages Naledi to have an extramarital relationship with Mohlouwa for financial gain.

Mohlouwa fires Tsietsi after Naledi has rejected his advances for an extramarital affair. The betrayal by Mohlouwa prompts Naledi eventually to begin an extramarital affair with Mohlouwa. Meanwhile, Tsietsi is now unemployed and has become addicted to alcohol. Tsietsi learns of his wife, Naledi's, extramarital affair with Mohlouwa. Tsietsi is angered by the news that his wife is cheating on him and goes the violent way.

Tsietsi is armed with an axe. He first finds and murders Mohlouwa's wife, Mmabatho, at her home. Tsietsi then goes to Mohlouwa's office, where he finds Naledi, Thapelo, and Pheleu. Tsietsi expresses his anger and admits to killing his children and Mmabatho before attacking and killing everyone in the room and then killing himself afterwards.

4.3.2 Emotional stoicism

In the literary text *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015), emotional stoicism is an important theme, well intertwined with the narrative through the actions and behaviours of the masculine characters who illustrate resilience, face inconvenient situations with calmness, and are not overwhelmed.

It may be questioned: What is emotional stoicism? This study understood emotional stoicism as the ability to cope with challenges without being overwhelmed and to endure emotions without being controlled by them. Some scholars have explained emotional stoicism. Among them are Sorabji (2009) and Graver (2019). As noted by Sorabji (2009), emotional stoicism is the capacity to control emotions to attain wisdom and inner serenity.

Gravier (2019) concurs with Sorabji (2009) by indicating that emotional stoicism comprehends and controls emotions rationally rather than completely denying them. The descriptions of emotional stoicism by Sorabji (2009) and Gravier (2019) elaborate that emotional stoicism is the systematic approach to managing emotions characterized by emotional restraint, resilience, and self-control without fear. This study employed the descriptions of Sorabji (2009) and Gravier (2019) as they clarify that emotional stoicism is the individual's ability to manage emotions in inconvenient situations without fear. The study investigated masculine characters who embodied emotional stoicism by managing emotions without being overwhelmed in difficult situations. Zeba (2021:12) provides an example of a person with emotional stoicism by indicating that such a person responds to frightening or dangerous situations through thoughtful caution rather than fear. Therefore, this study examined masculine characters who face frightening and dangerous situations without fear.

Thapelo demonstrates emotional stoicism during his conversation with Tsietsi about heavy rains and the damage that the rain caused in their village when he said:

Thapelo: *Ke a ipotsa hore re tlo tsamaya ho kae ha ho le qhafutso tjena hohle mebileng mona. Feela ha ho nang, ho lla ho ke ke ha re tswela kgomo le kgale ha ho se ho dubehile tjena wa mphato* (Letshaba, 2015:14).

[Thapelo: I wonder where we are going to walk when it is muddy all over the road. But no worries, crying will not benefit us, especially when it is messy like this.]

As cited above, Thapelo illustrates emotional stoicism, although the heavy rain caused so much damage to the roads, and they are going to find it difficult to walk on the muddy roads. Thapelo does not allow the situation to overwhelm him; rather, he manages his emotions in the situation they find themselves in. Thapelo further realises that crying when there is chaos is not a solution at all. As per Magano (2025), males are expected to be manly and not cry because doing so will make them less respected and their manhood questioned. There is a proverb in Sesotho that suggests that a male person should not cry, *Monna ke nku ha lle*. This proverb was used in the first section of this chapter. Mokitimi (1997:17) provides an interpretation that it is not normal to see a man crying. Crying is

associated with women because they are socially regarded as weak. According to Manuwa (2012:216), the proverb *Monna ke nku ha a lle* translates to “a man is a sheep, he does not cry”. In the Basotho society, seeing a man cry is not socially accepted and is not considered masculine. Manyawa (2012) states that women are socially perceived as weak, which is why crying relates to them. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) emphasize that emotional stoicism is the key aspect of hegemonic masculinity, which is the culturally and most socially accepted form of masculinity in each society. The act of crying and emotional expression is stereotyped as feminine, not masculine. When male characters do not cry, it is depicted as emotional stoicism, which is aligned with traditional masculine norms.

Besides Thapelo, Mmabatho is seen as displaying emotional stoicism. Mmabatho faces a dangerous situation when Tsietsi goes to her house armed with an axe with blood, looking for Mohlouwa, who is having extra extramarital affair with Naledi. Mmabatho does not show that she is afraid of Tsietsi, even though Tsietsi confesses that he has killed his children and has come to accomplish his mission by killing Mohlouwa. Mmabatho says the following to Tsietsi:

Mmabatho: *Ke tla bua le wena ho ya ka moo ke ratang ka teng, hoba ha o ntshose ka letho. Ke re le sona seletswana seo sa hao ha se ntshose ka letho* (Letshaba, 2015:123).

[Mmabatho: I will talk with you in any way I want to, because you do not scare me with anything. Even that small axe does not scare me at all.]

The quote cited above shows that Mmabatho is faced with a dangerous and overwhelming situation, where Tsietsi comes to her house demanding to see her husband Mohlouwa, to kill Mohlouwa. Mmabatho realizes that Tsietsi even has an axe with blood in his hands. Mmabatho does not allow that situation to threaten her, but acts calmly until Mmabatho orders Tsietsi to go out of her house. However, Tsietsi does not leave Mmabatho's house. Mmabatho assesses the level of threat and how she could respond to the threat. Taiwo (2010:1) states that emotional stoicism is associated with toxic or patriarchal masculinity, with traits linked to oppressive gender social practices and patriarchal social structures. Hegemonic masculinity includes emotional restraint, control,

and stoicism, which might restrict men's emotional expression and interpersonal connections, as noted by Connell (2005). Connell (2005) denotes that emotional stoicism and power dynamics are related, with men utilizing control to establish and retain their dominance over others. The literary text *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015) was used to reveal emotional stoicism, which depicts hegemonic masculinity that is demonstrated by emotional control, endurance and emotional suppression.

4.3.3 Courage

Courage is the theme that is illustrated in the literary text *Lejwe la Kgopiso* (2015), where masculine characters face their darkest fears, challenge societal expectations, but exemplify courage.

Courage is the theme in this category, where masculine characters have the capacity to confront fear and danger with self-assurance. Some scholars have described courage. Among them are Clancy (2003), Woodard (2004), Rate, Clarke, Lindsay, and Sternberg (2007), and Jordan (2008). According to Clancy (2003:132), courage is the capacity to confront difficult decisions and to overcome the fear that goes along with them. Woodard (2004:174) concurs with Clancy (2003) by stating that courage is the capacity to take significant action in the face of perceived threat. For Rate et al. (2007:81), courage is defined as the willingness to be vulnerable, possibly acting out of fear, while trying to behave well in a risky situation. From the explanations of Clancy (2003), Woodard (2004), Rate et al. (2007) and Jordan (2008), courage is the ability to stand up for what is right and face challenges with bravery despite feeling scared or uncertain. The explanations of Clancy (2003), Woodard (2004), Rate et al. (2007) and Jordan (2008) are relevant to this study. This study examined how courageous characters are in confronting and overcoming inconvenient situations without fear.

The characters Tsietsi and Thapelo work in an unconducive environment at Mohlouwa's businesses. Thapelo illustrated courage during their conversations with Tsietsi when he said:

Thapelo: *Ha ke re ke o bolelletse hore bothata bona re ka bo phema ha feela re ka lwanela ditshwanelo tsa rona* (Letshaba, 2015:40).

[Thapelo: I did tell you that this problem can be avoided only if we fight for our rights.]

From the above quote, Thapelo is seen as courageous because he encourages his friend Tsietsi they stand up for themselves and fight for their rights against Mohlouwa, who is an abusive employer. Thapelo shows a strong belief in the importance of himself and Tsietsi fighting for their rights at their workplace. Thapelo is not afraid of what Mohlouwa could do to them when they fight for their rights against his ill-treatment. Kimmel (1996) states that courage is associated with traditional masculine norms, which lead to emotional suppression and aggression. Masculinity is depicted through courage by Thapelo when standing up for himself against Nkubu, who ill-treats Thapelo without fear.

Thapelo also has a conversation with Pheleu, who discourages Thapelo from fighting for their rights at their workplace. Thapelo does not take Pheleu's advice, but threatens Mohlouwa:

Thapelo: *Ke dintho dife tse tlang nkenyang kgathatsong? Hona ke kgathatso e fe ena eo o buang ka yona? O ntjhebe o ntjhebisise, monna, nna ha ke bana ba hlolang ba thothomela ha ba o bona. O ka nna wa mmolella ntate Mohlouwa hore ha ke a kgotsofalla tshotleho ya mona ha hae. Ha se hore ha ke sebetsa mona ha hae ke lenyekathipa. Ke re le ona mosebetsinyana ona wa lona ha kena taba le ona. Le ha le ka ntebela hona jwale tjena nkeke ka hula ka falese le kgale* (Letshaba, 2015:64).

[Thapelo: Which things will get me in trouble? What kind of trouble are you talking about? Look closely at me, man, I am not one of those who tremble when they see you. You can inform Mr Mohlouwa that I am not satisfied with the mistreatment I have experienced here in his place. I am not a very poor person when I work here. I am telling you; I don't even care about this little job of yours. Even if you fire me right now, I won't back down or fall, never.]

The above citation depicts Thapelo as courageous because he stands up for himself when he feels mistreated by Mohlouwa, his employer. Thapelo confronts Mohlouwa when his livelihood is on the line. His words, "*O ka nna wa mmolella ntate Mohlouwa hore ha*

ke a kgotsofalla tshotleho ya mona ha hae”, show courage, because Thapelo knows that he might face potential consequences of losing his job, but Thapelo is courageous to stand up for his rights by confronting Mohlouwa, who is abusing him. Some proverbs encourage courage in Basotho society, such as *Monna ha ipolae. O bolawa ke ba bang*. Mokitimi (1997:17) provides the interpretation that one must fight to the bitter end for his dignity. The proverb, *Monna ha ipolae, o bolaoa ke ba bang*, is interpreted as courageous male characters who are expected to be fearless and fight for themselves when faced with opponents in life. Courage is an important aspect of masculinity theory. According to Kinsella et al. (2017), courage is associated with heroism, and men support a strong masculine identity. As stated by Connell (1995), males are supposed to exhibit fearlessness in the face of danger and misfortune, and courage is frequently viewed as a crucial component of traditional masculinity. Thapelo illustrates courage because of his fearlessness, standing up for himself against mistreatment from his employer, Mohlouwa. Thapelo shows determination in his decision to fight for his rights at work. He is true to himself and his values. Thapelo is willing to take risks for a good working environment at his work, especially for reasonable salaries. Therefore, Thapelo demonstrates masculinity by being courageous in prioritizing self-dignity over the abuse of Mohlouwa. Thapelo shows the masculine norm of courage through verbal confrontation with Mohlouwa and willingness to accept the high risk of unemployment.

4.3.4 Infidelity

Infidelity is another theme in the literary text *Lejwe la Kgopiso* (2015), which critically examines the complexities of masculinity within the narrative. The literary text *Lejwe la Kgopiso* (2015) was used to examine how infidelity can have terrible results, rather than just being a personal violation.

This study understood that infidelity means being disloyal or unfaithful to one's partner, which involves emotional or physical intimacy. Among scholars who defined infidelity are Glass (2002), Blow and Hartnett (2005) and McAnuty and Brineman (2007). According to Glass (2002), infidelity is described as any hidden emotional, sexual, or romantic action that deviates from the exclusive standards of a relationship. Blow and Hartnett (2005) state that infidelity can involve a variety of behaviours, including cheating, having an affair,

being in an extramarital relationship, and developing emotional attachments that go beyond friendships. McAnuty and Brineman (2007) concur with Blow and Hartnett (2005) that having extramarital affairs is considered a form of infidelity. According to McAnuty and Brineman (2007) and Blow and Hartnett (2005), infidelity is defined as any romantic, sexual, or emotional behaviour that violates the relationship's exclusivity commitment. This study utilized the descriptions of McAnuty and Brineman (2007) and Blow and Hartnett (2005) by examining characters who are in an extramarital relationship that violates marital commitment.

In the literary text *Lejwe la Kgopiso* (2015), the theme of infidelity is woven through the lives of Mohlouwa and Naledi. The act of infidelity by Naledi and Mohlouwa exposes the disturbing consequences of the betrayal of trust for their families. Mohlouwa is a businessman who employs workers such as Tsietsi, who is Naledi's husband. Mohlouwa's proposal for an extramarital affair with Naledi establishes infidelity. In Mohlouwa's conversation with Naledi, Mohlouwa says:

Mohlouwa: *ke bua nnete ena ya mmakoma, Naledi. Ruri pelo ya ka e a kgapatseha ha ke o sheba tjena* (Letshaba, 2015:35).

[Mohlouwa: I am telling you the absolute truth, Naledi. My heart overflows when I look at you.]

Mohlouwa: *Ke itse pinyane ha e senye motse* (Letshela, 2015:36).

[Mohlouwa: I said secret is golden.]

From the above extracts, Mohlouwa's proposal for an extramarital affair to Naledi represents an act of infidelity, made more terrible by the fact that both are aware of each other's marital status. Mohlouwa's words, *Pinyane ha e senye motse*, which translates as "a secret is golden", suggest that Mohlouwa believes that keeping their secret of infidelity with Naledi is a way of minimizing harm or avoiding confrontation from their partners. Coplain (1991:12) states that in the society of the Basotho, infidelity is referred to as *bonyatsi*. *Bonyatsi*, "cheating" among the Basotho society, may go unnoticed, since in the Basotho society, *bonyatsi* informs this study that the act of Mohlouwa and Naledi having an extramarital relationship is regarded as *bonyatsi* in the context of Basotho society.

Some proverbs demonstrate infidelity among the Basotho as noted by Rapeane (2003:211), such as *Monna ke mokopu oa nama, mosadi ke kha'abeche oa ipopa*. *Monna ke mokopu oa nama, mosadi ke kha'abeche oa ipopa*. Possa and Makgopa (2010) provide the interpretation of the proverb as “a man is allowed to initiate and have an extramarital affair, whereas a woman is not allowed to initiate an extramarital affair”. Another Sesotho proverb that encourages infidelity is *Monna ke apole oa lomisan'a*. Khotso (2019:205) explains the proverb as a man is acceptable when he has multiple partners. These proverbs: *Monna ke mokopu oa nama, mosadi ke kha'abeche oa ipopa*, and *Monna kea pole oa lomisan'a*, promote infidelity among the society of Basotho. Besides proverbs, Molapo (2008) indicates that there are Sesotho songs that Basotho men sing addressing the love affairs associated with extramarital affairs. The song is *Ha ke a nka mosadi ke nkile lerato*, by Tlou Makhola. The figurative meaning is that “a male who engages in the act of infidelity is explaining that he is providing the woman with love, while the woman still belongs to another man”. This song, *Ha ke a nka mosadi ke nkile lerato*, informs the study, as it depicts infidelity as socially accepted among some, not all, Basotho, and provides for a woman who is married to another man. As exemplified in the literary text *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015), Mohlouwa used to buy Naledi expensive presents, knowing that Naledi is married to Tsietsi. Infidelity is an aspect of masculinity theory. As per Kimmel (2005), there is a relationship between masculinity and infidelity. Consistent with Pascoe (2007), infidelity is a means for males to demonstrate or perform their masculinity, which is frequently connected to expectations of sexual power. The theme of infidelity is exemplified in Mohlouwa, a powerful businessman, who proposes an extramarital affair with Naledi, the wife of his employee Tsietsi. In *Lejwe la Kgopiso*, the character Mohlouwa engages in an act of infidelity by proposing an extramarital affair to Naledi. Naledi is Tsietsi's wife, who works for Mohlouwa. Despite both Mohlouwa and Naledi being aware of their marital status and respect for their marital commitments, Mohlouwa shamelessly declares his deep affection for Naledi, even claiming that their extramarital affairs will not harm their families. Naledi also agrees to engage in the act of infidelity with Mohlouwa, because Naledi thought that Mohlouwa would help her with her financial struggles. The depiction of masculinity is seen in Naledi and Mohlouwa's infidelity. Infidelity is regarded as a cultural norm; some of the Basotho refer to it as *bonyatsi*.

Masculinity is depicted in the act of infidelity, which is seen as socially and culturally acceptable among some Basotho as *bonyatsi*. The ability to be unfaithful is depicted as a demonstration of control, which is viewed as hegemonic masculinity. This study discourages the act of infidelity, as it is a form of hegemonic masculinity that leads to betrayal of trust in families and depicts masculinity in a negative light.

4.3.5 Aggression

The other theme in the literary text *Lejwe la Kgopiso* (2015) is aggression, which is illustrated in the form of characters that display violent acts with the intention to cause harm to individuals or groups of people.

Aggression is the act that is intended to cause harm, intimidation, or dominate others. Aggression can be in the form of physical, verbal, and emotional aggression. Buss and Perry (1992) state that physical aggression can include physical force or violence such as hitting, punching, pushing, and shoving. Infante and Wigley (1986) clarify that emotional aggression is the behaviour that is intended to harm or manipulate others, such as insults, gaslighting, and emotional blackmail. Infante and Wigley (1986) add to Buss and Perry (1992) that verbal aggression refers to behaviour that uses language to harm, intimidate, or dominate others. This study employed descriptions of Infante and Wigley (1986) and Buss and Perry (1992) by examining the masculine characters who use physical and verbal aggression to intimidate or dominate others, expressed in the literary text *Lejwe la Kgopiso* (2015).

Aggression is seen in Mohlouwa's words when he has a conversation with Thapelo, who works for him. Mohlouwa aggressively says to Thapelo:

Mohlouwa: *Tlosa moleko ona pela ka mona pele ke mo qhala boko ka tholwana!* (Letshaba, 2015:92).

[Mohlouwa: Remove this temptation near me before I demolish his brain with a bullet!]

From the above citation, Mohlouwa is depicted as aggressive due to his direct words when he says: "*Tlosa moleko ona pelaka mona pel eke mo qhala boko ka tholwana*",

[Remove this temptation near me before I demolish his brain with a bullet.] Mohlouwa intends to cause extreme physical harm to Thapelo. The threat of using a bullet to demolish Thapelo's brain demonstrates an immediate and intense desire to inflict irreparable harm. Kimmel (2004:184) states that males who uphold traditional ideas of masculinity are more prone to acting aggressively. According to Gilmore (1990:223), principles and beliefs that examine the relationship between masculinity and aggressiveness frequently present aggression to establish power. Mohlouwa's act of aggression is rooted in a threat by Thapelo, who stands up for himself against Mohlouwa, which makes it clear that the intention is to cause serious and permanent harm to him. Mohlouwa resorts to aggression as a way of not taking accountability for his ill-treatment of his employees. According to Connell (1997:77), aggression is associated with the norms of hegemonic masculinity. Connell (1997) states that aggression is not a natural biological trait, but a socially constructed practice and expectation that is learned. Mohlouwa's acts of aggression are depicted as hegemonic masculinity, as Mohlouwa demonstrates dominance and verbal aggression against Thapelo. The depiction of masculinity is seen through aggression, where masculine characters employ verbal aggression to assert dominance, power, and masculinity. The depiction of masculinity through aggression is an aspect of traditional masculine norms, in which masculine characters use aggression as a means of resolving conflict and asserting authority. This study aimed to discourage the depiction of masculinity in a way of aggression, which is regarded as hegemonic masculinity, but encourage actions that depict masculinity in a positive light, such as encouraging peace-making among characters.

4.3.6 Abuse of power

Abuse of power is a prevalent theme, revealing the depiction of masculine characters who misuse their powers to exploit and abuse other individuals.

Abuse of power is the misuse of power by someone in a position of power, resulting in harm or injustice to others. Vredenburg and Brender (1998) describe the abuse of power as actions that devalue a subordinate's human worth, such as verbal harassment. Waite and Allen (2003) add to Vredenburg and Brender (1998) that abuse of power is the misuse of power by a person who possesses power for personal benefit, such as financial,

political, or social benefits. The descriptions of Vredenburg and Brender (1998) and Waite and Allen (2003) are relevant to this study by stating that abuse of power involves an individual who possesses power abusing others for their personal, financial, or social benefit. This study examined the masculine characters possessing authority, abusing their power to manipulate other individuals who do not possess power.

Tsietsi has a conversation with Naledi, his wife, confirming that Mohlouwa abuses his power by firing him from Tsietsi's work, when Tsietsi says to Naledi:

Tsietsi: *Ho feela ho le jwalo.Ntate Mohlouwa a re ke se hlole ke le beha mosebetsing mane* (Letshaba, 2015:60).

[Tsietsi (with a heavy spirit): That's just how it is. Mr Mohlouwa said I should no longer set foot there at work.]

The above citation from the words spoken by Tsietsi about Mohlouwa exposes the abuse of power by Mohlouwa, as he orders Tsietsi never to set foot in work again. Mohlouwa's abuse of power is due to his intention to have an extramarital affair with Naledi, Tsietsi's wife. Mohlouwa does not provide any reason to his work for dismissing Tsietsi from his work. Consistent with Connell (2005), abuse of power is a form of hegemonic masculinity that prioritizes control and power over others by individuals who possess power. The depiction of masculinity is displayed through the abuse of power when Nkubu fires Mohlouwa at his work so that Nkubu can have an extramarital affair with Tsietsi's wife, Naledi. Nkubu's action of firing Tsietsi is motivated by the willingness to assert traditional masculine norms of hegemonic masculinity, which are control and dominance over Tsietsi. This study does not support the abuse of power, as it is a form of toxic masculinity that asserts control and dominance over others.

The abuse of power by Mohlouwa is also confirmed by his wife, Mmabatho, when she says to Mohlouwa:

Mmabatho: *Ke utlwa hape ho thwe o hirile basebetsi ba bang ba basadi ka mora hoba o kene diphateng mmoho le bona* (Letshaba, 2015:102).

[Mmabatho: I hear again that they say you have hired other female workers after you had sex with them.]

The above extract showcases an example of abuse of power through sexual harassment. This type of behaviour is a misuse of an employer's power, i.e. Mohlouwa. Connell (2005) clarifies that abuse of power is an aspect of toxic masculinity, which is associated with power, aggression, and dominance over others. The depiction of toxic masculinity is seen in the behaviour of Mohlouwa abusing his power to manipulate women to have sexual relationships for job opportunities. This study does not promote the depiction of masculinity through the behaviour of abuse of power, where individuals who possess power manipulate women into sexual relationships, because that is a form of abuse.

4.3.7 Homicide

In the literary text, *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015), homicide serves as a theme that explores the motivations, actions, and repercussions of homicide.

This study understood homicide as the act of killing another human being. According to Amor (2003), homicide is the deliberate or unintended killing of another person. Binder (2000) provides examples of homicide, such as murder, voluntary manslaughter, and involuntary manslaughter. This study examined homicide demonstrated in the literary text *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015)

Homicide is illustrated in Tsietsi's actions as he kills his children and his wife, Naledi, Mmabatho, Pheleu, and Thapelo. Thapelo goes to Mohlouwa's place to kill Mohlouwa because Mohlouwa has had an extramarital affair with his wife, Naledi. Tsietsi meets Mmabatho and says to Naledi and Mohlouwa:

Tsietsi: *Ho ja e ne e se ka wena le ntate Mohlouwa nkabe ke sa fenetha bana ba ka ka sehlooho tjena!* (Letshaba, 2015:124).

[Tsietsi: If it was not for you and Mr Mohlouwa, I would not have cruelly strangled my children like this.]

The above quote uncovers the act of homicide when Mohlouwa kills his children. The homicide is the result of a complete mental and emotional breakdown, because Naledi

has cheated on Tsietsi with Mohlouwa. Tsietsi is seen as a character who does not think of other solutions to the situation, he finds himself in, of his wife having an extramarital affair with Mohlouwa, as he decides to kill his children, Mmabatho, Mohlouwa and Naledi. Messerschmidt (1993) indicates that homicide, toughness and dominance are traditional masculine traits. Connell (2005) states that societal norms that encourage men to suppress their feelings, demonstrate power, and ignore weakness can lead to violent behaviour, including homicide. Tsietsi's act of homicide is a form of toxic masculinity, which is linked to the suppression of emotions caused by an extramarital affair of his wife, Naledi and Mohlouwa. This study discourages homicide as a way of depicting masculinity because homicide depicts toxic masculinity.

4.3.8 Family provider

Providing for a family is a pervasive theme in the literary text *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015). The theme of a family provider reflects the societal expectations and responsibilities placed on masculine characters, especially fathers, to ensure the economic stability and well-being of their families.

The study's explanation of the family provider is that men are expected to be primary breadwinners who provide financial stability for their families. Some scholars, such as Dette-Hagenmer, Erzinger, and Reichle (2014), Christiansen and Palkovitz (2001), and Dermott and Fowler (2020), define family providers. Dette-Hagenmer et al. (2014) assert that the important role of a father as the head of the family is to provide for needs such as food, clothes, and shelter. Christiansen and Palkovitz (2001) add to Dette-Hagenmer et al. (2014) that a family provider is defined as someone, typically a father, who fulfils the role of meeting the economic needs of the family. Dermott and Fowler (2020) concur with Christiansen and Palkovitz (2001) and Dette-Hagenmeyer et al. (2014) that a family provider is an individual who is responsible for supporting the family financially. This study investigated masculine characters who are expected to be depicted as family providers through their provision to their families and heads of the family.

Naledi has a conversation with her husband, Tsietsi, stating that he is supposed to be a family provider:

Naledi: *Feela Bophelo ba ntlo ena bo a ntena jwale, abuti Tsietsi. Hape ha se tseo feela; hona jwale ha re na dijo tse lekaneng. Ke tjho le tee e fedile. O monna aubuti Tsietsi, mme o lokela ho loha mapqheka ha ho le tjena* (Letshela, 2015:28).

[Naledi: Life in this house annoys me now, brother Tsietsi. It is not just that; right now, we do not have enough food. I mean, even tea is finished. You are a husband, brother Tsietsi, you are supposed to make plans when it is like this.]

The above citation indicates that Tsietsi, as a husband, is identified as a family provider for his household by his wife, Naledi. The statement, “*O monna aubuti Tsietsi, mme o lokela ho loha mapqheka ha ho le tjena*” [You are a man, brother Tsietsi, you are supposed to make plans when it is like this] places the expectation of problem-solving and provision directly on Tsietsi’s shoulders as a family provider. Among the Basotho, the family provider is the father. Some proverbs encourage family providers, such as *Marabe a jewa ke bana*. Mokitimi (1997:44) means parents must provide food, clothes and shelter for their children. The proverb illustrates that parents are expected to provide for their families, no matter the hard circumstances that they face. The proverb, *Marabe a jewa ke bana*, is relevant to the study as the character Tsietsi is expected to fulfil the role of a family provider, as stated by Naledi. Palmer and Engelbrecht (2020) specify that among the Basotho society, in line with traditional values of masculinity, men are often socially expected to fulfil roles as family providers. The depiction of masculinity in the above extract is rooted in traditional societal expectations, where Tsietsi is expected to be the primary breadwinner and financial supporter of the family. Masculinity is depicted in the way that being a family provider is seen as an important part of manhood.

4.4 Diphetofo

The third section of this chapter focuses on the literary text *Diphetofo* (2015). This section provides a summary of the literary text *Diphetofo* (2015) and the depiction of masculinity as unveiled in the themes: authority, violence, family headship and toughness. The themes will be analysed with evidence from the drama text *Diphetofo* (2015).

4.4.1 Summary of *Diphetoho*

The literary drama *Diphetoho* (2015) deals with the changes brought by democracy. The changes focus on the police department. *Diphetoho* (2015) is against women's abuse. In this literary text, we see the changes from the apartheid laws, being replaced by new laws that protect human rights. In this text, it is shown how other people are against the changes in laws. The people who are against the change see only the bad things about it.

Meanwhile, the police officers, such as Takalatsa and others who worked during apartheid, find themselves having to abide by the new democratic laws that came with the new government called *Ntswe la setjhaba*. The police officers who worked during apartheid view these democratic laws as derailing the dignity they had when they were under the government of *Ntswe-la-Morena*. The first change that frustrates the police officers is when a woman is appointed as their commissioner. The position that this woman, Tlharantlhope, occupies makes her lead the police officers. The male police officers feel undermined and disrespected to be led by a woman. Another thing that angers the police officers who are against Tlharantlhope being in a high position is that she is not married. The newly appointed commissioner, Tlharantlhope, adheres to new laws. During the meetings, Tlharantlhope is very firm on enforcing the new laws. The police officers, such as Takalatsa, are so angry to hear that when they arrest people who have broken the law. They are not supposed to handcuff them, but if they do, they need to handcuff themselves with the person who is arrested.

The police officers Takalatsa, Lerwana and Lejone are abducted by Naledi, their colleague. Naledi abducts them after they have abused her sexually by raping Naledi while working with them. Naledi speaks about the abuse by Takalatsa, Lerwana and Lejone. Naledi kills Takalatsa, Lerwana and Lejone. Naledi also takes her own life with a gun.

4.4.2 Authority

Authority is an important theme demonstrated in the masculine character in the literary text *Diophetoho*. This study views authority as the ability to take actions and decisions

that others are expected to follow. Some scholars have defined authority. Among them are Schauver (2008) and Huaggard (2018). Huaggard (2018) defines authority as the capacity to influence, direct and control others. Schauver (2008) assents with Huaggard (2018) that authority refers to the legitimate power or right to control. The descriptions of Schauver (2008) and Huaggard (2018) were relevant for this study because the explanations of Schauver (2008) and Huaggard (2018) state that authority is the ability of a person who has the power to make decisions that are expected to be followed by others. Kojeve (2020) provides examples of a person who has authority as dominant, powerful, and strong.

The character who is depicted as exercising authority is Tlharantlhophe, the station commissioner at the police station in *Diphetoho*. Tlharantlhope shows authority when she says to Lerwana, Takalatsa and Matjato:

Tlharantlhophe: *Baheso, ho na le melao eo le lokelang ho e tseba e seng e fetisitswe palamenteng, mme e tla qala ho kena tshebetsong kgwedding e tlang. Ke tla qala ke toloka ka bonngwe, mme moo le nang le dipotso le tla nkemisa. Feela ha ke le tshepise hore ke tla araba dipotso kaofela. Melao ena e radilwe ya phatlalatswa mekgatlong ya lona. Na ha ho jwalo?* (Mokhele, 2015:32).

[Tlharantlhope: Colleagues, some laws have been passed through the parliament that you need to know. Those laws will be implemented from next month. I will start by interpreting them one by one, and when you have questions, you will stop me. But I do not promise to answer all the questions. These laws were drafted and published to your unions. Is it not so?]

The above extract reveals a masculine norm that is authority, through Tlharantlhope, who uses her authority as a station commissioner to enforce the laws that are meant to be adhered to by the police officials. Tlharantlhope assumes the role of being the sole interpreter and educator of the laws that need to be adhered to. The words by Tlharantlhope when she speaks to her colleagues, “*Feela ha ke le tshepise hore ke tla araba dipotso kaofela*” [But I do not promise to answer all the questions], show that Tlharantlhope does not want to be influenced by police officers on the decisions that have already been taken to implement the laws. Among the Basotho, some proverbs depict

women in authority, such as *Basadi ke tau li mesana* (Mokitimi, 1997:27). This proverb is interpreted as “women are vicious and fearless even though they are physically weak”, hence they use the diminutive form of a dress (*mesana*) (Mokitimi, 1997:27). Connell (2005) views authority as a dominant form of masculinity. He states that people who manifest traits such as authority and physical strength are seen as natural leaders and figures of authority. The depiction of masculinity is depicted through authority by Tlharanthlope, who established the control of information about the laws. The character Tlharanthlope exerts authority by setting the rules for the discussion, stating that she does not promise to answer all questions, as demonstrated. This study encourages this depiction of masculinity through authority because it shows strength, responsibility, and leadership, which are key aspects of traditional masculinity that depict masculinity in a positive way.

4.4.3 Violence

Violence is the theme demonstrated by male characters through the portrayal of physical, emotional and psychological harm as revealed in the text *Diphetoho* (2015).

This study defines violence as the intentional use of physical force or power against oneself or others or against a group or community, which results in injury, death, or emotional harm. Scholars such as Hamby (2017), Jacquette (2013) and Walby (2013) define violence. Hamby (2017) defines violence as unwanted, intentional, and harmful behaviour intended to hurt others. Jacquette (2013) concurs with Hamby (2017) and Jacquette (2013) that violence is the intentional use of physical force or power to harm or damage others. Jacquette (2013) and Hamby (2013) define violence as the intentional use of physical force or power to harm or damage individuals or groups of people. This study explored how masculine characters enforce unwanted behaviour intended to harm others, as unveiled in *Diphetoho*. Walby (2013) defines violence in the context of gender as a form of male control over women, where men enforce their dominance in relationships over women. Shaw (2004) provides types of violence such as self-directed violence, interpersonal, psychological, and collective violence. The examples of violence, as provided by Shaw (2004), were relevant for this study to establish the types of violence exemplified by masculine characters in *Diphetoho*.

Violence is proven in Lejone as he intends to physically harm people who kill one of the police officers. Lejone, in conversation with station commissioner Tlharantlhope, says:

Lejone: *Hlo re fe metjhini re hle re tswe letsholo mme nna madi a ka a bela. (O qhomela hodimo, mme o betsa ditebele sepakapakeng)* (Mokhele, 2015:55).

[Lejone: Give us guns; we need to go on a campaign. Mother, my blood is boiling. (He jumped up and threw fists in the air.)]

Lejone: *Monna, mona ha ke shape, ke a bolaya. Tlharantlhope o tla ntshwarela. Ke batla hore ke ilo ikopanya le mookamedi wa bona kajeno. Ha ho potang. Yena ke tla mo etsa ntho di hana ho fela. Ke tla mo hobela hore ha e se ntja e be tshwene.* (Mokhele, 2015:73).

Lejone: Man, here I do not beat, I kill. Tlharantlhope will forgive me. I want to meet with their leader today. There is no doubt. I will do things that will never end. I will beat him so much that if it is not a dog, be a monkey.]

The above extract shows the depiction of masculinity through violence with the declared intent to cause physical harm using guns. The male character Lejone's goal is not just to physically harm the person, but to cause prolonged suffering.

The above quote depicts the male character Lejone as violent, as he intends to use guns to physically harm people who have killed one of the police officers, Leoto. The action of Lejone throwing his fists in the air shows his readiness to become physically violent.

Violence is also demonstrated in the male character Thube, when he talks to Lejone and the station commissioner Tlharantlhope, stating the following to Tlharantlhope and Lejone:

Thube: *Ebe o tshwana lenna? Ekare nka fumana e mmedi metjhini. Motho nka mo butswela hore ba habo ba se mo tsebe* (Mokhele, 2015:55).

[Thube: Do you have the same intentions as mine? I want to get two guns. I will blow a person's head, and their family will not be able to recognize them.]

The above citation depicts masculinity through the characters Thube and Lejone, who exhibit traditional masculine ideas of violent behaviour. Kimmel (2013) states that traditional masculine norms emphasize traits such as dominance, strength, and emotional suppression, which can lead to violence. The characters Thube and Lejone illustrate violence through the intended behaviour to cause physical harm and death to people who have killed police officer Leoto. The intended behaviour to cause harm to the suspects is not only physical but also psychological for the families of the suspects when they kill the suspects; therefore, the violence is displayed in Thube and Lejone. The depiction of masculinity through violence is a form of toxic masculinity. This study discourages the behaviour of violence because it is associated with toxic masculinity, which depicts masculinity unfavourably.

4.4.4 Family headship

This study understands family headship as an individual who has the main power and responsibility for making choices and supporting the family.

Some scholars, among them Craigie, Myers and Darity (2018), Bahrami, Mousavi and Chitsazian (2023) and Shanks (2024), define family headship. Family headship is defined by Craigie et al. (2018) as a family arrangement in which a woman takes on the major role of decision-maker and housekeeper. Bahrami et al. (2023) add to Craigie et al. (2023) that family headship refers to the leadership position and authority dynamics in a family, which focuses on the responsibilities of men and women in the home. Shanks (2024) concurs with Craigie et al. (2018) and Bahrami et al. (2023) that family headship describes a person who is responsible for making decisions and ensuring the welfare of the family. This study employed descriptions of Craigie et al. (2018), Bahrami et al. (2023) and Shanks (2024) to examine the depiction of masculinity through family headship in the literary text *Diphetoho* (2015). The study investigated the societal expectations in relation to family headships through the characters revealed in *Diphetoho* (2015).

The female character who is depicted as depicting masculinity through family headship is Mmatshotleho when she has a conversation with her husband, Takalatsa, regarding

their concern about a female character, Tlharantlhope, who has been appointed as a station commissioner. Mmatshotloho says to her husband, Takalatsa:

Mmatshotleho: Ke ile ka hla ka bona ka ho beha mosadi hore a okamele banna hore ke mmantlwane jwale. Matsoho a mosadi a etseditswe ho apehela banna le ho ba hlokomela, eseng ho tshwara lere la puso. E be o reng mosadi, o tla ka dife? (Mokhele, 2015:35).

[Mmatshotleho: I saw it when they promote a woman to be superior to men, that here is now a playhouse. Women's hands are made for cooking and taking care of men, not for being in a leadership position. What does this woman say? What is she bringing?]

The above citation illustrates family headship in Mmabatho's words. Mmabatho is seen as believing in masculine societal expectations, which state that women's primary roles are to be caregivers to their husbands and children, while men are expected to occupy leadership positions at work. Mmatshotleho declares that a woman who is appointed as a station commissioner at her husband's workplace is regarded as a way of disrespecting men. Mmatshotleho comes from some of the Basotho society where it is socially believed that a primary job of a woman is to take care of her husband and children while men work to provide financially for their families. According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), traditional ideas of masculinity frequently highlight male power and control inside the home, which is in line with the family headship paradigm. The depiction of masculinity through family headship highlights traditional and patriarchal gender roles in some of the Basotho society, where it is socially believed that men are seen as primary breadwinners and that women's employment and leadership are discouraged.

Family headship is also exhibited in Takalatsa's words when he has a conversation with Lerwana about the woman who has been appointed as their superior:

Takalatsa: Monna, Lerwana, ke utlwa ke sehwa ke letswalo. Ke ipotsa hore mosatsana eo o re tshwaretse di fe. O a tseba mmuso ona o seng o dumella basadi ho fetoha dihlooho tsa banna o tla ntena le pele o ya kae . Nna ha a ka

bapalla ho nna a ka teana le tsa semana. Nka mmontsha motlwang wa pula (Mokhele, 2015:26).

[Takalatsa: Man, Lerwana, I have piercing terror. I wonder what this young woman has for us. You know this government that allows women to change into leading men will annoy me, before it gets anywhere. If she plays games with me. She will face danger. I will show her the source of rain.]

The above extract depicts Takalatsa as expressing family headship because he does not see women as suitable for leadership positions. Takalatsa illustrates disrespect and disregard for Tlharantlhope by calling her a young woman instead of addressing her as his superior or by her name. Connell (1995) claims that family headship is a form of traditional masculinity that emphasizes the male role as the primary breadwinner and decision-maker. Takalatsa's words, "*O a tseba mmuso ona o seng o dumella basadi ho fetoha dihlooho tsa banna o tla ntena*" translate as "You know this government that allows women to change into leading men, will annoy me". Through these words, Takalatsa depicts masculinity through family headship, with the societal expectation that women are not supposed to be heads of family, while the family leadership, among some of the Basotho, is socially accepted when it is done by men.

Lerwana is also seen demonstrating family headship when he talks to Takalatsa:

Lerwana: *Sepolesa se ikela matjoing mehleng ena. Ngwananyana o se a qhothoma sa lerutle, a fihla a hlothola setulo sa bokomeshenara banna ba ntse ba le teng* (Mokhele, 2015:26).

[Lerwana: The police department is going nowhere these days. This little girl is jumping like a locust; she comes and snatches off the chair of the commissioner, while there are men.]

The above extract depicts Lerwana as a character reinforcing family headship. Lerwana's words: "*Ngwananyana o se a qhothoma sa lerutle, a fihla a hlothola setulo sa bokomeshenara banna ba ntse ba le teng*", translates as "This little girl is jumping like a locust; she comes and snatches off the chair of the commissioner, while there are men." These words reveal that Lerwana belittles Tlharantlhope by calling her a little girl. Lerwana

has the traditional Basotho belief that men are supposed to dominate women and hold high positions in workplaces. Among some of the Basotho society, there are popular expressions that encourage men as heads of families, such as “*Monna ke hlooho ya lelapa*”, equivalent to “A man is the head of the house.” The saying means that a man is supposed to be in a position of authority in a family, lead, and make major decisions in the family. This Sesotho saying, *Monna ke hlooho ya lelapa*, informs this study as the family headship that is manifested in the literary text *Diphetoho* (2015), displays characters who conform to the societal idea that men are heads of families, hold authority, and have the final say in their families, while women are supposed to submit to their husbands. The depiction of masculinity is seen in characters opposing women being in leadership positions, because they believe that family headship is meant for men. Connell (2005) states that family headship is associated with hegemonic masculinity, which prioritizes male dominance within family structures. The characters who depict masculinity through family headship have the idea that the sole responsibility of women is to be primary caregivers in their families. The characters Lerwana and Takalatsa show no regard for women in leadership, as both address Tlharantlhope as a little woman and a little girl instead of addressing her as their superior. Similarly, Mmatshotleho is a female character who believes that women are not supposed to be given leadership positions. According to Connell (1996), conventional patriarchal ideals are linked to masculinity and family headship, where men are viewed as the main decision-makers and authoritative figures in the home. The depiction of masculinity through family headships highlights traditional patriarchal roles and expectations, such as men’s positions as providers and decision-makers.

4.4.5 Toughness

Toughness is an important theme, explored through masculine characters who withstand challenging situations and recover from them.

This study understands toughness as the ability to endure challenging situations. Some scholars, such as Lawson (2013) and Fowler and Geers (2017), describe toughness as follows. According to Lawson (2013), toughness is the ability to tolerate hostility, emotional and physical stress, and to recover from adversity. Fowler and Geers (2017)

concur with Lawson (2013) in describing toughness as an expression of physical endurance or resilience in the face of threats. The descriptions of Lawson (2013) and Fowler and Geers (2017) elaborate that toughness is the capacity to tolerate emotional, physical, and psychological resilience in challenging situations. This study analysed how male characters endure difficult conditions and recover from them, as provided in the literary text *Diphetoho* (2015). Ritchie (2011) provides examples of toughness, such as material toughness, mental toughness, and physical toughness. The examples of toughness provided by Ritchie (2011) are highlighted in this study as the physical and emotional toughness revealed in the male characters in *Diphetoho* (2015).

Toughness is seen in Lerwana's words when he speaks to Sekgutshwe and Takalatsa about the physical torture they are facing from their captors. He says to Takalatsa and Sekgutswe:

Lerwana: *Tiisetsa weso! Monna ke nku ha a lle. Ha o lla o tla utlwisa dira monate wa ho re hlokofatsa* (Mokhele, 2015:90).

[Lerwana: Persevere relative. A man is a sheep; he does not cry. When you cry, you will make the enemies find pleasure in torturing us.]

The above excerpt depicts masculinity through toughness by emotional suppression; the character Lerwana suppresses the emotions of pain by not crying due to the torture of being beaten by the captors. The depiction of toughness is in the request not to cry. The words from Lerwana, "*Monna ke nku ha a lle*", suggest that Lerwana displays the male character trait of emotional control. The words are the Sesotho proverb that, according to Mokitimi (1997:17), means that it is not socially acceptable to see a man crying. Among some of the Basotho, crying is associated with women because they are regarded as weak. The character Lerwana depicts masculinity through the belief that men should manifest the masculine norm of toughness, not vulnerability, when facing difficult situations. Lerwana is a male character who demonstrates the masculine cultural idea of toughness.

Toughness is also seen in Sekgutshwe when he speaks to Takalatsa and Lerwana about the challenging situation of being abducted and physically tormented:

Sekgutshwe: Nna ke kopa ntho e le nngwe baheso. Le ha ho le boima re se ke ra lla. Ha re ka lla re tla etsa hore banna bana ba nne ba tswele pele hore hlokofofatsa. Hopolang ka batshwaruwa hore ha re ne re ba hlekefetsa ba ne ba tiisetse hore re be re ba lese (Mokhele, 2015:91).

[Sekgutshwe: I am asking for only one thing, colleagues. Even though it is tough, we should not cry. If we cry, these men will continue to torture us. Remember when we tortured prisoners, they used to persevere until we stopped torturing them.]

The above citation expresses toughness in Sekgutshwe. Sekgutshwe's words, "*Le ha ho le boima re se ke ra lla*" [Even though it is tough, we should not cry], show the emotional toughness to pain caused by being tortured by people who abduct them. Sekgutshwe demonstrates physical toughness and communicates that if they cry, they will empower their captors. Sekgutshwe believes that when they do not cry, they deny the abductors' satisfaction over Sekgutshwe, Lerwana, and Takalatsa. Sekgutshwe's reference to their experience of torturing prisoners shows his deep understanding of enduring pain. The Basotho proverb that encourages physical toughness, according to Mokitimi (1997:17), is *Monna ke ts'epe e nts'o*, interpreted as "men are physically strong". Male characters are tough and able to endure pain in the society of some of the Basotho. Sekgutshwe is depicted as physically tough, even when Sekgutshwe, Takalatsa, and Lerwana are tortured by their captors. Connell (2005) describes toughness as a key aspect of hegemonic masculinity, which allows men to demonstrate their strength and resilience during challenging times. Connell (2005) indicates that men who embody masculine traits such as toughness and resilience are likely to hold power and influence in society. The character Sekgutshwe demonstrates toughness through his ability to withstand physical pain without crying and encourages Takalatsa and Lerwana not to cry when they are tortured. The characters Lerwana and Sekgutshwe are depicted as having the ability to control emotions and not showing vulnerability to the captors who have abducted them. The characters' display of toughness is seen as driven by societal expectations that equate masculinity with endurance, toughness, and emotional control.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the analysis and interpretation of the data presented were outlined. The research questions were explained, and the aspects of literary masculinity theory that assisted the researcher in responding to the research questions were clearly stated. The summaries of selected Sesotho drama texts were clearly explained to provide insight into the selected texts. The depiction of masculinity was analysed through the following themes in three selected Sesotho drama literary texts: *Malefane* (2015), *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015), and *Diphetoho* (2015). In *Malefane* (2015), bravery, power dynamics, the language that depicts masculinity, and assassination are discussed. In *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015), emotional stoicism, courage, infidelity, aggression, abuse of power, homicide and family provider are shown, and in *Diphetoho* (2015), authority, violence, family headship, and toughness are addressed. In the analysis of the literary text *Malefane* (2015), the depiction of masculinity is demonstrated positively through bravery, where characters who embody this masculine trait are brave enough to stand up for what is right without fear. In *Malefane*, masculinity is also depicted as hegemonic through power dynamics, the language that depicts masculinity, and assassination. From the literary text *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015), it becomes clear that masculinity is depicted negatively, where male characters conform to traditional masculine norms such as aggression, infidelity, abuse of power, and homicide. The analysis of *Diphetoho* (2015) revealed that masculinity is depicted through the cultural masculine norms, where family headship is seen as a sole responsibility of men in the Basotho society. In the literary text *Diphetoho* (2015), violence depicts masculinity negatively as it is illustrated in the male characters as a way of asserting control and dominance.

In this chapter, it is concluded that the depiction of masculinity in selected Sesotho drama texts is demonstrated positively and negatively among the Basotho society.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter concludes the study that examined the depiction of masculinity in three selected Sesotho drama texts: *Malefane* (2015) by Maake, *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015) by Letshaba, and *Diphetoho* (2015) by Mokhele. This study was conducted in relation to the fact that although some scholars have researched the depiction of masculinity in the Basotho society, the depiction of masculinity in selected Sesotho literary texts has not been explored. This study is not a comparative study but explores the depiction of masculinity in selected Sesotho drama texts, *Malefane* (2015), *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015), and *Diphetoho* (2015). The research questions that this study intended to respond to are:

- What is the culture of masculine characters in the selected Sesotho drama texts?
- What is the language of masculine characters in the selected Sesotho drama texts?
- What is the behaviour of masculine characters in selected Sesotho drama texts?

The objectives of this study were as follows:

- To discover the culture of masculine characters in the selected Sesotho drama texts.
- To explore the language of masculine characters in the selected Sesotho drama texts.
- To examine how masculine characters behave in the selected Sesotho drama texts.

This study employed literary masculinity theory to analyse the data gathered. Literary masculinity theory was used to respond to the research questions, pertaining to aspects such as how language upholds masculine standards like power over women, performance

of masculinity in all interactions, practices, and behaviour, as well as how cultural norms define, perform and perpetuate masculinity.

This chapter is structured to provide the summary of the selected Sesotho drama texts, findings on the analysis of the depiction of masculinity in the texts to address the limitations encountered, and conclude with recommendations for future research and practice based on the findings on the analysis of the depiction of masculinity in the texts and the conclusion on the analysis on the depiction of masculinity in the texts, *Malefane* (2015), *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015) and *Diphetoho* (2015).

5.2 Summary of the Selected Literary Texts

5.2.1 Summary of *Malefane*

The literary drama text *Malefane* (2015), written by N.P. Maake is about a young teacher of marriageable age, by the name of Malefane. Malefane's future as a teacher is manipulated by Nkubu, who is a political leader with the support of his father, Letshela, to join politics. Malefane's father insists on the postponement of Malefane and his girlfriend, Mapule's long-awaited lobola negotiations, so that he can focus on politics. Despite Malefane's mother, Mmamalefane, advising Malefane not to join politics, Malefane joins politics. Nkubu's motive is to use Malefane to win political elections. After Nkubu has won the political elections, he fires Malefane from the political organization. Malefane secretly attends the meeting, as he has not been invited, and he is fired. His life ends tragically with a gunshot.

5.2.2 Summary of *Lejwe la Kgopiso*

The literary drama *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015), by T. Letshaba, is about the impact of poverty in the village of Katilehong. The poverty leads to Tsietsi's failure to provide for his family as the head of the family. The situation becomes worse when an abusive employer named Mohlouwa fires Tsietsi at his workplace and has an extramarital affair with Tsietsi's wife, Naledi. Tsietsi turned to substance abuse after losing his job. Tsietsi learns that Naledi is having an extramarital affair with Mohlouwa. As a result, he arms himself with an axe and kills his children, Mohlouwa's wife, his wife Naledi, and his friend Pheleu.

5.2.3 Summary of *Diphetoho*

The literary drama *Diphetoho* (2015), written by P. Mokhele, focuses on the conflict in the police department about democratic changes. There is a clash between the former apartheid laws and the new democratic laws that protect human rights. The police officers who have worked during the apartheid era still want the old government and are angered with the appointment of a female station commissioner. The male police officers think that the appointment of a woman as a leader is culturally and socially unacceptable in the society of the Basotho. Naledi takes revenge on her three colleagues, Lerwana, Lejone and Takalatsa, who have sexually abused her. Naledi abducts and murders them and takes her own life because of the devastating consequences of abuse.

5.3 Findings

5.3.1 *Malefane*

Based on the analysis of this study, the following findings for each research question have been revealed as follows:

1. What is the culture of masculine characters in *Malefane* (2015)?
 - Masculine characters who embody bravery demonstrate bravery in a favourable depiction through the character's determination during hardships.
 - This study analysed and found that the traditional masculine cultural norms are that men are culturally expected to suppress their emotions, because crying in some of the Basotho society is culturally and socially unacceptable and seen as not masculine.
2. What is the language of masculine characters in *Malefane* (2015)?
 - This study revealed that the language depicts masculinity-imposed silence on women because the masculine characters exclude women from important discussions. The language that depicts masculinity asserts male dominance and control over women.
3. What is the behaviour of masculine characters in *Malefane* (2015)?

- Power dynamics are depicted as the masculine behaviour of the masculine characters who possess power as they manipulate and dominate other characters. The masculine behaviour of power dynamics is revealed as a form of hegemonic masculinity.

5.3.2 *Lejwe la Kgopiso*

Based on the analysis of this study, the following findings for each research question have been revealed as follows:

1. What is the culture of masculine characters in *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015)?
 - This study found that emotional stoicism reflects the cultural belief of some of the Basotho, which states that men should not show their emotions. This is supported by the proverb: “*Monna ke nku ha a lle*”, which means that in the Basotho culture, it is culturally unacceptable for men to cry or show vulnerability.
 - This study found that the depiction of masculinity through infidelity is seen as culturally accepted in some of the Basotho society.
2. What is the language of masculine characters in *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015)?
 - This study found that the depiction of masculinity through verbal aggression in *Lejwe la kgopiso* reveals dominance and power.
3. What is the behaviour of masculine characters in *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015)?
 - This study revealed that the depiction of masculinity through power dynamics is shown in the acts of control, dominance, and asserting power over other individuals who do not possess power.

5.3.3 *Diphetoho*

Based on the analysis of this study, the following findings for each research question have been revealed as follows:

1. What is the culture of masculine characters in *Diphetoho* (2015)?

- This study discovered that the depiction of masculinity through family headship revealed a cultural norm in the Basotho society, which states that women's primary responsibility is to take care of family and household duties, while men are culturally expected to be the heads and financial providers to their families.
 - The analysis of this study revealed that toughness depicts masculinity through masculine norms, which state that men are culturally expected to be tough to prove their masculinity.
2. What is the language of masculine characters in *Diphetoho* (2015)?
- The language that depicts masculinity undermines, belittles, and disregards women's authority and asserts control and dominance over women.
3. What is the behaviour of masculine characters in *Diphetoho* (2015)?
- The analysis of this study revealed that masculinity is depicted as being closely tied to violent behaviour, which is hegemonic masculinity, where masculine characters exert violence to show dominance and masculinity.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- To eradicate hegemonic masculinity, panel members doing the selection of literary texts for schools, including institutions of higher learning, should consider texts that depict conducive masculinity for societies.
- Authors of Sesotho literary texts need to create literary works that depict masculinity in a way that encourages masculine characters to express emotions and seek help, and demonstrate vulnerability as strength, not weakness.
- This study recommends that authors of Sesotho literary texts write literary texts that discourage the depiction of masculinity through infidelity but promote healthy and faithful relationships.

- Authors of Sesotho literary texts need to develop texts that depict masculinity where members of the society share responsibilities in the families, regardless of biological sex.
- Authors of Sesotho literary texts in the Basotho society are encouraged to write literary texts that depict masculinity by promoting leadership that is derived from commitment and cooperation, not from manipulation or domination.
- Scholars who are interested in researching the depiction of masculinity in Sesotho literary texts are recommended to further research on how masculinity is depicted in different genres of Sesotho literary texts to get in-depth information on the depiction of masculinity.
- Authors of Sesotho literary texts are recommended to write texts that depict masculinity through non-violent behaviour as conflict resolution and demonstrate the importance of peace-making as a depiction of masculinity.
- To provide scholars with meaningful information about how masculinity is portrayed in Basotho society, this study recommends that the Department of Education incorporate an investigation of masculinity into the literature curriculum in Sesotho literary texts.
- The government should add literary texts from the Basotho society about masculinity to schools and institutions of higher learning, and support educators with training and resources on the exploration of the depiction of masculinity in Sesotho literature.
- To investigate how masculinity is portrayed in Sesotho literary texts, scholars should read various genres of these texts, read literary theories that analyze masculinity, and analyze how masculinity is portrayed in the texts they have read.

5.5 Limitations and Outlook of the Study

This study was limited to the analysis of only three selected texts, namely *Malefane* (2015), *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015) and *Diphetoho* (2015). The researcher surmises that the three selected literary texts might not widely have narrated how Basotho masculinity is

depicted in Basotho literary texts. To fill this limitation, in future projects, the researcher intends to select a higher number of books to acquire more information on the depiction of masculinity among the Basotho society. This study was not comparative but investigated the depiction of masculinity in selected Sesotho drama texts: *Malefane* (2015), *Lejwe la kgopiso* (2015), and *Diphetoho* (2015). In the future, the researcher will conduct a comparative study on the depiction of masculinity in different Sesotho literary texts to explore more on masculinity in the Basotho society. This study was a desktop study that did not include the use of data collection tools such as interviews and questionnaires but focused only on the data collected from the selected literary texts. To curb this limitation, in future projects, the researcher will employ different methods of data collection in practice, such as conducting interviews, surveys, and questionnaires, to investigate the depiction of masculinity in the society of the Basotho.

5.6 Summary

This study was intended to examine the depiction of masculinity in three selected Sesotho drama texts. This study was divided into five chapters.

In chapter one, the topic, research questions, research objectives, and the problem statement were introduced.

In chapter two, the study reviewed relevant literature by other scholars who employed literary masculinity theory. The aim was to investigate how other scholars utilized literary masculinity theory in their research projects and to identify the gaps in the depiction of masculinity in literary texts.

In chapter three, this study discussed the methodology that was employed to gather data and how the data would be analysed. The intention was to lay the groundwork for the research framework and for the researcher to successfully come up with reliable findings and recommendations.

Chapter four focused on data analysis utilizing the aspects of literary masculinity theory, and male characters were examined on how they depict masculinity in selected Sesotho drama texts.

Chapter five concludes the study and deals with the study findings on the depiction of masculinity in selected Sesotho drama texts, recommendations, limitations, the outlook of the study, and the summary of the study.

This study showed that hegemonic masculine norms are depicted through emotional stoicism, violence, infidelity, aggression and control. The study's recommendations support a positive depiction of masculinity through shared responsibilities in families, non-violent conflict resolution, leadership that comes from cooperation and commitment rather than dominance, as well as social and cultural expectations that foster emotional vulnerability through asking for help and expressing emotions. The study suggests that the government should integrate positive themes regarding masculinity into the Basotho literary curriculum and develop community programs on the discussion of masculinity. The Ministry of Education could include Basotho literary works that depict healthy masculinity and eradicate toxic masculinity.

This study recommends that the authors of Sesotho literary texts depict positive masculinity by creating texts that show emotional openness, respect for others, eradication of violence, and social responsibility in the society of the Basotho. Scholars exploring the depiction of masculinity in Sesotho literary texts are to analyse texts for healthy male traits and a positive depiction of masculinity among the Basotho society.

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