

# **RACE RELATIONS IN TWO POST-APARTHEID SESOTHO FARM NOVELS**

by

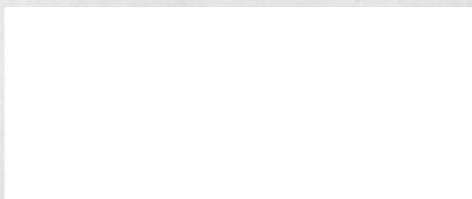
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degree of Master of Arts of the University of Stellenbosch.**

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and I have not previously in its entirety or part submitted it at any university for a degree



## SUMMARY

This study examines the presentation of race relations in two Sesotho novels written after 1994. The purpose of the study is to establish whether or not post-apartheid Sesotho novels present race relations as they were presented during the apartheid era. The novels of focus are, N.S. Zulu's *Nonyana ya Tshepo* (The bird of hope) (1997) and T.W.D. Mohapi's *Lehlaba la lephako* (The pain of hunger) (1999). The manner in which the authors who wrote during the two distinct eras presented the issue of race and presented race relations will be the focal point. At the end of this study it should be clear whether or not authors after 1994, that is, after the apartheid era continue to present race relations in an idealistic manner.

During the apartheid era authors such Lesoro (1968) and Mophethe (1966) were very cautious when presenting race relations in their novels. The common factor in these novels is the portrayal of the white Afrikaner characters by the authors. White characters were portrayed as very merciful, good Samaritans and their relationship with their black counterparts were often harmonious and crisis free. Attributes of race such as racial discrimination, racial hatred, racial conflict and racial intolerance were seldom spoken about in those novels. This is reminiscent of the notorious apartheid laws, which prohibit freedom of press. White characters in some novels published during the apartheid era were not characters derived from real life.

In N.S. Zulu's novel, *Nonyana ya Tshepo* we examine the portrayal of the characters from the two distinct races, black Africans and white Afrikaners. The author portrays the two groups of characters to be what Scholes (1981:11) calls characters representative of a social class, race and a profession. Black characters are portrayed as the exploited, which are always inferior, submissive and subjected to racial discrimination by their white counterparts. White Afrikaners are portrayed as the exploiters, who are superior, oppressors and the ones who further the policy of apartheid. This state of affairs prompted the black Africans to develop hatred towards the Whites. Instead of idolizing their masters, Blacks do the opposite. Our main character, Tshepo who is said to be

fathered by the white Afrikaner, is marginalized by his fellow Blacks and declared an outcast.

In T.W.D. Mohapi's novel, *Lehlaba la lephako*, the main character, Seabata who lusts for power and wealth is seen struggling for both at the expense of his fellow black Africans. Seabata is used by his white boss, Sepanapodi, to maintain the legacy of apartheid. The narrator portrays Seabata in such a way that he could carry out his boss' mission. Seabata is power hungry and always likes to please his boss to attain that, even if that means creating enmity with his own black people.

Seabata's socio-economic status makes him vulnerable to manipulation by Sepanapodi. Seabata was advised by his father that he should always strive to please his master in order to gain glory and wealth. He followed the advice slavishly and that left him devastated. He found himself at loggerheads with his colleagues, with the pastor, Nkgelwane, with a local teacher, Mohanelwa and with his wife, Mmabatho. Conflict between Seabata and the community is caused by the pain of hunger.

## OPSOMMING

Die doelstelling van hierdie studie is om ondersoek in te stel of die twee Sesotho novelles wat na 1994 geskrywe is, die verhouding tussen verskillende rasse behandel. Die doel van die studie is om uit te vind of die Sesotho novelles wat gedurende die tydperk van apartheid die aanbieding van rasse-verhouding dek, soos wat dit aangewys was gedurende die tydperk van apartheid. Die ondersoek sal gedoen word met die vergelyking van twee novelles wat na 1994 geskrywe is, d.w.s. N.S. Zulu se *Nonyana ya Tshupo* en T.W.D. Mohapi se *Lehlaba la lephako*. Die manier waarop die twee skrywers wat gedurende die twee afsonderlike tydperk, die kwessie van rasse behandel, en hoe hulle dit aangebied het, sal die fokuspunt wees. Aan die einde van hierdie studie moet dit duideliker word aan die lesers tot watter mate die skrywers wat na 1994 geskryf het, d.w.s. na die apartheid tydperk, nog die rasse-verhouding op 'n idealistiese manier aangebied het.

Die skrywers wat gedurende die apartheid tydperk geskrywe het, soos Lesoro (1968) en Mophethe (1966) was baie versigtig toe hulle die rasse-verhouding in hulle novelles aangebied het. Die gewone faktor van hierdie novelles is die uitbeelding van die wit Afrikaners se karakters deur die skrywers. Wit karakters is altyd as baie barmhagtig, en as goeie Samaritane beskrywe, en hul verhouding teenoor hulle swart teenhangers is dikwels eensgesind en vry van krisis uitgebeeld. Die hoedanigheid van rasseonderskeiding wat rassehaat, rasse in stryd met mekaar, en rasse onverdraagsaamheid, is in daardie tyd selde van geskryf in die novelle. Dit herinner die leser aan die ongunstige apartheidswette wat nie vryheid van die pers toegelaat het nie. Wit karakters, in sommige novelle wat gedurende die tydperk van apartheid gepubliseer is, is nie karakters wat van die ware lewe afgelei is nie.

In N.S. Zulu se novelle, *Nonyana ya Tshupo* word 'n uitbeelding gemaak van karakters van die twee afsonderlike rasse, die swart Afrikaners en die wit Afrikaners. Die skrywer beeld die twee groepe van karakters as die wat Scholes (1981:11) noem die wat verteenwoordigend van 'n sosiale klas, rasse en beroep is. Swart karakters is beskrywe as diegene wat geeksploteer word, wat altyd as minderwaardige, onderworpe en

mindere rasse beskou word. Hulle word gediskrimineer deur hulle wit landgenote. Wit Afrikaners is beskou as die eksploiteerders, wat die voortreflike onderdrukkers is en wat wat die beleid van apartheid laat voortgaan. Hierdie toestand het die swart Afrikaners gelei om haat te ontwikkel teenoor die Wittes. In plaas van om hulle meesters eer te bewys, het die swart Afrikaners die teenoorgestelde gedrag. Die hoofkarakter, Tshepo, wat geglo is dat hy kind van die wit Afrikaner is, is deur sy mense verban en as verworpeling verklaar.

In T.W.D. Mohapi se novelle, *Lehlaba la lephako* het die hoofkarakter, Seabata, begeertes van mag en rykdom. Hy word opgelei as 'n stryder op koste van sy medemense, swart Afrikaners. Seabata is deur sy wit meester, Sepanapodi misbruik om die nalatenskap van apartheid te handhaaf. Die verteller beeld Seabata af op so 'n manier dat dit duidelik is dat Seabata sy baas se opdrag sou voortdra. Hy, Seabata het 'n wens om mag te hê en bo alles om sy baas tevrede te stel op koste van ander swart Afrikaners, al maak dit hom 'n vyand van sy mense. Seabata se sosiale status het hom laat kwesbaar ge stel teenoor Sepanapodi se manipulasie. Sy vader het hom advies gegee dat hy altyd sy meester moes bevredig ter wille van glorie en rykdom. Hy het toe die advies van sy vader slaafs nagevolg, daarom het dit hom in 'n neerdrukkende gevoel laat eef. Aan die einde is hy in 'n konflik met andere soos sy kollegas, die plaaslike predikant, Nkgelwane, die onderwyser, Mohanelwa en sy vrou. Die stryd wat Seabata met al die mense in die gemeenskap het, is die oorsaak van hongersnood.

## KAKARETSO

Sepheo ka thuto ena ke ho hlahloba tlhahiso ya dikamano tsa semorabe dipaleng tsa Sesotho tse ngotsweng kamorao ho 1994. Thuto ena e tla sibolla ho re dipale tsa Sesotho tse ngotsweng mehleng e ka morao ho kgethollo di tswela pele ho hlahisa dikamano tsa semorabe ka tsela eo di neng di hlahiswa ka teng mehleng ya kgethollo. Dipale tsa Sesotho tse ngotsweng ka morao ho 1994 tse tla hlahlojwa ke buka ya N.S. Zulu: *Nonyana ya Tshupo* le buka ya T.W.D. Mohapi: *Lehlaba la lephako*. Tsela eo bangodi ba ngotseng mehleng ena e mmedi e fapanang ba ngotseng ka teng ka semorabe e tla nyakurelwa. Pheletsong ya thuto ena ho tshwanela ho hlakela babadi hore ebe bangodi ba ngotseng mehleng e ka morao ho 1994, e leng mehla e ka morao ho kgethollo, ba tswela pele ho hlahisa dikamano tsa semorabe ka tsela e phethahetseng kapa tjhe.

Bangodi ba ngotseng mehleng ya kgethollo, jwaleka Lesoro (1965) le Mophethe (1966), ba ne ba le sedi ha ba hlahisa dikamano tsa semorabe dipaleng tsa bona. Dipale tsa pele ho 1994 di tshwana ka ntho e le nngwe feela e leng ka moo bangodi ba hlahisang semelo sa Maafricanere a masweu ka teng. Baphetwa ba basweu ba ne ba hlahiswa ba le mohau, e le Basamaria ba molemo, mme dikamano tsa bona le bomphato ba bona ba batsho e le tse mofuthu, tse senang qaka. Dikateng tsa semorabe tse jwalo ka kgethollo ya semorabe, lehloyo la semorabe, dikgohlano tsa semorabe le ho se amohele ba merabe e meng, di ne di tshohela ho buuwa ka tsona dipaleng. Sena se hopotsa babadi ka melao e tummeng hampe ya kgethollo e neng e thibela bolokolohi ba bongodi. Baphetwa ba basweu ba neng ba hlahisitswe dipaleng tse ding mehleng ya kgethollo e ne e se baphetwa ba bopilweng ho tswa bophelong ba nnete.

Paleng ya N.S. Zulu, *Nonyana ya Tshupo*, re hlahloba tlhahiso ya baphetwa ho tswa merabeng e mmedi e fapaneng, e leng Maaforika a matsho le Maafricanere a masweu. Mongodi o hlahisa dihlopha tse pedi tse na tsa baphetwa e le seo Scholes (1981:11) a se bitsang baphetwa ba emelang sehlopha se itseng bophelong, morabe le porofeshene. Baphetwa ba batsho ba hlahiswa e le ba tujwang, ba tlaase maamong, ba

phethisang ditaello tsa beng ba bona, mme e le mahlatsipa a kgethollo ya semorabe ho bamphato ba bona ba basweu.

Maafrikanere a masweu a hlahiswa e le bahanyapetsi ba baholo ba bahatelli, ba ntshetsang pele leano la kgethollo. Maemo ana a ditaba a susumeditse Maafrica a matsho ho hloya ba basweu. Ho ena le hore ba kgumamele bomphato ba bona ba basweu, batho ba batsho ba ne ba sa etse jwalo. Mophetwa wa rona wa sehloho e leng Tshepo, eo ntatae e leng Leafrikanere le lesweu o kgethollwa ke ba habo, mme ba mmitisa hlahlasolle.

Paleng ya T.W.D. Mohapi, *Lehlaba la lephako*, mophetwa wa sehloho e leng Seabata, ya nang le tjantjello ya ho ba le matla le leruo, o bonahala a tsitlallela ho fumana tseo ka bobedi ka ho sotla bomphato ba habo ba batsho. Seabata o sebediswa ke monga hae, Sepanapodi ho boloka leano la kgethollo. Mophethi o hlahisa Seabata ka tsela eo a tla kgona ho ntshetsa pele leano la monga hae. Seabata o nyoretswe matla, mme o leka ka hohle ho thabisa monga hae ho fihlella seo, leha hoo ho ka bolela ho qabana le bomphato ba hae ba batsho. Maemo a Seabata a phedisano le a moruo a a mo thapisa, mme a mo fetola phofu ya Sepanapodi. Seabata o ne a eletswe ke ntatae hore a thabise monga hae mme hoo ho tla mo tlisetsa lehlohonolo le leruo. O ile a nka keletso eo ntle le ho sebedisa keletso ya hae, mme seo sa mo tlisetsa tshenyeho. O iphumane a qabane le basebetsimmoho, moruti Nkgelwane, titjhere, e leng Mohanelwa le mohatsae. Dikgohlano pakeng tsa Seabata le batho ba mekgatlo yohle ya setjhaba di bakilwe ke lehlaba la lephako.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this piece of work to my late brothers, Khabele Edwin Mokhele and Lehlohonolo Reginald Mokhele.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Problem Identification.**

The problem we aim to address in this study is to find out whether or not post-apartheid Sesotho novels continue to present idealistic race relations. Our point of departure is that most literary works reflect social issues of their times as Peck and Coyle (1984:2) contend that “every work of literature has a generic context. In addition, every work has a historical context: that is, it belongs to a particular historical period”.

The same goes for African languages and Sesotho specifically. Like all writers at a given time, Sesotho writers tend to portray concerns of their times. For example, when one studies Sesotho novels written during the apartheid era and after 1994 in South Africa, one realizes that they are about issues of those historical epochs. The issues they address stem from the social experiences and perspectives of those eras. History also plays a vital role in the writing of the literary texts of those two eras.

During the apartheid era, novelists were not writing freely but were restricted by the apartheid laws that inhibited freedom of expression in socio-political issues. Novels published during those days had to undergo scrutiny and censorship, which were the order of the day. South African authors in literature, in general, were very sensitive in dealing with racial issues, yet they wrote little about subjects, which expose the practice of racism especially by whites South Africans, given that apartheid gave them power to be superior to other races.

Racial relations in many Sesotho novels published during the apartheid era were often good. Such novels are marked by less conflict among characters of different races or surprisingly, no conflict at all. The presentation of conflict in literary texts, if that was done, could not be attributed to racial hatred, racial discrimination or racial intolerance but was presented as just hatred, discrimination or intolerance of individuals, not something that was inherent in the system of racial inequalities. For example, in

Lesoro's novel, *Pere e ntsho Blackmore* (1968) readers are confronted with the utterance:

*A re otle a re tiisa mekokotlo. A batla hore le rona kamoso re be dikgoka.* (Lesoro 1968:103)

(He beats us and strengthens our backs so that we could become violent in future.)

In this passage, the author uses a poem to satirize the hatred that existed between blacks and whites during the apartheid era. He, instead of condemning the beating of the blacks by their white counterparts, condones it because it will create strong people who will challenge life with bravery.

White and black relations in these apartheid novels were often represented as harmonious. White characters were frequently patronized and their depiction and portrayal still left question marks as to whether they are what Frey (1987:6) calls dynamic characters, alive with great passion and strong emotions. For example, when one studies the novel, *Mofufutso wa phatla*, one realizes the harmonious relations between the white Afrikaner, Landman and the black labourer, Monaheng. The narrator explicitly reveals the bond between those two characters in the chapter headings: 'Mathe le leleme', 'Meetlo e tshwanang' and 'Bitso' ('Close friends', 'The same customs' and 'The one with whom I share a name'). Swanepoel (1987:71) calls this an ideal relationship.

A brief look at some of the farm novels published during the apartheid era will help in establishing how race relations were presented during that period and that will serve as a basis in our endeavour to trace the post-apartheid farm novels and to establish whether or not the presentation of race relations is still an idealistic one.

The novel *Leshala le tswala molora* (1962), by Lesoro, is about black and white relations of a farm setting. Here the author patronizes those relations. In this novel, the readers are confronted with the white farmer, Ramolelle who is portrayed as a peace loving

Afrikaner who treats Blacks with dignity. He adopts an African black child, Ramailane, who was abandoned by his uncle.

Ramolelle adopts Ramailane, and converts him to be a complete member of his family. He then changes his African name to Aggrey Wilkinsen. In a new home Ramailane enjoys all the privileges that Ramolelle's own biological son enjoys. He is afforded the opportunity to study agricultural courses in an expensive school and ends up being the farmer's successor in managing the farm. The relations between these two characters from different racial groups are conflict-free. We can compare these relations with the ones that Ramailane had with his fellow black brothers and with his uncle, Mosala before he was deserted. That relation comprises a series of conflicts, which involve Ramailane, and all members of the family, and he is constantly ill-treated until the white farmer comes to his rescue.

The exaggerated image of Ramolelle does not reflect the white Afrikaner of the period of writing. The author further overstates these black-white relations to the extent that he depicts Ramolelle as been ignorant in guiding his own biological son to choose a career, but in fact persuades an adopted black child to follow agricultural courses to prepare him to take over when Ramolelle retires as a farmer. This contradicts the English expression 'Blood is thicker than water,' and does not reflect the Afrikaner farmer's vision during that period.

As mentioned earlier, authors during the apartheid era were restricted when dealing with some socio-political issues. The flaws of the apartheid system were never exposed, criticized or attacked in literary texts. Issues that were politically forbidden during that time were never publicized with any form of media. When touching on such issues, authors were forced into praising or commending the system or individuals serving within the system, to influence publication of their work. Skilful authors could get away with that by employing techniques such as satire, irony or sarcasm.

Readers are not surprised to find that the violation of the then Group Areas Act by Ramolelle when he took a black child to live with him is not opposed, challenged or even punished by the authorities in charge.

The novel, *Pere e ntsho Blackmore* is about black-white relations. The novelist also touches on the introduction of new systems and policies during the apartheid era and he uses the character, Monaheng, who is depicted as supportive of the apartheid government to welcome policies with praise poems.

An event surrounding the abuse of power by the white farmer, Ramosa when he robs a black farm labourer, Monyane of his horse is dealt with in passing without attaching it to any racial oppression. Readers are in fact made to understand that Monyane is in fact not cheated but he is returning a favour to Ramosa, who took his horse to a veterinarian surgeon when it was sick. Therefore, he must give up his horse, which the in-laws gave him as *lobola*. This contradicts the Sesotho expression '*Mpho ha e fanwe*' (You cannot give away what was your gift.)

The author names the white farmer, Ramosa (One with mercy), to reinforce his good character trait and advance his patronizing strategy. Monaheng is portrayed as always receptive to the new systems and discriminatory policies of apartheid. He always perceives the system of the apartheid government as pure and he appreciates all the policies within that government and sees the good side of them only. It is ridiculous that Monaheng praises the notorious and oppressive laws of that time in his utterance:

*A re otle a re tiisa mekokotlo. A batla ho re le rona ka moso re be dikgoka*  
(Lesoro1969:103).

(He beats us and strengthens our backs, so that we could be violent in future.)

What amazes the readers is that Monaheng, who is a teacher by profession, and who belongs to the oppressed community of the blacks, fails to realize that some of these

policies were meant to oppress blacks even though some of the illiterate members of the community make him aware.

The author dwells too much on showering the policies of racial segregation with praises. Pillars of apartheid such as Dr Verwoerd are also glorified. The novel is clouded with praise poems and that sabotages narration, development of plot and character change and character development. For most of the political events mentioned, there is a praise poem or an elegy in accompaniment. The Separate Development Act is regarded as a progressive tool of dealing with people from different races. It is praised for having achieved its purpose. In this regard, Monaheng is depicted as the supporter of the apartheid government and he backs and protects it wholeheartedly.

Nqheku's novel, *Arola naheng ya Maburu* (1942) is about racial relations between the white farmers and black labourers. When one compares this novel with the ones mentioned earlier, there is a vast difference in the presentation of race relations. Even though the author's work is written within the South African context, it was published outside South Africa, in an independent state of Lesotho. The author is therefore writing freely without any restraints of South African politics and racial laws. Readers are not surprised by the frequent use of discriminatory titles such as 'baase', 'kafore' and 'noi' because they were commonly used then. These are what Swanepoel (1987) calls the South African basic symbols and practices associated with conflicts of the apartheid era - abusive language, the sjambok, callousness and wilfulness.

Arola, the main character, leaves Lesotho to find a job in the Free State. The first white farmer he meets is portrayed to be very kind. His relations with Arola are harmonious and conflict-free. They both spend six months working together but we are never told of any conflict.

The narrator moves on to say that the only trouble that came on Arola's way was the unidentified image that he fought with one night. This is what the Basotho commonly calls '*thokolosi*' (the evil spirit). The narrator also tells us of the Zulu hooligans that

attack Arola when he is on his way home. Here the readers are surprised by these conflict situations, which emanates from nowhere, and by the harmonious relationship between the farmer and the labourer, which survive for such a long period without conflict. It is ironic to see the white Afrikaner and the black labourer being such a perfect match in the work situation during the times of high racial tension.

When Arola left the farm, that step marks the turning point of his life. He arrives at the next farm and there he meets an Afrikaner farmer with his labourers. Trouble starts when he greets them using the Basotho greeting expression '*Kgomo tseo.*' The white Afrikaner farmer, who is portrayed to have an extensive knowledge of Sesotho language and seems to understand that expression well, makes a meal out of it and insults Arola. He eventually orders that Arola be tied on the wagon wheel and he beats him fiercely.

From that incident onwards, the reader sees Arola changing his attitude towards every white Afrikaner farmer he meets. He fights the farmers to the bitter end. It becomes clear that the author in this novel is driving a political point. He portrays a character, Arola whose mission is to appreciate racial tolerance and punish racial intolerance. Swanepoel (1987:65) feels that the author failed to find a convincing technique to portray Arola when he changes his role from the defender to the aggressor. This is because Arola starts as the defender of the racially oppressed farm labourers, but ends up hating every white Afrikaners without any valid reason, except that one of them wronged him.

From the above discussion, it becomes clear that some authors during the apartheid era had a problem in their presentation of race relations. The problem is realised when they portray characters to address racial issues. Both black and white characters are often not portrayed as life-like characters and they are not developing characters.

It becomes evident that most Sesotho farm novels during the apartheid era, published in South Africa, presented race relations in a more idealistic manner, for clear ideological reasons, and also apparently that they avoided censorship laws. The relations we have

analyzed so far are those, which involved blacks and white characters of the same gender, that is, males. On the other hand, English authors during the apartheid era did raise racial issues in themes such as miscegenation and racial intolerance. Zander (as quoted by Zulu 2000:278) feels that such themes were used to attack racism and apartheid.

In this study we aim to establish whether or not post-apartheid Sesotho novels continue to present the same idealistic race relations presented during the apartheid era or perhaps there is a change to a more realistic way of presenting race relations.

## **1.2 Method and approach**

In this study we will examine racial issues in the post-apartheid Sesotho farm novels in line with the approach of Guerin et al (1999), Payne (1998) and Brooker (1999) cultural theory which focuses on cultural forms such as class, race and identity in literature. Payne (1998:3) sees cultural theory in terms of three contentions, subjectivity and consciousness, ideology and hegemony, and critique and polysemy. Subjectivity and consciousness refer to human beings as individuals with essential and determinate identities such as language, culture, race class, gender and politics, which are never autonomous, but dependent of other factors (Payne 1998:3). Payne (1998:3) defines ideology and hegemony as follows:

Forms of consciousness ... constitute ideologies, which either hold subject in their grip, or form limitations that can be breached by critiques or social revolution. An alternative (or supplement) to violent forms of suppressing or postponing revolutionary is the manipulation of the superstructural forms of culture – education, media, religion, art –not only by government but also by those who are subjects to such manipulation. Hegemony, in this sense, is complicity in oppression as normal or as necessarily a part of culture by those who are ruled by it... hegemony is woven out of a network of ideologies and is then transmitted by intellectuals in affiliation with the ruling class.

Critique and polysemy provide a systematic program to perform a critique of ideology ... in order simultaneously to understand its processes and to resist its dominance (Payne 1998:3).

Brooker (1999:208) regards this approach as focusing on the social forms and textual representations taken by expressions of race and racism. This approach, as Guerin et al (1999:242) stated, is "a direct method to attack class inequalities in society" and to strive for democratic ideals. This approach will help us in addressing racial issues in the post-apartheid Sesotho farm novels and it is discussed in the next chapter as the theoretical framework for this study.

### **1.3 Scope of study**

The focus of study will be on two Sesotho novels, *Nonyana ya Tshepo* (1997) by Zulu and *Lehlaba la lephako* (1999) by Mohapi. These are post-apartheid Sesotho farm novels written and published in South Africa. The two novels have been selected for the purpose of this study because they deal with racial relations in South Africa after 1994, which is the objective of this research study.

### **1.4 Significance and impact of study**

The significance and impact of this study, in the words of Ngan-ling Chow et al (1996:xi) is that a study of race, class and gender is currently transforming work in most disciplines. The study will also foster transformation by grounding race studies in specific empirical contributions, by developing new, more inclusive theoretical analyses. This can be achieved by documenting the experiences of diverse groups in society, and by suggesting new directions for social policy that can account for the effects of race on the difficulties that different groups experience. Also, narrowing the gap between the past and the present view of racial relations would have a positive contribution in novels of the future.

## 1.5 Organisation

This study is organized as follows:

Chapter 1 is the introduction.

Chapter 2 is about literature review of the study.

Chapter 3 is about race relations in *Nonyana ya Tshepo*.

Chapter 4 is about race relations in *Lehlaba la lephako*.

Chapter 5 is conclusion.



## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

It has already been established in the previous chapter that the objective of this study is to find out how two post-apartheid novels present race relations. It has also been indicated in that chapter that the method to be used is informed by cultural theory, and that cultural theory reviews a wide range of issues such as gender, politics, race, class, language and culture. Only race has been singled out in this study, hence in our literature review below, attention will be on the concepts race, racism and race relations.

We start with the concept 'race'.

### 2.1 The concept race

Mention is always made of everyone belonging to the human race. This is a very broad category but it can be subdivided and we may be specific and talk about the Mongoloid race and the Negro race. Some people can split the category further and speak of, for example, the British race, the Afrikaner race, the Zulu race and the Tswana race. Some may disagree with the above split.

The above-mentioned interpretations cause a great deal of confusion as to how the term 'race' should be used. Ash (1974:8) defines race as a group, which breeds among itself and produces children that will inherit the same features as their parents. The emphasis here is on 'same features' as the other, which means that there is a strong element to see race in terms of the self rather than the other, and that identity, rather than difference, plays a crucial role. Ash (1974:8) further asserts that these features, specifically the physical ones are closely related to the land of origin of those races. For example, black people's black skin helps them to resist the sunrays in hot climates of Africa. The white skin of the white people allows the rays of the sun to reach the layer in the skin, which will permit the production of vitamin D. This group is mostly indigenous to Europe.

The above definition of race still causes confusion because groups rarely breed amongst themselves because of the free contacts that occur between various groups in society. In a heterogeneous society like South Africa, relationships across racial barriers and lust across the colour line cannot be controlled and interbreeding is unstoppable.

During the apartheid era in South Africa, the physical differences were used as markers for distinguishing and discriminating against races.

Slattery's (1985:32) view of race include the concept gender because he claims that both race and gender are forms of class rule in which economic inequalities and private property are found in modern capitalism. Race, he asserts, makes the groups visible and some groups, as race or class, become victims of exploitation. In this situation, the ruling class often uses stereotypes and racist ideas and prejudices with the objective to justify the power of the elite over the working class. For example, during the apartheid era in South Africa black males were often earning less than their white male counterparts, and even less than white females. Black female labourers were earning far less than the black males. Labels such as a 'master' and a 'servant' were used for whites and blacks respectively. In this case black males were gendered as the 'other', the lesser than the white female, and not man as their white counterparts in terms of unequal economic and social resources.

In his study, Heywood (1997:182) refers to race as a group of people who share a common ancestry and 'one blood'. He however finds the term controversial both politically and scientifically. He asserts that scientists do not believe in a concept 'race' as it does not show a species type difference between people. Scientists refer to people as people or animal type and do not classify them further into racial groups. He further contends that politically, racial categorization is based on cultural stereotypes. Referring to the South African context during the apartheid era, blacks were often stereotyped as

uneducable; that is why they were often discouraged from choosing Sciences and even Commercial subjects from the school curriculum.

The concept race is not only used within biological sciences, social sciences or political sciences but is a topical issue that is often found in every day conversations or in press reports. Closely related to the concept of race are terms such as racial tension, racial conflict, racial differences, racial discrimination and racism. The first four concepts are forms of racial intolerance. The latter concept is a doctrine and it will be dealt with later.

The concept race is not discriminatory by nature. If it is taken to mean people with different physical features such as colour, it creates no problem. The problem arises when people not only see the physical features but also see differences in behaviour connected with belonging to a particular race. Some people say blacks are stupid, coloureds are drunkards, Jews are greedy for money and Indians are crooks. These attitudes and stereotypes often lead to racial segregation and even racial violence.

## **2.2 The concept racism**

The concept 'racism', according to Slattery (1985:32) was introduced in the 1930s to refer to doctrines of racial superiority that were popular in countries like Nazi Germany. Brits (1995:204) takes a similar view in his definition of racism. He regards racism as a doctrine or belief that differences among human races determine cultural or individual achievements. According to this belief, some races are considered superior to others and that justifies unequal treatment among races. For example, in South Africa during the apartheid era and even today, white people are still stereotyped as superior to blacks.

Such is an ideology of race which is a doctrine concerning human race. Brooker (1999:208), who asserts that an ideology may take three basic active forms, namely, violent assault, institutionalized racism and the expression of common sense attitude, supports this view of inequality as being inherently racial. These attitudes, Brooker

maintains, are based on unexamined and prejudiced assumptions, which may even make positive statements, such as 'Black is beautiful'.

The use of the concept racism has, however, changed with time and context. During the apartheid era in South Africa the practice of racism was often confined to white South Africans. After 1994, the practice has taken another route. Some political opponents of the post apartheid government refer to the government's Employment equity program, which emphasizes affirmative action, as a reverse racism. This is because this act is seen as favouring the previously disadvantaged racial groups such as blacks, Indians and Coloureds and in turn regarded as discriminating against white South Africans.

Abercrombie (1984:84) regards racism as the determination of action, attitude or policies. This, he maintains, is done by belief about racial characteristics. He further classifies race into two kinds. The first he calls the overt and individual one. This one involves the individual acts of oppression against the subordinate racial group or individual. In the South African context, an individual white Afrikaner may practice oppression to an individual black labourer or he may oppress the group of black labourers.

The second kind of racism he calls the covert and institutional one and asserts that it involves structural relations of subordination and oppression between social groups. For instance, if a group of Afrikaners practice oppression towards the group of the workers that is the covert and institutional racism.

### **2.3 Race from the biological point of view**

To have a clear understanding on the concept of race one would have to look at it from different perspectives. Light and Keller (1975:296) perceive race from a biological perspective and regards it as population that through generations of breeding has develop distinctive physical characteristics that are transmitted genetically. They cited three groups that are often identified when the concept race is used. These are the

white race, the yellow race and the black race. These groups, they assert, have distinct physical features, which separate one race from another.

Their white skin, light blue or dark brown eyes, straight or wavy light hair, narrow nose and thin lips characterize the white race. Typical example of this race is found in South Africans. This group is divided into the English-speaking group and the Afrikaner. The yellow race has brown or yellow skin, black and straight hair, high cheekbones and small nose. The South African Coloureds have these features.

The last group, the blacks have black skin, brown eyes, black short hair, and broad nose. Black Africans fall under this group. In South Africa, this group is so diverse that it can further be subdivided into other groups, which are classified according to their language. The Bantu –Negro belongs to that group.

Court (1997:161) regards race as a biological concept whereby human beings can be classified by a number of physical criteria, such as hair type, eye colour, skin colour, nose shape, lip form, etc. This definition conveys the idea that populations marked by characteristic appearance are biologically different. There are physical or biological differences between the black African and the white African groups.

Heywood (1997:182) confirms this when he refers to race as physical or genetic differences among human kind that distinguishes one group of people from another on biological grounds like skin and hair colour, physique and facial features.

The mentioned classification, taken from the South African context, still leaves questions. One wonders whether we can classify the South African Bushmen (San) into the Mongoloid group simply because of them having yellow skin and epicanthic folds, which makes their eyes appear slanted.

Court (1997:161) shared the same view of physical classification in his study of race. He however, went further to warn that race should not be regarded as just a straight

forward black and white issue, arguing that the majority of people are genetically mixed and have a combination of genes from different categories of race. The South African population with diverse population groups that often co-exist and are involved in love relationships is a practical example of mixed relationships.

Our study is not confined to the biological differences between various races but those differences will help us examine how the people from different races can create tension by the stereotypes they attach to each other. Magubane (1979:4) confirms this when he states that the problem in South African society is that the colonized are biologically and culturally inferior. The inception of the Mixed Marriages Act in apartheid South Africa had aggravated the race relations situation and closed doors for inter-race relationships. For example, white South Africans could not marry black South Africans; Indians could marry Coloureds and so on. Though the laws against interracial love had been scraped in post-apartheid South Africa, opposition between races is still problematic. For instance, Zulu (2000:277) in his analysis of the novel, *Itshwele lempangele* examines love relationship between an Indian girl, Shantha and young Zulu man, Ndelebuli and shows how this relationship influences negatively on the families of the two lovers. Here the two opposing families, the Indian and the Zulu families see the intercultural love as 'mental sickness' and attach it to some external power or witchcraft.

#### **2.4 Race from the sociological point of view**

According to Rex (1986:19), the biologists could not use the concept of race to address political differences among human beings. Thus, the biologists surrendered this to the sociologists.

The task facing the sociologists was to establish why political differences were attributed to race. The sociologists' response was first to assimilate all racial problems into the category of ethnic problems. In other words they have to bring an understanding that the problems which exist between the people of different races, who are distinguished from each other because of their visible physical traits like colour, is

not just a problem of black and white races but is a problem which also emanates from the two races' cultural traits. These traits may include amongst others language, religion and family customs.

In present-day democratic South Africa, communication is regarded as an important tool in bringing the rainbow people of the country together and letting them understand each other's way of life. That is why the country has declared eleven languages to be official languages of communication in the country. It is clear that knowledge of each other's language can minimize racial misunderstandings and conflicts. All citizens of this country subscribe to either of the two beliefs. Yet racial groups are still often associated with certain religions. South African Indians are often regarded as belonging to Islam religion; white South Africans are often associated with Christian religion; black South Africans often mix either of the above religions. The constitution of South Africa protects the peoples' rights to believe. This ensures that diverse people of this country, belonging to different religions and denominations, respect each other's religions and live harmoniously. That will in the process improve race relations.

The second task of the sociologists was to recognize the existence of racial differences. This existence acted as a marker for differential division of rights. Mention can be made of the education departments during the apartheid era in South Africa. The different races within South Africa were grouped to fall within different education departments. To cite an example, during the Apartheid era there was the Department of Education and Training, for black South Africans, and the Department of Education and Culture, for white South Africans.

From the above examples, it is clear that during the apartheid era in South Africa the different Education departments ensured that different races were given unequal rights.

The third task facing the sociologist was to use the concept 'race relation situation' to refer to situations marked by racism. Thus according to sociologists any situation where there is any form of prejudice which shows one racial group been superior to the other,

which is regarded as inferior, is referred to as a race relations situation. In South Africa, during apartheid era, there often existed situations in which black South Africans were involved with white South Africans in labour markets, in politics and in other social structures. Their relations were mostly racial.

Rex (1986:20) cites three elements, which are involved in race relation situations. The first he called the situation marked by severe conflict, discrimination, exploitation or oppression in labour market. Taking into account the past South African situation, the Department of Labour recently introduced the Labour Relations Act with the purpose of establishing and maintaining good relations between the employers and the employees. Secondly, he asserts that this situation existed between the categories of people, that is, the quasi- groups.

According to Slattery (1979:32), who also promulgated sociologists' views, the study of race emanates from the study of race as a form of social differentiation and the resultant effect on relations between the races of a particular society.

In studying the black and white races of South Africa, the focus should be on how the two groups relate, considering the reality that they are distinct groups with different history, class and culture. In such a study the analysis of racism is involved and what leads to one group being called inferior, thus suffering the discrimination by the other may be questioned. Elements such as ideas, attitudes and practices of individuals and society may be studied to establish to what extent they contribute towards racism.

The main concern of the sociologists was to establish why and how certain groups come to be stigmatized and maltreated. If black South Africans were stigmatized and maltreated, the sociologists' objective would be to find the reason for that and to investigate the methods that are used to carry out that action. The latter could help in addressing the imbalances of the apartheid. They further wanted to find out why racial and ethnic diversity lead to coexistence of these groups and to a rank order, which

comprises the superior and the inferior within the same groups. Their task was to find tendencies to racism and propose ways in which it might be cured.

In sociological terms, while their biological or concrete physical features distinguish races, ethnic groups are distinguished by their specific cultural identity.

Taken from the South African context, we may speak of the Negroid who has black skin, brown eyes and black curly hair. As mentioned earlier this group originates from Africa. On the other hand, there are Caucasoid, whose physical features include white skin, light blue eyes and wavy hair. This group, as mentioned earlier, originates from Europe and Africa. The groups mentioned above have their own specific cultural identities and they are thus classified according to those cultural heritages.

Their language, Afrikaans, often distinguishes White Afrikaner people of South Africa. On the other hand, the black African people of South Africa are a diverse group, which comprise different languages. It is believed that these languages even though they might look different are said to have originated from one language.

Cultural distinctions within ethnic groups often develop into a form of prejudice. This prejudice may lead to social conflict and discrimination. This often occurs when the particular features of an ethnic group's lifestyle become stereotyped. For example, youths within black dominated communities often feel rejected and discriminated against if they do not attend initiation school. They are often stereotyped as immature, 'incomplete,' and are ridiculed at and called '*mathisa*' and '*maqa*' for females and males respectively.

The main culture of an ethnic group may embrace a subculture. In black African group, there is a subculture of young men who judge manhood by drinking of liquor and the smoking of cigarettes. This group ridicules the non-smokers and non-drinkers and often discriminates against them. The above-mentioned examples demonstrate discrimination within the same racial or ethnic group.

Light and Keller (1975:297) define race as a group of people who perceive themselves and are perceived by others as possessing certain distinctive and hereditary physical traits. The traits they maintain are related to moral, intellectual and other attributes that are considered non-physical. The members of the race group, for instance the whites may consider themselves to be different from other race group, blacks and the former group tend to treat the latter differently as they perceive themselves to be.

The above definition justifies the notion that race is a social construct. Race deals with group differences that have consequences for one's behaviour. For example, conflict and violence among different racial groups may be as a result of those groups having differential land conception. One group may claim ownership of land and the other one may claim it to be theirs.

### **2.5 Race from the anthropological point of view**

Anthropologists have their own view of race. According to Light and Keller (1975:296) anthropologists have conducted studies on racial categories. Their point of departure was to study physical differences between groups of people. Their study could however not clear racial differences because classification of people according to blood type fails. The problem was that the blood type he studied could not correlate with outward appearance. For example, the blood type of the white and the black people could not be connected with their distinct physical appearance.

Anthropologists experienced the same problem that the biologists were faced with. Their problem crops up when they have to refine their classifications to embrace the varieties of man. Taken from South African background there is a clear-cut difference between a white Afrikaner and a black African. Their colour is a distinguishing factor. In the case where there has been some degree of admixture, there is a great confusion. If black and white people breed these two colours, cease to be easily distinguishable.

On the other hand, the coloured people of South Africa often breed among themselves. The problem is; when does a person cease to be a black African and become a white Afrikaner? Anthropologists found it difficult to determine the transition between the two or more distinct groups.

According to Slattery (1985:31) both anthropologists and sociologists have shared the same view in that they both regard the concept, ethnicity and race to be overlapping even though they maintain that they should be studied separately.

Generally, people rely on the race of their close relative or family member in searching for their own racial identity. The mass media also prescribes to us how blacks, whites, Indians and the coloureds should look and we take those images and conform to them. Sometimes the images or stereotypes as prescribed may be ambiguous or atypical. In this case, the race of kin of parents is the determining factor in classifying people in question.

According to Zack (1998:5), a person is black if he or she has a black ancestor in the family history.

## **2.6 Race relations**

The study of race relations goes deeper than the study of the concept race. According to Rex (1986:1), the study of ethnic and race relations is concerned with social relations, which exist between people of the same race and ethnicity and between people of different race and ethnicity. People from the same race such as black Africans may have strain relations, which may be marked by conflict. This was realized during the apartheid era where the media used to refer to 'black on black violence' if groups from the black population attacked each other.

Conversely, there may be a situation where the black and white race relates. These relations may be noticeable by violence, which is often regarded as racially motivated.

This kind of situation confirms what Fenton (1999:ix) asserts when he defines race as people who are inescapably different and between whom relations are essentially problematic.

Tischler (1978:23) regards race relations as the interaction that takes place between different groups of people. In his study on race relations Rothman (1977:7) contends: When the protagonist of race differences insists upon the differences between races he is seeking to justify the exclusion of one race from humanity: he seeks to create strangers. If there are no biological differences between the groups, he will invent them. If there are differences, he will exaggerate them.

To improve race relations, Stoffberg (1988:3) suggests sound knowledge of anthropology. He further stresses that knowledge of anthropology will help in creating trust and understanding between people, their problems and their point of view. This idea suggests that understanding human relations is a wider topic than understanding race relations. Problems, misunderstandings and conflicts are imminent even where the issue of race is not involved. There may be conflict between two black Africans or between two white Afrikaners, seen as mere personality differences, yet it becomes evident that race relations and racial problems always imply human relations and problems. The relationship between the Zulu speaker and the Sesotho-speaking person, is for example considered an ethnic relationship between language and culture between the same racial groups. On the other hand, the relationship between a white Afrikaner and a black African could be classified as a racial relation because of the visible racial differences. This relation can also be affected by these groups' cultures, that is, their way of life. To be able to address the problem of race relations Tischler (1978:20) suggests that we need to adopt an objective point of view and guard against an emotional one.

We shall now proceed, in the next chapter, to examine race relations in two Sesotho novels. We aim to establish how the two novelists who wrote after the apartheid era present race relations.

## **CHAPTER 3: RACE RELATIONS IN *NONYANA YA TSHEPO***

This chapter and the next one will be divided into two sections. The first section will be about episodes, which are seen to be useful in giving the story of each novel so that when the novels are analysed, the story is already known. The second section will deal with race relations in the novels.

### **3.1. EVENTS IN *NONYANA YA TSHEPO***

#### **EPISODE 1 (Page 1)**

Motlatsi, the white Afrikaner farmer assembles all farm residents. His intention is to persuade them to follow the Christian faith of his son.

#### **EPISODE 2 (Pages 2-13)**

Mabula, the priest of the new church, touches the hearts of the congregation in his very first sermon.

#### **EPISODE 3 (Page 14)**

A goose attacks Tshepo, the main character. Dijeng, her stepmother watches him and offers no help.

#### **EPISODE 4 (Page 14)**

Dijeng directs Tshepo to walk on thorns.

#### **EPISODE 5 (Page 15)**

Older Tshepo starts to write a book about his life.

#### **EPISODE 6 (Pages 16-17)**

Mokwena tells Mmanko about Motlatsi's intention to promote him to the ranks of a supervisor. Mmanko is surprised that Mosia, whom she thought deserves the promotion, is not promoted.

**EPISODE 7 (Page 18)**

Young Tshepo interrupts the discussion between Mokwena and Mmanko. Mokwena reprimands him fiercely and calls him with derogatory names such as '*Mmankgane*' (bat) and '*ledinyane la marabe*' (young snake).

**EPISODE 8 (Pages 20-21)**

Motlatsi is with his wife Mmaseeta. He tells her about his intention to promote Mokwena. Mmaseeta is dissatisfied about the fast track promotion. She assigns the promotion to the fact that Mokwena is taking care of Motlatsi's illegitimate son, Tshepo.

**EPISODE 9 (Pages 22-23)**

At Mosia's house, Mosia and his wife, Mmathabo share the frustrations they experienced in the hands of their bosses Motlatsi and Mmaseeta respectively. Mokwena also relates how Motlatsi fiercely beat him.

**EPISODE 10 (Pages 23-24)**

Mosia is caught in imagination. He remembered how he impregnated Dijeng and he persuaded Dijeng to lie to Mokwena and shifted responsibility towards him.

**EPISODE 11 (Pages 24-25)**

Dijeng and Mosia plan to frame Mokwena about Dijeng's pregnancy. The intention is that Mokwena should marry Dijeng when he hears that she is carrying his baby.

**EPISODE 12** (Pages 26-27)

Mokwena is married to Dijeng. Their marriage does not work.

**EPISODE 13** (Page 27)

Mokwena attacks Dijeng physically. Tshidi, Dijeng's child died in the event.

**EPISODE 14** (Page 28)

Mokwena attacks Tshepo for calling him his father. Dijeng reveals that the deceased child was not Mokwena's child, not his.

**EPISODE 15** (Page 29)

Dijeng has left Mokwena for Mosia.

**EPISODE 16** (Page 29-30)

There is a secret meeting between Mosia and his mistress, Dijeng.

**EPISODE 17** (Page 30-31)

Mokwena confronts his mother, Mmanko. He is worried about Dijeng's claim that the deceased child was not his flesh and blood. Mmanko does not provide him with answers.

**EPISODE 18** (Page 32-33)

Motloun visits Mokwena to discuss Tshepo's educational future. Their plan is to take him to a secondary school in the township.

**EPISODE 19** (Page 34)

Mokwena takes Dikeledi to the doctor. In the consultation room Mokwena becomes attracted to her naked body.

**EPISODE 20** (Pages 37-38)

Mmaseeta, the white farmer's wife ordered that all male dogs in the farm should be castrated. Mofokeng resisted the order. Mofokeng's dog is eventually found mating Mmanko's bitch. Mmaseeta shot Mofokeng's dog dead.

**EPISODE 21** (Pages 38-40)

Motlatsi, Mokwena and Mosia beat Mofokeng to death.

**EPISODE 22** (Pages 42-46)

Tshepo was out hunting. He has caught the rock rabbits. After presenting them to Mmanko, they discuss about life. Mmanko tells Tshepo how Motlatsi sexually abused Sebolelo. Mmanko tells Tshepo how he came into being. She also shows him his mother's photograph.

**EPISODE 23** (Page 46)

Dikeledi meets Thabo, whom she is attracted to. Dikeledi seems confused.

**EPISODE 24** (Pages 47-48)

Dikeledi seeks advice on whether to accept Thabo's love proposal. Mmanko advised her to reject the love proposal.

**EPISODE 25** (Pages 48-50)

Dikeledi tells Mmanko how Mokwena abused her sexually. Mmanko, after realizing that she is pregnant advised her to accept Thabo's love proposal so that they can frame him for the pregnancy.

**EPISODE 26** (Pages 51-52)

Mmanko narrates the story of how she was sexually abused by her grandfather, Letlaka. Letlaka impregnated Mmanko and Mokwena was born. Mmanko also relate how Mokwena has impregnated Dikeledi.

**EPISODE 27** (Pages 53-54)

Mmanko discovers that Dikeledi is pregnant.

**EPISODE 28** (Pages 55-57)

Tshepo returned home after disappearing for years. He found things completely changed. Dijeng, his stepmother stayed with Mosia. His stepfather, Mokwena stayed with Tswibila. Motlatsi and Mmaseeta are also divorced.

**EPISODE 29** (Page 57)

Tshepo arrives home and finds Dijeng with a baby. He feels hopeless.

**EPISODE 30** (Pages 58-59)

Mmanko murdered Dikeledi's baby after her birth.

**EPISODE 31** (Page 61)

Tshepo finds Dijeng and Mosia home. He confronts Dijeng about her life style, which contradicts her Christian belief. Mosia and Dijeng are angry. They left tshepo alone in the house.

**EPISODE 32** (Page 61)

Tshepo meets his stepfather Mokwena to find out about the cause of their divorce with Dijeng. His stepfather is speechless.

**EPISODE 33** (Pages 62-63)

This is a flash back on how Mokwena caught his wife Dijeng and her lover Mosia red-handed. Mosia fled away and Dijeng denied that she was sleeping with him.

**EPISODE 34** (Pages 64-66)

Tshepo is on his way to school where he will commence his job as a teacher. Tshepo remembers his old friend, who was a source of inspiration to Tshepo.

**EPISODE 35** (Pages 66-67)

Tshepo arrives on the farm. He meets Moloï, a local resident who orientates him about the life in farm schools.

**EPISODE 36** (Pages 67-68)

Tshepo meets schoolchildren for the first time. A strange language that they speak, Kgolokwe language, frustrates him. He gives children manual work. One of the learners resists. Later on Tshepo learns that, that child is the foreman's son.

**EPISODE 37 (Page 70)**

Tshepo slaps one of the unruly children. He becomes devastated and he releases schoolchildren before time.

**EPISODE 38 (Page 72)**

Schools are closed for winter holidays. Tshepo spends part of his vacation at Moloi's place. He goes out hunting and also writes his novel.

**EPISODE 39 (Pages 72-75)**

Tshepo goes home. At home he meets Tswibila. Tshepo and Tswibila are involved in an argument.

**EPISODE 40 (Pages 75-76)**

Dijeng changes an African cultural festival into a Western party.

**EPISODE 41 (Pages 77-78)**

Tswibila and Tshepo attend the party. They drink beer together.

**EPISODE 42 (Pages 79-80)**

Tshepo is in the final stages of completing his novel. He is alone analyzing the events of the novel.

**EPISODE 43 (Pages 81-82)**

Motlatsi is in a trial in court. Partial judicial system is exposed.

**EPISODE 44 (Pages 83-85)**

Tshepo is suffering spiritually. He longs for the peaceful world.

**3.1 RACE RELATIONS IN *NONYANA YA TSHEPO***

*Nonyana ya Tshepo* was published in 1997. The story takes place on a farm called Matswakeng. In this novel, the author tries to portray racial hatred and how it can tear the families apart. The author also wants to demonstrate how religion can be utilized wrongly for indoctrinating one race to become the object of manipulation by the other race.

In this novel, the readers read about the two distinct races, the black race and the white race. The characters from the black race are portrayed as the abused, the oppressed, the harassed and the ones whose sole purpose is to please their white employer. The white characters are portrayed as the abuser, the oppressor and the ones who maintain the legacy of apartheid.

The relationship between the black farm labourers and the white farmers is the master-servant relationship where the white farmer is the master with absolute powers and the black labourers are the submissive servants. This state of affairs prevailed during apartheid era. Readers are surprised to find out that even in this democratic era, apartheid is still practised in some farms.

In the first chapter, the narrator introduces readers to the main character, Tshepo and his stepfather, Mokwena. The two characters' relationship is revealed as the one

marked with hatred. The narrator explicitly points out in the utterance on page 1 when he refers to Tshepo:

*Katleho ena ya hae e ne e ntse e tlisa lehloyo pelong ya Mokwena ho fihlela Tshepo a bona hore ho molemo a iphe naha...* (Zulu 1997:1)

(His success caused Mokwena to hate him so much that Tshepo decided to flee from his home).

The cause of hatred is revealed later in the novel, namely that Tshepo is not Mokwena's flesh and blood. His father is a white Afrikaner, Motlatsi who impregnated a black domestic worker, Sebolelo.

In the same chapter, readers are confronted with the white Afrikaner Motlatsi who despises his Black labourers' religion and wants to convert their religion into what he claims to be a perfect religion that will free them of their sinful and heathen ways of life. Motlatsi perceives the black labourers as people without God and he introduces them to the denomination that will change their life style.

The narrator shows how the white farmer, Motlatsi forces people into following his denomination in the utterance:

*Ka moqebelo o latelang wa beke eo Tshepo a thobileng ka yona Motlatsi a bitsa batho bohle ba polasi ya hae. A re ba tle kaofela ha bona.* (Zulu 1997:1)

(On Saturday, the week after Tshepo ran away, Motlatsi called all the residents of the farm. He instructed that they should all come.)

From the above phrase it becomes clear that the residents have no choice but to assemble as instructed. Instructions like these were common to people in the farms that are owned by the white Afrikaners. The readers are surprised to realize that the residents are assembled for something that does not affect their work but something that concerns their religion.

Ironically the minister, Mabula, who has been appointed to convert the labourers, originates from the black racial group. Readers realize later that Mabula was just used as a scapegoat. Motlatsi's motive was to pave the way for his son who has just been ordained as a priest.

Some black labourers reject the Christian religion in the utterance:

*Leburunyana lena le a hlanya. Rona ha re bahetene.* (Zulu 1997:1)

(This young Boer is insane. We are not heathen people.)

The use of the word 'leburunyana' (the Boer) reminds the readers of the blacks' attitudes towards the white Afrikaner since the inception of apartheid in South Africa. This word was used synonymously with the notorious titles such as the oppressor, the dictator and the colonizer. The use of the diminutive (-nyana) indicates that the Boer is younger than the people he oppresses.

The narrator shows how religion is used to deceive people by stating that Mabula is the only black priest who has the power to convert others from their culture. He himself adopted the foreign religion, Christianity that is believed to have come from foreign countries and there after is deployed to practice it and change people from his racial group.

The narrator frequently uses the term '*motsho*,' *batsho*' (a black one, black ones) to qualify the people from that race group. This demonstrates his emphasis of the race relations informed by stereotypes and racism. The use of the English language by the Christian followers clearly reminds the readers that Christian religion is foreign to the blacks as the reader notice the use of the utterance "Yes Jesus! Oh thank you Jesus" on page 2, by the devoted black African followers of this religion.

Readers are not surprised when the narrator sarcastically ridicules the Christian followers by saying:

*Ho ne ho bonahala eka ho teng ba ikutlwang eka ba se ba kene teroneng ya Modimo e halalelang, le ba iponang e se e le mangeloi a tsebang qalo le qetelo ya lefatshe.* (Zulu 1997:3)

(There were those who felt like they have entered the holy throne of God and those who looked at themselves as angels and thought they knew the beginning and the end.)

Motlatsi is seen as forcing people to leave their denominations. This becomes clear in the utterance by the narrator:

*Mosadi e mong a hlobola seaparo sa kereke ya hae a se lahlela sefaleng.* (Zulu 1997:13)

(One woman took off her church uniform and threw it on the pulpit.)

This clearly shows that the residents were following other denominations. This practice was common during the apartheid era where people were forced into belonging to a particular denomination so that the white employers could employ them.

The settlers introduced Christianity to the black South Africans and that has caused confusion because it clashes with their traditions. The narrator confirms:

*Mekete ya majwala ya ka ya emisa. Diphabadimo tsa ka tsa tlohelwa.* (Zulu 1997:13)

(Traditional festivals stopped. Ancestral festivals were abandoned.)

The whites' influence is visualized where Tswibila is not proud of her black skin and uses cosmetics to change her black skin white. This indicates to the readers that some blacks regard their skin as inferior and the skin of their white boss as superior.

In Chapter 1, the narrator has been successful in showing the influence of religion and how it is used to indoctrinate the oppressed people in the farm. This practice reminds the readers of the missionaries when they first arrived in South Africa. They had the Bible in their hands and misinterpreted it when they taught it to the Black people and eventually dispossessed black people of their stock.

Chapter 2 begins with the narration, which reveals hatred between Dijeng and Tshepo. Dijeng calls Tshepo '*Mmankgane*' (p.14) (a bat). A bat is an animal, which seldom causes confusion in its classification. Some people classify it under mammal, arguing that it suckles its young ones with milk. Some classify it under birds. Their argument is that it has wings and can fly. In Sesotho this expression is used for a person whose character cannot be easily identified. In this context the name is used sarcastically to ridicule Tshepo who is struggling with identity. He is a Coloured.

Tshepo, whose skin colour confuses people as to whether he should be called a *Mosotho* (Southern Sotho speaker) is always rejected by his family and he is struggling to socialize in the community. As the narrator puts it:

*Sakeng moo ke hona moo a neng a kopana le metswalle e meng ya hae hape, manamane.* (Zulu 1997:15)

(In the kraal, that is where he met his other friends, calves.)

The readers realize that Tshepo is not accepted by the family and by the Sotho race.

Mokwena, Tshepo's stepfather also hates him. On page 18 he calls him '*ledinyane la marabe*' (young snake). According to the Basotho this expression is used to refer to a deserted or a foreign person, who after being adopted and taken care of by the merciful person, ended up killing his helper. Mokwena also calls Tshepo '*nakedi*', a polecat. This animal is notorious for its unpleasant smell. The narrator through Mokwena's words openly describes Tshepo's skin colour:

*Ha o mmone o mophatshwana? Kapa o se o itebatsa hore ntatae ke lekgowa? (Zulu 1997:18)*

(Can't you see he is a Coloured? Have you forgotten that his father is a white man?)

Mokwena mentions that with condemnation and he even spits as a sign of disapproval.

Dijeng, the stepmother who also hates and rejects Tshepo because of his lost identity, justifies her hatred by quoting the Bible:

*Ke tla otlala bana ka baka la bokgopo ba batswadi ba bona. (Zulu 1997:19)*

(I will punish children because of the wrongdoing of their parents.)

She feels that Tshepo must suffer the consequences of his parents' immoral behaviour. The narrator clearly shows the type of relations that existed between the black labourers and the white Afrikaners. Tshepo is rejected because his father is a white Afrikaner. His confusing skin colour makes him an object of racial discrimination. Readers realize that hatred within Tshepo's stepparents is racially motivated.

Chapter 3 opens with the portrayal of the Afrikaner women, Mmaseeta (One who wears or uses her shoes for a particular reason). She was so called by the black labourers because of her unbecoming behaviour of kicking her labourers when they fail to follow her instructions. Black labourers do not call her by this name but always refer to her as 'Mmisisi', a title used by the black Africans during apartheid era as a sign of respect for Afrikaner women. Later this title was used to ridicule the white woman.

In this chapter readers hear Motlatsi presenting a new foreman, Mokwena, to his wife, Mmaseeta. Readers are astonished to realize fast tracking promoting of Mokwena and to know some of the criteria that Motlatsi used to promote him. He extends working hours and knocks off a long time after other labourers. He is a devoted Christian. He is never absent from church service. This is disapproved by Mmaseeta who confronted Motlatsi and tells him that the sole reason why Mokwena is promoted, twice in a year is

because he looks after Tshepo, who is Motlatsi's child with Dijeng. It is ironic that the latter reason prompted Mokwena's promotion even though he hates that child and does not even care for him.

At Mosia's home, Mosia and Mmathabo relate about the bad treatment they receive from Motlatsi and his wife Mmaseeta. Mmathabo arrives very late in the evening. She claims that Mmaseeta kept her until late, ignoring her knock off time and she is not even paid overtime. Mosia on the other hand grieves about how Motlatsi uses abusive language when he talks to him. Motlatsi ended up abusing Mosia physically. The above treatment is typical of the one that was often experienced by the black labourers in their relationship with white Afrikaner farmers when race relations were sour. Readers realize that this kind of treatment is still experienced even today.

Readers are not surprised by Mokwena's submissive behaviour towards his boss, Motlatsi. When Motlatsi beats Mosia and Mosia wanted to retaliate, Mokwena thwarts him with strong words:

*O shapa lekgowa. O kile wa bona kae mohlolo oo? O shapa base wena? O shapa modimo wa hao?* (Zulu 1997:22)

(You want to beat a white man. Where have you seen such a miracle? You want to beat your boss? You want to beat your god?)

These words show how blacks perceived the white Afrikaners during the apartheid era. The author writes about it even after 1994 to attack that perception. The readers notice the use of the title 'base' (boss). The blacks more often used this title during the apartheid era in South Africa as a sign of respect for the white man. The title was used synonymously with the one who provides everything for the oppressed black.

After being fiercely beaten Mosia is ordered by Motlatsi to go to the nearest police station to report the matter. The judicial system during the apartheid era favoured the whites over blacks. Motlatsi is as confident as he claims:

*Lefatshe lena ke la rona. Re le rekile ka madi a rona.* (Zulu 1997:23)

This is our land. We have sacrificed our blood to conquer the land.)

This statement was commonly used by the settlers during apartheid era. The implication is that the Blacks do not own the land.

Readers realize how the white Afrikaners manipulate the black labourers. Mokwena folds his arms when Motlatsi attacks Mosia. He only wants his presence felt when Mosia fights back.

Chapter 3 ends up with Motlatsi and Sebolelo, the house cleaner, left alone at Motlatsi's house. The narrator implicitly suggests that Motlatsi does what he normally does when they are alone to lure her into sleeping with him. This incident reveals what happened before Motlatsi impregnated Sebolelo. This was and is still a topical subject in farms. Some white Afrikaner farmers have a tendency to abuse their black house cleaners sexually.

The struggle that Tshepo is faced with continues in Chapter 4. This starts with the fight between Mokwena and Dijeng, husband and wife. Tshepo fuels the fight when he referred to Mokwena as his father. Mokwena becomes furious and uses harsh utterances:

*Ngwana towe wa lekgowa! Ke mang ya itseng ke ntatao?* (Zulu 1997:28)

(You white man's child! Who told you that I am your father?)

Here Mokwena cannot hide hatred he has for Tshepo. His hatred towards Tshepo is not because Tshepo is not his biological child but because his father is a white man. This contradicts the expression in Sesotho, '*Ngwana ke wa dikgomo*' (The child belongs to the man who married the woman). This expression is used to console a man when he

has doubts about whether the child belongs to him or not. Hence the Basotho also emphasize that '*Motho ha a lahlwe*' (A person cannot be deserted).

In Chapter 5 the narrator narrates some of the malpractices, which occur during the apartheid era. Motlatsi, the Afrikaner refuses to allow Tshepo to further his studies. He wants to keep him as a labourer on the farm. Most white Afrikaners often practiced this action. Child labour was practiced until the child becomes a mature adult and gets a better job somewhere. At some instance a black farm resident could spend all his life on the farm. Contrary to that the white Afrikaner children could be on the farm, receive their formal education in town, and follow their careers in various institutions within and outside their South African country. The readers learn that these practices are still found after 1994.

As time unfolds Motlatsi could no longer hide his love for Tshepo. Perhaps this is caused by the reality that Tshepo is his biological child. Motlatsi takes Tshepo to school with his car. Mokwena who does not want to see Tshepo progressing in life disapproves of this. Readers are not surprised when Mokwena utters these harsh words:

*Ke o hodisitse ka thata ka ditjhelete tsa ka tsa bofutsana, ha o se o hodile ntatao ke hona a o tsebang.* (Zulu 1997:33)

(I raised you with hardship, with the little that I earn. When you are a grown up, your father claims to know you.)

Chapter 6 starts with Mmaseeta ordering that all the black labourers' male dogs should be castrated and that the ones that are not castrated will be shot dead. One of the black labourers, Mofokeng rebels against that sanction.

Unfortunately Mofokeng's dog went to Mmaseeta's residence and it was caught mating with Mmaseeta's bitch. Mmaseeta was so furious that she could not hide her anger. She expressed her anger in the utterance referring to the black labourers:

*Le ha nka le rekisa kaofela ha lona polasing mona le ke ke la etsa tjhelete eo ke rekileng ntja ena ka yona. (Zulu 1997:37)*

(Even if I could sell you all, you could not match the value of this dog.)

By using these harsh words the narrator reminds us of the notorious actions of the white Afrikaners during the apartheid era who used to sit in front of the bakkie with their dog and leave the black person at the back of their bakkie even during bad weather conditions.

Mmaseeta eventually shoots and kills Mofokeng's dog. She turns the gun towards Mofokeng but misses him. Mofokeng flees away but is later caught by other black farm labourers. Mmaseeta orders her husband, Motlatsi to beat Mofokeng. She threatens to commit suicide if her orders are not adhered to. Motlatsi takes a brandy to suppress his consciousness and does as his wife wishes.

Motlatsi and Mmaseeta's character trait are revealed when they ordered Mosia to fetch a stick and salt, which was normally used to pour on the wounds of the culprit. They are portrayed as very cruel sadists who care less about human life.

The readers notice racial oppression when Mosia is ordered to drink liquor so that he can carry out his boss's instructions bravely. Mokwena who pleads for mercy and forgiveness is also ordered and forced to drink brandy. Oppressive words are used:

*O tla nwa he kajeno, ho tjho nna lekgowa la hao. Ke Modimo wa hao, hao tsebe? Nwa!*  
(Zulu 1997:39)

(You will drink today, so said I, your white boss. I am your god, don't you know that. Drink!).

Mofokeng is battered until he dies. His death does not have any emotional impact on the life of Motlatsi. However it affected Mokwena immensely. It brought a change to his state of seeing things. Hence the narrator's utterance:

*Lefu leo la Mofokeng ya ka le tsukutlile ho hong ho itseng bophelong ba Mokwena a ka a phaphama hanyane. (Zulu 1997:41)*

(Mofokeng's death touched something in Mokwena's life; he then looked at things differently.)

In Chapter 7 the readers notice how Mokwena's respect for his white boss, Motlatsi is over exaggerated. The narrator relates the incident which led to Sebolelo been impregnated by Motlatsi. Motlatsi starts his lecherous behaviour when they are alone with Sebolelo, his house cleaner. He makes some sexual advances; he touches Sebolelo on her bumps and on her waist. Sebolelo takes the matter to her mother in law, Mmanko who confronts Sebolelo's husband Mokwena with the matter. Mokwena treats it very lightly. He in fact blames Sebolelo for dressing in mini skirts, which he claims, has prompted Motlatsi to harass her sexually.

This contradicts the Basotho husband's habit of often being so possessive about their wives. However, here it looks like racial prejudice has over powered Mokwena. He justifies what the white Afrikaner does to his wife and makes a joke out of it, unaware that that will lead to sexual activity. This event clearly shows how women were perceived during apartheid era and even today. Women were and are still regarded as sex objects.

Mmanko, after narrating to Tshepo how he came into being, shows him his mother's photograph. Tshepo looks at it and develop a terrible hatred towards everyone he relates to. He starts developing hatred for Motlatsi, his biological father, Mokwena, his stepfather and denying his stepmother, Sebolelo. This signifies the struggle he is going through, to be able to identify himself. He understands that his mother was raped and hates the rapist. On the other hand he hates his stepparents because he does not look as black as they do.

In Chapter 9 the narrator tells us about the end of marriages of the two families, Mokwena's family and Motlatsi's family. Mokwena and Dijeng divorce. Motlatsi and Mmaseeta divorce. What comes to the readers' mind is that the character, Tshepo features within the lives of the above-mentioned families. Tshepo is a stepchild of Mokwena.

On the other hand Tshepo is Motlatsi's biological child. Within the two families Tshepo has brought family tension, which consequently led to divorce. He was rejected and was seen as a threat to the two families. Mokwena's family regarded him as a child of a white man. The author wants to demonstrate racial tension, which exists between the two dissimilar races, which is exacerbated by Motlatsi and Sebolelo's involvement in sexual activities.

In Chapter 10 the narrator reflects on some of the political activities, which took place during apartheid era. The narrator relates them through the character, Phakwe, who is Tshepo's friend. Phakwe, who was an anti apartheid political activists tells Tshepo how he suffered during the apartheid era at the hands of the apartheid regime. He was called names such as *Moferikanyi*, *Mohetene*, *Lekomonisi* (a terrorist, a heathen, communist). Phakwe narrates about his life in exile and his visits of countries such as Angola and Tanzania. He also tells how he was called the apartheid government's spy. In this chapter the narrator lashes out at the atrocities of the apartheid government, which were said to be racially motivated.

In Chapter 11 we see Tshepo still struggling with racial identity. Tshepo and Tswibila are at Mokwena's household and drinking beer. Tswibila asks Tshepo to give her 'zera', a slang word for liquor. Tshepo is puzzled by the term and Tswibila find a chance to attack him. She tells him that he is not familiar with the term because he is the son of a white Afrikaner. Readers are also astonished because that term 'zera' is not even of Sesotho origin. Tshepo is again reminded that his real father is Motlatsi, a white Afrikaner.

In this chapter we are also told of some injustices of apartheid system, especially the judicial system during that time. The narrator flashes back on the incident after the death of Mofokeng. The case was contested in court. Political activists attended the court case and pleaded for justice. They were chanting slogans in their mission to influence the court's decision.

In this chapter the issue of race comes to the fore. Attending the court is the vast majority from the black population. This group is chanting slogans. Also in attendance are the white Afrikaners who are described by the narrator as:

*Banna ba melala e retetseng.* (Zulu 1997:81)

(Men with red necks.)

Here the narrator sends the message that the latter group is angry. When people with brown skin are angry their skin looks red as described. The latter group is backing Motlatsi for his wrongs. They are also singing a song, which the narrator describes as of a foreign country origin. They rise up the flag of unknown country, as described by the narrator. The narrator calls that country Freedom. The narrator describes this country like this:

*Naha eo baahi ba yona ba batlang ho phela ka kgotso ba sa nyallane le merabe e meng, ba sa apare diaparo tse mebala e tenwang ke merabe e meng.* (Zulu 1997:81)

(A country whose citizens like to live in peace without marrying other tribes and its citizens would like to dress clothes differing in colour from the ones dressed by other tribes.)

From the above utterance the readers realize that not only skin colour difference can cause differences between races but also the way the different races live or wish to live can cause racial differences and also create tension.

## **CHAPTER 4: RACE RELATIONS IN *LEHLABA LA LEPHAKO***

### **4.1 EVENTS IN *LEHLABA LA LEPHAKO***

#### **EPISODE 1 (Pages 1-4)**

Seabata, the foreman cannot sleep because of the sour relations between him and the farm labourers. His wife confronts him about that.

#### **EPISODE 2 (Pages 5-8)**

Nketsi, the farm labourer is at Mmajwalane's place to buy beer. He recalls a confrontation that he had with his boss Sepanapodi that was caused by Seabata who backbite him.

#### **EPISODE 3 (Pages 8-9)**

Sepanapodi meet Seabata and congratulates him for revealing Nketsi's wrongs to him.

#### **EPISODE 4 (Pages 10-14)**

Nketsi approached a local teacher, Mohanelwa about how bad he is ill-treated by Seabata and Sepanapodi.

#### **EPISODE 5 (Pages 15-18)**

Other women reject Mmabatho, Seabata's wife.

#### **EPISODE 6 (Pages 19-22)**

Seabata comes home drunk. His drunkenness is prompted by the situation he finds himself in. He is in conflict with farm labourers.

#### **EPISODE 7 (Pages 23-28)**

Nketsi, Mohanelwa and Nkgelwane visit Seabata, with the view of convincing him to join them in calling the labour organisation.

**EPISODE 8** (Pages 29-33)

Labour organisation addresses farm labourers

**EPISODE 9** (Pages 34-37)

Seabata visits his mistress, Mmakeneuwe. She gives him updates on labour organisation meeting.

**EPISODE 10** (Pages 38-43)

Monareng and Nketsi visit Nketsi's brother, Thabiso. They tell him of unbearable situation that they are faced with at their farm.

**EPISODE 11** (Pages 44-48)

Mmanketsi, Mmalefu and Mmakeneuwe are with Mmathabo, who is sick. Their visit comforts her.

**EPISODE 12** (Pages 48-49)

Secret meeting between Seabata and his mistress Mmakeneuwe.

**EPISODE 13** (Pages 50-52)

It is payday. All labourers have gathered to receive their wages. Women are not paid but their husbands receive their payment. Sepanapodi announced the plan to demolish the school building.

**EPISODE 14** (Pages 53-54)

Nketsi assembles women and tells them of the farmer's plan to demolish the school building.

**EPISODE 15** (Page 54)

Dissatisfied farm residents stone Seabata.

**EPISODE 16** (Pages 55-56)

Seabata tells Mmakeneuwe about the plan to demolish the school building. Mmakeneuwe threatens to desert Seabata if he allows that to happen.

**EPISODE 17** (Pages 57-58)

Seabata surprisingly arrived home without a car. He is dispossessed a car by its rightful owner, Sepanapodi.

**EPISODE 18** (Pages 59-62)

Demolishing of the school building.

**EPISODE 19** (Pages 63-65)

Labour organisation representatives meet with Sepanapodi. Sepanapodi is adamant.

**EPISODE 20** (Pages 66)

Seabata takes Mmabatho to the doctor.

**EPISODE 21** (Pages 67-68)

Seabata sells Sepanapodi's sheep to the butcher, Tawana.

**EPISODE 22** (Pages 69-70)

Mmabatho confronts Seabata about his secret love affair with Mmakeneuwe.

**EPISODE 23** (Pages 70-71)

Mmabatho discovered that the chickens have all been slaughtered.

**EPISODE 24** (Page 71)

Seabata's house is stoned and windows are left shattered.

**EPISODE 25** (Page 72)

Nkgelwane and Mohanelwa offered their house to be used as church and as school for the community.

**EPISODE 26** (Pages 74-76)

Nkgelwane and his wife Mmathabang discuss the problem within the farm.

**EPISODE 27** (Page 77)

Seabata, after being marginalised by his fellow Blacks is accommodated by the white farmer.

**EPISODE 28** (Pages 78-84)

Nkgelwane visit Seabata to convince him to reconcile with his fellow Blacks. Seabata is not willing to compromise.

**EPISODE 29** (Pages 85-86)

Seabata is drawing people's attention in town, moving from one shop to another to buy clothes for his newborn son.

**EPISODE 30** (Pages 86-90)

Seabata meets Thabiso Nketsi who brags about an Adult Basic Education and Training centre that the department of education envisages building at their farm. Nketsi spoils Seabata's happiness when he asks him where his son will be schooling now that he had demolished the school building.

**EPISODE 31** (Pages 91-92)

Seabata rebels against his boss, Sepanapodi. He ordered labourers to stop working and to have their lunch. Sepanapodi forced labourers to work and ignores Seabata's protest.

**EPISODE 32** (Page 92)

After Sepanapodi has left Seabata ordered labourers to start with their lunch. They did that cautiously fearing that he might caught them red handed.

**EPISODE 33** (Pages 92-94)

Nketsi and Sebolai meet and analyse Seabata's behaviour. According to Nketsi Seabata is pretending to have changed but is still conniving with Sepanapodi. Sebolai is convinced that Seabata has changed and is now serving the interests of the black labourers.

**EPISODE 34** (Pages 94-95)

Mmalefu and other women are discussing Seabata. According to Mmalefu Seabata has reconciled with his fellow Blacks. Other women regard Seabata as a traitor and disagree that he has changed.

**EPISODE 35** (Pages 95-96)

Sepanapodi tells his wife how Seabata rebelled against him. His wife advised him to chase him away from the back yard room where they have accommodated him. Sepanapodi is worried that if Seabata leaves the farm that will be a great setback because he knows everything about the farm work.

**EPISODE 36** (Page 98)

Seabata is arrested for stock theft.

**EPISODE 37** (Page 99)

Sepanapodi meets, Seabata's wife Mmabatho and tells him about Seabata's arrest.

**EPISODE 38** (Pages 101-103)

Seabata is in a trial in court. He is given a chance to speak. He exposes harassment and exploitation by the white farmers, and how he has turned his back against his fellow blacks because of poverty.

**EPISODE 39** (Page 103)

Seabata is sentenced to three years imprisonment.

**EPISODE 40 (Pages 103-104)**

Mmabatho visits Seabata in jail to announce the death of their son.

**4.2. RACE RELATIONS IN *LEHLABA LA LEPHAKO***

*Lehlaba la lephako* was published in 1999. This novel is based on life on the farm and it tells the story of a black labourer, Seabata who is lured by some privileges he receives from white Afrikaner boss, Sepanapodi. Seabata eventually turns his back against fellow black Africans.

In this novel readers realize how the white Afrikaner acts as a manipulator and a catalyst. Readers also realize how the Afrikaner, Sepanapodi, practices the apartheid policy of divide and rule. The Afrikaner seldom confronts the labourers but instead uses Seabata as a tool for that purpose. Our analysis in this novel will mostly be based on the role played by the protagonist, Seabata in furthering his boss's interest of racial discrimination.

The first chapter begins with Seabata, a black farm labourer and a foreman in that farm in a tense mood. Seabata is not willing to discuss what made him cross but his wife, Mmabatho guesses and guesses correctly that the cause of his problem is his strained work relations with other labourers. According to Mmabatho, Seabata's selfishness and pompous behaviour is the root cause of all his troubles. She said:

*Ke mosebetsi nthweo ha o kgahlapetsa batho jwalo ka ha eka ke dithotsela.* (Mohapi 1999:2)

(Can you say you are working when you are exploiting people and making them zombies?)

According to black Africans, it is believed that witches can turn people into zombies and use them to work strenuously for all hours of the day. This very statement entices

readers to read and find more about the kind of relationship that Seabata has with other farm labourers.

Mmabatho, Seabata's wife tries to persuade him to evaluate his behaviour and treat his own black people with dignity. To Seabata following his wife's advice will cause him status and wealth, hence he says:

*Nna ke tlile sebetsa mona, mme mongaka o mpeile hore ke be leihlo le tsebe ya hae mona. Ke tla sebetsa jwalo, hoseng jwalo re tla ja mabodi re sa hetla ka morao.* (Mohapi 1999:2)

(I am here to work. My boss has appointed me to be his eye and ear. If I do not work, we will starve.)

Readers realize that 'to work' in this context means to follow unbecoming orders from his boss, Sepanapodi and to follow them slavishly. To be his boss's eye and ear indicates his total commitment to his boss.

Seabata confirms exactly what Mmabatho has speculated: That the cause of his strained relationship is his attitude towards his fellow labourers. This is shown in his utterance:

*Motho ha a sa etse mosebetsi wa hae a se ke a llela ho nna.* (Mohapi 1999:3)

(If a person does not do his work, he must not blame me.)

This statement confirms that Sepanapodi was informed about the work performance of his labourers and he took them to task. The statement further tells the readers of Seabata's character. The narrator portrays him as one who enjoys backbiting. Mmabatho further asks Seabata a question, which instead of answering he shows anger:

*Eu, athe ke tsona tseo o di bolelletseng Sepanapodi ka Nketsi?* (Mohapi 1999:3)

(Have you backbitten Nketsi and told Sepanapodi about his deeds?)

In Chapter 2, the narrator shows how the hatred that was sown by Sepanapodi grows. There is a feeling of mistrust among farm labourers to the extent that they attribute any misfortune to witch craft. In the beginning of the chapter, we see Nketsi starting his tractor but it fails. He does not think of any mechanical failure but thinks it is because his enemy, Seabata is bewitching him. When the tractor finally starts and moves he says:

*O ne a re ekabaneng ditlhare tsa hae di tla loka o laehile, ha e ye!* (Mohapi 1999:5)

(He thought his herbs would work for him and they failed him. Let the tractor moves on.)

Nketsi, one of the labourers is seen blaming Seabata for leaking information to their boss Sepanapodi that he Nketsi once stole a sheep. He blames Seabata because he does not see anyone who relates badly with his fellow blacks and whose relationship is healthy with the white Afrikaner, Sepanapodi except Seabata.

Nketsi's day is spoiled by Sepanapodi who confronts him and reprimands him about the fight he, Nketsi had with Seabata the previous day. Readers notice partiality practiced by Sepanapodi. Instead of calling Seabata and Nketsi, who were both involved in a fight, hear the story from both of them, and resolve the matter, he listened to Seabata's side only and approaches Nketsi with a judgemental attitude.

Sepanapodi's approach and his unbecoming behaviour make Nketsi feel belittled and he protests on his own:

*Moshanyana e mokaale banna a ka tlo mpoellaka tjee? Bana ba ka ba ka reng ha ba ka mpona ke ne ke ikokobeditse, ke boborane jwalo ka pela monna... moshanyana hleng! Ra hola ra holela mathata, lephako ke sera.* (Mohapi 1999:pp.7-8)

(Such a young boy spoke to me like that? What could my children say when they see me be humbled by that boy. As we grow, we come across difficulties. Starvation is our enemy.)

From these utterances readers realizes the impact of racial prejudice. Nketsi is forced to succumb to harsh treatment by Sepanapodi, his boss. He also has to endure the brutal treatment so that he and his family could survive. Hence, he utters the words:

*Lephako ke sera.* (Mohapi 1999:8)

(Starvation is the enemy.)

The narrator ends the speculation that Seabata is playing double standards at the end of the chapter. Here the readers see Sepanapodi congratulating Seabata on revealing to him all secrets about labourers and their conspiracy. Sepanapodi calls that '*bonatla*' (heroic behaviour.) Even though Seabata is commended for bravery, the readers are meant to see the opposite. Seabata is seen as a weakling. He is a man but he agrees to be manipulated by another man, who is even younger than he is.

Sepanapodi thanks Seabata for good work and they both shake hands. The readers are meant to ridicule Seabata who regards the shaking of hands with a white farmer as glory. He even feels that he should not wash that hand because that will wipe away his boss's godliness. This demonstrates the extent to which Sepanapodi's manipulative strategy affected Seabata.

In Chapter 3 the hatred among farm labourers is so serious that, it does not only affect their relation in their work place but also affects them in their social life. Readers come across Nketsi, one of the farm labourers who were at loggerheads with his foreman Seabata. Nketsi is grieving against Seabata. He seems so devastated in his utterance:

*Mme ke mona a ka nna a jeswa mosebetsi ke Seabata.* (Mohapi 1999:10)

(And here Seabata can make him lose his job.)

This utterance is meant to give the impression that Seabata owns the job and Nketsi is a beggar, who is under his mercy. It is ironic to realize that Seabata, who is a servant, is seen as a boss who can cause other labourers their jobs.

This is further indicated by the expression used by Nketsi:

*Kgidi banna motho o ka re morena, morena phela o ka ba wa re shwa.* (Mohapi 1999:10)

(Oh, man, you can beg until you beg no more.)

A hopeless servant, who has surrendered himself under the leadership of his king with the hope of winning his favour for survival but in turn is exploited, uses this Sesotho expression. This is a sign of frustration.

Nketsi is however consoled by Mohanelwa, a local teacher at that farm. The latter share his experience on the farm. Seabata once swore at him in front of the schoolchildren. This happened when Sepanapodi ordered Seabata to take schoolchildren to town to fetch food for the cows. Mohanelwa tried to explain to Seabata that learners are writing a test and cannot leave it. This incident clearly shows that Sepanapodi cares less about the black children's education and in fact uses the person from their racial group, Seabata to thwart them from being educated. Readers are surprised when Seabata tells Mohanelwa that he even has the authority to end schooling or destroy the school.

Sepanapodi's influence towards Seabata is so powerful that other black people view Seabata as having lost a racial identity. Hence Mohanelwa remarks:

*Ntate Nketsi, ha re thuse monnaheso o lahlehile, o se a itebetse hore ke wa bo rona, mme re lokela ho sebedisana le yena hore re be ntsweleng tabeng tse re amang.* (Mohapi 1999:12)

(Nketsi let us help our fellow man, he has forgotten that we belong to the same racial group and that we need to work together and speak in one voice in matters that concern us.)

Chapter 4 starts with Mmabatho, the wife of Seabata on her way home. She pursues other women after work. She pleads for their company but they reject her, uttering sarcastic words. In this chapter, the narrator shows how the strained relationship among male labourers has been passed to their wives. Mmalefu and the company start blaming Mmabatho and her husband for being pompous. They demonstrate a feeling of insecurity about their stay on the farm. Mmanketsi confirm in her utterance:

*Mmannyeo, rona o se ke wa ba wa re kenya tabeng tsa hao, rona re ikela malapeng a rona ao re sa tsebeng hore re tla a dula nako e kae.* (Mohapi 1999:15)

(Do not commit us in your matters; we are getting to our houses, where we cannot guarantee our period of stay.)

These protesting women also sarcastically lash out at Seabata and his tendency to inform his boss about everything that is discussed by the labourers. Mmanketsi says:

*O mang wena o ka rerwang polasing yee? Di ka robala tsa se ke tsa tsejwa ke monnga polasi?* (Mohapi 1999:15)

(Who are you, who can be conspired against at this farm? The farmer can know everything within no time.)

From the above statements it become clear that Seabata's tendency to inform his white farmer about what is planned or what transpires during their duty and off duty is no secret. This further demonstrates mistrust between Seabata and his colleagues.

In their list of grievances Malefu and company grieve about Seabata's wife who also enjoys the privileges of being a foreman's wife. Mmabatho works as a domestic worker

while other women are working in the field where they seem to be enduring the hot temperature. This is also seen as the strategy of divide and rule.

Mmanketsi explicitly raises the issue of race in her grievance:

*Tsa lelapa la hao ke tsa hao, taba ya rona ke ya monnanyana enwa wa hao ya etsang setswalle le rapolasi, Lekgowa, kgele!* (Mohapi 1999:16)

(Your domestic affairs are your own business. Our issue is based on your husband who befriends a farmer, a white man.)

This clearly illustrates racial hatred that reigns among black farm labourers for the white farmer. To the labourers befriending a white man means creating enmity towards your fellow black people.

Mmalefu and the company left Mmabatho devastated and stubborn. She ends up feeling no remorse for what her husband has done. She expressed that in her utterance:

*Nxa, motho o ka ba wa re Seabata o lokile ha a ntse a ba loma tjena, ke re ke bua le bona hantle ba a ...* (Mohapi 1999:17)

(One can say Seabata is justified by backbiting them. I wanted to speak to them well but...)

The narrator further expresses rejection that was experienced by Mmabatho in the utterance:

*Batho ba motsana ona ba ne ba feresela ba mo feta eka ha ba mo tsebe.* (Mohapi 1999:17)

(People from that village were passing her by as if they did not know her.)

The narrator has been successful in showing that Sepanapodi s' seed of racial hatred was sown to the male labourers and moved to their wives and ultimately the whole community ended up reaping sour fruits.

Chapter 5 begins with Seabata arriving home drunk and under heavy stress. He is stressed by people's attitude towards him. People in the farm desert him. He says to his wife:

*...ke batla ho o bolella hore ha ho sa le monate mona polasing, re se re le dihlekehleke ha ho ya re thusang.* (Mohapi 1999:20)

(I want to tell you that life is no more pleasant at this farm, we are islands and no one helps us.)

Seabata however ascribes the rejection and hatred to jealousy. To him being a foreman has made people jealous.

Mmabatho, Seabata s' wife sees things differently. To her Seabata has driven people away from him because of his pompous behaviour. Hence, she pleads with him:

*Wena bitsa banna ba polasi mme o nyatse diketso tsa hao ho bona, mme bona ba tla o qenehela ba o thuse.* (Mohapi 1999:20)

(Call all male farm labourers and confess your evil deeds to them and they will pity you and help you out of this.)

Seabata is in denial. He sees her wife's advice as absurd and as what might prompt Sepanapodi to dismiss him from the farm. He prefers to be distant from his own people and be his boss's trustee. He says:

*Jwale o batla hore ba mpolaye kapa rapolasi a ntebele mona polasing ha a ka utlwa hore ke ntse ke rera le bona ho ba kgahlanong le yena.* (Mohapi 1999:20)

(Now you want them to kill me or you want the farmer to dismiss me from his farm when he hears that I am planning to oppose him.)

From the above utterance, it becomes clear how Sepanapodi has indoctrinated Seabata into thinking that his future lies in his (Sepanapodi) hands. The readers see Seabata in a dilemma. His fellow black brothers are threatening his life. On the other side, his boss is a threat to his future on the farm.

When Mmabatho blames Seabata for his suffering in the hands of Sepanapodi, Seabata utters harsh words, typical of a patriarchal model of a man

*O re o a ntshotla a re thusa tjee, ebe ke la ho qetela o bua jwalo ka yena.* (Mohapi 1999:20)

(You say he ill-treats me whereas he is helping us so much. This should be the last time that you speak like that.)

In this utterance the narrator uses '*ntshota*' and '*re thusa*' (ill treats me and help us) to show that Seabata has surrendered his life and also his wife's life to his boss, Sepanapodi.

In this chapter the narrator make use of the term '*baheno*' and '*ha rapolas*' (those belonging to our racial group and at the white farmer s' house) to refer to the two distinct racial groups, blacks and whites respectively. The theme of the novel '*Lehlaba la lephako*' is overtly expressed in this chapter. Seabata is not willing to rebel against his boss Sepanapodi because to him Sepanapodi is everything. He can survive the pain of hunger if he surrenders himself to his boss.

Chapter 6 begins with Nketsi, Mohanelwa and Nkgelwane, the concerned members of the community visiting Seabata with the view of convincing him to join hands with his fellow blacks and fight exploitation by the white farmer. Nkgelwane, the spokes person

is tasked to present the grievances to Seabata. A reader becomes aware that the problem is race related when Moruti says:

*Seabata o ngwana bo rona re a o hloka, o a re hloka* (Mohapi 1999:25)  
(Seabata you are our fellow brother we need you and you also need us.)

'Ngwana bo rona' (Our fellow brother) means the one from the same racial group. Seabata is a hard nut to crack. His argument is that he may lose his job and place to stay if he rebels against the farmer. Moruti and his company exacerbate the situation when they mention their plan of writing to the labour organization to help resolve the matter. Seabata left them with no hope to ever rebel against Sepanapodi.

In Chapter 7, the concerned members of the farm, Nketsi, Mohanelwa and Nkgelwane have assembled farm residents to meet with the labour organization representatives. The burning issue is the fact that the white farmer has ordered schoolchildren to go and cultivate during school hours. This practice was typical of the white Afrikaners during the apartheid era. Labour law did not protect schoolchildren and their right to learn was infringed. This abusive child labour practice had a negative impact on the children as it also threatened their education. Readers are made aware that even after 1994 some farmers are still contravening this act.

During the meeting, the character trait of Sepanapodi is exposed by one farm labourer in his speech:

*Jwale la e kgwatha noha mosimeng wa yona e thotse...* (Mohapi 1999:30)  
(Now you provoke the snake from its hiding place.)

This expression suggests that you cannot go and attack a person in his territory and win the battle. The labour representatives persuade the labourers to establish a labour organization within the farm, which they claim will help in solving the farm labourers'

problems. Mentioning labour organizations indicates that the novel was written after 1994 when people's rights were protected by the law.

The narrator dwells a lot on the farm labourer's concern about how they will approach Sepanapodi about the matter and how he is going to react to the people's demands. The farm labourers see this structure as but what will fuel the fire rather than bringing sound relations. Nketsi asks the question:

*E re mohlomong ke a lelekwa polasing mona rona ba bang re se re ntse re nkgalefotha la ho tsamaiswa le tla e pota hokae taba eo?* (Mohapi 1999:31)

(If I am dismissed from the farm, what are you going to do? Some of us can be dismissed at any time.)

This utterance shows a sign of helplessness and desperation on the part of the farm labourers. Farm labourers ask a series of questions which suggest that there is no freedom of association and even no freedom of expression in the farm. These were strategies, which were employed by the apartheid regime in South Africa with the view to further the policy of racial segregation. Readers become aware that these strategies are still used even after 1994.

Chapter 8 commences with a secret meeting between Seabata and his mistress, Mmakeneuwe. The relationship between the two is solely based on favours that each one gets from another. Seabata uses Mmakeneuwe to get information about the labourers. On the other hand, Mmakeneuwe maintains the relationship because Seabata supplies her with all her needs and also provides her with transport when she wants to get to town. The readers see Seabata applying the same strategy of divide and rule. Perhaps he copied this from his boss, Sepanapodi. Seabata confirms his manipulative strategy in his utterance directed towards Mmakeneuwe:

*Ke o boleletse ha o fihla mona hore o be tsebe lethwethwe.* (Mohapi 1999:35)

(I told you when you arrived here to listen carefully.)

Listening in this context refers to getting information secretly for Seabata.

During their discussion, readers realize how Seabata perceives his relationship with his boss, Sepanapodi:

*Ke sebeletse monnga polasi a be a mmamele?* (Mohapi 1999:36)

(Should I work for the owner of the farm and then he listens to me?)

From this utterance, it becomes clear that Seabata regards himself as a servant who does not have any say on the affairs of the farm but whose business is to listen to his boss's orders without question. To him a worker is the one who should just work and a boss is the one who should instruct. Both Seabata and Sepanapodi's character traits are exposed by the narrator in the utterance mentioned above. Seabata is seen as a man without a backbone. Sepanapodi is seen as a complete despot.

In Chapter 9, the narrator juxtaposes working conditions in two neighbouring farms: A farm owned by a conservative farmer, Sepanapodi and another farm where the character, Monareng abode and works. The latter farm is transformed and it is run democratically. In this farm, there is freedom of association and labour organizations operate freely. One of the farm labourers, Thabiso brags about this farm:

*Na le a tseba hore polasing ya rona re se re e na le dithuto tsa batho ba baholo?*

(Mohapi 1999:39)

(Do you know that our farm has introduced adult education?)

In this chapter, the divide and rule policy of apartheid is overtly presented in the utterance by the character, Thabiso:

*Taba ya ho supana ka menwana yona ke sa e hana, leno e bile leqheka leo ya bohlale a le sebedisang ho re qabanya ka lona.* (Mohapi 1999:40)

(I do not approve the issue of pinpointing at each other. That was a trick of the cunning man to sow the seed of hatred.)

In this chapter, the narrator reflects on the ideal farm that the oppressed farm labourers are longing for.

In Chapter 10, we see Mmalefu and Mmanketsi visiting Seabata's wife Mmabatho. They have heard of Mmathabo's ill health and are there to comfort her. This surprises Mmabatho because those women were at one instance very cross with her and today they have visited her. These women exacerbate her ill health when they reveal to her about the secret love affair between her husband, Seabata and Mmakeneuwe. This is prompted by anger and hatred that they have for Seabata whom they claim is collaborating with the white Afrikaner. These women left Mmabatho very bitter. The readers realize the frustration that these women are faced with. They want to destroy Seabata.

In Chapter 11, the narrator exposes the hardship that female labourers were faced with. They were not paid for their labour. Their husbands were the only people that were paid. Women's wages were included in their husbands' wages. The readers realize segregation at its worse form on the payday when women are waiting for their husbands to be paid so that they may go with them to their homes. Readers also realize that unlike the male black labourers whose rights are oppressed, female black labourers do not have rights at all.

The climax of the novel is found in Chapter 12. This is where Sepanapodi ordered Seabata to demolish the school building. Seabata is opposed to the idea but is unable to get out of the corner. He confesses to his mistress, Mmakeneuwe:

*Mmakeneuwe ho boima, ke ikentse tshotso dinaleng, ke tsietsing ka nnete, ha ke tsebe hore ke ne ke etsang. Sekolo se ilo heletswa hosasa...* (Mohapi 1999:56)

(Mmakeneuwe, it is difficult, I have committed myself, I am in trouble, and I do not know what I have done. Tomorrow the school building will be demolished.)

In this passage, we see Seabata regaining his consciousness. Mmakeneuwe causes him more pain in her response:

*Ke bonna ntho eo ya ho hatellwa ke monna e mong.* (Mohapi 1999:56)

(Is it manhood when you are overpowered by another man.)

This expression is the one that is often used by black African women when a man succumbs to another man. This is more challenging to Seabata because of the racial issue between Seabata and Sepanapodi. Seabata is not just faced with another man but a man whose skin colour dictates power.

The chapter ends with Sepanapodi withdrawing one of the privileges. He refuses to give Seabata a vehicle to come home fearing that it might be burned down by the angry people in the farm. In this chapter the narrator exposes Sepanapodi as a greedy leader who likes to further his interests without caring for other people's interests. This incident marks the beginning of sour relations between Seabata and Sepanapodi.

Chapter 13 begins with Seabata in a terrible state of mind. He is having a very hard task ahead of him. He must destroy the school building. The narrator emphasizes the importance of the building to the community by saying:

*O ne o sebedisetswa sekolo, kereke le konsarete.* (Mohapi 1999:59)

(The building was used for the school, the church and for concerts.)

It is clear that the school was an asset to the black community.

In this chapter readers realize how Sepanapodi manipulates Seabata. Sepanapodi is seen at a distance drinking tea while Seabata and other men, from the neighbouring

farm are demolishing the school building. The readers see Sepanapodi enjoying while residents are enduring what they witness.

Seabata is performing the task against his will and his conscience is fighting him. The narrator confirms:

*Nako le nako letswalo le ne le mo kgebetla, mme a fufulelwa ho feta ba bang eseng ka lebaka la motjheso empa a swabile, a tenehile, a kgenne a sa tsebe hore o kgenetse mang.* (Mohapi 1999:61)

(Time and again his conscience was fighting him He perspired more than other people, not because of his body temperature but he was having a feeling of shyness, he was emotional, he was angry but he did not know what caused his anger.)

Here Seabata is seen, as a slave who cannot resist what is against his will. This also indicates that he has lost his manly qualities.

Labour organization representatives witness the demolishing of school building and they approach Sepanapodi and try to convince him to stop his action. Sepanapodi is not willing to negotiate with them. He in fact appoints Seabata on the spot to be the middleman between himself and the labour organization. Seabata is astonished by that task, and Sepanapodi puts him in a predicament when he asks him:

*Ke tla o roma bathong bana ba le emetseng, kapa le wena ke baemedi ba hao?* (Mohapi 1999:64)

(I will send you to the people who are representing you. Or are they your representatives?)

Seabata could not answer the question. He finds himself in a dilemma. He is a foreman and he should be on the side of his boss. On the other hand he must decide against his conscience and also against his own people. Despite all the negotiations and disputes the school building is ultimately destroyed.

In Chapter 14 things are becoming worse for Seabata. The majority of the farm residents perceive him as an enemy. One day when he arrives home he finds all his chicken slaughtered. The night of the same day his house is stoned and the windows were left shattered. This reminds the readers of the situation during apartheid era in South Africa when there was a serious racial tension. Black people who were collaborating with the whites were often labelled sellouts. Their houses were burned down and many people lost their lives.

In Chapter 15 the narrator reveals the theme of the novel in the utterance by Moruti in his conversation with his wife:

*E re ke o etsitse mohlala, bothata ba Seabata ke bofutsana.* (Mohapi 1999:75)  
(Let me cite this example. Seabata's problem is caused by his financial status.)

This carries the same message: '*lehlaba la lephako*'. (The pain of hunger) The narrator further reveals Sepanapodi's manipulative strategy in the utterance by Nkgelwane:

*Bothata ba moshanyana enwa wa lekgowa ke ho rata ho hatella basebetsi a sebedisa Seabata.* (Mohapi 1999:75)  
(The problem with this white boy is that he likes to oppress the farm labourers. He does so by using Seabata.)

From this it becomes clear that Sepanapodi uses Seabata's avaricious attitude to further his racially motivated segregation and oppression. Pastor, Nkgelwane lashes out at segregation, which was familiar during apartheid era where the white Afrikaner would stay in a beautiful house, popularly known as heisi i.e. 'beautiful house' in the utterance:

*Moshanyana Lekgowa o dula kwana heising rona re dula mona. Ha re lwantshana madi ha a mo qhapaletse ho hang feela.* (Mohapi 1999:75)

(A white boy stays in a beautiful house and we are staying here, in shabby houses. When we fight each other blood does not spill on him.)

This depicts Sepanapodi as a catalyst. He influence changes but he is not affected in the process.

In Chapter 16 Seabata is no more residing with his own people but is accommodated in the farmer's back yard house. Seabata regards this as a promotion and he even dreams of being allocated a piece of land where he could farm one day. Readers feel pity for Seabata. He is ostracized by his fellow black people and goes and stays with people from another race. In this chapter the narrator exposes one of the notorious practices of the white Afrikaners during the apartheid era in South Africa: that of training dogs to bite black people only. When referring to Sepanapodi's dogs he says:

*Ntho e neng e makatsa ke hore di ne di sa bohole makgowa.* (Mohapi 1999:78)

(What was surprising about these dogs was that they were not barking at white people.)

Here the author exposes racial hatred between the black and the white race, which, according to him also affects animals.

Chapter 17 starts with Seabata delighted with joy. His wife bore him a baby boy, which makes any Mosotho man proud. However his joy is spoilt by Nketsi Thabiso, an old man who is residing in one of the progressive neighbouring farm. Nketsi sarcastically ask Seabata where his son will be schooling when he grows up. This reminds Seabata of the school that he destroyed. Seabata began to realize the white Afrikaner's purpose when he demanded that the school should be demolished. The white Afrikaner wanted the black labourers' children to work in the farm and forget about education, which might liberate them from farm labour. Seabata affirms:

*Ntatemoholo, Seabata le mora ba sebetse polasing ka ho latellana.* (Mohapi 1999:88)

(Seabata's grandfather, Seabata and his son should work in a farm in succession.)

This practice was common during the apartheid era and it is seldom found even today. This has prompted the anti apartheid organizations to demand land distribution prior to and after the apartheid era.

The narrator also satirizes when he mentions that Seabata used to take the white farmer's children to and from school with his boss's vehicle. This depicts Seabata as a person without vision for his fellow black people.

In Chapter 18 readers see Seabata turning his back against his boss, Sepanapodi. Seabata has visited the neighbouring farm where Thabiso works. He came back highly influenced by the sound working relationship between the white Afrikaner farmer and the black labourers.

It is lunchtime and as usual the time is for the white farmer and not the labourers. The labourers sit down and eat against the policy of the farm. Sepanapodi arrives and orders the labourers to start working. Seabata challenge the farmer about the issue but the farmer had the final word. The readers see Sepanapodi as very cruel. He does not treat black labourers with dignity and he disrespects their right.

Later on Sepanapodi relates the story to his wife who was so cross that she demands that Seabata be dismissed. Readers realize the dependency of Sepanapodi on Seabata when Sepanapodi interjects in their discussion with his wife:

*Bona, ha re mo leleka o tla re ntsha kotsi. O tseba mosebetsi wa polasi ena kaofela ha yona.* (Mohapi 1999:96)

(Look, if we dismiss him he will cause us trouble. He knows all duties within the farm.)

From these utterances the readers realize that Sepanapodi invested in Seabata when he affords him certain privileges. Seabata took privileges as favours not being aware that without him the farm will come to a stand still.

In Chapter 19 the narrator tells of Seabata's tendency to steal Sepanapodi's livestock and sell them to the butchery. He is in the event trapped by his boss and is caught by the police. This marks the ends of the relationship between the two men, Seabata and Sepanapodi. The readers realize that Seabata, who seems to be earning more than other labourers, is in fact still not earning a living wage, hence he supplement his wage by stealing and selling.

In Chapter 20 Seabata is to appear in court for stock theft. Sepanapodi has ordered all labourers not to attend to the magistrate court. He has threatened anyone who will attend with dismissal, from work and also from the farm. This sanction also applies to Seabata's wife Mmabatho.

In his testimony in court Seabata confessed for having betrayed his fellow people in his words:

*...ke ne ke tshepahala ho monga polasi e seng baneng beso. (Mohapi 1999:102)*

(I was honest to the farmer but not to my fellow people.)

The narrator exposes the theme of the novel in Seabata s' utterance:

*Ke ne ke kgotsofatsa monga polasi ya neng a ntshebedisa ka hobane o ne a tseba hore ke a hloka empa ho na le ho hong hoo a ka ho sebedisang ho nna. (Mohapi 1999:102)*

(I was satisfying the farmer who used me after realizing that I am poor. The farmer realized that there is something he could get out of me.)

This phrase explicitly reveals the scheming strategy that Sepanapodi used to Seabata. Readers are surprised to realize that even though Seabata was seen as blind while Sepanapodi was using him, he was in fact aware of his boss's strategy. What distracts his attention were the privileges he enjoys.

Seabata also exposes exploitation in farms and says:

*... taba ke hore rona mapolasing re makgoba a lephako, ntja tsa makesi tse saeletswang mmutla o mong le o mong o fetang empa nama ya ona ha re e latswe le ho e latswa. (Mohapi 1999:103)*

(... the issue is that here in farms we are slaves because of hunger. We are dogs, which chase hare, and after catching it we do not get its meat.)

Seabata is sentenced for three years' imprisonment. Readers are amazed to learn that Mmabatho could not visit Seabata in jail. She was only allowed to be there to announce the death of their son.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The aim of this study is to find out whether or not post apartheid Sesotho novels continue to present idealistic race relations. To be able to arrive at that conclusion we examined some Sesotho novels published before 1994 that is, novels that were published during the apartheid era. The conclusion that we arrived at was that novels published during the apartheid era were often idealistic in their presentation of race relations. Novels published before 1994 that we studied are *Mofufutso wa phatla* (Mphethe 1966), *Leshala le tswala molora* (Lesoro 1962), *Pere e ntsho Blackmore* (Lesoro 1968) and *Arola naheng ya Maburu* (Nqheku 1942).

In the first three novels mentioned above, black-white relations were studied. The portrayal of the characters, especially white characters were observed. The conclusion that we reached was that the white characters were not portrayed as real people who have weaknesses and strong points. Their strong points were overemphasized and very little were readers told of the weaknesses of the white characters. What white characters say, do and how they interact with their black counterparts was questionable. The racial situation in South Africa was not criticized. These first three novels were not written within the context of South Africa during the apartheid era. Their authors' approaches were influenced by the apartheid laws, which prohibit freedom of expression.

The last novel, *Arola naheng ya Maburu* (Nqheku 1942) was written by the author who was not restricted in his work. The readers are not surprised by this harsh utterance by the white farmer when he was about to torture one of the Blacks:

*Tsoarang ntja eo kapele likafore ting!* (Nqheku 1942:19)

(Catch that dog quickly you kaffirs!)

This utterance justifies the fact that this novel is not a South African product but it was published in the independent state of Lesotho where freedom of press was not restricted.

Our focus in this study is on the two post-apartheid farm novels, *Nonyana ya Tshepo and Lehlaba la lephako*. These novels as indicated earlier were written after 1994, the year, which marked the change of political situation in South Africa. During this era the inception of the South African constitution, which entails the right to freedom of opinion and expression made a tremendous influence on literary works especially the work of the black writers.

We have examined race relations in the above-mentioned two novels with the view of establishing whether or not the authors of those novels continue to present race relations in an idealistic manner as it was done in most novels that were written prior to 1994.

In the two novels, *Nonyana ya Tshepo and Lehlaba la lephako* the authors wrote freely without any political restrictions. Characters in these novels are portrayed as real people with human weaknesses and strong points. The authors of these novels have dropped the tendency of their predecessors who wrote before 1994, who as Malan (1987:4) puts it, were often expressing disruption and inhumanity of apartheid without explicitly criticizing it.

The readers are not surprised by the way racial discrimination, racial oppression, racial intolerance and other attributes of race are exposed. The two authors confirm the views of Malan (1987: 2) about writers. He maintains that writers are not prepared to be silenced by censorship in the country. He also emphasizes that the writers' writings reflects the bitterness, one-sidedness, stereotyping and intolerance of apartheid.

In our conclusion, we will look at the narrators' portrayal of the different characters and the presentation of character traits in the two post-apartheid farm novels. This will reflect the kind of relationship that prevails between characters from different races, that is, race relations.

In the novel *Nonyana ya Tshepo*, the main character, Tshepo is depicted as the hated, the marginalized and the devastated person. This is caused by his strange skin colour, which makes it difficult for Blacks to accept him. He is a Coloured. The narrator has been successful in building plot around this character and also in developing conflict out of this character's background. The narrator started off by using a metaphor, *Mmankgane* (a bat) to describe Tshepo and ended up using harsh phrases like:

*Ngwana towe wa lekgowa!* (Zulu 1997:28)

(You son of a white man!).

Racial utterances like these were seldom found in South African Sesotho literatures, especially the ones written before 1994. The narrator is condemnatory in his presentation of Tshepo. Perhaps the reason for that is to show what confusion the white Afrikaner, Motlatsi has created by sleeping with his black maid, Sebolelo to produce the Coloured boy Tshepo.

The character, Mmaseeta is portrayed as very aggressive. Mmaseeta is a notorious Sesotho name, which means the one who kicks. Readers are surprised to learn that she is not just 'the one who kicks' but she is a sadist who also enjoys seeing people harassed and tortured. This is evident when she persuades her husband and other farm labourers to kill the black labourer, Mofokeng. The narrator explicitly exposes Mmaseeta's attitude, which is said to be racially motivated.

The character, Motlatsi is portrayed as a very cruel and a racist farmer. His treatment of the black labourers reminds the readers of the atrocities during the apartheid era. He shows disregard for human dignity when he forces Mokwena to

drink brandy so that he could carry out his orders being out of his senses. He then forces Mokwena and Mosia to help him beat Mofokeng to death. Motlatsi is also seen sexually harassing the black maid, Sebolelo. The narrator exposes these cruel and racial behaviours.

The portrayal of characters of some black labourers shows the influence of apartheid laws in the South African society. Black characters like Mosia, Mokwena and Sebolelo are portrayed as very submissive to their Afrikaner boss. They are so submissive that they forget that they have human rights, which need to be respected and protected. They are tortured, harassed and exposed to all sorts of discrimination but they always remain loyal to their Afrikaner boss. The author exposes the ill treatment of the black labourers by their white bosses and he does that in a very critical manner.

Mofokeng is portrayed as a firm person who seems to be aware of his rights. He stood by his principles until he died. In this novel the author exposes the strained relations between the black labourers of the farm and their white counterparts.

In the novel *Lehlaba la lephako* we have seen how the white Afrikaner, Sepanapodi has used the farm Goedehoop to create the conditions that will prevent the full development of the black group. He has done so by denying them basic human rights and freedom. In this novel the narrator shows the rise and the fall of the main character, Seabata.

The readers were introduced to Seabata, who was portrayed as very submissive. His loyalty towards his boss was seen as unchallengeable. Perhaps the narrator wanted to justify the fact that Seabata is the victim of *Lehlaba la lephako* (The pain of hunger). It is this hunger that has cost Seabata his manhood and it is because of poverty that he has turned against his own black people and has become blind and deaf when his own people tried to show him or advise him.

The narrator has been successful in exposing Seabata's senseless behaviour. He treated his fellow blacks without dignity and disregards their rights. He harassed other black labourers and was always seen backbiting them. He once forced schoolchildren out of school and harassed their teacher, Mohanelwa who wanted to prevent him from his actions.

Seabata connived with the white farmer and destroyed the school building, which was used by the black community. The author exposes all these atrocities and malpractices. The narrator justifies Seabata's actions by saying he was advised by his father before he died. His father's advice was that if you want to live in luxury you must be loyal and submissive to your boss. Perhaps the narrator wants to show the legacy of apartheid.

The narrator has been successful in his portrayal of the character, Sepanapodi. This character is portrayed as a racist and a dictator whose conduct is motivated by racial prejudice. He violated some human rights like the rights of children to education. This is evident where he demanded that school building be demolished. He denied farm labourers the right to form and to join trade unions. He does not allow freedom of opinion and expression in the farm. He also denied Mmathabo the right to visit her husband when he was jailed. The incident where Sepanapodi denied workers to break for lunch during working hours shows that he disrespect human dignity.

Sepanapodi's character is also portrayed in the incident where he only pays the male labourers and does not pay the female labourers. That depicts him as cruel leader who does not care for or recognize the rights of other people. The narrator portrays the women characters as the exploited and also as slaves. Women's rights during the apartheid era were infringed. Affirmative action has been introduced in South Africa to close the gap between men and women. Above all the South African constitution is there to protect the rights of women.

In the crisis, which involves Seabata and Nketsi, Sepanapodi is depicted as very unfair. He does not give Nketsi a fair hearing but passes judgment without hearing both side of the story. All these malpractices were mostly found during the apartheid era and were not publicized. The narrator exposed them and criticized them vehemently.

From the above discussion it becomes clear that the authors of the two novels dealt with race relations in an honest and realistic way. They are more objective in their portrayal of historical events and they depict socio-political circumstances realistically. Perhaps the two authors are appealing against exploitation and degradation of black people in the farms. Freedom of expression in this new dispensation should be regarded as a valuable asset, which will ensure that democracy is not just on paper but it is practiced. Authors are watchdogs and will always make sure that democracy is maintained.

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