

TRAGEDY IN SELECTED SESOTHO NOVELS

by

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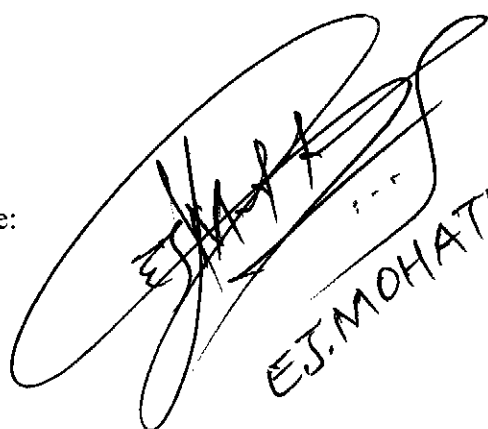
Promoter: Prof. N. S. Zulu

December 2002

DECLARATION

I, the undermentioned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work, and has not previously in its entirety or in part, been submitted at any university for a degree.

Signature:


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SUMMARY

The object of this study is to examine the expression of tragedy in randomly selected Sesotho novels in two major periods, namely the early period (1925 to 1970s) and the later period (1970s to 1990s). Five Sesotho novels will be discussed in each period and give an indication of tragic expression in that period. It is however not the main emphasis in this work to compare and contrast between the two periods but mainly to observe patterns of tragedy and tragic expressions in Sesotho novels.

Chapter One orientates the reader by indicating aspects such as the problem identification, aim of the research, the approach or *modus operandi*, the scope as well as the organisation of the study, that is, a brief arrangement of chapters and presentation of what would be contained in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Two presents the theoretical framework within which the research will be based. As the theoretical framework in this work, aspects of tragedy, namely, character, plot and theme will be discussed.

Chapter Three focuses on the early Sesotho tragedies within the literary period 1925 to 1970s. As already indicated, five novels, namely, *Chaka*, *Mphatlalatsane*, *Moiketsi*, *Mosali a nkholo*, and *Leshala le tswala molora* will be discussed in terms of the theoretical principles suggested in Chapter Two. At the end of the chapter, an analysis of the findings and conclusions will be drawn on tragic expressions in these novels. These novels distinguish themselves as largely classical tragedies (there are modern ones also) in terms of the nature of tragic characters available.

Chapter Four examines the later Sesotho tragedies ranging between the period 1970s to 1990s. As in early Sesotho novels, five novels will be discussed with a view to highlight tragic expressions in this period. *Peo ena e jetswe ke wena*, *Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha*, *Nna ke mang*, *Ke leshelehele leo a iphehletseng lona* and *Lehlaba la lephako* will be the novels we analyse. Analysis of the findings will be made and conclusions drawn at the end of the chapter in how

tragedy is expressed in all these novels. These novels distinguish themselves as largely modern tragedies in terms of the tragic characters portrayed in them.

Chapter Five presents the general conclusions on all the novels discussed in the two periods. A comparison will be made as to how tragic expression differs from one period to another particularly in terms of the three aspects of tragedy. Each novel will be given the individual attention and focussed exclusively as to how it presents tragedy and how perhaps it differs from others.

SAMEVATTING

Die doel van hierdie studie is om die voorkoms van die tragedie in geselekteerde Suid-Soetoe romans gedurende hoofsaaklik twee periodes, naamlik, die vroeëre periode (1925 tot die 1970's) en die latere periode (1970 tot die 1990's) te ondersoek. Vyf Suid-Soetoe romans sal bespreek word rakende elke periode en sal 'n aanduiding gee van die tragedie gedurende die betrokke periode. Dit is egter nie die hoofdoel van die werk om vergelykings en onderskeidings tussen die twee periodes te tref nie, maar eerder om tragedie en tragiese elemente binne Suid-Soetoe romans te bespreek.

Hoofstuk Een se doel sal wees om die leser te oriënteer aangesien dit aspekte soos die probleemidentifikasie, die doel van die studie, die omvang en die voorlopige navorsing gemaak in terme van ander navorsingswerke rakende die onderwerp bevat, naamlik, vorige studies rakende die karakter in Suid-Soetoe romans met spesifieke verwysing na tragiese karakters. Die hoofstuk sal ook die uiteensetting van die studie, soos die uitleg van die hoofstukke en inhoud van daaropvolgende hoofstukke bevat, bespreek.

Hoofstuk Twee stel die teoretiese raamwerk bekend waarop die navorsing gebaseer is. As deel van die raamwerk, sal aspekte van die tragedie soos karakter, intrige en tema bespreek word. Hierdie teoretiese aspekte sal dan toegepas word op Suid-Soetoe romans in opvolgende hoofstukke.

Hoofstuk Drie fokus op die vroeëre Suid-Soetoe tragedies binne die literêre periode 1925 tot 1970s. Vyf romans, naamlik *Chaka*, *Mphatlalatsane*, *Moiketsi*, *Mosali a nkholo* en *Leshala le tswala molora* sal bespreek word in terme van teoretiese beginsels genoem in Hoofstuk Twee. Aan die einde van die hoofstuk sal 'n analise gemaak word van die bevindinge en gevolgtrekkings rakende die tragedie se voorkoms in hierdie romans. Hierdie romans onderskei hulself grootliks as klassieke tragedies in terme van die tragiese karakters se voorkoms.

Hoofstuk Vier ondersoek die latere Suid-Soetoe tragedies gedurende die tydperk 1970

tot 1990. Soos in die vroeëre tydperk, sal vyf romans bespreek word met die doel om die aspekte van tragedie te aksentueer. *Peo ena e jetswe ke wena*, *Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha*, *Nna ke mang*, *Ke lesheleshele leo a iphehletseng lona* en *Lehlaba la lephako* sal romans wees waarop gefokus word. `n Analise van die bevindinge en gevolgtrekkings sal gemaak word aan die einde van die hoofstuk en sal die voorkoms van die tragedie in al die romans beskryf. Hierdie romans onderskei hulself hoofsaaklik as moderne tragedies in terme van die tragiese karakters se voorkoms.

Hoofstuk Vyf verskaf algemene gevolgtrekkings waartoe gekom is in die voorafgaande bespreking van die genoemde twee periodes. `n Vergelyking sal gemaak word oor hoe die voorkoms van die tragedie verskil van een periode na die ander, rakende die tragiese figuur. Elke roman sal individuele aandag kry en klem sal gelê word op hoe dit verskil van ander romans.

KGUTSUFATSO

Ka mosebetsi ona wa diphuputso re hlahloba ka moo mahlomola a totobatswang ka teng dingolweng tse kgethilweng dinakong tsena tsa bongodi, e leng ho tloha selemong sa 1925 ho isa selemong sa 1970 le tse hlahlamang esita le nako ya morao e qalang selemong sa 1970 ho isa dilemong tsa 1990 le tse hlahlamang. Re tla hlahloba dipale tse hlano mokgahlelong o mong le o mong wa nako e le ho totobatsa ka moo mahlomola a hlahiswang ka teng dipaleng tsa Sesotho. Ha se sepheo se seholo sa mosebetsi ona ho bapisa totobatso ya mahlomola mekgahlelong ena ya nako empa sepheo se seholo ke ho bontsha ka moo mahlomola a hlahiswang ka teng dipaleng tsa Sesotho.

Kgaolong ya Pele re tla nyenyeletsa mmadi diphuputsong tsena ka ho mo tsebisa dintlha tsa bohlokwa malebana le mosebetsi ona tse kang totobatso ya qaka, sepheo sa phuputso ena, mokgwa oo phuputso e tla etswa ka ona, dintlha tse tla fuputswa esita le tlhophiso ya mosebetsi ona. Ka tlhophiso ya mosebetsi ona re bolela tatelano ya dikgaolo esita le tlhahiso ya kgaolo ka nngwe, ho tse tla latela.

Kgaolong ya Bobedi re hlahisa teori kapa moralo wa tsebo o tla sebediswa bakeng sa phuputso ena. Tse ding tsa dikarolwana tsa moralo ona wa tsebo e tla ba dikarolo tsa bohlokwa tsa pale ya mahlomola, mme ka hona mosebetsi o tla totobatsa mophetwa, moralo wa kgohlano (poloto) le mookotaba. Dintlha tsena tsa moralo wa tsebo di tla sebediswa dipaleng tsa Sesotho tse tla hlahlojwa dikgaolong tse tla latela.

Kgaolong ya Boraro re hlahloba dipale tsa Sesotho tse ngotsweng mokgahlelong wa pele wa nako mme e le nako e qalang selemong sa 1925 ho isa selemong sa 1970 le tse mmalwa tse latelang. Jwalo ka ha re se re hlalositse, re tla hlahloba dipale tse hlano e leng *Chaka, Mphatlalatsane, Moiketsi, Mosali a nkholo le Leshala le tswala molora* ho latela dintlha tseo re buileng ka tsona kgaolong ya bobedi. Qetellong ya kgaolo ena re tla hlahloba diqeto tseo re di etsang ho latela tseo re di lemohileng dipaleng tsena malebana le tlhahiso ya mahlomola. Dipale tsena ke dipale tsa tlelaseki tse tshwanang le tsa

Sekgerike (le hoja ho ntse ho na le dipale tsa sekwalejwale) ho latela semelo sa mophetwa wa mahlomola.

Kgaolong ya Bone re hlahloba dipale tsa mahlomola tsa mokgahlelo wa sekwalejwale mme e le dipale tse ngotsweng nakong ya selemo sa 1970 ho tla fihla dilemong tsa 1990 le tse hlahlamang. Jwalo ka ha re ile ra etsa dipaleng tsa kgale, re tla hlahloba dipale tse hlano e le ho bontsha ka moo mahlomola a totobatswang ka teng paleng tsa Sesotho. Dipale tseo re tla di hlahloba ke *Peo ena e jetswe ke wena, Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha, Nna ke mang, Ke lesheleshele leo a iphehlletseng lona le Lehlabana la lephako*. Ha re se re hlahlobile dipale tsena re tla fana ka diqeto tseo re di fihleletseng mabapi le ka moo mahlomola a hlahiswang ka teng paleng tsena. Dipale tsena di ka tsejwa e le dipale tsa sekwalejwale ho latela mofuta wa mophetwa wa mahlomola ya fumanwang ho tsona.

Kgaolong ya Bohlano re fana ka diqeto tse akaretsang malebana le dipale tsohle tseo re di hlahlobileng mekgahlelong ena e mmedi ya nako. Re tla bapisa ka moo tlhahiso ya mahlomola e fapaneng ka teng ka lebaka la tshwaetso ya semelo sa mophetwa, diketsahalo kapa moralo esita le mookotaba kapa molaetsa. Re tla lekola pale ka nngwe mme re hlahlobe ka moo e hlahisang mahlomola ka teng le ka moo e fapanang le dipale tse ding ka teng.

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my parents,

Nolan Thabang and Lillian Morakane

Mohatlane

*

A

special dedication

also to

my grandmothers,

Henriette Mmapeeletso Monare

and

Aletta Mmathabang Mohatlane (late).

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CHAPTER ONE: TRAGEDY IN THE SESOTHO NOVEL

1.1 PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Tragedy has been seen as an integral part of drama since the time of Aristotle. Very few researchers in African languages have considered research on tragedy in the novel. At the moment we are aware of only one comprehensive study in African literature that researches tragedy, namely, Jafta's (1996) unpublished doctoral thesis entitled *Tragic expressions in selected Xhosa literary works*. It appears that no comprehensive research has been undertaken in this regard in the Sesotho language in particular. Lack of research in tragic expression in Sesotho novels therefore motivated the researcher to undertake research in this area.

The research will focus on the expression of tragedy in Sesotho novels. The investigation intends to find out how the Sesotho novel expresses tragedy and also the specific way in which it reflects tragedy. The research will also focus on the type of situation which may give rise to tragedy in the Sesotho novel. A study of the theme will be undertaken in conjunction with character and plot to establish the scope of conflict that is tragic in nature. It is well known in African literature that the issue of forced marriages frequently gives rise to tragedy. It has not yet been established what other possible themes may contribute to the expression of tragedy. It is for instance, of interest to see how far themes, which deal with various forms of corruption, reveal tragic circumstances in changing times.

1.2 AIM OF THE STUDY

This study aims to examine the expressions of tragedy in Sesotho novels. We intend to determine how tragedy is expressed from the early classical to the later modern Sesotho novels. The study aims to establish the role and the nature of the tragic characters in the Sesotho novels. It will also be necessary to establish whether the tragic character has a status of great magnitude, that is, whether the character commands respect and specific recognition from all other characters (for such a novel to be classified as classical tragedy) or whether the tragic character is an ordinary person who only happens to act in blindness by virtue of a human error of judgement

(for such a novel to be classified as modern tragedy).

The concepts 'tragedy' and the 'tragic' expressions need some definition as they may be confusing. Aristotle (quoted by Leech 1969:1) defines 'tragedy' as the imitation of an action that is serious and has magnitude, which is complete in itself, in language with pleasurable accessories, each kind brought in separately in the parts of the work, in a dramatic, not in a narrative form; involving incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its *catharsis* of such emotions.

Baldick (1990:226-227) defines 'tragedy' as a serious play, or, by extension, a novel representing the disastrous downfall of a central character, the protagonist. The protagonist is led into a calamity by a *harmatia* (error) which often takes the form of *hubris* (excessive pride leading to divine retribution or *nemesis*). The 'tragic effect' usually depends on our awareness of admirable qualities, manifest or latent in the protagonist, which are wasted terribly in the fated disaster.

Jafta (1996) outlines the difference between 'tragedy' and the 'tragic' as follows:

Tragedy is associated with a particular form in literature which has come to be accepted as drama or a play while the tragic extends beyond the confines of drama. The tragic is used to mean a type of experience, a sense, a vision of some kind

(Jafta 1996:8.)

Jafta (1996) seems to share a common understanding with Krieger (1973) with regard to the difference between tragedy and the tragic as she outlines Krieger's views as follows:

He maintains that tragedy refers to the totality of the work and considers the object's literary form that is associated with Aristotle's formalistic or structural definition. The tragic refers to the subject's psychology, his views as well

as version of reality

(Krieger quoted by Jafta 1996:8.)

We can only reiterate at this stage that Jafta (1996) confirms that tragedy relates to structure (as in drama) whereas the tragic is not confined to any particular structure. The tragic can be found in the novel or any other literary genre such as poetry, the essay or the short story.

1.3 APPROACH (*MODUS OPERANDI*)

In our analysis of tragic expressions in the early and later Sesotho novels we will focus on character, plot and theme as aspects of tragedy. The reason for the investigation of character, plot and theme is that tragedy mainly involves the fusion of these three literary aspects in the sense that tragic flaw unfolds through the development of the plot. The tragic hero serves as the central figure around whom tragic events occur. The development of plot leads to various themes and the end of the novel gives the main idea or the underlying message and moral issues that explicate tragedy. These three aspects are therefore inter-linked in the expression of tragedy.

It will therefore be ideal to investigate how the three aspects of tragedy, namely, character, plot and theme function to express tragedy in each novel and we shall observe the patterns of the early and later Sesotho novels.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In order to investigate the expression of tragedy in Sesotho novels it is important to divide the work in two literary periods of early and later Sesotho novels so as to investigate whether tragedy in Sesotho novels develops, remains stagnant or deteriorates. The Sesotho novels to be studied are the following:

Early novels

The following five early novels will be used to illustrate the expression of tragedy during the

period 1925 to the 1970s:

Chaka by T. M. Mofolo (1925).

Mphatlalatsane by J. J. Machobane (1947).

Moiketsi by M. L. Maile (1958).

Mosali a nkholo by B. M. Khaketla (1960).

Leshala le tswala molora by E.A.S. Lesoro (1962).

Later novels

The following five later novels will be used to illustrate the expression of tragedy during the period 1970s to the 1990s:

Peo ena e jetswe ke wena by I. M. Moephuli (1982).

Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha by T. Mafata (1991).

Nna ke mang? by K.P.D. Maphalla (1991).

Ke lesheleshele leo a iphehletseng lona by C. Chobokoane (1992).

Lehlaba la lephako by T.W.D. Mohapi (1999).

The main emphasis is however, not on literary periods, per se, but on the actual presentation of tragedy in terms of the use of the aspects of tragedy discussed above.

The criteria for selection of the early and later Sesotho novels to be investigated in this work are

that firstly, a novel involves the tragic character with a tragic flaw. Secondly, tragic characters are protagonists who miscalculate. Some characters may deliberately and consciously maintain their flaws even though they are advised differently by other characters. Other characters may not be aware that they have flaws and only recognise it *ex post facto*. Thirdly, the novel has the possibility of the process of the deterioration of events from good fortune to misfortune (*peripeteia*) on the part of the main character. Finally, it was also considered whether the misfortune of the main character generated the emotions of pity and fear (catharsis) in the reader(s).

In view of the fact that the above criteria emphasise the presence of the tragic character, it becomes clear that the availability and the nature of the tragic character can be distinguished as the principle that determines whether the novel is a tragedy or not. We have therefore selected Sesotho novels to be analysed on the basis of the main character having a tragic flaw that would lead him/her to experience a disastrous downfall at the end.

1.5 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The study will be divided in five chapters.

Chapter One orientates readers to the work by indicating the problem that prompted the study, the aim of the research, the approach, the scope, as well as the organisation of the study.

Chapter Two presents the theoretical framework and the methodology on which the study will be based. An analysis of the aspects of tragedy namely, character, plot and theme will be done.

Chapter Three deals with the analysis of the early Sesotho novels.

Chapter Four presents the analysis of the later Sesotho novels.

Chapter Five will focus on observations and conclusions.

We turn to Chapter Two to explain in more detail the aspects of tragedy, namely character, plot and theme as our theoretical framework.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the discussion of character, plot and theme as the theoretical framework for the analysis of the tragic expression in selected Sesotho novels. These three aspects of tragedy are discussed sequentially as follows: character, plot and theme.

2.2 CHARACTER AS AN ASPECT OF TRAGEDY

Our focus on character is primarily on the 'tragic character' as an aspect of tragedy. This means that we concentrate on how the tragic character can be identified in both the classical and the modern tragedy.

2.2.1 The tragic character in the classical tragedy

Our view of the tragic character in a classical tragedy is that he should be shocking and have great influence on society as a whole. This implies that as the tragic character experiences problems in his life as an individual, society is also greatly affected. The tragic character's problems are extrapolated to society as a whole. In the times of Aristotle, the tragic characters were only kings and queens, or princes and princesses. They were eminent persons who had specific status in society. During the time of Aristotle, the state of affairs in society was such that the position of the king was still recognised as a high status in society. This influenced their tragic experience to be of great magnitude. Baldick (1990) adds more meaning to classical tradition in his contention that:

Classical tragedy represents the disastrous downfall of a central character, the protagonist ... The character has a highly respected position in his society

(Baldick 1990:226-227.)

Marjorie Boulton (1960) concedes to Aristotle's views on the issue of emphasis given to characters of high status. She maintains that:

The central character ... is a person of admirable character and important position who is ruined by some one (sic) flaw of character ...

(Boulton 1960:147.)

Following the view specified above, Boulton confirms that the relationship between the main character and other characters is of utmost importance in the expression of tragedy.

2.2.2 The tragic characters in the modern tradition

Unlike in the classical tradition, the fall of the tragic character in the modern tragedy does not affect many people but is directed and limited to the tragic character in question. The tragic heroes and heroines of the modern tragedies are not necessarily kings and queens, or princes and princesses, but can be any ordinary characters. The tragic experience in this regard can therefore not be recognised to be of great social magnitude. The social perspective around this view is that from the time of Aristotle focus has changed from group solidarity to the individual. Tragedy is no longer restricted to drama but extended to poetry and the novel. Holman et al. (1986) give an historical account of this issue:

In the Middle Ages the term tragedy did not refer to a drama but to any narrative recounting how a person of high rank, through ill fortune or vice or error, fell from high estate to low

(Holman et al. 1986:506.)

Holman et al. (1986) add more meaning to the fact that drama should not be perceived as the only literary mechanism that expresses tragedy. The novel as a narrative prose or any other art-form, can also be applied in expressing tragedy.

2.2.3 The role of the tragic character in the expression of tragedy

The tragic hero rises above the ordinary person. The character operates under the impression that he has more powers than any ordinary persons. Without the realisation of any human weakness he engages in unrestricted plans and develops an unbound wish to live as it pleases him. He appears to be too individualistic and sometimes becomes pompous. He is inclined to dissociate himself from other characters. In this way, the tragic character has a tragic flaw which leads to his downfall. This implies that the personality of the tragic character is of great influence to his ultimate suffering. What is more tragic is that the character is not aware of his tragic flaw nor does he want to accept when advised about his weakness. Some of the personal elements through which the tragic character plays a role to influence the development of tragedy in a novel involve the following:

- ▶ *Hamartia*

Hamartia in the Greek sense suggests a socially unacceptable set of predetermined circumstances which determine the main character's downfall, from which he cannot escape but for which he cannot be held responsible.

- ▶ *Peripeteia*

Peripeteia suggests a change in fortune. In a hierarchically organised society *peripeteia* inevitably means a noble character, a king or chieftain. The impact of a lesser figure would not have the same ripple effect through the community and subdue it to a state of misery. Such a change of fortune, furthermore, should be seen in terms of action and a measurable position in society.

- ▶ *Anagnorisis*

Anagnorisis means discovery. In this context, however, the discovery was of some hidden set of facts, or circumstances that could explain the state of affairs within which the character found

himself. The identity of some character which had hitherto been unknown is also revealed.

► *Hubris*

Some of the points raised by Baldick (1990:226-227) about the role of the tragic character include the error of judgement that takes the form of *hubris*. This implies an excessive pride that the character develops as a result of which his relationship with other characters becomes tense. The tragic hero is also involved as the eminent person. In this way tragedy is rated as of high social magnitude. Another factor that is worth noting is that the hero has a tragic flaw which is the defect that brings about his downfall. The tragic flaw should be shocking and have great repercussions on the surrounding society as a whole. The aroused shock evokes *pathos* which enhances tension among readers or spectators as conflict develops.

As indicative of the role of the tragic character, many literary critics such as Baldick, Boulton, Leech and others, believe that tragedy in the novel is not possible without the tragic character. This implies that the tragic character is central in the presentation of tragedy. This is perhaps the reason Moody (1971) maintains that:

A novel without characters would be an impossibility, and one of the most consistent attractions of the novel is that through the author's creative imagination we gain acquaintance with, and insight into, a great variety of human types and problems
(Moody 1971:48.)

In the expression of tragedy, Pretorius et al. (1982:24) maintain that there is a tragic hero. However, of importance is that the tragic hero can be any person who oversteps his boundaries by not taking into consideration the advice of other people. In this regard such a character thinks too much of himself in the sense that he maintains that he possesses the capacity to govern all characters.

However, Aristotle holds the view that tragedy is plot-centred but he is challenged by Altenbernd

(1966) who holds the view that tragedy is character-based. In other words, for Altenbernd (1966) the role played by the tragic character in a tragedy is more significant than the unfolding of events or plot itself. This is why Altenbernd (1966) maintains that:

The emotions of the characters give interest to the plot; the story seems to be what it has to be because the characters are as they are

(Altenbernd 1966:14.)

While Aristotle places more emphasis on plot, it becomes clear that Altenbernd (1966) gives preference to character. In other words, Altenbernd (1966) is more interested in the effects of tragic experience on the part of the character than the actual unfolding of events themselves.

2.2.4 The expression of tragedy through round and flat characters

Rimmon-Kenan (1983:40) makes a distinction between round and flat characters. Flat characters are referred to be analogous to *humours*, caricatures and types. These characters are again described as non-developing and non-changing in the sense that they do not change from their initial characteristics. Round characters on the other hand, are defined as having more than one quality and being liable to develop (change) in the course of the action.

Pretorius et al. (1982) concur with Rimmon-Kenan (1983) in a definition he attaches to both round and flat characters. About the round character, Pretorius et al. (1982) maintain that :

A round character is complex in temperament and motivation, and is represented in some detail: The reader gets to know him in more than one way - what his temperament is; what his moral nature is; how he experiences things...

(Pretorius et al.,1982:7.)

These particular qualities of a round character are thought to be functional in the expression of

tragedy. About the flat character, Pretorius et al. (1982) say that:

In the case of a flat character, only superficial, typifying characteristics are revealed to the reader.

(Pretorius et al.,1982:7.)

The tragic characters are expected to be either round or flat characters in order to be in a position to clearly show how tragedy takes place in the novel selected. However, a round character demonstrates tragedy through transition in his life, that is, a change from good fortune to misfortune. A flat character on the other hand, exercises his tragic flaw and does so consistently at the end of which he experiences tragedy.

Forster (1974:73) also makes a distinction between flat and round characters and concurs with Rimmon-Kenan (1983) in describing flat characters. He points out that flat characters were constructed around a single idea or quality and were easily recognisable whenever they came in. The reader had no problems to remember or identify these characters. We have to clarify though that Forster (1974) was concentrating on flat and round characters in the novel but his assumptions can also be applied to explain characters in a tragedy.

Forster (1974:77) maintains that round characters are developing characters. They are complex, fit to perform tragically for any length of time and can move readers to any feelings except humour and appropriateness. The most important points mentioned by Forster (1974) about the use of round as well as flat characters towards the expression of tragedy in the novel is that a successful novel involves both round and flat characters. Round characters are, however the main characters. Unlike other art-forms where a flat character could be the main character, Forster maintains that in a novel (particularly a novel that involves tragedy), a round character would be ideal to function as a tragic character. Forster (1974) furthermore contends that:

... a novel that is at all complex often requires flat people as well as round, and the outcome of their collisions parallels life more accurately ...

(Forster 1974:75-76.)

Seeing that Forster (1974) maintains that the existence of flat and round characters already implies conflict, this contention may be important in explaining the tragic expression in the novel. However, Forster (1974) is opposed to flat characters operating as tragic characters as he maintains that they are more relevant in expressing comedy than tragedy. The view is captured in the following comment:

For we must admit that flat people are not in themselves as big achievements as round ones, and also that they are best when they are comic. A serious or tragic flat character is apt to be a bore

(Forster 1974:77.)

Forster (1974) seems to particularise the role of a flat character. He believes that a flat character is more relevant to comedy than tragedy. The argument is that though Forster (1974) maintains that both round and flat characters could be used in expressing tragedy, he recommends the use of round characters than flat characters. He opines that round characters are more relevant in effective expression of tragedy. In this way, Forster is convinced that only the round character can serve effectively as a tragic character as he argues that:

It is only round people who are fit to perform tragically for any length of time and can move us to any feelings except humour and appropriateness

(Forster 1974:77.)

2.2.5 Methods of characterisation

Methods of characterisation cited by Rimmon-Kenan (1983) namely, the expository and dramatic techniques together with other methods of characterisation such as naming technique and metaphorisation of tragic characters can be explicated as follows:

- ▶ The expository method

In this case, the author employs the narrator to give qualities to the characters. This means that the narrator remarks on the nature of the character. This serves as an explicit identification of tragic characters.

- ▶ The dramatic method

In this case what characters do, say, think and even dream about gives qualities to them. Readers are therefore given an idea of the nature of the character from what the character says, does or thinks. Sometimes characters reflect their nature through dialogue which may be an index to the background of the character.

- ▶ Direct definition

This is yet another explicit method of characterisation. In this particular case, the author employs the narrator to inform the reader about the nature of the character. It also implies throwing more light on the tragic character and perhaps understanding the character's relationship with other characters.

- ▶ Names of characters

Characters are known by their names and sometimes names reflect the role of the character in expressing tragedy. Names of characters, particularly the tragic characters, have an influence on their behaviour and on their personalities. In most Sesotho tragedies, authors make use of names to reflect the nature of the characters.

- ▶ Metaphorisation of tragic characters and the expression of tragedy

Names of characters may be presented metaphorically, that is, associating a character with a fearful animal or object in order to express the nature of that character. People in the African

communities venerate certain animals as their totems.

2.3 PLOT AS AN ASPECT OF TRAGEDY

Before we delve into discussions of the plot as an aspect of the novel, it is important to distinguish between story and plot, as they are very close concepts. Story or *fabula* (to borrow the Formalists' concept), is defined by Forster (1974) as:

A narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence

(Forster 1974:83.)

In defining plot or *sjuzet*, Forster (1974) maintains that plot is:

A narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality

(Forster 1974:87.)

Forster (1974) remarks further that story merely evokes curiosity in the reader. This means that the reader is introduced to events that may possibly occur so that the reader's curiosity is aroused to know more about them. Plot provides the causality for the occurrence of events. This implies that the causality principle serves as a chain that binds events in terms of the cause-effect relationship.

2.3.1 Fatal plots and the expression of tragedy

Zulu (1998:3) noted that Aristotle distinguishes between fortunate and fatal plots. This distinction is based on whether the tragic character's position improved or declined. The fortunate plot line refers to the comic plot whereas the fatal plot refers to the tragic. Chatman (1978:85) identifies three types of classical fatal plots: Firstly, that an unqualifiedly good hero fails. This is shockingly incomprehensible to us, since it violates probability. Secondly, a villainous protagonist fails. About his downfall we feel smug satisfaction, since justice has been served. Finally, a noble hero fails through miscalculation, which arouses our pity and fear.

Tragedy for Aristotle was governed not only by social beliefs, but also by the range of dramas from which he would draw to create his theory inductively.

Chatman (1978) contrasts these fatal plots with the following comic plots: Firstly, a villainous protagonist succeeds but this causes us to feel disgust, because it violates our sense of probability. Secondly, an unqualifiedly good hero succeeds, causing us to feel moral satisfaction; and finally, a noble hero (like Orestes) miscalculates, but only temporarily, and his ultimate vindication is satisfying. Fatal plots are relevant within the scope of our operation.

2.3.2 The expression of tragedy through a uni-linear or a multi-linear plot

Literary critics such as Rimmon-Kenan (1983) and Abrams (1971) maintain that if one main character operates as the tragic character, then tragedy involves a single plot (uni-linear). However, if more characters are used as main and tragic characters, then the novel involves a complex plot structure and it is thought to be unusual (multi-linear). Rimmon-Kenan (1983) distinguishes between a uni-linear and multi-linear plot with special reference to the main character(s). He argues that:

*(Events) in strict succession can only be found in stories
with a single line or even with a single character
(Rimmon-Kenan 1983:16-17.)*

2.3.3 The expression of tragedy in the plot and sub-plots

A plot is normally restricted to the unfolding of events of one main character as in the uni-linear plot situation specified above. On the other hand, sub-plots can be established when more than one main characters are involved in a novel.

Abrams (1971:129) avers that a successful development of the plot is the structural unity that can be achieved between double plots. He further explains the sub-plot as a second story that is complete and interesting in its own right. The sub-plot is never independent and separate from

other sub-plots or the main plot, but they are all unified to eventually produce the underlying message of the novel.

Abrams (1971) points out that a unified plot involves a continuous sequence of beginning, middle and end. The beginning could be referred to as the point-of-attack which introduces the developing conflict in the novel. There are two forms of beginning; namely, *in medias res* and *ab ovo*. When a plot begins *in medias res*, it refers to developing conflict without necessarily introducing the family background of the main character. On the other hand, *ab ovo* signifies the introduction of the main character in terms of his family background with reference to his birth.

2.3.4 The expression of tragedy through the development of conflict into phases of plot

A plot is a composition of events ordered and rendered towards achieving a particular emotional and artistic effects. Conflict in a tragedy develops into different phases and culminates in a plot. In a tragedy, the central figure on whom our interest centres, namely the hero or protagonist, is caught in a sharp conflict between opposing forces. Later in the struggle the hero suffers and moves from good fortune to misfortune. He has a flaw in his character which actually leads to his defeat.

The conflict may be centred on individuals (protagonists) against fate or circumstances which make it difficult for them to attain their goals. The conflicts are represented by actions and interactions that are resolved at the climax. The climax may be followed by the crisis or both may take place at the same time. When the conflict is resolved, one idea or person triumphs providing us with the theme.

A plot involves a number of aspects such as exposition, discovery and reversal, point-of-attack, complication, climax, crisis and denouement. These aspects are significant in explaining the expression of tragedy. The discussion of the phases of a plot does not suggest that these phases will always be experienced as specified in that sequence in all the novels. This implies that the sequence may change depending on the role of the character and the intensity of conflict in the text. The following are common plot phases:

► **Exposition**

Exposition is normally found at the very beginning of the novel. The significance of exposition is that it presupposes the imminent conflict as it introduces characters who may have different philosophies of life. Millett et al. (1963) maintain that:

The interest aroused by the exposition will usually be found to consist of four elements in various proportions: attentiveness in the broadest and vaguest sense, curiosity, suspense, and sympathetic or unsympathetic feelings

(Millett et al.,1963:186.)

At this stage the *status quo* is still maintained as there is no conflict between characters yet. Nevertheless, conflict may likely occur in terms of the nature of the main characters introduced as well as their opposing views. The impression is made of the possibility of the developing conflict at this stage.

► **Discovery and reversal**

This implies the stage when characters realise an apparent conflict or an obvious major problem they are to face. On the other hand, reversal implies a sudden change of emotion and the actual beginning of conflict. As plot is based on the causality principle, we believe that such a change is normally brought by the realisation of the anticipated problem.

► **Point-of-attack**

This is the point where the chain of events constituting the main action starts. A particular force sets the mechanism of the novel in motion. At this stage the equilibrium is disturbed and conflict is liable to start. In some novels the point-of-attack may be present at the initial stage of the novel (early point-of-attack) whereas with other novels it may be delayed and only come as a late point-of-attack.

► **Complication**

As conflict develops to build up the plot structure, it becomes complex in the sense that it tends to involve many characters. Millett et al. (1963) maintain that:

Complication is a basic element in plot structure; in the simpler forms of drama, it consists in (sic) introduction of persons or events that delay the arrival of the hero at his goal or that intensify the conflict between (sic) from the prehistory of hitherto unexpected elements

(Millett et al.,1963:190.)

Complication therefore refers to a moment where force introduced into tragedy affects the direction of the course of action. The plot may however be constructed through a series of complications of which the point-of-attack is one.

► **Climax**

The development of conflict culminates in the highest point, namely the climax. This is the maximum disturbance of the equilibrium and the moment of the most intense strain. The tragic character has reached the point where he should make the final judgement. The character should decide as to whether he continues with his point of view or whether he decides on another option. Millett et al. (1963) opine that:

The climax is best regarded as the crisis of maximum emotion and tension. Structurally, it may also be the turning point - in tragedy, the point at which the protagonist first catches sight of his inevitable but unwillingly accepted defeat; in comedy, the scene in which the protagonist begins to have reason to hope for his ultimate success

(Millett et al.,1963:193.)

We have to note, however that more than one climax may be involved if more than one tragic character participates in a tragedy. This implies that sub-plots and sub-themes can be found. Tension mounts through minor climaxes until the major climax is reached. This is why this particular phase in the development of conflict is perceived to be the most serious.

► **Crisis**

This is the moment of decision-making. One could even refer to it as a turning point where the ultimate decision has to be drawn. Crisis may occur at the same time as climax or sometimes after the climax. The tragic character finds himself in a situation where he has to make a final decision to cease the catastrophic circumstances which prevail. Millett et al. (1963) maintain that:

Crises are situations usually involving a clash of interests and emotions and a number of possible reactions to the specific situation. Such a crisis, even though it is a minor one, involves like the exposition the attraction of interest, the deepening of suspense, and an increase in the number and variety of the emotions felt by the characters and shared by the audience
(Millett et al., 1963:191.)

At the same time, the tragic character may experience a clash of interests in which he has to determine the alternative that will seal his fate. Such an alternative may lead to good fortune or disaster, depending on what the author intends to communicate to the reader. The tragic character may make his own decision or sometimes decisions may be thrust upon him.

► **Denouement**

This refers to the end of the tragedy and the final resolution of conflict. Millett et al. (1963) confirm this view:

The particular function of that portion of the plot we designate as the

denouement is that of solving the problem which the plot initiated and developed. A satisfactory solution or denouement in whatever type of drama will be found to have certain characteristics: clarity, plausibility, and interest

(Millett et al., 1963:194.)

This phase functions to restore order, unify and complete the courses of action and provide an ending that seems necessary and probable as the result of the development of the novel. The denouement of tragedy often involves a catastrophe. It shows disaster and a complete reversal of the hero's status and quite often the tragic character fails to overcome his problems.

2.3.5 Plot as a unified system in the expression of tragedy

Unity in the expression of tragedy implies an interlocking arrangement of the incidents with a beginning, a middle and an end. The actions of characters as well as the places where events take place must also be consonant and both reflect the time or the period of events and characters. Unity of action, according to Hatlen (1967) means that tragedy deals with a single course of events. All parts of tragedy are organically related to such an extent that if one part is displaced or removed, the whole tragedy will be disjointed.

Unity of place presupposes restriction of changes of place of events. Normally, tragedy confines the action to a few places. Moving the action from one place to another may sometimes be confusing to the reader, if it is not motivated. At the same time, the unity of time compels the author to limit the story to the main events without boring the reader or listener. There are also restrictions regarding the use of time in a tragedy. These restrictions on time, place and action or events, maintain the unity of the novel and create better opportunities for effective presentation of tragedy.

Taylor (1989:53) maintains that the well-made plot depends on the subject matter. The plot of this nature is possible when dealing with both the subject matter and theme and it can be expressed by a linear or straightforward development of events. It becomes clear that the

development of plot hinges on conflict and that conflict manifests itself in a form of phases as discussed previously. Taylor (1989) concurs with an explanation regarding the development of the plot as specified in the previous paragraphs as he maintains that:

A more highly developed form of organisation is to create an aesthetic or constructional pattern that has a logic of its own, and is at the same time tied to the logical sequence of the plot incidents themselves

(Taylor 1989:52.)

2.3.6 Relationship between plot and character in the expression of tragedy

Aristotle's emphasis on the plot is controversial in that plot cannot unfold itself if characters are not involved. In other words, when one refers to plot, one should consider that it hinges on characters (particularly the main or tragic characters). Kershner (1997) indicates his awareness on this point as he maintains that:

Though we can generally distinguish easily enough between, for example, plot and character, we must also recognise that it can be difficult to describe events and actions independent of the actors and situation

(Kershner 1997:112.)

It implies therefore that there is a specific relationship between characters and plot. The existence of such a relationship is confirmed by Zulu (1998) in his view that:

There is a symbiotic relationship between characterisation and plot because character construction develops with the unfolding of the plot

(Zulu 1998:7.)

Muir (1991) observes that Aristotle's belief was that plot rather than character was the prime essential of tragedy. This view is challenged by Muir (1991) with the understanding that both plot and characters are of relevance in the expression of tragedy. The essence of Muir's contention is captured by the following statement:

When plot is all important and characterisation minimal, we have the recipe for a detective story or thriller, and where character is the first essential and plot the minor importance, we get the kind of play which reads better than it acts

(Muir 1991:375.)

As stated in the preceding chapter, Kershner (1997:112) mentions that Aristotle gives preference to plot than other aspects of tragedy. However, a plot cannot function independently of other aspects of tragedy. Aspects of tragedy are unified though they may be identifiable. This means that plot deals with events performed by the characters. In the strictest sense of the word, a plot involves the unfolding of events in the life of the tragic character. Kershner (1997) further explains the relationship between character and plot as well as other aspects of tragedy:

... plot and character can be said to illuminate one another almost to the point of defining one another

(Kershner 1997:113.)

Holman et al. (1986:378) perceive plot to be an artificial and not a natural ordering of events. The question of unity between plot and character becomes obvious in the sense that plot presents the events performed by characters in an artificial manner. Holman et al. (1986) opine further that:

The most effective incidents are those springing naturally from the given characters, the most effective plot presents such struggle as would engage these given characters, and the most effective emotion

for the plot to present is that inherent in the quality of the given characters. The function of plot, from this point of view, is to translate CHARACTER into ACTION

(Holman et al., 1986:379.)

Holman et al. (1986) go even further to elaborate on the plot structure, and maintain that even the *deus ex machina* should not be seen as a weakness, as plot should be understood to be an active involvement of characters participating in action.

2.3.7 The expression of tragedy through a narrative cycle

The structure of a classical Greek tragedy tends to follow the twists and turns of fortune of the personae involved. It is therefore plot-centred; that is, it focuses more on the plot. Aristotle maintains in his *Poetica*:

But the most important of all is the structure of the incidents. For tragedy is an imitation, not of action, but of life, and life consists in action, and its end is a mode of action, not a quality

(Butcher's translation in Trilling: 1970:58.)

Kershner (1997) confirms Aristotle's view as he points out that:

In his Poetics, Aristotle considers plot the most important aspect of a work, and he observes that plots have a beginning, middle and end

(Kershner 1997:112.)

It is obvious that Aristotle observed that in tragedy it seems that plot rather than character was the prime essential. Tennyson (1967) adds more meaning in his contention that:

Aristotle noted that Greek tragedy rests heavily on plot, which

he called 'the soul of tragedy'. But character is, as always, closely bound up with plot. It is a matter of emphasis rather than separation. Greek tragedy has been called the tragedy of fate, a designation which suggests the overwhelming role assigned to forces outside the character of the main figure
(Tennyson 1967:62.)

At the level of climax the main character experiences an unfortunate event which is a common feature of tragedy. The basic expectation at this stage is that the main character experiences the process of deterioration. A moral lesson can therefore be derived from the catastrophic experience of the tragic hero as discussed in the next paragraph.

2.4 THEME AS AN ASPECT OF TRAGEDY

2.4.1 Theme as a unifying element in the expression of tragedy

Theme serves as the end-result of the interrelationship between character and plot. In other words, theme can only be established at the end of all events (events that involve the tragic character) in a tragedy. The deterioration of the tragic character culminates in the establishment of theme in the sense that in most tragedies readers tend to learn a moral lesson that good triumphs over evil. The character's error of judgement leads to *nemesis* or the ultimate downfall and this implies the theme. As his ultimate downfall, the character undergoes a change of attitude, from good to bad. There is normally some weakness in a tragic character. He must be good in nature though not too good or perfect, so that seeing him passing from good fortune to misfortune arouses pity and fear on the part of readers.

Brooks et al. (1959) are of the opinion that the theme is actually the central idea that results after the events performed by characters. They contend that:

The theme is what a piece of fiction stacks up to. It is the idea, the significance, the interpretation of persons and events, the pervasive

and unifying view of life which is embodied in the total narrative
(Brooks et al., 1959:273.)

We gather from this definition that theme develops mainly from the relationship between characters and plot (events). It is said to be a unifying element because all the aspects of tragedy culminate in expressing this underlying message in the novel. If the theme cannot be the end-result of the unity of all the aspects of tragedy, then tragedy becomes disjointed and less successful.

Ryan (1963) also offers another insight regarding the significance of a theme in the expression of tragedy in his conception that theme implies the interpretation of tragedy as a whole. In other words, as a dominant idea in the text, a theme tends to be established by the relationship of all the basic aspects of tragedy. It is for this reason that Ryan (1963) maintains that:

The theme of a novel makes a general comment about (human) values.
The theme of a work can only be formulated adequately in view of an
interpretation of the work as a whole
(Ryan 1963:50-51.)

What is of importance to note is that theme is derived from the occurrence of tragedy as a whole. In other words, in order to establish the theme, we have to trace the relationship between character and plot from the beginning to the end of the particular tragedy.

2.4.2 The manifestation of emotions in the expression of tragedy

Catharsis refers to the manifestation of emotions. It encompasses emotions such as pity and fear. The concept has been variously interpreted or misinterpreted, especially by those with a liking for the determinism of behaviourist psychology, who seem to see it as a kind of psychological enigma that will prevent similar behaviour patterns in future. This fails to take into account that the behaviour of the characters is not morally deliberate, it is predestined. They are not culpable. Under these circumstances the cleansing is more akin to relief or gratitude that the viewer is not

faced with the same set of circumstances.

Zulu (1999:2) in his unpublished paper *Tragic expressions in selected Sesotho novels* read at the Alasa Conference at the University of South Africa, makes an exposition of the elements of the classical tragedy in summarising views of other critics. He maintains further that tragedy involves tension that is characterised by the arousal of pity and fear (*catharsis* of emotions). There is no pity and fear, however, in the passage of a bad character to a bad end. This means that the ruin of man eminently good and just is repugnant and horrible. Compassion is thus felt for undeserved misfortunes. It must also be noted that misfortunes of the good are unbearable and tragic.

2.4.3 Moral justification as theme

The feeling of tragedy is evoked in the readers and this feeling is evoked through the contrast between the initial greatness of the hero and his subsequent downfall. Emotions of pity and fear surface in tragedy on the part of the readers because of a drastic change in the whole philosophy of life of the main character. Readers feel pity for the main character as he might have acted blindly. On the other hand, readers fear that what happened to the main character might happen to them. In other words, though readers empathise with the main characters by putting themselves in their position, they contain their fear, as they do not wish to be like them.

Zulu (1998:3) observes that there are views that tragedies were meant to be didactic in the sense that tragedies aroused fear and pity and therefore warned against evil. On the other hand, Moloji (1974:11) distinguishes between two forms of novels; namely, romance and the dramatic novel. A romance is said to be intended to arouse curiosity. Arousing curiosity on the part of the reader implies a lot of action and performance on the part of the character. A dramatic novel involves a lot of action expressed through the unfolding of the plot in order to present the theme.

2.4.4 Binary oppositions in the establishment of theme

By binary opposition we actually refer to the situation when the character changes his basic

standpoint after having experienced deterioration from good fortune to misfortune. The winning idea presupposes the underlying message the author wanted to convey to readers. Such an idea is then perceived as the theme. A change of this nature becomes more appealing on the part of readers as they empathise with the tragic character. The theme becomes almost obvious as it seems to be a moral warning against the negative or the non-social behaviour.

2.4.5 Theme and sub-themes

Both theme and sub-themes are actually determined by plot and sub-plots respectively. This implies that where we find the plot that involves one prominent tragic character, one main theme can possibly be established. In the same vein, when other characters are involved, sub-themes would possibly be based on them. There could perhaps be instances where the tragic character is actually betrayed by other characters as a result of which he experiences tragedy.

We turn to Chapter Three for the application of this formulated theoretical framework in the analysis of the selected early Sesotho novels.

CHAPTER THREE: TRAGEDY IN EARLY SESOTHO NOVELS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim in this chapter is to apply the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter Two, namely, character, plot and theme, in order to investigate the expression of tragedy in early Sesotho novels. We will open the chapter with investigations of the expression of the tragic in the novel *Chaka* as the earliest in the selected novels.

3.2 *Chaka* (1925)

Chaka is reported in most book reviews in *Limi* and *South African Journal of African Languages* as the best ever written Sesotho novel (in its specific period and also as compared to other novels in subsequent literary periods). It is important to establish whether this novel expresses classical tragedy or whether it expresses modern tragedy. It is also ideal to investigate whether the novel involves mere tragic events without necessarily ending up in the total deterioration of the character.

The analysis of plot

Chaka was born into a royal family with Senzangakhona as his father and Nandi as his mother. Because his father defied the traditional Zulu law, Chaka found himself the victim of Senzangakhona's wives as well as the victim of his entire society. He was referred to as *ngwana wa dihlahla* (child born out of pre-marital sexual relations) because his father, Senzangakhona had seduced Nandi, who was a young woman from Ncube's village. Chaka therefore had to carry the stigma of being referred to as illegitimate. Indeed, the position generated pity and fear as Chaka himself was innocent but had to suffer for what had happened beyond his control.

The beginning of external conflict was marked by Dingiswayo's refusal to recognise any other

heir-to-the-estate except Chaka. The three senior wives of Senzangakhona were not pleased about this position and they wanted to report the case of Senzangakhona's indecent sexual relationship with Nandi to Dingiswayo. Senzangakhona, in fear of the three senior wives, sent Nandi to her people and disowned Chaka in order to protect himself against the scandal. In order to contextualise a change (*hamartia*) in the life of Chaka as one of the elements of tragedy within the classical philosophy, we shall focus on the following points:

Chaka's inconceivable ambition marked his tragic flaw

It was Isanusi who nurtured and reinforced Chaka's ambition to become what Mofolo portrays as the greatest Zulu king in Southern Africa. It is tragic to realise that Chaka operated in darkness not realising that Isanusi was only there to build confidence in him but not really expecting him to achieve kingship of such a great magnitude.

Chaka makes a grievous mistake by submitting himself completely to Isanusi and placing his life in his hands. Isanusi cleverly points to him that he will have to think deeply before he can commit himself to follow his instructions but, in doing so, Isanusi indirectly encourages Chaka to do what he orders him to do. It is when we hear him committing himself to undertake the task of carrying out Isanusi's instructions through thick and thin that he says:

Ke itlama ho boloka ditaelo tsa hao ka hohle kamoo o ntaelang
(Mofolo 1983:41).

(I commit myself to abide by your commandments in every way
in which you will command me.)

We should note that Chaka does not even set conditions in which he would carry out Isanusi's instructions. Such a commitment shows that Chaka was gradually undergoing a change from good to bad in his life. He was turning to be irrational and inconsiderate. Chaka even committed himself for the second time when Isanusi pointed out to him that he should really make up his mind as his instructions and expectations would not easily be carried out. He answers that if

everything that Isanusi refers to was humanly possible, then he swears that he will do it.

It is tragic to think that Chaka deemed Isanusi as his 'saviour' from what he had experienced in the past. It is for that reason that he accepts whatever he is told. Chaka makes life difficult for himself in order to please Isanusi in whom he appears to have a firm belief and trust. Chaka is not aware that Isanusi has planned and designed his instructions and commandments in such a way that he would find them to be manageable without realising that they will eventually destroy him. His decisions seemed good, but they finally turned against him. What is more tragic is that even when warned before he could take a decision, Chaka would opt for the choice that would please Isanusi. Thus he became the victim of his own decisions and this again translates to his tragic flaw.

Chaka appeared to be naive as he hastened to obtain power without considering its implications for the future. His unbridled quest for power as encouraged and motivated by Isanusi was one of his obvious weaknesses. He placed himself at the mercy of Isanusi and sullied his mind by being too ambitious to obtain the highest kingship. Isanusi served as his motivational force but at the same time as his destroyer. We hope to clarify this point later in this discussion.

Overemphasis on the belief and the use of *muti*

It is Chaka's belief in the magic powers of *muti* that made him act blindly without realising that he was operating at a wrong level by assassinating his own mother. It is worth mentioning that Chaka had no apparent reason for killing his wife except that he was driven by his firm belief in *muti*. We must remember, however, that Chaka was set on acquiring the role of high chieftainship.

Chaka might have been driven by his superstitious belief to accept Isanusi and to be heavily dependent on him even though he had not known him previously. It is in fact shocking to realise that Chaka could not remember that Dingiswayo actually saved him during the time when his peers tortured him and caused him to suffer and that he ignored Dingiswayo's advice about Isanusi. Also shocking is the fact that Chaka did not enquire when Isanusi claimed that he did

not want to meet Dingiswayo. Chaka seemed less concerned even when Dingiswayo himself opposed people like Malunga and Ndlebe who were associated with Isanusi.

An inordinate love of fame and kingship

Chaka's love for kingship as well as all the fortunes that Isanusi promised him, seems to have driven him quickly to his total downfall. He cannot make correct choices in his life simply because he has as his target, the greatest fortunes with which Isanusi has enticed him. To return to the role of Isanusi as motivator and destroyer, he uses Chaka's weakness as a mechanism which causes him to make incorrect choices as he says:

...mahlohonolo ao o a tshepitsweng bongwaneng a tla qala hona kajeno ho o wela hodimo; o tla atleha ho tsohle tseo o di etsang
(Mofolo 1983:41).

(...the blessings that you were promised in your childhood will fall upon you today. You will succeed in everything you do.)

It is no wonder that Zulu (1999) maintains that:

The word mahlohonolo (blessings or fortune) is ambiguous. Like Isanusi's visages, mahlohonolo (blessings or fortune) at first appears to indicate good fortune but when followed through to the end of the novel, turns out to be Chaka's nemesis.
(Zulu 1999:11.)

Chaka suppressed his consciousness and rationality and acted in terms of his human interests to obtain the fame he always longed for. What makes it more tragic and heartbreaking is the fact that Chaka appeared to be depersonalised simply because he wanted fame and fortune after the death of Dingiswayo. He seemed to act instinctively like an animal with no sense of being at all.

It is for this reason that he was deceived by Isanusi to commit serious criminal offences which also involved the termination of other people's lives. If Chaka could kill his own mother and his own lovely wife, then it is very clear that his humanity had dwindled into nothingness and could be associated more with animal life than anything else. It is against this background that we concur with Zulu (1999) that Chaka experienced a psychological and moral 'death'.

Desire to attain extraordinary powers and the domain of chieftainship

Isanusi would quite often ask Chaka whether he was still interested in attaining a higher rank or status as a king even though he, at that point, was known almost everywhere; Chaka never hesitated to declare that he wanted to capture by force all the remaining chieftainships and attain fame all over the world. Isanusi thought that it would be almost impossible for Chaka to do that and Chaka never realised that he was being manipulated.

Isanusi: ... *kajeno ha eba o a bona hore o bolaile ho lekane,*
 ha o sa batla ho feta moo, o hle o mpoelle hona
 kajeno, ke time matla a meriana e mading a hao,
 hore e se ke ya o bolaya
 (Mofolo 1983:80).

(If you feel that today you have killed sufficient numbers of people and that you do not want to kill more people any longer, you should tell me just today so that I can reduce the power of the medicine in your blood. You will not kill any more people.)

Chaka responded: ... *nna Chaka ha ke rerile taba, ha ke tsebe ho e*
 kgutlela ke sa fihla qetellong ya yona. Ke sa ntse ke lapile,
 ke sa batla ...
 (Mofolo 1983:80).

(... I am Chaka and if I plan to do something, I will not give up until I achieve my aim. I am still hungry, I still need more)

Chaka's psychological problems

We have already mentioned that Chaka seems to have suppressed his rationality and resorted to immediate satisfaction without ensuring whether they would be for a good cause. Moreover, Chaka was made to act in this way. We feel pity for him as he changed his personality which the author clearly outlined at the beginning of the text. He then adopted a cruel attitude. This element of extreme cruelty was fuelled by Isanusi whom he regarded as his saviour who would protect him if things went wrong. Little did he know that death is not only meant for the weak but also for those who happen to dominate others and overpower them. His death signifies what has been written in the Bible:

Yaba Jesu o re ho yena: "Busetsa sabole ya hao selateng sa yona, hobane bohle ba tshwereng sabole ba tla bolawa ka sabole"
(Matthew 26:52).

(Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword".)

His half brothers, namely, Dingane and Mhlangana could not allow him to continue killing people as it pleased him. The death of Chaka therefore confirms what Romans in the Bible emphasises:

Hobane moputso wa sebe ke lefu; empa neo ya mohau wa Modimo ke bophelo bo sa feleng, ka Jesu Krete, Morena wa rona
(Romans 6:23).

(For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God's mercy is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.)

Even though Chaka was overpowered by his two half brothers, he did not realise that he was power-hungry and therefore did not change his viewpoint. Instead he proudly mocked his brothers and said that they would not succeed him in his position as the king of the Zulus. The White man would rule the entire nation after his death. In his words, Chaka reveals that he was proud even at the very end of his life. He regards his kingship as meant only for him and which could not be shared with anybody else. Chaka adopted the philosophy that nobody could take his position.

Peripeteia means achieving the opposite of that which was aimed at. In this particular case, we will attempt to investigate how Chaka achieved the opposite (death) of what he formally aimed at (greatest kingship). Anderson et al. (1977) define *peripeteia* as:

A turning point in which the results leading from the plotted action are confirmed or reversed. This sudden change of fortune in drama or fiction precipitates the climax

(Anderson et al.1977:99.)

The entire life of Chaka turned from good to bad and events in this novel signify such dramatic changes. Chaka's change from good to bad happened gradually and unintentionally in the sense that his aim was to achieve *mahlohonolo* (blessings) as promised by Isanusi as well as to silence all the other nations and attain worldwide fame. The event which marked the total transformation of Chaka's life was the fact that he had to kill his own wife in order to reach the fame that Isanusi had promised him as the narrator comments:

Ho tloha lefung la Noliwa, Chaka a fetoha hampe sebopehong sa mmele wa hae le sebopehong sa ka hare, sa pelo, sa merero le diketso ... tllhasenyana ya botho e neng e sa saletse ya tima, ya re lore mafifing a tshabehang a pelo ya hae; kutlwisiso ya ho tseba ho kgetha ntwala ho polao,

ho fenetha, ya fela, ya fella ruri; ho yena dintho kaofela tsa tshwana, a di tadima ka mokgwa o le mong. Taba ya bobedi boyena ba eshwa, ba shwella ruri, ha kena bophoofolo ka ho tlala; hobane leha e ne e ntse e le motho ya sehloho pele, empa e ne e le motho, sehloho sa hae e le sa botho. Motho ya tsholotseng madi a fetang a hae ka borena, ya tsholotseng madi a motho ya kang Noliwa, ho a utwahala hore ho yena madi a bafo a tla tshwana hantle le a diphoofole tseo re di hlabang
(Mofolo 1983:119).

(From Noliwa's death, Chaka changed greatly; physically, mentally, emotionally, in his intentions and deeds ... the little light of humanity, kindness, which still remained within him died completely in the fearful darkness of his heart; understanding and knowledge to discriminate between war and murder, manslaughter, disappeared completely. To him all things were alike; he adopted the same attitude to all of them. Secondly, his conscience died completely, beastly behaviour entered him fully; for, although he had always been a cruel person, yet he was still a human being, his cruelty was that of human beings. To one who has spilled royal blood greater than his own, who has spilled blood of one such as Noliwa, it is understandable that to him the blood of commoners would be exactly like that of animals we slaughter.)

We will notice from this passage that Chaka underwent transformation, not only mentally but in other facets of humanity such as the physical, the spiritual, the psychological, and so on. Other characters could therefore not expect Chaka to be the same as he had been before.

It was also Chaka's ambition to take revenge on his former opponents (including his father, Senzangakhona) who had been made to chase him away for no apparent reason. He was then determined to regain his lost position as the successor of Senzangakhona. Chaka also intended to succeed Dingiswayo, who appeared to be his idol or role model. We cannot forget to mention though that Chaka's change was a gradual process. An event that signified total deterioration in

the life of Chaka was the fact that he had to accept to drink the bile of a yellow snake. This marked a turning point in his life. The killing of Noliwa and Nandi marked the climax or the total change in the life of Chaka. This is why Kunene, when he comments on the brutal killing of Noliwa and Nandi, maintains that:

Chaka has moved out of the morality-immorality spectrum from which the fallen can still be saved, into the limbo of amorality in which a person is even incapable of losing his soul, and is therefore beyond redemption, the very epitome of spiritual deadness

(Kunene 1989:124.)

Even though Chaka pretended to be strong and not very troubled about the death of his wife and his mother, Mofolo maintains that it was not so. He says that Chaka experienced the same terrible feelings after killing his mother (Nandi) as he did when he killed his wife (Noliwa). This view is shown in his contention that:

Ha Nandi a qetella ho shwa, Chaka a boela a utlwa ntho e mo sidila kahare, jwale ka mohla a bolayang Noliwa

(Mofolo 1983:147).

(When Nandi was almost dead, Chaka had terrible feelings as if something knocked him inside in the same way as it happened when he killed Noliwa.)

Mofolo explicates the repercussions Chaka experienced after the two brutal incidents. It seems as if Chaka suddenly lost his senses and therefore appeared to be completely insane. It is in the following lamentation by Chaka that we gather that he might have lost his reasoning power:

Jo, Jo, mme o shwele wee! Jo, Jo; malapeng a mang mosi o a thunya, heso ha o thunye!

(Mofolo 1983: 147).

(Oh, my mother is dead! Oh, in other families food is being cooked, in our family nothing is being cooked!.)

The remark by Chaka seems to signify a change for the worse. Chaka, who happened to be famous and well-respected by everybody, seemed to have internal conflict as well as having to fight against affairs in his immediate environment. It is at this stage that we realise that Chaka was not rejoicing about his achievements after killing many people including his loved ones. He began to develop fear and apprehension. A psychological change in Chaka was taking place. He battled against his thoughts and emotions. What aggravated and intensified the situation was that he resorted to becoming a *dracula* who seemed to be ready to feed on human flesh and to drink human blood. This point is supported by the fact that he appeared to be a man-hunter.

As *anagnorisis* refers to the realisation of the truth, Chaka realised that life had turned against him as (in his dream) he was mocked by those he kept in the *Donga luka Tatiyana* which was almost like hell on earth. This happened at a time when he could no longer punish them. The unidentified voice was heard saying:

Chaka, mmolai wa bana beno, madi a ntatao! Mmolai wa mosadi wa hao, motswalle wa pelo ya hao! Mmolai wa bana ba hao, madi a hao! Mmolai wa mmao, motswadi wa hao!

(Mofolo 1983:162).

(Chaka the killer of your siblings, your father's blood, murderer of your own wife, your heart's friend, your children's murderer, your blood! The killer of your mother, your parent!)

Mofolo uses a rich metaphor to show that the sun was setting for Chaka which implies that he was about to die.

Motsheare o moholo ... yare ha meriti ya mantsiboya e thea, e lepella, [mahlaba] a mo totela ka matla a tshabehang, a

mo hlokisa le sebaka sa ho bua le bana babo

(Mofolo 1983:162).

(Midday ... when the sun was about to set, he felt terrible pains as a result of which he could not even talk to his brothers.)

This is indicative of the fact that Chaka was in a position to reminisce and to realise his tragic life. Chaka visualised in his dream the *Donga luka Tatiyana* which was almost a place similar to hell. In addition to what he saw, he was shocked to visualise a nerve-wracking event where some of his people pierced his heart with their spears. This marks the realisation of his weakness and state of helplessness even though at this stage there could be very little for him to do in order to defend himself. An illusion comes true through Dingane and Mhlangana. Even though Chaka realised his weaknesses, he seemed to be brave and self-centred, as he arrogantly told his half-brothers that:

*Le mpolaya ka tshepo ya hore le tla ba marena ha ke se ke
shwele, athe le lahlehile, ha ho jwalo, hobane umlungu o a
tla, mme ke yena ya tla le busa, lona le be bahlanka ba hae*
(Mofolo 1983:163).

(You are killing me in the hope that you will be kings when I am dead, but you are wrong. That is not the way it will be. *Umlungu* [the white man] is coming, and it is he who will rule you, and you will be his servants.)

Chaka uttered these words as a warning. It implies that Chaka's assassins did not know what they were doing. Perhaps, at that point, Chaka could foresee that his half-brothers would not attain the success they probably expected in life. This links as an extra-textual reference to Jesus Christ in the Bible when he remarked:

Empa Jesu o ne a re: 'Ntate, o ba tshwarele hobane ha ba tsebe seo ba se etsang'.

(Luke 23:34).

(And Jesus said: 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do'.)

Chaka suggested the dawn of a new era of colonialisation. The new regime would come with the White man being a dictator over all mankind. What is tragic again is that Chaka realised at a late stage that when he needed Isanusi, Ndlebe and Malunga, they could not be found. This was the time when he realised that he now stood alone and he had to face life as an individual.

Isanusi claims his payment only after Chaka had killed his mother and his lovely wife - yet he (Isanusi) could not save Chaka as he had promised when his half-brothers attacked him. It was all in vain when Chaka realised that Isanusi was not in a position to protect him all the time and in all places. In other words, he now realised that his perceptions about the supernatural powers that Isanusi claimed to have had were wrong.

It was in this state that Chaka understood the irony of Isanusi's tasks, namely, the completion of the work that the woman-doctor had initiated. The essence and the most tragic element of *anagnorisis* is that Chaka realises the truth, that is, that no assistance from anyone in whatever manner, can help him. The narrator remarks that Chaka had no easy time in the tender years of his life and comments further that:

*Ditaba tsa bophelo ba hae kaofela ho tloha bongwaneng a di bona,
mme a fumana di le mpe, di tshabeha, di sisimosa mmele*

(Mofolo 1983:35).

(He had a vision of his entire life since childhood. He found it to be bad and frightening and also nerve-wracking.)

In this way, Chaka realised how tragic his life had been and had to react to the situation. At this stage he decided to leave his society and consider being alone. While Chaka was undergoing a process of change in his life, his attitude towards his fellow men also changed. He decided not to trust anybody, and planned to change his attitude to his fellow men regardless of his relationship with them (*peripeteia*). That is why Chaka opines that:

*...ho etsa se ratwang ke yena, leha se le sebe, le ho iphetetsa
ka boiphetetso bo tletseng, bo tsejwang ke yena a le mong feela*
(Mofolo 1983:35).

(...to do anything that he felt like, regardless of whether or not it was evil and to take revenge in whatever manner he could.)

Chaka was reminded of previous incidents where he was being punished by everybody for no apparent reason. It was becoming clear to him that he was not supposed to live together with other people, but, perhaps stay alone. Mofolo takes it further in the subsequent section of the narrative where Chaka finally decides on his transformation and says:

*Ke tla bolaya feela eo ke ratang ho mmolaya, a leng molato kapa
a se nang ona, hobane ke ona molao wa lefatshe. Nke ke ka ba ka
qenehela motho ka baka la dithapelo tsa hae*
(Mofolo 1983:48).

(I will kill whoever I wish to kill, regardless as to whether he is at fault or not; solely because of the type of government in this world. I will not feel sorry for anybody. I will not be influenced by his prayer.)

This remark again shows that Chaka was beginning to realise that he was not acceptable to his society. He began to realise that there is no justice and truth under the sun and that the government of the world did not propagate justice for its own sake. It was becoming clear that

Chaka revolted against the present form of government. He knew that he was suffering because of strict Zulu traditions and norms. The tragedy was that he had no control over it, neither did he contravene any Zulu traditional custom as an individual.

Catharsis refers to the situation where the audience or readers experience pity for the character who suffers because of his miscalculations about certain aspects of life. The character generates pity to readers as he denies positive and becoming advice. Instead he operates without proper knowledge of what the outcomes of his actions will be. In this way, the character led himself to experience the tragic flaw. We, as readers, feel pity that Chaka suffers because he is regarded as a product of sin. Chaka himself did not control the fate that relates to his birth. He was born like any other child except that in his case, the emphasis lies on birth out of sin. He experienced terrible treatment from his peers who were also instructed by their parents to ill-treat him. In other words, we can assume that the entire Zulu society turned its back on him.

In terms of theme, the novel *Chaka*, like most classical tragedies, tends to be moralistic. Sin is punishable and leads to death. Senzangakhona ordered that Chaka be killed. He himself tried to kill Chaka who fortunately escaped. We feel pity for Chaka as we know that he was innocent. That is why Mofolo says:

... ha re bone tshito ya Chaka tabeng tsena, empa le ha ho le jwalo ntatae o laela hore a bolawe. Senzangakhona, moo a tshabang ha ditaba tsa hae di tsejwa, a ba a rera ho bolaya mora wa hae ...
(Mofolo 1983:34).

(... we cannot think of blaming Chaka in this situation, but his father ordered that he should be killed. Senzangakhona only feared that his secret may be disclosed and that is why he plotted to kill his son....)

The narrator seems to reflect on the irony that Isanusi claims to protect Chaka by finishing the task which was assigned for the woman-doctor but Chaka's brothers eventually killed him and Isanusi was actually looking for money. Chaka died despite the fact that he trusted Isanusi. That

is why the narrator mentions:

Ho bile jwalo ho fela ha Chaka, mora wa Senzangakhona
(Mofolo 1983:163).

(So was the end of Chaka, the son of Senzangakhona.)

This statement reminds us of Isanusi and his malevolent, though hidden thoughts about Chaka, the son of Senzangakhona. It reflects once more on how Chaka displayed weakness and a tragic flaw by not enquiring more about Isanusi when he met him for the first time. The name of Chaka ceased to be when both Dingane and Mhlangana pierced his heart with their spears until he died. We are surprised to note that Chaka did not notice that Isanusi was taking advantage of him to get payment. Chaka accepted a deal with Isanusi even though he did not know him. He did not persist in finding out Isanusi's real name.

Isanusi worked on Chaka in such a way that he always felt obliged to kill as many people as possible. Chaka was made to kill his mother and wife and afterwards Isanusi came back to him to ask for payment. It is convincing that he suffered terrible and devastating exploitation by Isanusi whom he trusted and served almost as his saviour. Chaka paid a heavy price for giving away his soul to Isanusi and when his blood was spilt the nation was freed from brutal killings. As an extra-textual reference, it links up with Jesus Christ who also cleansed mankind through his blood. His soul was out to take rest so that man could be freed from evil and become holy. As Jesus was pierced with spears until he died, it also happened that Chaka's heart was pierced with spears by his half-brothers until he died.

We, as readers, feel pity for Chaka and also fear that we might find ourselves in the same position as Chaka as we hear Isanusi's confirmation that Senzangakhona, Chaka's real father actually plotted to kill his son simply because he was being egged on by his other wives. Isanusi remarked:

*Kgele, ke a bona, o hanwa ke ntatao, yena o tshabana le basadi
ba hae; kajeno o phonyohile bothateng, o ne o reretswe polao*
(Mofolo 1983:39).

(Oh, I see. It seems as if your father is against you, as he fears his senior wives. Today only, you survived a serious tragic event because they plotted to kill you.)

Chaka got to know more about his tragic life in that particular community and finally decided to free himself from the situation. Within the constraints of this particular novel, *nemesis* will be understood to suggest a change of fortune to misfortune. Different characters played different roles in the life of Chaka to change his fortune into misfortune. We will now focus on how characters such as the woman-doctor, Isanusi, Ndlebe and Malunga caused more harm than good in the life of Chaka.

Chaka and the woman-doctor

Chaka's interaction with the woman-doctor was never successful until the end as she eventually left him without completing her task. He had been disillusioned by her decision of not returning to him. Zulu (1999:11) rightfully points out that the use of *mahlohonolo* (blessings) was almost a *leitmotif*. This is so because in many instances the woman-doctor seemed to be more concerned that Chaka obtained the blessings that his ancestors prepared for him, as is shown in the following remark:

*Mosadi eo ... a mo lokisa (Chaka) ka dihlare tsa mahlohonolo hore a tle
a be hlwahlwa dinthong tsohle*
(Mofolo 1983:2).

(The woman-doctor ... worked on him (Chaka) with the medicines of luck so that he could excel in everything.)

Like anybody who aims to achieve success in life, Chaka was no different. For this reason he almost sacrificed his life to the woman-doctor. Mofolo (1983) mentions that Nandi took her son, Chaka, to the famous woman-doctor from Bungane who promised that Chaka would be successful in life if empowered by her medicines. The woman-doctor also made her promises as follows:

Ke ho re, leha batho ba ka mo bokanela ba le sehlopha, ba ke ke ba mo kopa ... ngwana enwa o tla fumana mahlohonolo a fetisang ka boholo

(Mofolo 1983:12-13).

(Even if a group of people attack him, they will not succeed ... this child will achieve the greatest of blessings.)

Chaka and Isanusi

While he was still troubled about the fact that he was no longer empowered by the woman-doctor, Chaka appeared to rise to power again when he met Isanusi. Isanusi promised him to be there to complete the task of the woman-doctor even before Chaka could ask him about it. Isanusi's first appearance to Chaka could be interpreted in various ways. Chaka initially thought that Isanusi was good but discovered his evil ways too late. Isanusi proved himself a crook and a killer. Frustration and misery was brought into the life of Chaka. Mofolo says that:

Chaka ha a phaphama borokong, mahlo a hae a qala ho teana le a monna eo, a fumana sefahleho se swentse ... a bona motho ya pelo e mpe ho feta babolai hole ... Yare ha a boela a mo tadima, a fihlela sefahleho sa monna eo se se se mo swabetse, se mo qenehetse, ...

(Mofolo 1983:36).

(When Chaka woke up, he saw the man who looked angry.)

The man seemed to be more cruel than all the known evil killers ...
 When he looked at him again, the man looked good to Chaka
 and seemed to feel sorry for him)

Isanusi's external picture projected here, seems to reflect his hidden nature. Although Chaka could not understand its implications but at the end it became obvious that Isanusi would do more harm than good to him. It was Isanusi who had foreseen that Chaka was desperate for help and who therefore took advantage of him to attain payment from him. He always asked Chaka whether he still wanted to have a higher rank of kingship. Later we realise that Isanusi merely enticed Chaka to commit himself. Isanusi was engaged in his mission to deceive and to flatter Chaka and praised him, knowing that he (Isanusi) was only interested in his payment and nothing more:

O motho ya kelello, Chaka, ruri ha ho ba bangata ba tshwanang le wena ka ho tseba nako, hobane nako e teng bophelong ba motho eo ereng ha a ka e tlohela ya mo feta, ebang o fetilwe ke mahlohonolo ao a ke keng a hlola a a bona le kgale ...

(Mofolo 1983:122).

(Chaka, you are conscientious. Not many people stick to time as consistently as you do. There is time in one's life which one cannot afford to let go otherwise one forfeits one's chances to attain success....)

When Chaka was about to die, and Isanusi was expected to support him, Isanusi mocked Chaka that he had come to him to ask for his payment:

Isanusi a re: 'Chaka, kajeno ke tlile ho batla ditefo tsa ka; ke ile ka o bolella mohla ke fetang mona hore o sale o itokisa, le hore tikatiko e be siyo, o nnee tsa ka ka ntle ho ditaba, jwale ka ha ke o sebeleditse ka makgethe, o fumane borena, le hlonepho le maruo, le botumo bo boholo'

(Mofolo 1983:160).

(Isanusi said to Chaka: 'Today I come to collect my payment. I told you the other day that you will have to pay me without complaining as I have helped you to regain your kingship, respect, wealth and fame.')

We gather from this statement that Isanusi did not aim to assist Chaka as he had promised, but that he was only interested in personal gain. If Isanusi had cared for Chaka at all, he would not have come to him at the most critical moment of his life with this kind of request. Mofolo further maintains that Isanusi acted in a subtle manner to hurt Chaka:

Leha mantswe ana a se mabe, bohloko ba ona ho Chaka ya eba bosele-sele; a utlwisisa hore Isanusi o se a balla bongata bo bo tletseng Donga luka Tatiyana boreneng ba hae, etswe o buile a tadimile teng

(Mofolo 1983:160).

(Even though these words were not meant to hurt, Chaka was seriously hurt. He understood that Isanusi included even the multitudes that filled *Donga luka Tatiyana* in his kingship as he was looking at it as he spoke to him.)

It was at this stage that Chaka became completely insane and it became obvious to him that death was inevitable without the assistance of Isanusi in whom he had so much faith and trust. It is tragic to realise that Isanusi encouraged Chaka to take decisions that were almost humanly impossible. It was Isanusi who actually initiated the unbridled ambition in Chaka for a high-ranking kingship. Two instances can be identified when Isanusi cleverly manipulated Chaka to make serious choices. In the first instance, Chaka did not know beforehand that such a high-ranking kingship existed and that is why he remarked to Isanusi:

Haeba o ka etsa hore ke be morena e moholo, ya ipusang, eo marenana a mang a kgotsitseng ho yena, nka leboha haholo
(Mofolo 1983:42).

(If you can make me the highly respected king, to whom other subordinate kings report, I will be very grateful to you.)

In the second instance, Isanusi warns Chaka before he could make the decision to take up the prescribed medicine of blood that the medicine would arouse his interest in killing as many people as possible. Having mentioned the danger of taking such a medicine, Isanusi emphasises that by taking the medicine, Chaka could attain the blessings that he was looking for, as in the following remark:

Ngaka ya bea ditaba ho rateng ha Chaka, ya mmolella e sa mo lobele letho hore moriana oo o mobe e le ruri, yona ya emella thoko, hore ho etse yena kamoo a ratang kateng
(Mofolo 1993:43).

(The doctor told Chaka everything without hiding anything. He actually told him that the medicine was not good and he then said that Chaka should make his own choice.)

Chaka decided to take the medicine despite being warned that the medicine would arouse the need to kill many people. That is why the narrator comments that:

...mme le moriana oo ke o phatsitseng ka ona ke wa madi, ha o sa tsholle madi haholo o tla o fetohela, o bolaye wena
(Mofolo 1993: 46).

(... and the medicine I incised you with is blood medicine.
If you do not kill as many people as you can, this medicine

will then kill you.)

In this way, Chaka sacrificed himself to experience tragedy without realising that Isanusi actually aimed to exploit and manipulate him to reach his goal.

Chaka's interaction with Ndlebe and Malunga

As Chaka was made to behave, he thought that Ndlebe and Malunga would always stand by him whenever he encountered problems, but they decided to disappear at the very moment that he desperately needed them. Ndlebe deceived Chaka as he appeared to represent security to Chaka and his kingship. In previous instances, he used to report time and again about matters that related to Chaka in order to make him more confident. One could even regard Ndlebe as a spy in the sense that he actually used his long ears to eavesdrop on people who plotted against Chaka elsewhere and he would report accordingly. Malunga on the other hand, served as Chaka's defence force. It is tragic to realise that he could not protect Chaka when his half-brothers attacked him, though Isanusi promised that Malunga would always be there to protect him.

Chaka as the victim of circumstances

We have seen that at different levels, in his interaction with different people, Chaka had always been in a tragic situation. Both the woman-doctor and Isanusi did much to change and actually destroy his humanity up to the point where Chaka became physically ill and mentally imbalanced. He finally became psychologically disorganised and frustrated as he saw visions and had dreams which tortured his soul as they reminded him about his grievous past.

Isanusi appeared at the end of Chaka's life at the climax of Chaka's struggle for his life, to claim Chaka's soul. That was the time when Chaka was critical and defenceless but it was at that particular time when Isanusi came to remind him that he was coming to collect his payment (Chaka's soul). It now becomes clear why Isanusi persistently referred to Chaka's joining the ranks of higher kings or ancestors as in the following:

*Hona kajeno lebitso la hao le kene palong ya marena
a heso, le hona a maholo*
(Mofolo 1993:162).

(Today, your name will be included among those of our
highly recognised and respected kings.)

Mofolo adds that it was at that time that Chaka understood what Isanusi had implied when he had said that Chaka would join the ranks of the mighty kings. The *mahlohonolo* (blessings) that Isanusi promised to Chaka were turned into death. Chaka indeed had been the victim of circumstances.

Chaka, the tragic hero

Chaka, the main character and the principal focus in this story, is a tragic hero in the sense that though he rose to power, he was silenced to death by his half-brothers, Dingane and Mhlangana. He is again a tragic hero as he never thought that whilst he was punishing people for no apparent reason, he deemed it necessary to do so, because of all the torture and strife he experienced from various people in his immediate society as a boy.

Revenge seemed necessary to Chaka. However, he acted blindly by not establishing whether a person was indeed a culprit or innocent. It is at this stage that he overreacted to the situation and this flaw led unfortunately to his ultimate end. The fact that Chaka could not distinguish between an innocent person and a culprit, meant that the flaw in him did more harm to him than good.

As a tragic character, Chaka's entire life signified tension. We can categorise stages at which Chaka experienced tragic events in his life: his birth, which was reckoned to be contrary to the Zulu customs and traditions as he was born out of wedlock; Chaka's upbringing was filled with tense moments as for instance being harassed by his peers; Senzangakhona, his father, did not show fatherly love to him, and was forced by his three other wives to act against Chaka. Chaka had many talents and great achievements in his life which aroused jealousy in the others.

It was heartbreaking for him to suffer though his father was still alive and to be protected only by his uncle, Dingiswayo. This is why Chaka commented after his transformation that he need not care for other people as there seems to be no justice under the sun. By saying this, he was reminded of the jealousy and mean treatment he endured from the three women as well as his father's ignorance and negative attitude towards him.

We have to mention too that his peers played a significant role in his life by always torturing him for no apparent reason. Chaka had to suffer for a sin over which he had no control. Chaka, as portrayed by Mofolo, was the victim of Zulu laws of his time, and this led to his father's ignoring him and not protecting him during difficult times. Being subjected to Zulu laws and being afraid of his wives, Senzangakhona did not care for Chaka and was cruel to him. Consequently, not all members of the Zulu society acknowledged Chaka's achievements. One of his greatest achievements was that he killed a lion which threatened the people for a long time but not all the people felt obliged to applaud and praise Chaka, except the women in that particular community. His other achievements were that he killed a hyena and a mad man with *thongo* (schizophrenia). As Chaka only was praised by women and their daughters, he was effectively rejected by his menfolk, beside the fact that he made a contribution to his community. They were actually jealous of him.

The fact that Chaka did not know what the consequences of his actions would be, is reason enough for the readers to feel pity for him. This is so because readers know that Chaka would eventually land in trouble. They know for instance that Isanusi does not necessarily aim to help Chaka by building confidence in him, because he only wanted payment from him.

At the very beginning of the text we are introduced to Chaka born to Senzangakhona, a well-known king of the Zulus. By virtue of Zulu culture, the son of the king was the heir to the estate. Zulu society therefore looked upon Chaka as their future king even though some, including Senzangakhona's three other wives, thought that Chaka should not be regarded as the heir to the estate as he was born out of sin. That is why he was referred to as *ngwana wa dihlahla* (child born out of marriage).

Whilst we accept that people had to give their loyalty and dedication to Chaka, we also understand that these praises heaped on him brought him more misery than joy. This is so because many people were already negatively influenced against Nandi's son, Chaka by Senzangakhona's three wives. It was a tragic situation when Senzangakhona was forced by his wives to actually assassinate Chaka simply because society applauded him for his achievements, namely the killing of a hyena and a lion.

What added more tragedy to the situation is that Chaka almost sacrificed his life in order to save other people. In this case we are reminded of his achievement in saving the life of Mfokazana's girlfriend. We feel pity for him when he was chased away by his father as Chaka fought for his society and actually exposed himself to danger by facing the lion when other men ran away. In spite of all these great achievements, Chaka had always been the victim of circumstances. He was not only persecuted and demonised by his peers when they herded cattle, but he was also discarded by Senzangakhona, his own father. His life was a mixture of unfortunate instances and situations.

Chaka was exposed to serious and dangerous events which he managed to overcome because he was empowered by *muti*. He could stand meeting Isanusi who woke him from his sleep. He could stand the scene of *morena wa madiba* (water snake). In all these instances we realise that Chaka had actually no one to come to his rescue. He therefore appears in every case to have no alternative but to accept the situation to which he is exposed. He could not retreat from danger, but managed to escape through *muti*. The narrative cycle can be illustrated as in the next page.

The narrative cycle in this particular novel can be illustrated as follows according to Zulu (1999:54):

CHAKA

Bad state: loss

born illegitimate

strengthened with medicine by first doctor

baptised by the king of deep waters

strengthened with medicine by Isanusi

arrives at Dingiswayo's

kills a mad man

Process of

improvement: gain

becomes king after his father's death

Good state:

inherits Dingiswayo's kingship

powerful king

plunders nations around him

murders Noliwa

kills cowards

Process of

Mzilikazi runs away

deterioration: loss

sends Nongogo and Mnyamana on fatal expeditions

murders Nandi

great thirst

hallucination and madness

Bad state: total loss

death murdered by his brothers

We should take note of the fact that in this novel tragedy is expressed in such a way that we realise Chaka's improvement from bad to good state and deterioration from good to bad state. Based on the above illustration, the novel identifies itself as effective in expressing tragedy. There is no doubt that Chaka has been efficiently presented as the tragic character and his tragic events (plot) link relevantly with his human nature as a character and thus the two aspects collectively express the theme.

3.3 *Mphatlalatsane* (1947)

Tau, the king of the Bakoena tribe, is a tragic hero in *Mphatlalatsane*. He is a tragic hero because he expresses an excessive love for a bull called Maphatsoe even though he was advised differently about the bull as we hope to clarify later. Tau was taken by the beauty of the bull but was advised by Moholo to kill the bull after the second calving and he refused to do so. By so doing, Tau undermined the ancestors. Perhaps he did not know that Moholo was sent to him by the ancestors. He expressed his flaw by being too particular in satisfying his own personal interests as indicated in the following statement:

Kgomo ena ke o tlisetsang mona hore o e bone ke e rata ho feta tsohle tsa mehlape ya kgutlo sena. Le hohle lefatsheng leo nkileng ka tsamaya ho lona, ha ke eso bone letho le nkgahlang ho e feta. "Ke e rata ho feta le mosadi wa ka Mmasebabatso, Mofumahadi wa kgutlo sena. Ke e rata ho feta le bona bana ba ka. Ho nna ho bonolo ho tela tsohle ha feela nka nna ka tseba ho rua kgomo ena. Na lerato lena le ntlhantshang nka le fokotsa jwang? Ha o bona kgomo yee e tswetswe ke poho ya kgomo? Hona, ho re ke e sireletse, jwale ka ha ke sa rate ho lahlehelwa ke yona tjena, ke lokela ho etsa jwang?"

(Machobane 1962:5).

(This bull I have brought you here to see, I love more than all! the herds in this valley. Throughout many places where I have travelled, I have not seen anything that pleases me better. "I love it more than my wife, Mmasebabatso, queen of this village. I love it even more than my own children. To me it is easier to sacrifice all, if only I could keep this bull. How can I reduce the love that turns me mad? According to your judgement, do you think this animal was born of a bull of the cattle group? What must I do to protect this bull so that I do not lose it?")

To link up with the basic elements of tragedy, Tau as tragic hero refused to take advice from Moholo that the bull, Maphatsoe belonged to the gods and that it should be killed before its fame brought disaster to Kgapung. In all good faith Moholo tried to advise Tau and said to him:

Morena wa sekgutlo, nkutlwe hle! O Mosotho, ke Mosotho mme ke a o eletsang ke re e tle ere hoba kgomo ena, Maphatsoe, e etse manamane a bobedi feela, o e tlose lefatsheng. Metsotsong eo, botumo ba boitlwe ba yona bo tla be bo eso tlale lefatsheng, mme he o tla qoba tsietsi eo e sa le hole. Ha o ke ke wa etsa kamoo ke o eletsang ka teng, wena hammoho le tjhaba sa naha e ntle le tla anya kgomo e tshwana ... le tla shwa lebuba!

(Machobane 1962:10-11).

(King of the valley, please listen to me! You are a Mosotho, I am a Mosotho, and I advise you. I say as soon as this bull has sired the second time, you must kill it. By then the fame of its beauty will not have spread throughout the land, so you will be able to avoid misfortune. If you do not do as I have advised you, you together with your nation, will taste bitterness . . . you will die a horrible death.)

Tau acted blindly only to discover his weakness later on. In the light of this understanding of tragedy, Tau liked the bull for its beauty and strength and affectionately called the bull names such as:

*Mphatlalatsane ya Sekgutlo, Kgomo ya botle, Kgomo
ya Basotho, Naledi ya Meso ...*

(Machobane 1962:68).

(Mphatlalatsane of the Village, the Bull of beauty, the
Bull of the Basotho people, the Morning Star)

The tragic flaw that Tau had shown involved extreme love for the bull. To him the bull seemed unusual and exceptional. It seemed to have special features. The narrator presents the features of the bull (Maphatsoe) as follows:

*Mobadi a utlwisise hantle se bolelwang ha ho thwe poho. Mona ho
rialo ha se ho bolela feela kgomo e tona e sa faotwang; ho bolelwa
poho tihadimong yohle, ho qala tlhakong e ka morao ho ya tswa ho
e kapele le ho ya tswa hlohong. Ho bolelwa poho diketsong tsohle
tsa bopoho hara tseo e behilweng poho ho tsona. Poho mesebetsing
e lokelang poho, e leng poulelo e makatsang ho tseo e lokelang ho
di sireletsa*

(Machobane 1962:2).

(The reader should understand very clearly what is meant by bull. This does not necessarily mean a male beast that is not castrated, but a real bull when you look at it from the hind leg to the front one, and up to the head. We are referring to a bull with all the qualities of a bull and in what a bull is supposed to do. It is a bull which is supposed to be a bull by protecting with extreme jealousy that which it is supposed to protect.)

The tragic flaw in Tau became clear when the wise man, Moholo came to his court to advise him on how to handle Maphatsoe. Before Moholo sought to hear about the birth of the bull before he could advise Tau. He also wanted to get a clear picture of the bull and of course what had made it so famous. Moholo advised Tau that Maphatsoe was not just an ordinary bull but that

*... kgomo ena ke mpho ya badimo, ke mpho
ya lehodimo le hodimodimo*

(Machobane 1962:9).

(... the beast is a gift from the ancestors, it is
a gift from the highest heaven.)

Upon checking some of the issues that Moholo had raised about the bull, we notice that Tau had received very strict instructions about Maphatsoe from which we can cite the following: Firstly, the bull should not be hit with a stick or any object. Secondly, when the bull is rounded up by men who try to tame it, it should be called by its name. This implies that the bull will be able to respond when called by its known name. If the bull refuses to come when called by its name, it must be brushed on the thigh and on the jaws. Thirdly, Tau was strictly advised that many nations would become jealous because of the beauty of Maphatsoe and that Maphatsoe should be allowed to live only a short period until it had sired twice.

The wise man tried to convince Tau that if he did not keep Maphatsoe for a long time, he could

avoid the challenges from other nations that seemed imminent and that could lead to havoc and death of the entire nation.

As we explained before, whoever fails to adhere to the just principles of accepting advice in life will always experience tragic events and will not survive. The fact that Tau failed to listen to the wise man Moholo, who in good faith tried to save his life and the nation as a whole by advising him to get rid of Maphatsoe, led Tau into tragedy. Zulu (1998) in his description of Tau, the king of the Bakoena, maintains that:

*Tau could be taken as a man who has an obsessive
love for the trivial and this is his hubris*
(Zulu 1998:113.)

Tau developed a repulsive obsession for Maphatsoe. This becomes clear when he mentions that he likes Maphatsoe even more than his wife and children. Nobody under the sun could ever hold such a negative view of his own family. This shows that Tau was suffering psychologically. Tau was even prepared to lose everything that he owned to retain Maphatsoe. His love for the bull affected him mentally and as a result he experienced tremendous psychological torture. People felt pity for him and tension in his society mounted every passing day.

To return to the principle of understanding the expression of tragedy in this particular Sesotho novel the author presents Tau alienating himself from other members of his society. It seemed that he was not cooperative. The Basotho people express it thus: *o ne a itshehla thejana* (alienated himself) which literally means that he decided to be alone, even though he was amongst other people. This fact was proved when Tau deceived the people by pretending to have killed Maphatsoe. He actually experienced internal conflict as to whether he should kill Maphatsoe, but because he liked the bull and that Maphatsoe was more powerful than other bulls such as Limapa, Mankhoe, Tholang, Limamarela and Sentsho, he found it extremely difficult to part with it. The narrator explains the situation after Maphatsoe had fought and overpowered other bulls and says:

*Ya leba hae moreneng, ya siya mahlomola le
bofifi di aparetse sekgutlwana ...*

(Machobane 1962:19).

(It went to the king's palace and caused grief and
miseris in the village....)

A grievous mistake that Tau committed was that he had decided to arrange for a mock ritual killing of Maphatsoe in order to protect it. What is tragic in this case is the fact that he had to follow specific instructions in the process of killing the bull which he could not carry out in a mock ritual killing. This was enough to result in calamity in his life which was caused by the ancestors and predicted by the wise man, Moholo. Tau was operating under strict obligations set by the ancestors and therefore could not do otherwise or avoid them. He attempted to keep the bull, even though he was instructed to kill it.

In terms of the aspects of tragedy, the novel *Mphatlalatsane* distinguishes itself as a classical tragedy as it is based on Tau, king of the Bakoena tribe. Tau's psychological problems were extrapolated to the entire Bakoena society as a result of which tragedy in this novel can be reckoned to be of great social magnitude.

Tau's act of keeping the bull even though Moholo had advised him to kill it, is indicative of his tragic flaw which was also epitomised by many nations who came rushing to dispossess Tau of his favourite bull. This act also generates emotions of pity and fear in the readers because they know that Tau actually had no business keeping the bull and jeopardising his relationship with other people. In this way he paved the way for his enemies to attack him. Little did Tau know when he refused to kill Maphatsoe that eventually he would be faced with serious problems. As a tragic character, he took a long time to realise the essence of Moholo's advice. He therefore miscalculated his chances.

Even though the tragedy that faced Tau was imminent, Tau as a tragic character did not change his mind and hand over the bull to his enemies. Although he took his time to realise the truth,

he still stood firm and adamant that he would not give them the bull, no matter what happened to him. When tragedy takes place to Tau, it justifies what Moholo told Tau previously. The moment of tension and sorrow has come in the life of Tau and he asked himself a question without an answer:

Na ekaba kgopiso ya ka ho medimo ke efe?

(Machobane 1962:10).

(What is my offence to the gods of my ancestors?.)

Tau's question reminds us of Moholo's advice that:

*Ke se ke boletse hore kgomo ena ke mpho ya badimo,
mpho ya lehodimo ...*

(Machobane 1962:9).

(I have already pointed out that the beast is a gift from the ancestors; it is a gift from the highest heaven....)

Having realised that the bull was a gift from the ancestors, Moholo could have persuaded Tau to take the situation seriously, but Tau was not in the right frame of mind. He should have realised that by refusing to kill Maphatsoe, he would offend the ancestors, which in the African sense, is one the most grievous sins that one can commit. Tragedy in this case is regulated by the fact that an offence to the ancestors implies calamity to the culprit. Tau stands as the culprit and suffers the consequences of his ignorance.

We have already mentioned that the novel involves tragedy of great magnitude. The essence and the intensity of the tragedy becomes apparent when Maphatsoe dies. The death of the bull was not only a matter of concern to Tau but to society, as expressed in the following statement:

*Ke re Mphatlalatsane ya Sekgutlo sa Khapung ya diha molala,
ya etsa ditumediso tsa mahlomola, ha bonahala ruri hore e
dumedisa morena, e dumedisa Basotho, e dumedisa medimo e
nko e metsi, maholosiane a sekgutlo, e siya lefatshe la Basotho,
e tshelela mose wane*

(Machobane 1962:53).

(I say Mphatlalatsane of Khapung died, and made sad greeting;
it was indeed clear that it was greeting the king; greet Basotho,
greeted the gods, greeting the gods with wet nose, the white birds
of the place, leaving the land of the Basotho, and crossing over to
the other side.)

The effects of tragedy caused by the death of Maphatsoe in that particular society is presented by the narrator as follows:

*Sekgutlo kaofela sa Khapung, sekgutlo sa Bakoena le Basiea,
sa otlwa ka taba tse kgolo tsa ho senyeha ha kgomo e ntle,
Maphatsoe*

(Machobane 1962:53).

(The entire area of Khapung, the area of the Bakoena and Basiea
were inundated with the sad news of the death of the beautiful
bull, Maphatsoe.)

The literary significance of the above statement is that it justifies the fact that this novel is a classical tragedy on account of the magnitude of tragedy reflected in this statement (even though a mock ritual killing was done). As a mock ritual killing was performed, other instructions that Moholo gave Tau regarding the killing of the bull could not be performed as the bull was still alive. In this way, the ancestors got angry and attacked Tau vehemently, hence the tragic end of Tau.

The tragic intensity in this novel is expressed in the theme of the novel as *mohana a jwetswa o tshohela leomeng* (non-acceptance of an advice leads to tragedy) in the sense that Tau had learnt a moral lesson on the issue of taking advice. He also learnt that if one refuses without reason to take advice, the likelihood would be that one may alienate oneself from other people and one's society in general. Another moral lesson that is also embedded in this novel is that one has to have faith and be fair. Tau suffered because he hid the bull and claimed that it had been killed and 'buried'. It is this particular behaviour that eventually led him into a series of tragic events. He was victimised by many people as well.

Moloi (1974:120) maintains that Tau was a tragic figure in all the events in the text. Moloi is of the opinion that Tau held a distorted sense of value in that he sacrifices all the valuable possessions in his life just to protect the beauty that he could not save from natural death. What is more tragic is the fact that even though he spent a lot of money to save the life of Maphatsoe, it eventually died. Tau could not keep the skin or eat the flesh of Maphatsoe as he and his society were brutally attacked. However, only Tau remained alive. One feels that the author wanted to keep Tau longer alive so as to demonstrate the repercussions that he suffered as a tragic figure. Eventually, readers were introduced to Tau's tragic and fatal death.

In general, Machobane succeeded in expressing classical tragedy in *Mphatlalatsane*. Most of the basic aspects of classical tragedy are manifested in this novel. As we understand that tragedy presupposes a shift from good fortune to misfortune, we have reason to accept that this novel qualifies as a tragedy as Tau's kingdom finally collapsed and his wife and children were put to the sword. The enemy has forced Tau to dig out the stinking remains of Maphatsoe; now beauty stank; it had no value any longer. A perfect shift from good fortune to misfortune becomes obvious in the following statement:

*A sala moo a bohile tshenyeho ya motse o motle, a bohile
dithako tse nyarosang kutlo ya motho, tsa matlo a tjheleng
lore! A sala a bohile le tsona ditopo tse mpe tsa basadi ka
bana ba bolailweng ka sehloho seo mahlo a hae a neng a
qala ho se bona, sehloho seo motho a ke keng a se bona ka*

mahlo a moya, ha e se yena feela le Baroa ba Kgapung
(Machobane 1962:67).

(He remained there witnessing the destruction of the beautiful village, watching the ruins that chilled one's feelings, ruins of houses burnt to the ground. He remained watching the grim corpses of women and children butchered with such cruelty and callousness that cannot be imagined, except by himself alone and the Bushmen of Kgapung.)

The phrases *a tlalwa ke pelo, ntho ya mo mathela pelong, a kwaleha moya, a akgeha* (became sick at heart; something ran into his heart, he suffocated and fainted) are meaningful and significant in explaining the tragic end of Tau. As a matter of fact, these phrases are carefully selected to express the tragic experience of the character, the development of plot as well as the final establishment of the theme.

Another crucial observation that convincingly expresses tragedy in this novel is the use of phrases that are identical semantically but differ structurally. In other words, such synonymous phrases are crucial in expressing the tragic in this novel, as follows:

Tau, morena wa sekgutlo, ha a bona mme a fela a hopola tsena tsohle, a tlalwa ke pelo; ntho ya mo mathela pelong, a kwaleha moya, a akgeha
(Machobane 1962:68).

(Tau, the king of the valley, seeing and remembering all these things, became sick at heart; something ran into his heart, he suffocated and fainted.)

In terms of the nature of the tragic character, the author managed to express tragedy in this novel by using the flat character. Tau, the tragic character never realised his flaw until he became

miserable. This novel therefore distinguishes itself as a classical tragedy in terms of the position assumed by Tau as the tragic character in relation to other characters.

3.4 *Moiketsi* (1958)

In the novel, *Moiketsi*, readers are plunged *ab ovo* at the beginning of the text and told about the parents of Moiketsi, the main character. Moiketsi was born into an extended family and as such, his grandfather and grandmother were also introduced. The novel involves an early point-of-attack where conflict is introduced immediately into the text.

It seems that 'Moko (Moiketsi's grandfather) and Litsehoane (Moiketsi's grandmother) were not at all happy that their son Mothusi (Moiketsi's father) had married Tselane. They were of the opinion that Tselane came from a family that practised witchcraft. Such a conflict presupposed tragedy later on in the sense that it made the relationships within that particular family very tense. Tension became the order of the day in terms of this apparent perception. The narrator states that:

*'Moko le mohats'a hae Litsehoane ba ne ba se khotso ka lenyalo
la Mothusi hobane ba ne ba re batho ba habo Tselane ke batho
ba sa tsebisahaleng*
(Maile 1958:1).

(Moko and his wife Litsehoane were not happy about Mothusi's marriage because they said that Tselane came from a low-class family.)

As tragedy normally occurs where there is conflict, tragedy seemed imminent as Moiketsi's grandparents had a different value system with regard to marriage. Another issue that relates to tragedy in this novel is that Mothusi did not take the advice of his father, before he decided to marry Tselane.

From the perspective of the African idea regarding tragedy, someone who does not take advice from experienced people, may likely undergo tragedy for which other people will have very little sympathy. This is why the name *Moiketsi* was given to the boy by his grandparents when he was born. It seems that they anticipated the type of personality that the boy would have in life.

What it means is that the boy was born out from a marriage that was not planned by his grandparents. In this sense, *Moiketsi* could not survive as he was already the offspring from the sinful marriage. As a result, *Moiketsi* was not welcome and had to face calamities in life.

Having been born into an extended family that had conflicting values, *Moiketsi* developed negative qualities which contributed towards the tragedy in his life. In the first place, *Moiketsi* developed a rather unusual and unbecoming attitude towards his contemporaries and other people in his society at an early age. When he was still a boy he became too proud of himself.

*Batsoali ba hae ha ba ka ba belaetsoa ke boikhantso boo hakaakang
hobane ba ne ba re o etsoa ke bonyenyane le ke lerato leo a neng a
ratoa ka lona*

(Maile 1958:3).

(His parents did not worry so much about his pride because they thought that perhaps he was influenced by his youth and he was shown the highest regard by his grandparents.)

This implies that *Moiketsi* developed *hubris* at a very tender age. Secondly, *Moiketsi* assumed an over-sensitive personality. He easily became emotional. At an early age, *Moiketsi* became very forceful and would insist on being given something even though his parents may not have planned to do so. The narrator highlights this point in his presentation of the nature of *Moiketsi*:

*Ha a ne a batla ntho e itseng, o ne a e batla ka qophello ho fihlela
a ba a e neoa*

(Maile 1958:4).

(If he needed something, he would persist by force until he received it.)

These negative forms of behaviour signify that Moiketsi's parents might have offended their ancestors in some way before the birth of Moiketsi. In the third instance, Moiketsi liked to emulate old people and to act as if he were old. The narrator points out that:

*Moiketsi o ne a makatsa 'Moko haholo hobane o ne a batla lintho
tse mo fetang, tse sa mo tsoaneleng. Ka letsatsi le leng a bonoa
a ntse a bokelletsa lithutsoana ho besa mollo ka tsona*
(Maile 1958:5).

(Moiketsi astonished 'Moko because he always wanted things that he did not deserve. One day he was accumulating sticks to make a fire.)

Acts such as these seemed destructive and though 'Moko was worried about them, Moiketsi was allowed to continue with them. In this way, tension mounted in the family, as the parents were not sure as to what the future held for their son. The child is expected to be introduced to the outside world by his elders, particularly his parents whilst developing to adulthood; but in the case of Moiketsi, it appeared that he was disobedient and was not prepared to allow his parents to guide him through life. It is a child of the nature of Moiketsi who, within the context of Sesotho culture, is *en route* to tragedy. Time and again he was reprimanded for doing wrong but persisted without any sign of respect or repentance.

Family relationships in 'Moko's family were also a matter of great concern. Moiketsi realised that his parents and grandparents were over-protective of him. He therefore developed a negative attitude towards his peers assuming that he would be supported by his parents. When other parents came and complained to 'Moko about the behaviour of Moiketsi, he would talk to him but Moiketsi would continue misbehaving as the narrator confirms:

*Leha ho le joalo batsoali ba bashemane ba bang ba ne ba
lla ho 'Moko ka hore moshanyana eo oa hae o hlorisa bana*

ba bona, o a ba loantsa
(Maile 1958:7).

(Nevertheless, other boys' parents lodged their complaints with 'Moko that his boy made life unpleasant for their children by quarrelling with them.)

As 'Moko became too lenient with Moiketsi, the other boys decided to launch a surprise attack on him and to assault him. Tension grew again in the family and as a result, Moiketsi had to be sent away to herd cattle with other boys older than him. But Moiketsi continued quarrelling with the older boys. 'Moko would support Moiketsi even though he was told that what Moiketsi had done was actually wrong, as reflected by the narrator:

'Moko eena a ba halefela haholo hobane le bona ba ne ba bua ka khalefo. A ba botsa hore na ba tseba seo bana bao ba neng ba se tseka etsoe oa hae a le monyenyane hoo ho sa utloahaleng a ka qala e moholo hakalo ho eena
(Maile 1958:8).

('Moko scolded them for they were also angry at him. He asked them whether they knew what those children were quarrelling about, especially as his child was so young. He believed that it was illogical that Moiketsi could have initiated trouble against one who was that much older than him.)

What was tragic in this case was the fact that in all these events, 'Moko attributed the behaviour of Moiketsi to the original family of his mother. 'Moko believed that Tselane had come from a bad family who believed in *muti* and practised witchcraft, but the reason was simply the kind of care that he had been given by his parents and grandparents.

'Moko tried an alternative plan to curtail the negative attitude of Moiketsi, but unfortunately it

did not work. A child with this kind of behaviour would be expected to experience problems in life as good social relationships serve as functional strategies to avoid unnecessary tragedy in a family, school or entire community.

A great deal of trouble happened in the life of Moiketsi because of his negative attitude. Among the instances of his negative behaviour, we can mention that he showed no respect at school as a result of which he was expelled. There is no way that Moiketsi would respect his teachers if he had failed to listen to his parents and grandparents. He had been a real problem at school as he had been involved in a number of fights with his peers. Moiketsi caused many problems to the point that he even challenged his teacher, Lephogo. Maile (1958:19) maintains that Moiketsi threatened to beat Salmina and Tshobotsi (his classmates). The two used to report his bad behaviour to their teacher and also inform him about Moiketsi's unbecoming attitude in his relationship with his peers at school.

Moiketsi engaged himself in excessive use of liquor after being expelled from school. He later on devoted his time in trivial love affairs. This is why he proposed love to Pulane, Rosina and Letia, to mention a few. Having done all the above, Moiketsi eloped with Rosina and left his main wife, Pulane at home. He disappeared on the very wedding day (when he was expected to get married to Pulane). This event was serious and caused unnecessary stress and tension to Pulane and her relatives. The narrator confirms this view by pointing out that:

*... ho ne ho se ho tumisitsoe kahohle hore monyali o nyametse `me
lenyalo e bile le qalang ho bonoa ka bosula*
(Maile 1958:66).

(... it was news well-spread to the effect that the groom had disappeared and that an unpleasant wedding like this one, was the first of its kind.)

Having experienced this tragic and disappointing event, the two families were concerned as to what could have happened to Moiketsi, but his mother remembered that Moiketsi once told her that he did not want to get married to Pulane.

*Mora oa hae o phethile morero o ts'abehang oo a neng a kile a o ama
ho eena oa hore a ke ke a ba a nyala Pulane leha a ile a re o a soasoa
ha a bona 'mae a lla*

(Maile 1958:66).

(Her son committed a terrible mistake. He once hinted to his mother that he will not get married to Pulane. He, however, lied to his mother when he saw her crying and said that he would marry Pulane.)

Moiketsi made a serious mistake by refusing to get married to a woman who had been chosen for him by his parents. We believe that the ancestors were also offended and in terms of the Basotho philosophy (ancestral belief system), Moiketsi would face tragedy and calamity in future. When Moiketsi eloped with Rosina, his grandfather, 'Moko, felt very bad and even remarked:

*O tla shoa bontja, a shoele lichabeng kamoo a ntsenyelitseng a ba
a ntlotlolla kateng*

(Maile 1958:65).

(He will die like a dog, in a foreign country because of the way he made me sustain such a great loss and experience embarrassment.)

Moiketsi harassed Rosina when she tried to advise him not to come home too late, particularly at night (Maile 1958: 68). Perhaps Moiketsi was not blessed by his ancestors as he disrespected his parents. As a matter of fact, Moiketsi did not fully enjoy his relationship with Rosina until they clashed. Another problem that Moiketsi encountered in his interaction with Rosina was that she introduced him to liquor. Being introduced to liquor, Moiketsi changed completely and proved to be a failure in various aspects of life as in the following tragic instances:

Firstly, he lost Pulane, his first wife as he was deceived by Rosina and her mother. Secondly, he eventually lost Rosina, his second wife, after ill-treating her because of Letia, his concubine. Thirdly, he lost Letia as she never wanted to associate herself with Moiketsi after his wife had

left him. Letia wrote him a taunting letter and informed him that though Rosina had left, she did not want to come and it only appeared as if it were she who had decided to encourage Rosina to leave her husband. She even mentioned that there were many other girls that Moiketsi could pursue. Letia went further to say:

*Ngoaneso se ileng ke se ileng. Ho lla ha ho thuse letho.
Lipelaelo le masisapelo tsona ha li thuse. Kgotsofala
ngoana batho. Ipatlele ba bang. 'Na ha ke sa le litabeng
tseo ho hang*
(Maile 1958:82).

(What is gone, is gone, my brother. Crying will not help.
Suspensions and heartache will also not help. Be satisfied.
Look for a substitute. I am no longer involved in the love
affair.)

The three instances mentioned above suggest that Moiketsi contravened the basic principles of a successful marriage in terms of the Basotho traditional values. As a matter of fact, he no longer stood a chance of better life with any other women, except Pulane, the one his parents had chosen for him. It is tragic to realise that Moiketsi did not consider the fact that women also have human rights in marriage. Little did Moiketsi know that if those women did not find what they expected to get from a husband they could discontinue living together with him. Alternatively, if the husband could happen to be in trouble, they could possibly leave him, as it happened in the case of Rosina or Letia.

Where there is conflict, chances are always high that tragedy will occur. Against this background of conflict that had already begun between Rosina and Letia, Moiketsi eventually landed in a serious tragic state. This is so because both women left him sick and helpless. No one ever wanted to come back to him to assist him to recover from illness. Readers understand at this stage, that as Moiketsi had tarnished the relations between Rosina and Letia, the ancestors would not allow him to survive but he had to suffer the consequences of his actions.

Despite the fact that Moiketsi refused to get married to a woman his parents had chosen for him, he made another mistake by getting married to a woman of a lower educational standard than his. Rosina was of a low educational standard even though she was temporarily employed at a school, but Letia was highly educated and was therefore a source of contention between Rosina and Moiketsi. On the other hand, Moiketsi wanted to use Rosina's low educational standard as the reason for him to have a relationship with Letia, an act Rosina severely opposed. Being unfaithful was a quality that caused Moiketsi to find himself being tossed between Rosina and Letia. Moiketsi developed a deep-seated anger and contemplated revenge against the two ladies. He expresses his anger as he remarked to Letia that:

*Ke mohau haholo Letia kamoo le nkentseng hampe kateng, uena
le Rosina. Ke se ke le mobe hampe kajeno hoo ka nako e 'ngoe
ke eeng ke ikutloe hore nka le nehella thuleli ea maliba*
(Maile 1958:82).

(I am very sorry that you, Letia and Rosina have ill-treated me.
I am seriously demonised in such a way that I even contemplate
killing you by means of a thunderstorm.)

Moiketsi engaged himself in a secret love affair with Letia and was not ashamed to bring her to his home in the presence of Rosina. He grew up emulating people and particularly elderly people. His tragic flaw was emulating even the wrong actions done by the elderly people. In this way he displayed his weakness as he could not differentiate between good and bad. He once visited the African power-doctor. As he was not satisfied with the treatment and the payment that goes with it, he also wanted to revenge and do the same with other people. So, he became an unskilled power-doctor. Underlyingly, Moiketsi knew that he is seeking for revenge to satisfy himself and boost his ego.

We also mentioned before that tragedy is likely to occur if a character decides to leave from home without permission from his parents. One can imagine that Moiketsi had no foundation of security as he had been away from home for five years and during the time he had nobody to

advise him. The narrator expresses this view:

*Kajeno ke selemo sa bohloano Moiketsi a furalletse ntlo eabo 'me a
sa ngole le ho ngola*
(Maile 1958:85).

(This was the fifth year that Moiketsi had turned his back on his home.
He did not write any letters either.)

Readers will realise that in doing so Moiketsi exposed himself to most of the problems in life and diminished the possibility of obtaining any help from his parents. Though readers feel pity for him as he experiences tragic events, at the same time they are afraid of being exposed to the same kind of situation. The narrator states that Moiketsi experienced serious hallucinations which reminded him of what he had done in the past:

*Bosiu bo hlahlamang a robala habohloko ka baka la
litoro tse ngata, tse tsabehang, tseo a ileng a li lora*
(Maile 1958:89).

(He did not sleep peacefully the following night because
of many fearful dreams.)

As in the novel *Chaka* when Chaka hallucinated about the number of people he had killed, Moiketsi also suffered psychologically on account of a series of negative experiences that emanated from his attitude and behaviour. Tension mounted in him and towards his parents. It is tragic to realise that though Moiketsi committed all these crimes, he was not the only one who suffered. His parents who tried under all circumstances to advise him, also suffered spiritually and emotionally because of the unbecoming behaviour of their son.

One of those tragic incidents experienced by Moiketsi is that he became seriously ill and as a result suffered both physically and spiritually. While he was still recovering at the hospital from

having been burnt by Rosina, the two ladies, namely Rosina and Letia rejected him and aggravated his spiritual suffering. The list of Moiketsi's tragic events is endless as he was harassed by the police for no apparent reason. He was also unfortunate to have been on the scene where a man had been brutally attacked by thugs. The poor man could not defend himself as the incident had happened so quickly and had almost been a coincidence. Unfortunately Moiketsi was taken to be the culprit and sentenced to three months hard labour. His problem was that it had been very late at night and that he had not been able to produce his identity document. He even borrowed money from a White man and decided to disappear. The development of conflict reinforced by tragedy in this novel can be illustrated as follows:

PULANE

Chosen for Moiketsi according to Basotho traditional principles

Choice based on belief in ancestral spirits

Legal wife - in terms of Basotho communal
and customary marriage system

vs

ROSINA

Moiketsi's concubine

Moiketsi eloped with her and thus
married her outside of the customary laws
regarding marriage

LETIA

Another concubine

Caused tension and tarnished
relations between Moiketsi and
Rosina

Moiketsi's life was characterised by a series of contrasts which contributed to his ultimate downfall.

Firstly, Moiketsi ignored the good example his grandparents had set for him though 'Moko chose a wife for his son, Mothusi. Secondly, Mothusi respected his father, but Moiketsi did not reflect or reciprocate this quality. Thirdly, 'Moko insisted on a communal system of life in nurturing his son, Mothusi, but Moiketsi individualised himself by moving away from home to lead an independent and solitary life. Finally, being subjected to strict discipline, Mothusi was not free to do as he pleased, but Moiketsi needed to be free and engaged himself in drunkenness, a series of secret love affairs, telling lies, unfaithfulness and being disrespectful.

We should not lose sight of the fact that Moiketsi had always been reminded of his parents whenever he encountered problems in life. He did so even though he did not care about his parents while enjoying himself. He would write a letter to his father and sometimes fail to post it because he was feeling ashamed of what he had done to him.

He had been attracted to the pleasures of the world and acted in blindness by not listening to people who, in good faith had tried to advise him so that he could effectively exercise his potentialities in life. Moiketsi experienced the dark side of life as he lost touch with his parents. His future looked dark as most of the tragic events he encountered took place at night. As he wandered around at night, he actually knew that what he was doing was wrong and socially unacceptable. His life also ended in darkness when he fell into a ravine (at night) and died.

*A tsoha har'a mpa ea bosiu, a akha likhuru har'a lefifi
a sa tsebe moo a mathelang teng. A matha joalo a ba
a ea oela selomong moo a ileng a shoella teng*
(Maile 1958:89).

(He woke up in the middle of the night and started running though he did not know where he wanted to go to. He ran like that until he fell into a ravine where he died.)

Moiketsi revealed through his tragic end that nobody cared for him at the time of his death. The reason could be that he alienated himself from his society and nobody knew where he was. His

father once remarked that Moiketsi would end up in an unknown place if he avoided associating with his family. Thus Moiketsi struggled alone against the tragic events in his surrounding environment.

Moiketsi's name which is derived from the Basotho's warning *moiketsi ha a lleloe* (there is no sympathy for the self-destructor), is clearly expressed in this novel and is of great moral value. The novel displays a modern type of tragedy in terms of the expression of tragedy. The main character was an ordinary person who turned the focus of other characters on him due to his extreme forms of behaviour. The entire life of the main character was littered with tragic events which had been caused by Moiketsi himself, though he was unaware of it.

Moiketsi therefore acted in blindness only to precipitate the series of tragic events at the end. He therefore fell into a ravine at night and died (Maile 1958:89). Though readers felt pity and fear for him, they accept that the main character himself is to blame. Thus the title *moiketsi ha a lleloe* (there is no sympathy for the self-destructor) should be the basic theme in this novel. What again is tragic is the fact that even though Moiketsi was aware of his imminent downfall, he did not do much to avoid it. In this way Moiketsi was destroying himself though other characters like his parents tried to protect and support him through advice and encouragement.

3.5 *Mosali a nkhole* (1960)

The novel *Mosali a nkhole* presents the tragic events in the life of Mosito, the main character. As readers we are introduced to Mosito, the only son of chief Lekaota who has turned twenty-five and awaits succession to the throne of his father. In the classical sense of tragedy, we understand that the novel presents common features with the classical Greek tragedy in terms of the expression of tragedy. This notion is based on the fact that Mosito has been the successor of Lekaota as the king. As a matter of fact, Lekaota educated Mosito so that he could be a good leader who would assume his kingship with great responsibility.

We have to make an observation at the outset that events in this novel unfold through binary oppositions. That is, we realise significant instances of opposition which reinforce the

development of conflict and plot in general. Firstly, Mosito was educated whereas his father was not educated. Secondly, Mosito was of a higher educational standard than his wife, Mmathabo; and thirdly, Mosito was a modernist whereas his wife was a traditionalist. These differences between Mosito and his wife played a major role in the final downfall of Mosito. This observation will be taken into consideration in the actual investigation of tragic expressions in the novel.

As our strategy in the investigation of tragic expressions in this novel, we consider those aspects of tragedy cited in Chapter Two, namely character, plot and theme as our point of departure and our main focus. The oppositions in terms of the nature of characters will also be enshrined in the investigative mechanisms.

Characterisation in *Mosali a nkholo*

Before we analyse the unfolding of events that lead to tragedy in this particular novel, we hope to explain the name Mosito itself and perhaps try to contextualise it in expressing tragedy in this novel.

The name *Mosito* (offender)

As an individual, Mosito seems to derive the meaning of his name from his weakness. The tragedy he experiences in this novel justifies his name. Mosito's name may be consciously or unconsciously contextualised into his paraphernalia of self-definition. It is imperative that Mosito be seen as someone who is constantly emotional in terms of being easily upset by love. He appears to lack a clear sense of self-perception, or an insight into himself. In addition, he lacks the drive towards intellectual pursuit. The result of this is that his emotions determine his actions. It is no wonder therefore that his father, Lekaota, called him aside to warn him to respect the power of his conscience:

*U mamele letsoalo la hao, u etse seo le reng u se etse, leha u ka eletsoa
ke mang kapa mang, haeba tsoalo la hao le sa lumele keletso eo, u se ke*

ua ba ua ea ka eona. Letsoalo ke lona molisa oa sebele oa motho; ke lona; ke lona motsoalle oa sebele oa motho; ke lona moeletsi oa sebele oa motho

(Khaketla 1960: 19).

(You should be governed by your conscience. Try to conform in case it tells you to do so. Even if you are advised differently by somebody, you should not take his advice if your conscience does not approve of it. You should perceive your conscience as your honest guide, your best friend and honourable adviser)

The very first error that Mosito committed after he had met his prospective wife, Sebolelo was when his father tried to advise him about life, and women in general. Mosito appeared to listen, but eventually turned his back on the strong warnings of his father. Lekaota was serious when he warned Mosito that:

Ho khetha mosali ho boima haholo, 'me ho lokela hore motho a imabelle hona hantle. Haeba u fela u utloa hore Sebolelo ke eena, ke eena, 'na ke re ho lokile. Haeba u bona hore leha le sa lekane ka thuto le tla 'ne le phele hantle ba babeli, ke re ho lokile ...

(Khaketla 1960:13).

(It is difficult to choose a wife. One has to take time to prepare one's mind. Nevertheless, if you really love Sebolelo, then I have no problem with it. If you wish to get married to a woman who is less educated than you are, then there is no problem whatsoever)

Mosito's father wanted him to reconsider his choice of marrying Sebolelo, and review his ambitions and perhaps change his mind. Mosito did not give himself time to ponder the issue and made a fatal decision. The contrast here is that at the moment Mosito left his father, the

external appearance of Sebolelo came flooding into his mind. The narrator remarks that:

*Bosehlana ba Sebolelo; mahlo a hae a maphatsoana;
meno a hae a masooana; lebonyo la hae le tletseng lerato,
motsamao wa hae o hohelang - tsena kaofela tsa tla ka
sekhahla maikutlong a hae ...*

(Khaketla 1960:13).

(Sebolelo's light complexion, shining eyes, white teeth,
her smile full of love and her attractive way of walking
took his feelings by storm)

The external beauty of Sebolelo filled Mosito's inner thoughts. He did not ponder Sebolelo's personality even for a moment. He did not think, even for a second, about compatibility. What was of utmost importance to him was that he had fallen in love and that his body and soul belonged to her. From the very outset, Mosito's state of emotions is the root cause of trouble as the story develops. The very name, *Mosito* (offender), reflects the personality of Mosito and his relationship with his environment as an individual. He perceives himself as a weakling who cannot distinguish between good and bad.

Mosito offended his father, Lekaota, through his ignorance and immaturity. He disregarded the important advice, based on conscience and respect for human dignity, that his father wanted to instil in him. As frustration became more prevalent in the life of Mosito, his life became characterised by opposition to his father's good intentions towards him. This brings us to conclude that his name communicates literary significant information, since Mosito embraces a different philosophy towards life.

The tragic flaw

We must remember that chief Lekaota, Mosito's father, contrary to Basotho culture, he never wanted to choose a wife for his son. He actually wanted Mosito to commit himself to choosing

for himself a woman he would like to marry. This is why he pointed out to Mosito:

*Ke se ke u boleletse hore ha e le'na ha ke na u khethela, ke tla u supisa
feela malapa ao ke tsebang hore ke malapa a sebele, uena o e'o ichebela,
u tl'o mpolella*
(Khaketla 1960:7).

(I have already told you that I am not going to choose a wife for you. I will merely show you the families that I know to be worthy so that you can go and choose a wife and come back to report to me.)

This point justifies the fact that Mosito led himself into tragedy. He could not turn around and complain that his father had misdirected him. Lekaota was also concerned about the educational standard of 'Mathabo. Even here, it did not appear that Mosito cared about the need for a woman to be educated. He was merely interested in Sebolelo ('Mathabo) without realising that during that time it was essential for a woman to be educated so that she did not appear to be a misfit and otherwise embarrass her husband unexpectedly and unnecessarily. That is why Lekaota asked Mosito again about 'Mathabo and said:

*Joale, bakeng sa thuto, ekaba eena o fihlile kae? ...
U fihlile bukeng ea bone feela? ... Aa, monna, na o
re le tla hle le hule hantle le eena? Hojane bonyane
u fihlile ho ya bosupa kapa ea borobeli ...*
(Khaketla 1960:12-13).

(As for educational standard, what standard did she pass?
... She only reached standard four? ... Oh man, do you think
that the two of you will pull together very well? If she could
have at least reached standard seven or standard eight)

Other advice that Lekaota gave to Mosito was that he and his family should stick to Christianity

and serve the Lord in whatever manner they could. He advised Mosito on the issue of Christianity and ordered him to pray everyday and at any time because a prayer opens all the entrances to heaven. The old man finally said that:

*Le hoja ke sa sokoloha, ke phetse bophelo bo hlokang mahonothotho ...
Lona ke ile ka le lumella ka tsokoloho, 'me ke le eletsa hore kamehla
thapelo e se ke ea khaotsa, le rapele hosasa, motseare, le mantsiboea ...*
(Khaketla 1960:19).

(Although I am not educated I did not lead a troubled life ... I encouraged you towards Christianity, and I advised you to pray in the morning, during the day and at night)

Mosito did not follow his father's advice but listened to his wife, 'Mathabo. In this way we realise the change in the life of Mosito, who promised to be a better king than his father, Lekaota, but ultimately experienced a shocking downfall.

Looking at the tragic flaw of Mosito from another angle, we find that he seems to be a slow-thinker. This is so because when Selone wanted Mosito to commit himself by killing Tlelima with his own hand, he failed to realise that Selone wanted to clear himself and wanted Mosito to take the initiative himself so as to be blamed.

Light and darkness in the life of Mosito

Every day when the sun rises, the daily activities begin, and every evening when the sun sets, the activities should stop. Therefore, light is normally associated with routine activities whereas night is associated with a period of rest and inactivity. The author points out in an indirect and subtle manner, how incongruous the activities in *Mosali a nkholo* are. With Mosito, confusion appeared to be the characteristic factor. He was always looking forward to meeting Selone in the evening. Thus instead of night being a period of rest, it became a period of activity. This is further evidence of the disharmony and tragedy in the life of Mosito.

Mosito's confusion relates well to the image carried by the colour of the horse he was riding, mentioned on the very first page of the text. It is stated that he was riding a grey horse which signifies confusion as it looks like a mixture of black and white and at the end the mixture produces an unusual, greyish colour.

*Hang hoba a be holima eona, putsoa eabo, bahlankana ba bang
ba li hloa, ha lla tlhako feela ho ea lebenkeleng la ha Ralefatla ...*
(Khaketla 1960:1).

(After Mosito rode his grey one, other boys rode theirs and all that one could hear were the sounds of footsteps as they hurried to Ralefatla's shop....)

The colour 'grey' projects with maximal impact on the state of mind of Mosito which can be summarised in one word, namely, confusion. The author seems to use the colour grey in this novel to signify confusion.

The image *mophato o a tjha* (initiation house burns down) adds more meaning to tragedy in this novel as it has been used as a satire and suggests the manliness of Mosito as a character. Whilst *mophato o a tjha* literally means 'initiation house burns down' and implies the end of boyhood and the beginning of manhood, with Mosito the situation is different. Mosito comes from a modern school and cannot prove himself or deny the accusations of his wife, 'Mathabo. He seems to have no vision regarding his future, instead he always appears to be dependent on the advice of others. *Mophato o a tjha* implies commonly that one has reached the stage of independence, but it does not seem to mean the same with Mosito. Even though Mosito comes from a modern school, he does not appear to be educated but merely reduced to a state of childlike dependence. Sebotsa even remarked about him that:

*Thuto ea tla ea re khola, ea re senyetsa Morena. Hona joale
o ahlametse bashanyana bano, o hana ho tseka; homme ke ne
ke bile ke bona hantle hore nyeoe eno o tla e hlola habonolo*

feela

(Khaketla 1960:39).

(Education has spoiled our king. He now keeps watching these boys instead of battling and I thought that it would be easy for him to win the battle.)

The element of opposition between modernism and traditionalism plays a role in this case, and leads Mosito into trouble. Mosito and his wife seem to differ radically in terms of their philosophy of life. Mosito is a modernist and Mathabo is a traditionalist. The difference seems to be based on their upbringing and their life experiences in general. In the third paragraph of Khaketla (1960:59), Mathabo manifests herself as a traditional Mosotho child who understands the customs and ways of the Basotho. Mosito, on the other hand is Euro-centric and as an educated man, he views life from a Western point of view. It is this particular point that greatly surprises, angers and irritates Mathabo when Mosito informs her that he does not agree with Khati and the other traditionalists that they should strengthen his case with medicine. Mosito insists that though Lekaota believed that medicine men could cure natural diseases, he did not believe that their medicine could do miracles such as changing the outcome of court cases.

The fact that Mosito is not a traditionalist but is confronted by traditionalists such as Mathabo, Khati, Maime and Sebotsa makes the situation tense and tormenting for him. As a modernist, Mosito seems to be living in the past as he still practices what uninitiated boys are expected to do:

'Mathabo le eena ha Mosito a re ho tloha kajeno ke tla o mamela, o a 'motsa hore hobaneng a re o tla 'mamela. Mosito u re ke tla batla lenaka leo e leng khale u bua ka lona. 'Mathabo a fumana hore khocheletsane eane eo e leng khale a batla ho e fihlella, kajeno u e fihlelletse

(Khaketla 1960:59).

(When Mosito promised to listen to 'Mathabo from that day, 'Mathabo also needs to know why he says so. Mosito pointed out that he would seek the medicine that she told him about. 'Mathabo realised that she had achieved what she intended.)

She then discovered that what always impeded her has been removed and that she can manipulate or take advantage of Mosito.

Socialism and Christianity as extra-textual references

Extra-textual references in this novel suggest that Mosito actually committed a crime. He murdered Tlelima without any reason. This is one of the actions that are forbidden by the Holy Bible through the commandment, namely, *Thou shall not kill*. Mosito had been led into this kind of temptation by his wife. That is why Maime says to Khati:

*Le nne le utloe Mangolong a Halalelang hore e ne ere ha
Satane a bona hoba a ke ke a phelekanyetsa Atama eaba o
mo raha maling-a-mpa Ha motho oa monna a hana ho
u mamela, u mo rahe maling-a-mpa ka ho kena ka mosali
oa hae*

(Khaketla 1960:40).

(You often hear from the Holy Scriptures that when Satan realised that he could not defeat Adam he devised other means and mechanisms . . . If a person does not want to listen to you, you should involve his WIFE into the matter.)

Mosito could not escape punishment in any way. The punishment he incurred was directed at both his psychological and physical well-being. The author presents the argument between Mosito and his wife, Mathabo. In the following quotation Mosito tries to defend his point of

view:

*Oho, Mathabo, batho ba se ba 'nile ba tsoaroa, ba fanyehoa,
ka ho etsa mesebetsi e kang ona, 'me ha ke rate ho etsa joalo, hoba
ka ho lumela morero ona ke tla be ke etsa tsohana-ya-neta; le tla
pata lihlooho tsa lona kae ha ke e-shoa lefu le lebe le tlontlolang,
lefu la ho fanyehoa, lefu la lintja!*

(Khaketla 1960:107).

(Oh, Mathabo, people have always been caught and hanged for committing such acts. I do not want to do such things. This is so because I believe that by doing so I will be doing wrong. Where on earth are you going to hide yourself if I die like that? A shameful death - being hanged like dogs!.)

Darkness is associated with evil. Mosito habitually schedules meetings with his colleagues at night. He and his followers murdered Tlelima at night in order to reach their goal. It is no wonder that they were also punished in darkness at night:

*Ropo ya phetha mosebetsi oa eona, 'me hora ea botsela ha
e ota kahlolo ea b'e felile, ba leketlile ka melala ea bona ho
fihlela ba be ba e-shoa, kamoo Moahloli a neng a ba bolelle
kateng*

(Khaketla 1960:188).

(The verdict was pronounced by six and the rope performed its duty. They hanged by their necks until they died which was what the judge had told them.)

Mosito appears to have had different transitional stages in his life. The most serious and nerve-racking stages in his life could be associated with darkness. If Mosito experienced darkness in

his life, darkness presupposes punishment and the death of both himself and his friends. This is why the magistrate gave them a life sentence too:

Ka motsotso oa joale lekhlotla le le fumana le le molato, 'me kahlolo e 'ngoe feela eo molao o ntaelang ho e etsetsa ba nang le molato o kang oa lona. Ho tloha joale le tla busetsoa ditlamong tseo esaleng le e-ba ho tsona, ho fihlela nako ea ho phethisa kahlolo ea lona e fihla; 'me ha nako eo e fihlile, le tla fanyehoa ka melala ea lona, le leketle, le leketle, ho fihlela le eshoa!
(Khaketla 1960:176).

(The court finds you guilty. There is only one punishment the law prescribes that befits your offence. Henceforth, you will be returned to the cells until the day of sentence. When that day comes, you will hang by your necks and hang by your necks until you die.)

Selone gave Mosito a knife to slaughter a *sheep*. The *sheep* that Selone referred to was Tlelima who had to die to pay with his life the retention of fame and status of his king, Mosito. As encouraged by Selone, Mosito ignored Tlelima's humble prayer that he had children to care for and that his children were still young. They did not feel sorry for him but killed him instantly. It is for this reason that Selone said:

Hi'u nke thipa he, mali a tsolloe ke letsoho la hao
(Khaketla 1960:99).

(Take a knife so that you can spill blood by your own hand.)

Mosito as a modernist having grown up with a Western education, in a modern family situation, followed the traditional practices and that caused him to act in blindness as shown by the following remark:

*... mali a hae a tla tla tsolloa ke 'na ka letsoho la ka, ke a tsolla
ka litaelo tsa ngaka
(Khaketla 1960:116).*

(... I am the one who is going to spill his blood with my own hand.
I shall do as instructed by the doctor.)

Mosito did not understand the medical jargon that Selone used when he referred to *lenaka la borena* (the chief's horn) and therefore he admitted to murdering Tlelima for no apparent reason. Unfortunately he did not know from the outset that the *lenaka la borena* (the chief's horn) Selone was referring to implied a mixture of human flesh otherwise he would probably have acted differently. This is the essence of his tragic flaw, his acting in blindness.

The author creates a picture in the mind of the reader about Lesotho during the time when ritual murder was rife. It could probably be Lesotho during the time of the reign of the chiefs and when they fought against the British colonialism.

*Batho ba bangata ba theoha, ba nka meroalonyana ea bona,
ba qeqekela, ba qhalana, ba ea ka tsela tse fapaneng; motho
ka mong a habile ho ea fihla ha habo ho sa khanya, kaha
naha e ne e itebetse ka nako eo, batho ba tsamaea ba tsohile
ho akhelo a lerapo molaleng
(Khaketla 1960:1).*

(Many people alighted, took their little luggage, dispersed taking different directions. Each one of them intended to arrive at home whilst it was still light outside. The environment was not safe and people walking around feared the ropes that could simply be thrown around their necks.)

This was the time when Mosito experienced an internal conflict not knowing whether he should

maintain the modern standards of living that he had acquired through education or retain traditional customs subsumed in traditional African cultural heritage.

Observations on Mosito's human nature and his tragic flaw

Firstly, Mosito does not take advice from anybody since he even rejects his own father's counsel.

Secondly, as mentioned previously, he is ruled by his emotions and appears to be a megalomaniac and power hungry.

Thirdly, he tends to make hasty decisions which he regrets afterwards.

Finally, he is not thinking before taking action, and planning were not his priorities.

Khati agrees with what Sebotsa has to say and tries to convince Mosito to do something in order to regain the kingship status he has lost. He goes on to say:

*Morena kea bona Sebotsa o a tsila-tсила. 'Na ke tla toboketsa feela.
Metsoako eno e batloang ke sebetse sa motho, 'me ke ka hona a itseng
e fumanoa hathata kajeno, hobane ha ho sa le ntoa. Sebetse se ne se ka
'na sa fumaneha habonolo ka ho epolloa ha motho ya shoeleng mane
mabitleng, empa ekare moriana o tla sebetsa hantle sebetse seo ya e-ba
sa motho ya bolailoeng ka matsoho ... Joale he o lokela hore o fumane
"phofu" eo o tla sebetsa ka sebetse sa eona
(Khaketla 1960:26).*

(Chief, I realise that Sebotsa is a bit hesitant. I will get straight to the point. What he actually needs is a man's liver which is not easy to find in that the days of wars are over. We could just dig out a dead person and use his liver but it is traditional that medicine should be mixed with the liver of someone who has just been murdered. You are therefore

obliged to secure a victim whose liver you will use to make the mixture.)

Mosito reacted by saying that:

Ha se ntho eo ke sa tla e etsa eno, leha le ka rata le ratile. Ha ho motse o ka tiisoang ka sebetse sa motho kapa mohlabelo
(Khaketla 1960:27).

(That is what I am not prepared to do. Over my dead body!
It does not matter whether you wish me to do it or not. We cannot strengthen our household by means of such offerings.)

The question of Mosito as a modernist being opposed to the traditionalist comes in again. Too late Mosito realised the truth because Mathabo and other traditionalists including Selone had already devised the means of convincing him to murder Tlelima and sacrifice him for that particular mixture that Selone urgently required.

Mosito's tragic life is characterised by confusion as other modernists such as the Commissioner General's advice was opposed to that of the traditionalists. Advice of the Deputy Commissioner General to Mosito during the inauguration of Mosito as king was that:

Ke a tseba hore har'a lichaba tse ngata tsa batho ba batso ho na le tumelo ea hore borena ba motho bo holisoa ka lithhare, le hore ha morena a tla ratoa ke sechaba eka khona a sebetsoe ka meriana e thata-thata ea manaka ke lingaka; empa kaha oena o motho ea rutehileng ha ke rate ho senya nako ka ho u bolella hore ha ho ntho e joalo
(Khaketla 1960:22).

(I know that many African tribes maintain a firm belief that man's success is attained only through *muti*. They also believe that the

chief has to use *muti* to attain favour from his people. Seeing that you are educated, I do not want to waste your time by telling you what you already know, which is, that there is no such thing as *muti*.)

Mosito eventually identified Tlelima as his victim and submitted to sacrifice him. His wife Mathabo had a different view regarding the relationship between the king and his people. To her the relationship between Mosito and his people was the same kind of relationship as that between a man and his flock of sheep. This relationship becomes clear in Mathabo's view in her discussion with Mosito that:

Har 'a mohlape ona oa hao ho na le nku e bitsoang Tlelima; uena mong 'a mohlape u na le morero oa popotahali, o lokelang ho o phetha, 'me ho fumaneha hore har 'a mohlape ona kaofela ke nku ena feela e nang le tsohle tse batleloang morero; ka lebaka la matla a hao a thuo ea nku ena, u ka etsa seo u ratang ka eona. Joale ho hana 'ng hore u sebetse ka eona? Tlelima ha a e-shoa, 'me a tseba hore o shoa a pholosa Morena oa hae, o tla iphumana a le lehlohonolo haholo, hobane o tla phetha mosebetsi oo ho seng ea sa tla ke a o phethe, 'me o tla shoa ka khotso e tsoeu
(Khaketla 1960:105).

(In your flock there is a sheep called Tlelima, and you the owner of the flock have a great plan and you find that in the flock it is only this sheep that can help you fulfil the plan. Because of your power over the sheep, you can do whatever you want with it. What forbids you from using it? If Tlelima dies with the knowledge that he was saving his King, he will find himself fortunate indeed, because he will be fulfilling the plan that nobody can, and he will die satisfied.)

This suggests that Mosito could do whatever he wished with his people without bothering whether they had a specific purpose in life or not. When Mosito was instructed by Selone to

slaughter a black sheep, he identified Tlelima as his victim and went further to say:

*Tlelima e tla ba eona nku eo ke tla etsa sehlabelo sa balimo ka
eona, ke reke bophelo, ke reke borena, ke reke lebitso*
(Khaketla 1960:111).

(Tlelima will serve as a sheep to sacrifice for my offering to the
ancestors in order to acquire life, chieftainship and status.)

Theme and tragic expressions

The novel examines the moral non-justification of *diretlo* (ritual murder) as a means of gaining power in a world which has outgrown ancient tribal belief. The events of the story take place against the background of World War II. During this period ritual murders still occurred fairly often in Lesotho.

Ritual murders were committed on account of the belief that the *lenaka* (cure) or *muti* should contain one or more internal organs from a human body, such as the liver, the heart or the spleen. Being at war, and possibly impatient with the inadequate local government in South Africa, the British Administration in Maseru decided in August 1944 to rationalise the system of local administration. The traditional courts were diminished from 1340 to 117. There was also a ruling that all revenue should in future be cashed in the national treasury.

It was also decided that local chiefs and headmen were to receive salaries based on the number of their taxable subjects. The idea was to decrease the temptation to chiefs and headmen of helping themselves too generously to the local levy.

Mosito returns home to a village in the Qachasnek district to prepare to succeed his father, Lekaota, the local headman who is nearing the end of his days. Although in his mind traditional beliefs and customs have almost completely been substituted by enlightened concepts of the modern world, Mosito and his father agree on the family from which he has to choose a wife.

Mosito chooses Sebolelo (Mathabo), although she has passed only standard four. His father, Lekaota, is not quite satisfied with the large gap in the level of their respective educational achievements, despite her implied deeper attachment to tradition. Readers will bear in mind that, when Mosito and his friends were at chief Khare's, Mosito realised that there were funny things she did that he could not understand, for example, Mosito observed that when the tea was served, they were made to look foolish, but he dismissed the jokes as trivial things done by the girls who were feeding them. And he concluded that:

*Thope ena eo a buang le eona e hlile e kentse hlooho
ka mokotleng*

Khaketla (1960:11).

(The young woman he is talking to is not educated.)

When Mosito arrives back home from Khare's, his father becomes concerned about the educational gap between him and Sebolelo. This is something that surprises the reader. His major concern is that there may be some problems of understanding, but Mosito assures him that he is happy with Sebolelo. So choosing a wife becomes Mosito's major problem. It seems that because of his Western education, he is far removed from his nation, whereas Mathabo, because of her low education does things that are closer to the heart of the nation. She is consequently loved by the nation, but Mosito is seen as some stranger who must still learn to adapt to his traditional roots.

The narrator sees Mosito and Sebolelo's marriage as a horse and a cow pulling a cart together. This metaphor, as will be seen later, does indeed characterise Mosito and Sebolelo's marriage to the end. Knowing these differences between Mosito and his wife, Khati and Sebotsa see Mathabo as a powerful instrument in defeating Mosito, and as will be observed later, they use her persuasive power effectively.

When the rationalisation measures come into practice, Mosito's power will be fundamentally affected. Realising the justification of this step, Mosito and his enlightened age-group advisors

Khosi and Pokane, unconditionally accept it. The traditional counsellors Khati, Sebotsa, and Maime take a different stand. They neither accept the step, nor do they accept their headman's decision to do so. They try to persuade Mosito to object, but fail. They seek assistance from forces nearer to him, in the person of his wife, Mathabo.

At the end of the story and after the brutal death of Tlelima, Mosito suffers the consequences. He actually suffers the disastrous downfall as the central character and this characterises the novel as tragedy. Mosito is then reminded of all the advice he received from his wife and only then realises that she did more harm than good to him, hence *mosali a nkholo* (the woman lands me in trouble).

Tragic expressions as manifested by the development of plot

As already mentioned, the tragic events in the life of our main character hinge on oppositions and factions in Mosito's court as opposed to what has happened during the time of Lekaota.

In the first instance, Mosito seems to be determined to democratise his court through negotiations with his followers. He therefore appears not only to listen to Khosi and Pokane, his right-hand followers, but on the contrary, to the traditionalists. Lekaota, even though he was not educated, had a vision that Khosi and Pokane would advise Mosito to lead his followers to Western civilisation. Along the line Mosito is confronted with opposition from his wife, Mathabo and from the traditionalists, namely Khati, Maime, Sebotsa and Selone, the power-doctor.

Mosito ignored his father's advice that he should rely on Khosi and Pokane and decides to change his attitude to them as in the following:

*Khosi a talima Pokane, a qekotsa, eaba o boetse o talima Mosito,
empa a fumana sefahleho sa hae se hloka khotso ho hang, hoo e bileng
o se a sitoa le hore na a ka boela a re'ng ho Morena eo oa hae
(Khaketla 1960:94).*

(Khosi looked at Pokane and then looked again at Mosito but only discovered that he was not at all happy as a result of which he did not know what next to say to his King.)

We realise as readers that Mosito continued to disrespect the orders of his father, Lekaota and to introduce his own style of leadership. Mosito distinguishes himself as a tragic character in the sense that he chooses not to follow the good example that Lekaota had set for him and also not to accept the advice that his father had given about the qualities of perfect leadership.

Mosito complicates everything by listening to his wife who has a one-sided view of the story. She tells him to ignore the advice of Khosi and Pokane as they are civilised and operate in terms of Western principles or philosophy of life. She wants to instil the traditional principles or else maintain the *status quo* as it was during the time of Lekaota. It is for this reason that Mathabo opines that:

*Oho, haeba ba joalo, le 'na ke re u nepile ka ho ba teela kathoko.
Koana le uena ke kahobane o le motho ea sa eletsoeng; hojane
ua eletsoa, u ka be u hlile oa ba tlohela khale, hobane ba sebetsa
litaba ka setsoelopelenyana sena sa lona, ba re ba rutiloe*
(Khaketla 1960:58).

(Oh, if they are like that, I support you for having put them aside. But, you do not take advice easily either. If you had taken my advice, you could have dismissed them long before as they merely apply their meagre forms of civilisation because they claim to be educated.)

Based on Mathabo's assertion, it becomes clear that she is opposed to civil principles. This view is captured by the use of *setsoelopelenyana* (civilisation) in the negative sense. This opposition becomes the bone of contention in the family life of Mosito as well as in his social life in general. Mosito indicates the signs of being bullied by his wife or decisions being taken for him by other people. This complicates the life of Mosito to a point where he feels weak and numb. The

question of Mosito having a weak personality as opposed to Mathabo who has a strong personality becomes a matter of concern at this stage. Mosito is for instance forced by his wife to consult the divining bones though he would not have done so if he had followed the modern norms of living that his father had tried to instil in him. But the narrator goes further to explain that Mosito had had no option but to succumb to Mathabo's orders and mentions that:

*Kamoo mosali a neng a ile a mo pepetlela kateng ka mantsoe,
morero oa hae o ne o le mong feela - e le hore a leke litaola
tsena hang, a tsoe a tseba bonnete ba tsona*

(Khaketla 1960:87.)

(Because his wife had spoken very strongly to him, he had only one intention - to try these divining bones once more, and know about their truth.)

As Zulu (1999:40) confirms, the life of Mosito was torn apart by oppositions which complicated and confused his life. Mosito becomes confused when his wife, Mathabo, derives pleasure from the fact that he consulted the bones even though she knew that he did not actually like to consult Selone for divining bones. He is taken aback when he realises that Mathabo is happy that he has consulted the divining bones:

*... a khaoletsoa ke ho kena ha Mofumahadi Mathabo. A kena sefahleho
sa hae se khanya, se bonya, ho bonahala hore pelo ea hae e nyakaletse
haholo hobane kajeno Morena o entse seo eena, mohatsa hae, a se ratang
haholo. Ke ka hoo a ileng a 'muisa ka lentsoe le monate, le tletseng lerato,
le nang le mololi o monatenate, ...*

(Khaketla 1960:93).

(... he was disturbed by princess Mathabo when she came in. As she came in, she looked happy, smiling, which implied that she was rejoicing because the King has done what she, as her wife, required from him. This is why she

spoke to him so nicely and with a sweet voice,)

Zulu (1999:40) maintains that these contrasts as they occurred prior to or after Mosito consulted the divining bones implied the turning point or *peripeteia* in the life of Mosito and Mathabo. What it all means is that there had been a shift in the life of Mosito from good to bad whereas in the life of Mathabo, the situation changed from bad to good.

We can only point furthermore that this significant change identifies Mathabo as the cornerstone that propels tragedy in the life of Mosito, hence *mosali a nkhola* (the woman lands me in trouble). This point is again highlighted when Mosito discovers after all the advice of his wife, the traditionalists and the power-doctor, that Tlelima has to die. The narrator mentions that Mosito:

*... o utloa a robehile litho phuhla, pelo ya hae e tetebella tlase,
lentsoe la hae le fokola joaloka la motho ea qetileng likhoeli
a baba, a le phateng tsa lefu*
(Khaketla 1960:102).

(... he felt very weak and down-hearted and his voice sounded as if he had been terminally ill for a number of months.)

We have already mentioned that besides other forms of opposition Mosito suffered great opposition from his wife, Mathabo. It is no wonder therefore that Mathabo made it difficult for Mosito to make a different choice than not to kill Tlelima as she had decided to commit suicide in case Mosito did not kill Tlelima. As a matter of fact, she imposed two difficult options to Mosito for him to make a choice: whether to kill Tlelima or have Mathabo commit suicide.

*Ntho li peli feela tseo u lokelang ho khetha ho tsona: bophelo
ba Tlelima kapa bophelo ba ka*
(Khaketla 1960:107).

(There are two things you have to choose from: Tlelima's life or my life.)

Though Mosito was cornered, he could still resist making a choice if Mathabo had not pointed a rifle at herself when she gave him those two options. It is therefore logical for Mosito to have opted to save the life of his wife and perhaps let Tlelima be killed. He had no other alternative because at that point death was imminent. It is this force by which Mathabo reigns over Mosito that made him commit himself and lie to her that he meditated on the matter of killing Tlelima and that he had finally taken a decision that Tlelima should be the victim. Mosito further commits himself by saying that:

*Taba ena ke imameletse eona hantle, 'me ke rerile ka maikutlo;
ka baka leo ke sa boela ke re Tlelima e tla ba eona nku eo ke tla
etsa sehlabelo sa balimo ka eona, ke reke bophelo, ke reke borena,
ke reke lebitso*

(Khaketla 1960:111).

(I meditated on this issue very carefully and I am now certain.
I repeat that Tlelima will be my sheep to be the sacrifice for
the ancestors, to buy kingship and his status.)

Mosito did not anticipate the day when he would be sentenced to death on account of his involvement in the murder of Tlelima. He found himself being convicted because of his wife, Mathabo. It is fascinating to realise that Mosito, even after being convicted, still hoped that the medicine mixture could be significant to make him win the court case. As we mentioned before that Mosito was operating in darkness. He then wrote a letter to his wife and instructed her to provide Thulare with the body parts of Tlelima for him to make a medicine mixture that could be used to make him win the court case.

In this way, Mosito complicated the case as he provided the court with tangible evidence that he had actually killed Tlelima. It is tragic to realise that in each case Mosito is governed by hope

without any proof whatsoever. Mosito, our tragic hero who failed to abide by his father's advice, who relied on his wife Mathabo and who tried to please Selone, the power-doctor and who suppressed his conscience was then hanged for killing Tlelima.

In this way, Mosito appears to be the vehicle through which the author conveys the theme that punishment will always be the necessary end to all evil. In the case of Mosito, he got the punishment of death but before he was killed he suffered spiritually and psychologically as he experienced hallucinations and could not sleep comfortably. Tlelima came in Mosito's dreams and spoke to him:

*Mosito, Moren'a ka, ha ke u thusitse hakaale ka sebetse,
u fumane borena boo u neng u bo llela, ekaba u ka tsosoa
ke ho bona ke u etetse ho tla u lebohela ha u fumane
moputso oa hao?*

(Khaketla 1960:177).

(Mosito, my King, as I have helped you so much with my liver to retain the kingship that you have been crying for, why should you be so scared when I visit you to pay tribute to your great achievement?.)

The author used the metaphor *lebone le a tima* (light turns off) to indicate the fact that Mosito had come to the end of his life. Mosito's life which had been the light now turned into darkness on account of his tragic flaws that he did not want to avoid. He experienced a dramatic change in his life from a good to a bad state because he had failed to make correct choices in life as suggested by his father, Lekaota.

On the other side of the coin, Mosito knew God but suppressed his conscience when Tlelima asked him in the Name of the Lord to feel sorry for him but continued to kill and thus sacrificed him. As things went wrong, Mosito was reminded of God but Tlelima reminded him that he should not mention the name of God. Mosito should have listened and been considerate before

he and his partners proceeded to kill him.

*Lebitso la Molimo hase leo u ka le bitsang, hobane ha u le tsebe.
Hojane u nu le tseba, u ka b'u kile ua nkutloela bohloko ha ke
ne ke bitsa lebitso leo, ke u rapela hore u mpe u nkhouhele, nke
ke ka bolela seo u neng u nketsa sona*
(Khaketla 1960:177).

(You may not mention the name of God because you do not even know it. If you could had known God at all, you could have felt pity for me when I mentioned that name and begged you to feel sorry for me and that I shall not inform anybody about your actions to me.)

This moment also aggravated the extent of tragedy in the life of Mosito, and brought him to a point where he suffered both physically and spiritually. Through this novel the author seems to suggest that evil is punishable and that death will be the necessary form of punishment. On the other hand, the author seems to clarify through Mosito that good will always supersede evil.

Tragedy in *Mosali a nkholo* signifies a total change in the attitude of Mosito to other characters. Mosito originated from a dignified family but because of the influence of other negative characters, such as Selone, Mathabo, Khati and Maime, he found himself behaving in a manner he would not like himself to be associated with and this point is expressed by the narrator when he described the personality of Mosito:

Mosito was not used to be swayed from his original opinion:

Maikutlo a ka ha a fetohle joaloka lempetje
(Khaketla 1960:56).

(My feelings do not change like a chameleon.)

Characters agreed among themselves that Mosito had a good personality:

Moren'a ka e ne e le motho ea mohau ...

(Khaketla 1960:73).

(My king was a very merciful person.)

The narrator adds more meaning to his interpretation of his judgement regarding Mosito's personality:

Botebong ba pelo ya hae Mosito e ne e se motho ya khopo

(Khaketla 1960:97).

(Mosito was, in fact, not a cruel person.)

On the basis of the above description of Mosito, and on the basis of his good human relations with other characters, the tragic event of the killing of Tlelima touched most of the characters and most of the readers experience pity for Mosito as a character of positive human relations. We therefore understand exactly what we mean by tragedy as it relates to Mosito's personality.

Zulu (1999:54) illustrates the narrative cycle in this narrative tragedy as follows:

MOSITO

Good state:

chief

inaugurated as chief

advised to strengthen new court with medicine

Process

left out in the reduction of tribal council

of deterioration:	disputes the decision to leave him out advised to use medicine and start the case afresh consults Selone's divining bones forsakes his friends Pokane and Khosi
bad state:	ritual murders Tlelima for his liver
total loss	apprehended and hanged
death	

Based on this illustration of the narrative cycle, we realise that events deteriorate from good to bad state. The deterioration of the character has an influence on the establishment of the theme as we shall realise in the subsequent paragraphs.

The theme

The theme is interpreted on the basis of the tragic experience of the character, Mosito. As Mosito's life was transformed from good to bad state, this tragic experience has an influence on the theme in the sense that theme could be a matter of binary oppositions, good as opposed to bad. The novel *Mosali a nkhole* has traditional African customs and ritual murder as its theme. Though Mosito has not been a traditionalist himself, he finds himself in a position where he has to make a choice between either following his father's advice of adhering to educational and Christian principles or accepting the position raised by his wife, Maime, Khati and Sebotsa on traditional African customs. Mosito, like any other chief, is anxious to become a recognised chief. He has been prompted by his wife to murder Tlelima so as to acquire his rightful chieftainship and become a dignified king. Mathabo is adamant and encourages her husband to fight for chieftainship at all costs.

Mosito is assisted by his wife and other councillors to murder Tlelima. When sentenced to death, Mosito exclaims that:

Ntate Motete, mosali oa ka a tl'a nkhole!

(Khaketla 1960:182).

(Father Matete, my wife has deceived me!.)

This remark can be the sub-theme of the novel based on the role played by Mathabo in the expression of tragedy in this novel. The theme therefore determines the relationship of all other aspects in this tragedy. This implies that characters and plot are held together in a specific relationship to express the theme in this novel.

3.6 *Leshala le tswala molora* (1962)

The novel is based on events in the life of Teboho, the main character who serves as the tragic hero due to his tragic flaw. In the first instance, the novel is presented *ab ovo* in the sense that at the beginning of the novel, we are introduced to the grandparents and the actual parents of Teboho.

The conflict is presented as late point-of-attack as the author employs the narrator to take time describing the physical and non-physical setting at Metsiawang in the Free State, where the story is based. As part of the non-physical setting in Metsiawang we are introduced to herdboys which implies that cattle-farming was part of the mode of living in that area.

Father Molapi and Mmaramailane are terminally ill according to doctor Radishobana who has just diagnosed their illness and discovered that there is very little he can do for them. Mosala, who is Molapi's brother-in-law, decides to refer the two patients to an African doctor, namely Kgophotjha to establish whether something can be done for them. Kgophotjha, like Radishobana determines that Molapi and Mmaramailane are terminally ill and can actually not survive. Kgophotjha emphasises that:

Lewa le welweng ke ditaola tsena ke le supang masetladibete:

lefu, lona feela!

(Lesoro 1962:6).

(The style in which the divining bones have fallen, signifies danger: death and only death!.)

Molapi and Mmaramailane died and the story turns to their son, Ramailane. Ramailane had a difficult life staying with Mosala, his uncle. The author expresses tragedy in this novel through contrast between Ramailane and his son, Teboho. Ramailane suffered as he grew up without parents but Teboho had parents and a lion's share of whatever they possessed.

Ramailane was five years of age when his parents died and he did not really know his parents. At that tender age, he was assigned to herd cattle. Mosala did not give him a chance, as he did with his own children, to go to school. He had no proper clothes and did not eat well. In addition to all these sufferings, Ramailane became the laughing stock among his peers. He suffered physically, psychologically and emotionally. When Ramailane asked Mosala to allow him to go to school with his half-brothers, Mosala answered angrily:

*Ke mang ya tla o rekela dintho tsa sekolo ha o bona, athe ntatao
o shwele a se na le podi ee ya leshedi, e le letjheko le jang dintu?*
(Lesoro 1962:18).

(Who will buy your school equipments? Your father had nothing when he died, nothing at all not even an ordinary goat.)

Symbols of tragedy

When Mosala scolded Ramailane for asking him to pay for his education, the owl and the jackal could be heard in the distance during that night. In terms of the African (Basotho) traditional belief, these animals, particularly and owl, signifies danger (death) that is liable to happen. In this way, nature did not approve of what Mosala and his wife were doing to Ramailane.

Ramailane had all forms of torture but he endured. Some of the unpleasant experiences Ramailane had were excessive corporal punishment but he persevered nevertheless because he

had a dream, namely to become educated like his half-brothers. He was denied educational opportunities until an unknown White man came to his rescue and brought him up simply because he had known his father. Ramailane did not have any peace of mind as he was teased day in and day out by his half-brothers because he could not read or write. He was given difficult tasks to perform unnecessarily even at awkward times when everybody expected to rest.

Having presented these difficult times, and having met Ramolelle or Wilkenson, the author shifts the focus to the life of our main character, Teboho, the son of Ramailane. The life of Teboho shifts from good to bad, not because he had no parents, or because his parents could not afford to raise him properly, but because Teboho himself decided to take the course of his life in his own hands. This change from good to bad (good fortune to misfortune) is typical of tragedy as suggested by Aristotle (quoted by Leech 1969:1). Aristotle contends that the plot of tragedies are either simple or complex and have a single, and not a double issue. Zulu (1999) maintains that:

The change in the hero's fortunes must not be from misery to happiness, but, on the contrary, from happiness to misery - and the cause of it must lie not in depravity, but in some great error on his part.

(Zulu 1999:2.)

Teboho's tragic flaw

Some of the issues which can be identified as part of the tragic flaw of our tragic character, are that Teboho did not like school as his father had. In this way he placed himself in a predicament as he did not perform to his optimal potential at school. Therefore he forfeited his chances and became exposed to the hardships of life in general.

Teboho was disobedient to his parents and did as it pleased him without having informed his parents. He, for instance decided to move from home to go and seek employment at the Wesselton Diamond Mine.

Teboho had to leave school because he started to steal the other pupils' money. He had no respect or love for his wife, Lefulesele and even arranged with three men to kill her when she visited him in Cape Town. Teboho needed to kill Lefulesele as she would disturb him while he was having his affair with his concubine, Elsie Monnakgotla.

We must also remember that Teboho had decided on his own to elope with Lefulesele whereas his parents expected to finalise matters with the girl's parents before their wedding. Teboho was cruel and inconsiderate. He paid the three men who had to kill his wife the sum of R60,00 for having done the dirty job for him. To indicate Teboho's cruelty, the narrator shows how Teboho used to punish his dogs even though they used to catch animals for him. However, Teboho's actions could not go unchallenged and he barely survived when dogs attacked him.

Harmatia

As readers, we realise that a change in the life of Teboho was brought about by his change in personality. The fact that Teboho did not persevere (as his father did) in spite of the hardships of life, and the fact that Teboho got everything that he needed from his parents, made him to care very little about other people, including his wife. We notice here the development of *hubris*, namely an excessive pride as shown by Teboho in his relationship with other characters.

Catharsis

We feel pity for Teboho as he took life easily simply because his father could afford to raise him. Teboho did not learn from his father how he should experience life. At the same time we fear to be exposed to the same kind of situation as Teboho who represents the negative side of life unlike his father, Ramailane who represented the positive aspect of life.

As in *Mosali a nkhole* where the author expresses tragedy through opposition between mainly Mosito and his wife, 'Mathabo, the author manages to express tragedy through contrast between Ramailane and his son Teboho in *Leshala le tswala molora*. Here it is shown how Teboho went astray in spite of the good example that his father had set for him. This contrast between the two

characters can be illustrated as follows:

RAMAILANE	vs	TEBOHO
<u>Poor</u> family background.		<u>Good</u> family background.
<u>Liked</u> school though his father died before he could afford education for him.		<u>Disliked</u> going to school though his father wanted him to be educated.
Hardworking and self-apprenticeship (educating).		Lazy and not focussed in life.
Eventually rich and well-to-do.		Engaged himself in trivial love matters
Continued to study further to improve his position.		Ran away from home to the Cape.
		Plotted to kill his wife.
		Collapsed and died.

It becomes clear that Ramailane felt an obligation and was highly determined to educate his son though his son did not realise that his father wanted to secure a brighter future for him. Here Teboho showed a particular weakness which eventually claimed his life.

Molapo and Mmaramailane served their White employer very well for a long time before they got ill and eventually died. The loyalty of the two to Ramolelle paved the way for their son Ramailane who was adopted by the Wilkenson family. The significance of the loyalty that

Teboho's grandparents had shown to Ramolelle was that it linked with the subsequent events, namely, adoption of Ramailane and school opportunities for their son, Teboho.

Teboho made a serious mistake when he failed to maintain the same kind of loyalty to his fellow men. It would have been ideal for Teboho to maintain the same kind of philosophy of life as that of both his father and grandfather but he went astray in life, hence the punishment which eventually claimed his life.

The narrative cycle in this novel can be illustrated in this way:

Good state:	Ramailane employed by Wilkenson
	Adopted by the Wilkenson family
	Birth of Teboho
	Teboho sent to school - educational opportunities
Change and deterioration of the character:	Ramailane encourages Teboho to go to school
	Teboho hesitant and avoids going to school
	Ramailane decides to change the educational career of his son
	Teboho disappears and goes to the Cape
Bad state:	Teboho involved in a brutal plot against his wife.
	The two men decide not to kill Teboho's wife

Teboho - not informed about the change of
decision

Teboho deceives his father about his wife's death
Collapsed and died

If we look at this plot outline, we realise that Ramailane, Teboho's father, had tried very hard to educate his son but in vain. It is tragic for the main character to realise eventually that the two men he had faith in to carry out his instruction to kill his wife did not do so. Readers feel pity for him in the sense that he did not expect such disloyalty. He therefore exposed his tragic flaw as being the misjudgment of chances. When he became aware that his wife was still alive it was too late for him to defend himself.

The tragic flaw

Teboho stole money from another pupil at school. It was apparent that Teboho was becoming a thug and a thief and this caused serious concern on the part of both his parents and his teachers.

*Taba ena eo Teboho a e entseng, mosadi, e mpe, e dihlong.
Ha ke tsebe hore na ha a batla tjhelete ha a ka a e kopa keng,
ho ena le hore a yo utswetsa bana ba batho kwana sekolong
(Lesoro 1962:51).*

(The experience to which Teboho subjected the woman, is nasty and shameful. I do not know why he decided not to ask for money when he needed it, instead of stealing other children's money at school.)

It seems that Teboho did not learn any moral lesson even after he was punished for stealing someone's money at school. He then continued to try to steal the principal's money as if nothing had happened. He actually took advantage that the principal was close to his father, Ramailane.

Teboho stealthily opened the envelope with the hope that it contained money he could steal. The principal caught him and exclaimed:

*E be o e qetetse ketso ya mofuta o jwalo. O se hlole
o e leka hape. Ke ho bapala ka mollo ntho eno!*
(Lesoro 1962:55).

(This is the last time that you do something like this.
You must never try it again. It is playing with fire!.)

What led to Teboho's total downfall in life was his decision to leave school. He never cited meaningful reasons why he intended to do so but only mentioned that:

*.... ha a sa batla sekolo, ha a na hlooho ya sona, o utlwa se se se
mo dutse mona pelong, se mo tenne le ho feta nama ya fariki, e
tshwetshwethang mafura*
(Lesoro 1962:56).

(... he no longer wants schooling, he does not have brains for it,
and it even bores him. It bores him more than fatty pork.)

It is at this stage that the narrative indicates the tragic position in which Teboho is. What intensified the tragic situation was the fact that Teboho did not notice that he was digging his own grave. It was also then when Teboho showed disrespect to his father in the sense that he stood bravely to reply to his father when he ordered him to go to school:

... a re o tla thobela ha habo ha habo mmae kwana, Maokeng
(Lesoro 1962:56).

(... he said that he was going to run away from that place to his
mother's hometown at Maokeng.

Tension mounted in the family of Ramailane on account of the behaviour and lack of discipline of his son, Teboho. The narrator comments that the family was experiencing sorrow and also remarks about Teboho's parents that:

*Ho hloleha ha hae sekolong le ho tswa ha hae ho
sona ho ile ha fihla ho bona e le sehlabi se bohloko,
hobane ba ne ba mo reretse tse kgolo bophelong*
(Lesoro 1962:58).

(His failure at school as well as his act of quitting was very painful to them because they would love to see him reaching great heights in life.)

3.7 Conclusion

The Sesotho novels discussed in this chapter, namely, *Chaka*, *Mphatlalatsane* and *Mosali a nkholo* are identified as classical tragedies whereas the two remaining novels, namely, *Moiketsi* and *Leshala le tswala molora* are modern tragedies. Conclusions are therefore based on these two forms of tradition. Here are some of the points that have been identified regarding the expression of tragedy in selected early Sesotho novels:

Classical tragedies

a) *Chaka*

In this novel, tragedy is presented in terms of a character of great social recognition who deteriorates from benevolence to malevolence on account of his miscalculation. Based on the fact that Chaka was originating from a royal family, tragedy is therefore of a classical nature in terms of the Greek tradition. Tragedy is, in this sense, categorising itself as of great social magnitude as it affects society as a whole. Plot in this tragedy reflects the development of tragic events in the life of Chaka. Events are meaningfully selected and thus cohere in expressing

tragedy. The theme confirms the plight of the Zulu society (during the time of Chaka) due to the deterioration process of their king, Chaka. Chaka is presented as a thematic character in the sense that tragedy in this novel can be explained in terms of a total change that Chaka experienced from good fortune to misfortune.

b) *Mphatlalatsane*

This is yet another Sesotho novel that presents tragedy in terms of a character of high social status. It is for this reason that tragedy presented in this novel is of great social status as it is extrapolated to society as a whole. The plot is employed to signify the total loss that Tau as the tragic character experienced as a result of which even his society ceased to exist. The theme is moralistic and seems to discard the negative behaviour of Tau against the decision of the ancestors. The theme is based around the idea that Tau operated at a wrong level by pursuing his individual choice against what the multitudes of people expected him to do.

c) *Mosali a nkholo*

Tragedy presented in this novel is of high social magnitude in terms of the royal and high social status of Mosito, the tragic character. For this reason, the novel distinguishes itself as a classical tragedy. The development of plot signifies tragedy in the life of Mosito. He changed from his former position of maintaining his conscience and assumed a new position where he seemed to be in the mercy of his wife. Mosito is presented as a thematic character in *Mosali a nkholo* because from his actions we can derive the underlying message that good will always triumph over evil. Tragedy is therefore reflected through moralisation in this novel. Moral issues such as respect for one's conscience, making a correct choice of a partner, respect for ancestral beliefs, etc. can be perceived as possible themes in this novel.

Modern tragedies

a) *Moiketsi*

Tragedy in the novel *Moiketsi* identifies itself as modern. We observe that modern tragedy has been influenced by changes in the social lifestyle, that is, from communalism to individualism. A uni-linear plot has been employed to present tragedy in this novel. Events are organised in such a way that they reflect the tragic events in the life of Moiketsi. The theme confirms the fact that Moiketsi destroyed himself. The title *Moiketsi* is suggestive of a specific moral lesson. The title makes it easy for readers to anticipate what will happen (a tragic event) with the tragic character. This is why the Basotho coined an idiomatic expression *moiketsi ha a llelwe* (no sympathy for self-destroyer).

b) *Leshala le tswala molora*

Teboho, the son of Ramailane had a tragic flaw by deviating from the life principles set by his parents and assuming an individualistic, modern lifestyle. Plot in *Leshala le tswala molora* presents all the unfortunate instances that involve Teboho with a view to expose his flaw. The novel *Leshala le tswala molora* is moralistic and educational. The author aims at conveying the message to the reader that children should respect their parents, otherwise they will go astray, at the end of which they may be tantamount to die tragically.

We turn to Chapter Four for the analysis of the later Sesotho novels on the basis of the theoretical framework formulated in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER FOUR: TRAGEDY IN LATER SESOTHO NOVELS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The novel *Peo ena e jetswe ke wena* (as the earliest in the selected novels between the period 1970s to 1990s) will be the first among the selected five novels to be analysed.

4.2 *Peo ena e jetswe ke wena* (1982)

Tragedy is reflected between Kgwapo and Samina. The two characters are exposed to a terrible storm and at the same time Mmasefatsa is amazed that Kgwapo (her husband) has not yet returned home. Samina claims money from Kgwapo as she maintains that Kgwapo has impregnated her. It is in the darkness of the night that Samina threatens Kgwapo to tell his wife if he fails to give her money.

Samina is presented as the tragic character as she takes advantage of other characters (particularly male characters) to claim money from them. She has a flaw in doing so because she did not know or expected that one day those characters will revenge against her. The repercussions thereof are tragic and appalling.

Tragedy is also implied by the very heavy storm at night and Moephuli states when he commences with his narrative:

*E ne e le bo bong ba masiu ao ekang lehodimo
le theohile mme le imamareditse ka hohle hodima
lefatshe. Pula ya sefefe se tshabehang e ne e ngwapa
e ba e thefuthefula difenstereng le menyako ya ntlo
jwaloka katsehadi e lahlilweng ka tshepo ya hore e
keke ya boela ya kgutla, e tla lahlehela ruri, empa*

*jwale yona katsehadi eo e fihlile mme e halefile le ho
feta pele, e leka ho kena hona mane moo e sa batlweng
teng*

(Moephuli 1982:1).

(It was one of those nights when it would seem that heaven and earth are one. Terrible stormy rain would scratch on the windows and doors of the house just like a huge discarded female cat. The cat was discarded with the hope that it would never return. But now it was back and it returned with ferocity to the place that had rejected it.)

According to Basotho culture, a weather of this magnitude implies something that will happen to society. It may be something that will destabilise harmony in that particular society. That is why the Basotho say that weather *e a-hlola* (it presupposes a shocking event that will happen). Indeed Samina ruined the lives of other characters. She was physically attacked and brutally assaulted by Amos Mwana.

Like the cat that tries to get inside the house, Samina persists in harassing Kgwapo's family. *Katsehadi* symbolises Samina who represents destruction, disturbance, inconvenience and everything negative in Kgwapo's family life. Samina destroys the family of Kgwapo financially as she keeps on asking for money from Kgwapo and she ignores the fact that Kgwapo has children that he supports. Samina is very adamant to get the money from Kgwapo as she says:

*O tseba hantle seo ke se tletseng mona - tjhelete yane
eo o ileng wa ntshepisa yona. Ha e hlahe!*

(Moephuli 1982:4).

(You know very well the exact reason why I am here - the money that you promised me. Make it available!.)

Kgwapo tries to dismiss Samina and argues that he earns a meagre salary, but Samina is not concerned about it as she only cares for herself. Samina does not even have respect for Kgwapo's wife and she calls her *mosadinyana* (young woman). The use of the diminutive morpheme *-nyana* in *mosadinyana* has been deliberately used to belittle and despise Kgwapo's wife.

Samina is aware that Kgwapo respects his wife and she uses that as her weapon to punish him. She is quite conscious of the fact that Kgwapo is a responsible family man and she therefore threatens to inform his wife that she is pregnant by her husband, Kgwapo. She knew that this move will serve as a *recipe* of conflict in Kgwapo's family and thus the family would be destabilised. The author operates on these contrasts of personalities between Kgwapo and Samina to create the background within which tragedy is expressed and understood in this novel.

In the first instance Kgwapo had relations with an unmarried woman who only nurtured her feelings and needs without any sensitivity to another person's feelings whatsoever. What is tragic is that Kgwapo did not realise that Samina intended to abuse him, that is, to always claim money from him even though it was not necessary. His dignity as a man has been reduced to that of a boy. This point is reflected in the way he shows respect to Samina as he addresses her in the following remark:

*Nkutlwele bohloko hle, moratuwa. Tjhelete kaofela eo o seng
o e nkile ho nna e feta makgolo a mabedi a diranta, jwale ...*
(Moephuli 1982:7).

(Please bear with me, my dear. All the money that you have taken
so far from me exceeds two hundred rand. So)

We mentioned that Kgwapo's dignity seems to be dented. He cannot stand like a man and face the challenges of life, instead he sends Nkotso to talk to Samina on his behalf and to ask her not to ask for money again so that the integrity of his family can be protected. It is at this point where Samina proved herself to be very stubborn and quite insensitive towards Kgwapo. She

was not afraid to tell Nkotso that she would continue to force Kgwapo to give her money. Samina kept on saying *ke Samina nna* (I am Samina) which implied that she had self-confidence and did not rely on anybody for whatever she wanted. Even before Nkotso came to Samina, she had been boasting that she was Samina:

*Ke Samina nna, mme ha ke a tla lokisa
Kgauteng e ntse e nyeunya ke ho bola*
(Moephuli 1982:6).

(I am Samina. I am not here to improve
on Kgauteng when I find rotten.)

Kgwapo could not expect Nkotso to stand against Samina on his behalf. It shows that Kgwapo was beginning to realise that he had no power any longer. In that case, Kgwapo had to admit that he had committed a serious mistake by bringing Samina into his life. Kgwapo had a tragic flaw. He was attracted to the beauty of a woman. He did not consider the obvious matter that he was married and that Samina was still unmarried and that it would not be feasible for them to continue with their relationship.

The novel introduces Kgwapo and Samina planning to bet on a horse in the race to try their luck. Each one of the two pays half the betting ticket and they bet on horse number seven. They happened to be fortunate to win the bet and their friendship therefore developed. Their friendship is based on opposing views even though neither Kgwapo nor Samina are aware of it at this stage. Kgwapo adheres to Samina simply because, as a family man, he thinks that they have been lucky and got the money and that they could win again and as such earn money to maintain his family necessities.

Samina on the other hand, even though she also needed money, aimed beyond the money itself. She wanted to corner Kgwapo and make him divorce his wife. The author contends that Samina uses her beauty as a mechanism to attract men, such as Kgwapo, Natona Khulatsi and others.

Samina might have noticed that Kgwapo had a weakness for an attractive woman and could easily fall into her trap. This is why the narrator comments on Samina that:

*A hlaha a se a apere tse masirasira tsa bosiu, a hata butle
ngwanana, a beha leoto sa bommabotle ba itseng ba le
tlhodisanong; a bososela mme pososelo eo e le e bothoselang,
e bonolo, mahlo e le dithunthung tsa motlatladiane, fate
sa ditshomo*

(Moephuli 1982:34).

(She appeared wearing shining night garments. She was walking slowly like a beauty queen and she smiled, her eyes sparkling brilliantly like the *motlatladiane* tree in the folktale.)

It becomes evident that Kgwapo has reduced himself to a position that society does not expect him to be in. He appears to place himself as subject and subordinate to Samina who uses the opportunity to toss him around.

The narrator states that when Samina was talking to Kgwapo, her voice tormented like a needle when it pricks:

*Lentswe la Samina le ne le hlaba sa nale e ntjhotjho, le
tletse nyediso feela*

(Moephuli 1982:7).

(Samina's voice was as acute as a sharp needle, and full of contempt.)

The narrator makes it clear that Kgwapo has led himself into tragedy. Kgwapo should have known that a woman of that nature might not necessarily be interested in making love with him but only in getting money. It was a common practice among women at that time to abuse men

*Ntlo yona he, ya leka ho thibela katsehadi ena e tshabehang
hore e se kene ka tlung mme ya hlasela mosadimoholo enwa
ya ntseng a sokasoka bohobe setofong ...*

(Moephuli 1982:1-2).

(The house tried to prevent this female cat from entering and attacking the old lady who was cooking porridge on the stove.)

The author uses the symbol *katsehadi* (female cat) to refer to Samina who wants to enter Kgwapo's house to destroy peace and happiness in his family. The augmentative morpheme *-hadi* in *katsehadi* has been deliberately used to signify femininity. Thus the morpheme reflect Samina's role as the tragic character. Samina eventually came into the life of Kgwapo and destabilised peace in his family as she kept Kgwapo away from home and even asked for money from him. By *mosadimoholo* (an old woman) the author refers to Samina's wife who tries to stabilise and maintain peace in the family in the absence of Kgwapo. Conflict seems imminent between Samina and Kgwapo's wife and this implies tragedy in the life of Kgwapo.

Natona Khulatsi was also the victim of Samina but unlike Kgwapo who took a long time to realise (*anagnorisis*) that he was being used, Natona faced Samina and told her categorically that:

*Ke wena mohlodi wa maswabi ana le makaqabetsi ana kaofela;
peo ena e jetswe ke wena!*

(Moephuli 1982:93).

(You are the cause of this embarrassment and misery; you are the cause of trouble!.)

The use of *ke wena* (it is you) accounts for Samina as the course of evil in this novel. She therefore emerges as the main tragic character who is central in most tragic events. Natona became aware that Samina had deceived him and led him into a trap. In this way, Natona could

not accept the blame as he became aware that Samina was determined to get him into a tight corner. This is why the narrator states that Samina only managed to make Natona worry because she could not succeed to punish him as she has done with Kgwapo.

*Ntho e etsahetseng ke hore Samina a kgone ho jala peo
ya dipelaelo pelong ya hae feela*
(Moephuli 1982:103).

(What happened is that Samina only managed to cause
problems in his heart.)

The author maintains that Samina destroyed Natona emotionally but not physically or mentally. Samina aroused and maintained worry in Kgwapo and Natona but eventually Amos Makwentla Mwana resolved the developing conflict and escalating tragedy when he murdered Samina. When Mwana came at Ralesho's house, Samina did not recognise him. She only thought that it was Natona but realised too late that it was Amos Mwana who fatally assaulted her without any remorse. She never had a chance even to attempt to survive.

Samina, the tragic character

Samina uses her beauty to attract men and to take the opportunity to make money from them. She serves as a sex-worker because she knows that most of the men are interested in her as attracted by her beauty and therefore she makes a lot of money. The narrator describes Samina's beauty and her trap to betray men as follows:

*motho e mosesane, a hatela hodimo ka seeta se phahameng,
a bua ka lentswe le tletseng nyediso*
(Moephuli 1982:3).

(a lean and slender person who walked proudly on high-heeled
shoes and talked with a contemptuous voice.)

Samina as a tragic figure lost sight of the fact that evil cannot be tolerated for a long time. It cannot go unchallenged forever. She exploited Kgwapo because he was so gentle. When she asked money from Kgwapo, she derived pleasure from it when he became very humble and begged her:

*Ao, Samina, eba mohau hle. O se o nkutile le hlako. O nahana
tjhelete eo nka e fumana kae ... ? O se o ntlhothile le yona
sentyana ya qetello eo ke neng ke re ke ipatetse yona*
(Moephuli 1982: 4).

(Oh Samina, please be merciful. You took all my money.
Where do you think I will get that much money ...? You took
my last cent which I had hidden for myself.)

Amos Mwana ended the developing conflict by killing Samina. It then follows that the death of Samina implies a moral message to the reader that evil has to come to an end. The other point that could be raised here is that Samina serves as the thematic character in the sense that through her life, the author has a moral lesson for the listeners or readers that good will always triumph over evil. The life of Samina changed drastically from good to bad. She was recognised in her society as one of the most beautiful girls but her life deteriorated when she failed to choose a husband for herself and thought it wise to target another woman's husband.

We have already mentioned that if man does not respect the position that he or she occupies in relation to other people; and, if he or she disturbs other people or challenge their integrity as human beings, then other super-powers like the ancestors would come in to normalise the situation (*deus ex machina*). When the ancestors come into the picture they may likely impose judgment or catastrophe on someone who deserves such punishment. It became clear again that the position of Kgwapo had been shaken and his integrity as a family man has been challenged.

SAMINA
(conflict structure)

Kgwapo	-	Money (unsuccessful to get married)
Natona Kgulatsi	-	Marriage
Amos Makwentla Mwana	-	Money
Nkotso	-	Victimised to be the culprit - assault
Mmangwane Ralesho	-	telling lies

The above conflict structure captures the negative relationship that Samina had with other characters as a result of which tragedy seemed imminent.

Samina and Kgwapo

We have already seen how she ruined the life of Kgwapo in order to obtain money, although she professed that she loved Kgwapo. Kgwapo became the victim because of his own sexual desires. Samina, the woman with loose moral codes exploited this weakness to her favour. Kgwapo was abused in various aspects of his humanity, namely sexually, financially and socially.

Samina and Natona Khulatsi

Samina tried to hijack Natona as he was still unmarried so that he could be the father of her unborn baby. Samina knew that she had never actually had sexual intercourse with Natona and that Kgwapo was the father of the unborn baby. Samina, the opportunist, exploited the fact that Natona Khulatsi was drunk and could not realise that he was being dragged into a problem of this nature.

Samina and Amos Mwana

Amos Mwana became the victim of Samina when she asked money from him under the pretext that she loved him. Then she disappeared. Samina exploited the fact that Amos Mwana was taken up by her beauty. She therefore decided to prey on him though she was eventually brutally attacked and died in the end.

Samina and Mmangwane Ralesho

Mmangwane Ralesho always allowed Samina to stay with her without payment but Samina was not faithful to her. Samina lied to her and stayed out late hiding the truth as to where she actually went. Samina could not manage to make her life to be absolute and to do as she pleases with men in order to achieve her aims in life. She tried to take advantage of several men and even though circumstances were such that she was unsuccessful, she was persistent. It appears that the author is of the opinion that all the forces of evil, such as lying, blackmail, seduction and gambling as personalised by Samina will eventually be defeated by good. Samina experienced tragic events such as the case of her stillborn baby and her shocking event of her assault to death by Amos Mwana. These were all symbols of the defeat of evil. The forces of good on the other side of the coin could be Kgwapo's reconciliation with his family, peace maintained in that particular family, and the reunion of the team named *Mashapa*.

The readers feel pity for Samina because she wanted to make life possible for herself even though she was doing it in unacceptable ways. Having tried to devise some means to make life for herself, Samina encountered serious problems which were shocking and tragic. She was knocked down by a motor-bike and at that time Natona realised that Samina was three months pregnant. It became clear to Natona that Samina was trying to trap him into a forced marriage. As Samina recovered in the hospital, she was brutally attacked by Amos Mwana and killed after giving birth to a stillborn baby. These events then justify Samina to be the tragic character whose life shifted from the pleasures of enjoying money from other people to her ultimate end in a form of death.

Samina took a long time before she realised that evil does not pay and when she was attacked by

Amos Mwana, she could no longer protect herself. It then became evident that evil is liable to bring torture and tension in one's life.

Kgwapo could be punished by the ancestors for having ignored his responsibility towards his family. He also appears to be used as a thematic character as the author seems to communicate the point that one has to protect one's family life. As Kgwapo once left his family and the author seems to indicate that it is not ideal to run away from reality but that one should face the reality and stand as a man to defend one's family.

Peo ena e jetswe ke wena is yet another contemporary novel and is not classical in the sense of a Greek tragedy. This is so because Samina as the tragic character is an ordinary person who had a tragic flaw. The novel therefore cannot be referred to as generating tragedy of great magnitude as is the case with *Chaka*, *Mphatlalatsane* and *Mosali a nkholo*.

4.3 *Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha* (1991)

Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha distinguishes itself as a modern tragedy with Kgama as the main character and also as the thematic character. By virtue of Kgama being an ordinary person who does not stand above others, this novel can be declared to be a modern tragedy. Kgama has a tragic flaw which generates pity on the part of the reader.

The novel presents an early point-of-attack with the developing conflict between Mofifi and his brother, Mafikeng. The two characters argue on the issue of establishing a future for their sons, Theko and Kgama, respectively. Mofifi opines that the two boys should be taken to school to obtain Western education and to prepare them for the future, but Mafikeng has a different opinion. Mafikeng says:

*Ha o ka tadima batho ba reng thuto e ba nehile
menyetla bophelong ... e entse hore ba se boulele
meetlo ya bona. E ba entse setjhabana se sa
itsebeng, se hlokang leredi leo e leng la sona la*

tihlohelo.

(Mafata 1991:1)

(If you look at people who say that education afforded them privilege in life ... it caused them to lose pride in their tradition. It made them a generation which does not know itself, a generation which lacks its natural dignity and well-being.)

The atmosphere of an imminent tragedy therefore prevails. Tension that goes along with tragedy is apparent at the very beginning of the narrative tragedy. On the other hand, Mofifi is passionate and expresses his idea in the following:

Empa le ha thuto e ka ya etsa bana ba rona jwalo, re tla be re ba phemisitse mathata a fetang ano. Re tla be re ba qobisitse ditsietsi tseo nna le wena, esita le ba bang ba bangata, re fetileng hara tsona ka lebaka la ho se rutehe
(Mafata 1991:1).

(But even if that was the result of education, we will have enabled our children to overcome serious problems. We will have enabled them to sidestep troubles which you and I and many others had to go through because of the lack of education.)

The tragic flaw

In the first instance, Kgama, the main character, made a fatal mistake by not paying attention to school but engaging in love affairs. He actually proposed love to Dibakiso and subsequently to Sentebaleng and as such wasted his time with such trivial matters.

In the second instance, Kgama tended to be too proud of himself and referred to his peers and other people in his society as uncivilised as in the following statement:

... batho ba Mohlakeng ba kwalehile, ha ba tsebe letho. Theko le bomphato wa hae ba makalla boikgantsho boo bo neng bo bonahala bo tota ka sekgahla se phahameng - boikakaso bo neng bo sa natse hore na monga bona o hlaba batho ka mantswa ha bohloko hakae

Mafata (1991: 83).

(... the people of Mohlakeng are very stupid, they do not know a thing. Theko and the other peers were shocked to note his pomposity escalated. In his pomposity he never bothered to think whether other people were offended or not by what he was saying.)

In this way, Kgama alienated himself from his society and actually placed himself in conflict with his peers. This is so because even his peers were not happy with his attitude and his thoughts about them. In this way Kgama has shown that he has the capacity to shock other characters. This indicates that Kgama could be a round tragic character.

Thirdly, Kgama deviated from the African culture and traditional life of a Mosotho that his father, Mafikeng, always endeavoured to instil in him. He therefore indicated to have a flaw once more as he unnecessarily ignored his traditional lifestyle and adopted the urban lifestyle beyond any apparent reason. This new type of lifestyle was incongruent to the basic principles that his father had applied to empower him.

Kgama's tragic flaw intensified and manifested itself when he eloped with Sentebaleng to a secret place without informing anybody, whatsoever. Though the people of Mohlakeng tried their best to assist Mofifi and Mafikeng's wife to seek for Kgama, it was all in vain. The narrator mentions that in the mean time, Kgama and his girlfriend, Sentebaleng were enjoying themselves

elsewhere:

*Ka nqa e ka borwa ho Maseru, Sentebaleng le Kgama
ba ne ba se ba ena le matsatsi a leshome le metso e
meraro ba phela ntlung ya makapa, moo ba neng ba
lefa maloti a mane
(Mafata 1991:91).*

(In the southern part of Maseru, Sentebaleng and Kgama have already completed thirteen days living together in a corrugated iron house where they paid four rands rent.)

This type of behaviour could not be condoned by all the Basotho. This could be the reason that led Kgama to eventually land in trouble. Kgama miscalculated his chances in life and eloped with someone's girlfriend in order to try to boost his own ego. This action led to his ultimate downfall.

Kgama disrespected his mother by lying to her. He said he was leaving home and going away on school matters but only created a chance to meet with Sentebaleng. This action also led to his tragedy in the sense that perhaps his mother could have advised him not to go away with Sentebaleng but instead he preferred to keep it secretly to himself.

*O ne a qeta ho re mmae a sale hantle, o sa leba kwana
Phatlatshweu ho ya tlatsa diforomo tseo ho itsweng ba
tle ba yo di tlatsa. O ne a itse o tla kgutla ka letsatsi la
boraro a tlohile hae. O ne a nganngwe feela ha ho thwe
a dule a tle a tsamaye ka le hlahlamang, ka ha e ne e se
e le ha mmamorao
(Mafata 1991:90).*

(He greeted his mother, because he was leaving for

Phatlatshweu to go and complete forms as requested.
 He indicated that he would be back on the third day.
 He would not accede to the request that his departure
 should be delayed a day, because it was already late.)

Kgama, the tragic character, had been the cause of trouble, and had a lot of confrontations with other characters. These confrontations reflected his personality as well as his gradual process of deterioration in life. In this way, the conflict structure in this narrative tragedy can be outlined as follows:

Kgama and Mofifi

Although Mofifi struggled to persuade Mafikeng to allow Kgama to go to school, he eventually convinced him that Kgama and Theko be sent to school. Even though Theko found it difficult to acquaint himself with the school situation, he persevered by staying in school. Kgama decided to leave school at the end of which Mofifi and Kgama's mother became seriously offended. They were worried about what would eventually happen to him. In this way, Kgama revealed himself as a care-free type of character.

Kgama and his mother

As already stated, Kgama showed disrespect to his mother by not telling the truth whenever he had to leave home. On two occasions he decided to disappear from home without bothering to notify his mother. Commenting on the second event of Kgama's disappearance, the narrator says:

*MmaKgama a ngongoreha, a utlwa bohloko jwalo ka mohlantse yena
 Kgama a ne beng a thobetse kgohlong*
 (Mafata 1991:91).

(Kgama's mother became worried. She felt the discomfort which she

experienced when Kgama had gone to the cliff without being noticed.)

Readers feel pity for Kgama as he only aimed to meet with Sentebaleng and decided to leave after an important arrangement that his parents had made for him of going to school to obtain education and to maintain a standardised life.

Kgama and his peers

Theko and other boys were shocked to experience Kgama's unexpected change of behaviour. This change actually caused him to offend other people and to think of himself as better than his peers even though they grew up together. Kgama seemed to be taken up by modern urban ways of living to a point where he even forgot about Theko who was subjected to the same kind of discipline by their parents as he was. Kgama decided to go his own way and learn more about urban life. This is why Dibakiso realised that Kgama did not have respect for and fear to appear in public with her. Dibakiso realised that:

O ne a mmona a se a ena le ho se tsotelle ha batho ba baholo ba ka ba bona ba eme mmoho. Le ha ba akana o ne a bona Kgama a se a ena le ho mo phopholetsaka ka mokgwanyana o hlokang boithompho, a mo mathisaka matsoho ka mokokotlong, ho ya tlaase!

(Mafata 1991:79).

(She realised that he no longer cared whether elderly people saw them together or not. Even when they kissed, she realised that Kgama would caress her in a manner that showed no respect. He would move his hands all over her back, from the top to the bottom.)

It is this change of personality that brought Kgama in conflict with his peers including Theko who happened to be his favourite brother.

Kgama and his father, Mafikeng

Unlike his father, Mafikeng, who stood firm to propagate the African culture regarding respect and maintained the traditional African rituals, Kgama adopted his own lifestyle and resorted to the urban modern lifestyles which spelled out his total deterioration at the end. The narrator proceeds to describe Mafikeng as follows:

Mafikeng e ne e le senatla, mohale wa marumo, ntlheng ya ho boulela boleng ba Basotho. Makgabanenyana a ntho efe kapa efe o ne a sa a shebe ha feela a ne a ka bona eka ntho eo e tla tlisa phetoho e hlobaetsang bosetjhaba

(Mafata 1991:3).

(Mafikeng was a strong person, a hero in war and a patron of the traditions of the Basotho. He would not appreciate anything that would bring about change in the culture of his society.)

As in *Mosali a nkholo* where Mosito failed to follow his father's advice, Kgama failed to follow what his father stood for and as Mosito suffered the consequences of his actions, Kgama also suffered the consequences of his actions in that he was eventually brutally attacked by two men who destroyed his future and nearly killed him.

Kgama and Dibakiso

Honesty is the cornerstone of love. As Kgama was totally dishonest with Dibakiso in favour of Sentebaleng, matters turned worse for him when Dibakiso discovered that Kgama had been attacked by the two men because of his love affair with Sentebaleng.

Kgama and Sentebaleng

Readers feel pity for Kgama because he did not know that Sentebaleng had already had a love affair with someone else before she engaged herself to Kgama. It is again with great pity that readers realise that Sentebaleng is not only a girlfriend but actually a wife of someone else. The unknown person replies Sentebaleng and say:

*Ke monna wa hao, yane eo o mo qetetseng tjhelete.
O ne o nka tjhelete ya ka hore o tlo tsebe ho tla e ja
le kwata ee ya hao?
(Mafata 1991:93).*

(I am your husband, whose money you squandered.
Did you take my money only to enjoy it with this
'kwata' of yours?.)

Sentebaleng was not fair and honest with Kgama in the sense that she did not tell him that she was already engaged to someone else. She nevertheless decided to elope with him. This particularly tragic event was reinforced by the fact that Sentebaleng did not visit Kgama at the hospital even though she knew that he was there.

*Ha e le Sentebaleng yena e ne e le nako e teletsana a ne a ntshwe
sepetlele. E ne esale ba qetela ho bonana le Kgama mohla batho
ba ne beng ba ba patetse ka tlung. Le nakong eo a neng a ntse a le
moo sepetlele o ne a sa ka a hlwela Kgama, le ha yena a ne a
tseba ho itsamaisa
(Mafata 1991:96).*

(Sentebaleng was discharged from the hospital long ago. She last saw Kgama when they were attacked by the people. Even when she was still in hospital, she never bothered to visit Kgama though she could walk to him.)

In this way, Kgama experienced tragedy and torture both physically and mentally as he did not expect Sentebaleng to treat him like that during the course of their love affair.

In order to express tragedy in *Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha* we can illustrate the narrative cycle in this novel as follows:

Kgama

Good state: Education

- his father, Mafikeng, wishes him well and to be educated,
- school clothes bought for him by Mofifi, and his mother.

Process of deterioration:

- left school,
- alienated himself from his peers,
- left home and lied to his mother that he was going to school to fill in the forms,
- engaged himself to girlfriends, first Dibakiso and then Sentebaleng.

Bad state: Total downfall:

- deceived by Sentebaleng that he is the one and only in her life,

- attacked by the two men,
- had to repeat the standard he could have passed long ago at school.

If we consider Kgama as the main character then we realise that he is made to play a thematic role, namely, to educate readers that one has to preserve one's traditional African customs but also work hard at school at the end of which he would attain success in life.

The entire novel could be regarded as modern and not classical as in the Greek sense because Kgama is an ordinary character who is made to play such a role and not attract high social recognition.

4.4 *Nna ke mang? (1991)*

The story introduces the conflict in terms of the early point-of-attack between Tsholedi and his wife, Mmatsekiso. The two characters quarrel because Mmatsekiso did not ask for permission of selling liquor at their home from Tsholedi. In this way, Tsholedi could not approve of the selling of liquor at home. Tsholedi is also not in favour of this type of business although he believes that they should earn money to maintain their children. Mmatsekiso decided on her own to sell liquor and she claims that she assists her husband financially as he earns a meagre salary with which he cannot properly maintain the family. Even though Mmatsekiso seems to have a point trying to boost the family financially, she did not consult her husband before she did that and when asked about it she still did not appear to be apologetic, and spoke impatiently to her husband as seen in the following quotation:

*Empa, ruri nna ha ke utlwisise hore hantle o
mpatlang, ... Na ke nna mosadi motseng oe
wa Dihlabeng ya rekisang jwala?
(Maphalla 1991:1).*

(What do you need from me actually ... Am I the only woman in Dihlabeng who sells liquor?.)

Mmatsekiso argues with her husband even though she never consulted him about selling the liquor. The way she addresses her husband leaves much to be desired as she stresses that the man cannot provide any reason why she cannot sell liquor. Her argument is captured in the question she asked Tsholedi, her husband:

*Ke itse ke batla lebaka le ka sehloohong.
Lebaka le utlwahalang leo ka lona nna ke
tlamehang ho tlohela kgwebo ena ya ka e
nkenyetsang tjhelete ka lona. Lebaka le le
leng feela le utlwahalang*
(Maphalla 1991:2).

(I said I only need the main reason. I need just one valid reason to make me leave my profitable business. Only one valid reason.)

Tsholedi knew that the business of selling liquor at his place would mean inviting people (men, in particular) to come to his place with ulterior motives. He knew that he would not have peace of mind at a place where he is supposed to always get peace of mind. This is why he pointed out to his wife, Mmatsekiso that:

*Mona lapeng la ka e se e ka mantlwaneng. Ha re sa kgona
le ho tshohla ditaba tsa lelapa. Hona jwale ke sebetsa bosiu.
Motsheare ha ke tlameha ho phomola, ke lerata feela mona
lapeng. Ha ke kgone ho phomola. Le mantsiboya ha ke
tsamaya mona, ke siya ho tletse mona, e le marata feela*
(Maphalla 1991:2).

(My house has been changed into a play-house. We do not even get a chance to discuss family matters. At present I am working the night-shift. During the day when I need rest, there is a lot of noise. I do not find time to rest. At night when I leave home, the noise has already started.)

Right from the beginning we are introduced to Tsholedi who has serious concerns about his wife as he tries to talk to her but she does not seem to listen. Conflict develops as many intoxicated people get injured but Mmatsekiso does not accept that it is the effects of her business. She only maintains that money is life but how she makes life has serious effects on the family as a whole.

The dignity of the family is also at stake. The minister of religion knows about the bad behaviour of the people drinking at Tsholedi's house. The daughter even decided to leave home by getting married to a policeman at Matsieng. The fights between parents always have serious effects on their children. This happens with Tsekiso at the Teachers' College. Tsekiso is reminded of the problems that his father normally encounter with his mother about her business of selling liquor. This affects his performance at school.

Tsekiso is in love with Morongoe, a girl from Dihlabeng. He reads her letter when he arrives at Kgabalemeriti at the College. Morongoe is described by the narrator as:

*Morongoe ke pabala hara dikgarebe. Ke setsoto hara
thaka tsa hae. Ke twadi hara barwetsana bohle ba
Dihlabeng ...*

(Maphalla 1991:11).

(Morongoe is the most beautiful girl amongst them all.
She is the most beautiful among her peers and she is
the most beautiful girl in Dihlabeng)

After reading Morongoe's letter and having had those motivating words from his girlfriend,

Tsekiso becomes frustrated as he is again reminded of the trouble in their family that is caused by his mother. The narrator goes further to explain the psychological problems that Tsekiso encounters at school by mentioning that:

*Empa, tsena tsohle tse ntle tseo Tsekiso a di hopolang
ka thabo e motlotlo, di fifatswa le ho rothofatswa ke
ho sithabela ha maikutlo a hae ha a hopola lapa labo*
(Maphalla 1991:15).

(Nevertheless, all this that Tsekiso can proudly remember, is spoiled by his state of depression whenever he thinks about their home.)

Mmatsekiso is suspicious that her husband is talking behind her back to the minister of religion. She knows that she is a uniformed member of the congregation but her actions do not verify her status. Mmatsekiso happens to be in love with Nthapeleng who is a well-known and rich man at Dihlabeng. He has a number of shops at the Ntheoleleng Shopping Centre as well as the cafe. When Nthapeleng enters Mmatsekiso's house, the narrator describes him:

*Ha kena motho a le teng kajeno. Ha qala ho
kena motho a qala ho kena lapeng lena kajeno.
Ha kena yena mohlomphehi Nthapeleng,
thathalasi, kwete ya mona Dihlabeng. Mpodi
ho boRamaruo*
(Maphalla 1991:18).

(The real man came in today - someone who has never been here before. Mister Nthapeleng came in himself, the liked and the rich man of Dihlabeng. The richest among the rich people.)

Nthapeleng came with the sole motive to woo Mmatsekiso even though Mmatsekiso took time to realise it. He had been fortunate to find Mmatsekiso on her way to Ntheoleleng Shopping Centre and so they drove together which gave Nthapeleng a chance to propose love to Mmatsekiso. The strategy that Nthapeleng used had been to show off the money which he knew that Mmatsekiso as a struggling woman would be interested in and that she would give him a chance to win her.

We gather that Nthapeleng was fearful and that Mmatsekiso did not know him but only saw him harassing his servants.

*O ne a mmonela thokwana mane ha a ntse
a kgaruma basebeletsi ba hae, kapa a kena
koloing ya hae a ikela toropong*
(Maphalla 1991:19).

(She used to see him at a distance harassing
and giving instructions to his servants or
riding his car on his way to town.)

Many people respected Nthapeleng and nobody could ever think that a man of his calibre can be interested in a struggling, poor woman like Mmatsekiso, but, it happened. As a struggling woman, and having had many promises that involve money by Nthapeleng, Mmatsekiso had no alternative but to accept the offer she had been given. Nthapeleng promised her by saying:

*Ke tla o hlokomela Mmatsekiso.
Ke tla o kgabisa, mme o tla rateha
ho feta ka moo o ratehang ka teng*
(Maphalla 1991:21).

(I will take good care of you Mmatsekiso.
I will buy good clothes for you and you

will be more beautiful than you are now.)

Mmatsekiso had no doubts about accepting the offer she had been given by Nthapeleng. She seems to have forgotten that she is a married woman, a member of the congregation with children to raise but she made her decision:

*Ho lokile ntate ... Ke se ke tla utlwa ka wena
feela. Empa o tsebe hore re a ikutswa*
(Maphalla 1991:21).

(It is fine ... I will hear from you. But you
should know that we do it secretly.)

This was the moment when Tsholedi's family was rudely shaken and ready to disintegrate. Tsholedi appears to be our tragic character who does not have any peace of mind because of his wife. In line with what he told his wife when he reprimanded her about her business of selling liquor, Tsholedi also had to cope with Nthapeleng who was involved in destroying the family which had stability and peace before.

In the last statement uttered by Mmatsekiso, namely, *empa o tsebe hore re a ikutswa* (but you should know that we do it secretly) it becomes clear that Mmatsekiso knew that what she was doing is wrong. It also becomes clear that she thought that it would be a secret which could not be revealed. She failed to remember that there is no secret under the sun and things become known as time passes by.

The conflict between Tsholedi and Mmatsekiso becomes clearer when Tsholedi discusses his problems with the minister Dipolelo. He remarks that Mmatsekiso started her business after she had left her job three years before. As a person who is experienced in dealing with social problems, minister Dipolelo tried his best to motivate Tsholedi so that he and his family stay with God and most importantly always prayed.

Mmatsekiso experiences internal conflict as she cannot think why she happened to be in love with Nthapeleng. At the same time, Mmatsekiso tries to encourage herself by thinking that she is also a human being who needs care. It looks as if she is not only going to get tender care but also a lot of money from Nthapeleng. She is worried that her secret lover, namely, Moferefere, may also know about the affair and cause trouble but she puts it out of her mind with the idea that Moferefere is just another servant who cannot pose any problem.

Tsekiso is attracted to Diepollo Mokoena at the College and has already proposed love to her. He is already forgetting about his former girlfriend, Morongoe at Dihlabeng. We gather that Tsekiso is doing with Morongoe what his mother is doing with his father. Unfaithfulness is rife in that family.

Far away from home, Tsekiso is still reminded of the attitude of his mother to his father. He becomes furious as he remembers that Moferefere, her mother's secret lover enters her mother's sleeping room without even knocking at the door.

*Ntho eo a neng a e nyonya le ka ho fetisisa
ke ha sekebekwa sane se bitswang Moferefere
se se se ikenela feela le ka diphaposing tse ka
hare tsa habo a sa kokote le ho kokota. O ne
a sa kgathalle le ha ho thwe mmae o a hlapa,
o ne a itshohlometsa feela*
(Maphalla 1991:31).

(What he hated most is the fact that the criminal Moferefere, tended to enter even bedrooms without knocking at the door. He did not care when told that his mother was still bathing, he just entered.)

The family of Tsholedi was being harassed by men and this had a serious impact on the children. It was uncalled for that Moferefere should behave like this but we will come back to this situation

and its impact on the family later on. Tsekiso's friends at the college knew about the situation at home and encouraged him:

*Metswalle ya hae e meng e a tseba hore lelapa labo le fetohile,
empa ba mo tshedisa ka hore lefatshe lohle le jwalo. Ba
mmoella hore hoo ha se mohlolo, empa e le ka moo bophelo
bo leng ka teng*
(Maphalla 1991:31).

(Some of his friends knew about the situation in their family but they encouraged him that it was always like that in life, that it was no disaster but how life is.)

Tsekiso wrote a letter to his father, and expressed his concerns about the situation in their family. As we have indicated before the problems that occur between husband and wife have a serious impact on the children, Tsekiso states that:

*... lelapa leo le se le le modubedube, le mahleke,
ha le sa tshwana le pele. Taba eo ka mehla ha
ke e hopola e a ntlhobaetsa, e a ntshwenya, e
ntshithabetsa maikutlo mme e hlokisa moya
wa ka phomolo*
(Maphalla 1991:32).

(... there is now tension in the family and it is no longer like it was before. Every time I am reminded of that problem, I become confused, depressed and worried.)

Tsholedi as our tragic character has not had peace of mind like other men in their families. What his son has told him also tortured him emotionally. We note the consistent suffering that

Tsholedi has been exposed to since his wife lost her job and started selling liquor. However, we also notice his staunch belief that even though he encounters many problems with his wife, he should not lose hope but pray that God give him all the strength he needs. He goes to minister Dipolelo for spiritual advice every time he feels worried and disturbed about the state of affairs in his family. Dipolelo is always considerate to help him with a spiritual counselling and to advise him how to withstand his problems.

The author depicts our main character, Tsholedi, as the victim of circumstances who is being taken advantage of by many people. Tsholedi who is a night-guard at Ntheoleleng Shopping Centre where Nthapeleng also has two shops, was being called by Nthapeleng.

Tsholedi never thought that he may be called in by a highly recognised and dignified person like Nthapeleng one day. He was invited to the office of Nthapeleng and Nthapeleng mentioned that he is grateful to him for serving them so well. He instructed Gladys to give Tsholedi a pair of grey trousers and to let Mmatsekiso, Tsholedi's wife have a dress of her choice from his shop. By doing this, Nthapeleng was actually deceiving Tsholedi who thought that he cares for him although he is only interested in his wife, Mmatsekiso.

Mmatsekiso made a plan to go back to Nthapeleng as they were on their way home and pointed out that she had forgotten her handkerchief. Mmatsekiso just wanted to see Nthapeleng in his office in the absence of her husband who was waiting for her outside. But this was not enough for them as Mmatsekiso made another plan. She accused Tsholedi that he had not reminded her to buy sugar when they were at the shop. Even though Tsholedi offered to go and buy sugar for her, she said that she would go herself as she may discover that there are other household utensils that she would like to buy. This was once more a plan to see Nthapeleng and to deceive Tsholedi.

Nthapeleng claimed that he did not know Tsholedi's wife, but Tsholedi discovered from the book of accounts that he grabbed from Mmanthodi that Nthapeleng's name appear in the list of customers. This gave Tsholedi a suspicion that there was something involving Nthapeleng that was taking place. He decided to do a little research into the matter. This is the reason why

Tsholedi remarked that:

*Diphiri di ngata lefatsheng mona tse matlalong
a dikonyana. Motho o iketsa ya lokileng ka ba
bang hobane a le maemong a phahameng*
(Maphalla 1991:45).

(There are many hypocrites on earth. A person will pretend to be better than others simply because he has a higher status.)

Mmatsekiso sold liquor and she was obviously tempted to drink liquor as her customers. This is why they (Nthapeleng and Mmatsekiso) got intoxicated drinking glass after glass. They were half-naked which implied that they might have had sexual intercourse. Nthapeleng and Mmatsekiso fell asleep and they were found in that office the next morning by Tsholedi, the night watchman. This was a very sad scene when Tsholedi found his wife sleeping half naked with Nthapeleng.

These experiences tortured Tsholedi psychologically and emotionally. The sad news about what had happened to Mmatsekiso was sent to Tsekiso by his girlfriend, Morongwe in her third letter. Here we realise the level of embarrassment which Tsekiso experienced having had this news. The narrator says that:

*Tsekiso a fehelwa feela, yaba o sisinya hlooho
mme o re ka pelong, 'Ruri bophelo lefatsheng
ke ntwa, ke kgaruru ya kgumamela, ho fihlela
lebitleng'*
(Maphalla 1991:55).

(Tsekiso felt irritated and shook his head and said to himself: 'Indeed, life is full of misery. It can be associated

with war that leads to death'.)

We have mentioned before that the impact of the conflict between Tsholedi and Mmatsekiso had serious effects on their children. Modise did not perform well at school as he used to. Teachers sent letters home enquiring about the problem. This aggravated the conflict between Tsholedi and Mmatsekiso as Mmatsekiso did not want to accept that the state of affairs at home accounted for the poor performance of Modise whereas Tsholedi maintained that there was no way that Modise could perform well while the conflict situation in his family persisted.

Tsholedi was a tragic character because at this stage, he had been fired at work by Nthapeleng. He told minister Dipolelo that Nthapeleng had told him that his services as the night-watchman were terminated with immediate effect. Tsholedi was being accused of beating his wife and the council could not approve of such actions. Tsholedi was of course innocent. As in *Chaka*, Tsholedi became convinced that it is useless to be nice to people otherwise they take advantage of you and attack you. As in *Mopheme*, Tsholedi decided to stay alone or to seek a different form of life where he would not meet this woman, where he would not hear reports from his son about his wife and where he would not feel ashamed to face the minister with sad stories as he always did.

Tsholedi informed his wife, that he was going to seek employment at the mines. This is the situation where Tsholedi learned to drink beer and gradually shifted from his personality and mode of behaviour. He thought that drinking liquor was an ideal way of living as it assisted people to forget about their problems. He also thought that people who do such things stay happy. He never just disappeared but he informed his wife accordingly and even minister Dipolelo was duly informed. As he talked to his wife, Tsholedi said:

... o batla ho ka a hahlwa ke moya, le
 ho sutha marateng ana a mo tenang.
 Le ho moruti o ne a ile a rialo
 (Maphalla 1991:70).

(... he only needs to be alone and to move away from disturbing and irritating noise. He also informed the minister.)

Tsholedi meant what he said. He made his plan long before he left home as he wrote it down. He only needed the minister to pray for him otherwise he knew exactly what he was going to do. It looked as if he was aiming at revenge. We will come to this point later on.

Tsholedi pretended to have left and sought employment from a coal shop. He pretended to be an old man as part of his strategy to deceive people in order to achieve his goal. He even changed his name and was known as Kgikgitha Mathakgola. The name has a specific literary significance as Tsholedi aimed to harass not only his wife but all those people who surrounded her and made life difficult for him. To come to the point of revenge once more, Tsholedi aimed at nothing else but to watch Mmatsekiso and what happens at his place in his absence. Every night he would go there like any customer to watch what happened there.

Both Kgikgitha Mathakgola (Tsholedi) and Mokhutli served Leema. They worked together harmoniously. The narrator states that:

*Ka boMoqebelo ha ba sa sebetse, Mokhutli
le Kgikgitha ba ne ba ye ba ikele le motse ho
batla se nyorollang. Le hona mane ha
Mmatsekiso ba ne ba ye ba nne ba fihle*
(Maphalla 1991:73).

(On Saturdays when they were not on duty, both Mokhutli and Kgikgitha would visit several families in the village and buy liquor. They would sometimes visit Mmatsekiso.)

One Friday, the situation was lively at Mmatsekiso's place as usual. Kgikgitha was also there.

Moferefere, Mmatsekiso's concubine came from the bedroom where he had privacy with Mmatsekiso. Takadimane and his girlfriend, Matlakala were also there caressing each other. Takadimane took offence when Mmatsekiso ordered them to leave as it was late. Even though the author did not specify it, it is implied through action that Kgikgitha might have witnessed the mess that is taking place at his house. It is for this reason that the next morning the police were there, trying to find the killers of both Moferefere, Mmatsekiso's secret lover and Matlakala, Takadimane's girlfriend. What frustrated people more than anything else was the note written in bold capital letters *KGODUMODUMO* (GIGANTIC MONSTER). They were killed in the same way.

The narrator specifies that it was at one o'clock in the morning that Kgodumodumo was conceived. This means that it was at that time when Kgodumodumo started to actualise his plans for the first time.

E ne e le ka hora ya pele ha Kgodumodumo e tswalwa.

Ho tswalwa ha Kgodumodumo ha tlisetsa batho

masisapelo le mahlomola

(Maphalla 1991:79).

(It was at one o'clock when the gigantic monster was born. The birth of the gigantic monster brought miseries to the people.)

Tension was rife in the entire society and people could not understand who or what Kgodumodumo is. The report came in the morning that:

Hoseng hona ho utlwahala hore Moferefere le

Matlakala ba bolailwe ka sehloho se nyarosang

mmele

(Maphalla 1991:79).

(It is said that Moferefere and Matlakala were found brutally killed.)

We have reason to believe that Kgodumodumo is in fact Tsholedi himself as both Moferefere and Matlakala were at Tsholedi's house the previous night. Mmatsekiso is mistaken in her thinking that Moferefere, her secret lover, might have been killed by Takadimane. She quarrelled with Takadimane but that does not necessarily justify the killing.

The police were making investigations and they needed to know where Tsholedi had gone. They needed the address where they could find him to give evidence in their investigations. The police had already discovered that Moferefere was Mmatsekiso's concubine. This is why the narrator gives a direct description of Mmatsekiso as:

*... mosadi e mobe haholo, ya mathang
le banna ba basadi ba bang motseng
oo wa Dihlabeng ...*
(Maphalla 1991:91).

(... an evil woman who maintains secret love affairs with other women's husbands in the Dihlabeng village....)

Mmatsekiso destabilised her family and it adversely affected Tsekiso at the college. Diepollo, Tsekiso's girlfriend also received a letter from her mother informing her that she and Tsekiso are brother and sister. This information was yet another dimension of tragedy as Tsekiso had already impregnated Diepollo, yet she is her sister. To return to the point of Mmatsekiso's unfaithfulness, it becomes obvious that it might have been that Mmatsekiso was impregnated by someone else before or after she had been married by Tsholedi. We must remember that the narrator described the woman as the worst amongst all the women in Dihlabeng in terms of her low morality. Tsekiso is in trouble, his future with Diepollo is shattered. Tension mounts again after Tsekiso has heard about the death of Moferefere and Matlakala and informed his father

about it.

As time goes by, it becomes clear that Mothoduwa is not acceptable to most people as the son of Tsholedi. Mothoduwa always thought that his father is Tsholedi and that his mother is Mmatsekiso and that his sister is Ntebaleng and his brother is Tsekiso. He is puzzled when people look at one another whenever he calls himself the younger brother of Tsekiso. An unknown old woman informed him that he, Mothoduwa, is not the real son of Tsholedi.

Kgodumodumo killed Nthapeleng and what is strange is that the pair of trousers that he had given to Tsholedi was used as a pillow whilst Nthapeleng lay in a pool of blood. The note in capital letters from Kgodumodumo, found near Nthapeleng's corpse, told the story:

*KE EELLETSWE HORE O TLATLAPA BATHO
MOO KGWEBONG YA HAO. O BAPALA KA
BAREKI, MME O A BA KOKONA. TSEBA HE
HORE KA LABOHLANO KGWEBO YA HAO E
TLA BE E WELE, MME WENA O SHWELE*
(Maphalla 1991:123).

(I NOTICED THAT YOU HARASS PEOPLE IN
YOUR BUSINESS. YOU FOOL AROUND WITH
YOUR CUSTOMERS AND CHEAT THEM. YOU
SHOULD TAKE NOTE OF THE FACT THAT ON
FRIDAY YOUR BUSINESS WILL HAVE
COLLAPSED AND YOU WILL BE DEAD.)

Tsholedi is caught and convicted. He points out in court that he is Kgodumodumo and that Kgodumodumo has not been caught and that it will live forever as it lives inside human beings. Tsholedi explained that people are jealous, full of hatred, unfaithful. He despised the earthly judicial law. He mentions that the law practised on earth is liable to change to suit the conditions of those who made them. Tsholedi compares the heavenly law, that is, God's law, and the earthly

law and concludes that people will always suffer because of the law as practised on earth. He finally challenges the judicial system practised on earth to address real issues such as hatred, jealousy, fighting for higher positions, oppression of the poor, and other elements of Kgodumodumo.

In spite of Tsholedi's final message, he was sentenced to death seven times as he was accused of killing seven people. Despite the death sentence, Tsholedi (Kgodumodumo) left a message to Mmatsekiso which aroused unending internal conflict in her:

'O phetse. Sala hantle.

Ke nna KGODUMODUMO'

(Maphalla 1991:167).

(‘You survived. Good bye!

I am the GIGANTIC MONSTER’.)

Mmatsekiso is left with the question as to what would have happened to her had Kgodumodumo not been caught. Her problems were however not resolved as the issue of Mothoduwa remained. Perhaps from what Mmakgotso had told her husband, suspicions were aroused that Nthapeleng could also be father to Mothoduwa. Mmakgotso remarked to her husband when they greeted Mothoduwa:

You remember darling,

that issue of Nthapeleng!

(Maphalla 1991:170).

The remark signals the idea that Nthapeleng could be the father and that is why the two prefer to communicate in English to make it difficult for Mothoduwa to understand what they are saying. However, Mothoduwa, could understand the name of Nthapeleng, and the old woman decided to tell Mothoduwa the truth. She told him that her father was Molahlehi and her mother Mmatsekiso. Molahlehi was one of the seven people that Kgodumodumo (Tsholedi) had killed.

The question NNA KE MANG? (WHO AM I?) now had an answer. Mofuduwa knows who he is and need no longer worry as he used to when people asked him the question.

4.5 *Ke lesheleshele leo a iphehletseng lona (1992)*

The story takes place in Lesotho during winter. The narrative time, winter, has been chosen deliberately and placed at the very beginning of the text to presuppose a series of tragic events that would take place in this novel. The animals too do not show any sign of happiness, which implies that there prevailed seriousness and tension. The narrator says:

*Ka sakeng Khaloli e bokolla e sa tsoa bokolla.
E bontsa ho hloka khotso, kaha kajeno ho
bonahala ho tsoha ho le hobe, moea ho hlahile
oa ha 'Makhepheretsi
(Chobokoane 1992:1).*

(Khaloli cried continuously in the kraal. It showed that it was not happy as today the weather conditions were unpleasant and the wind was blowing from the direction of 'Makhepheretsi.)

It takes a long time for Ramahlelehlele, the short-lived character, to be introduced in the novel. There is a late point-of-attack as he is the tragic character and the reader has to know about the conflict that he encountered. Ramahlelehlele encountered the problem of keeping his cattle together when the weather conditions changed and it appeared that it was going to rain. He struggled to drive his cattle along and while doing so he suddenly fell in a *donga* and died. The narrator comments that:

*Eitse ha a tlola a re oa a tsoa, athe ke ntsing tsa lengope,
lengope la re heaa! ka eena ho ea tlaase, 'momo oa re
toatla! letheka la re soahla!... ho bonahala hore ho khaohile*

mothapo o moholo

(Chobokoane 1992:4).

(As he tried to jump, he was at the end of the cliff and he fell!
He broke his leg and injured his waist! ... it seemed that his
main blood vessel had burst.)

The author presents Ramahlehlele in only four pages (narrating time) in the first chapter as our main character. Though Ramahlehlele experienced tragedy, he does not seem to have any tragic flaw. At this stage, the question of who created problems for himself implied by *Ke lesheleshele leo a iphehletseng lona* (He destroyed himself) is still open and left unanswered. Ramahlehlele could then be the main character who happened to experience tragedy (the tragic).

Shortly before his death, Ramahlehlele had a baby boy known as Mahlehlele. His mother, namely 'Mamahlehlele now takes over from where Ramahlehlele left off. She is described as a beautiful woman but on account of a series of problems that she had encountered after the death of her husband, she grew thinner and thinner. The narrator presents her suffering as follows:

*Sefahleho le sona sa fifala, esita le lijo
li theohela ka thata; ho bonahala hantle
hore pelo e ile mafisa, o lohotha ntho e
se kaalo ka letho*

(Chobokoane 1992:7).

(Her face became dark. She could not even
eat properly. It was definite that she was not
happy. She was actually deep in thoughts.)

'Mamahlehlele experienced problems with nurturing her baby properly because of lack of food

as well as her physical state of health and emotional problems. At the same time, her baby became ill and due to lack of experience on how to handle a sick child, she was already discouraged that Mahlelehlele would get well again. 'Mamahlelehlele experienced a lot of problems after the death of her husband as the thugs stole all her cattle including the calves. This event implied that there would no longer be any milk to feed her child. When people tried to chase the thugs to recapture 'Mamahlelehlele's cattle and calves, the other two thugs stole 'Mamahlelehlele's sheep. Thus far the author has presented 'Mamahlelehlele as a character without any specific tragic flaw but only someone experiencing a series of tragic events.

The next tragic event that 'Mamahlelehlele encountered was when a rich man made use of her gardens and paid her a thousand rands. Though the man had been honest to pay her the specified amount, she was accused that Ramahlelehlele had no legal documents to prove that those gardens belonged to him. 'Mamahlelehlele discovered then that she had to repay the money to the rich man and was faced with a problem as the narrator indicates:

*O ne a se na boikthelo, haese ho khutlisa
sekete sa liranta sa monn'a morui. Empa
o tla se khutlisa se le hokae kaha o se a se
sebedisitse kaofela?*

(Chobokoane 1992:14).

(She had no other option but to repay the thousand rands to the rich man. How could she pay back the money she had already used?.)

The narrative is plot-centred as 'Mamahlelehlele had to sign another contract with the rich man so that he may use her son, Mahlelehlele to guard his calves for a period of three years. The readers feel pity for 'Mamahlelehlele as confirmed by the narrator:

*... taba e ileng ea otl'a 'Mamahlelehlele pelo ka ho
fetisisa, ke ea ho tlameha ho tela moshanyana oa*

*hae, e monyenyane hakaalo, hape ea neng a se a
bile a tlotse le lilemo tsa ho ea qala sekolo*
(Chobokoane 1992:15).

(... the matter that was most heart-breaking to
'Mamahlehlele was for her to part with her
young and lovely son, who was already above
the school-going age.)

The novel continues to present a series of tragic events such as when Mahlehlele came home badly beaten by an unknown man once more. It was a tragic moment for 'Mamahlehlele who thought that people were taking advantage of her because her husband Ramahlehlele had passed away. The narrator indicates the predicament in which 'Mamahlehlele found herself:

*Ha 'Mamahlehlele a boetse a bona sebopeho
seo mor'a hae a leng sona, pelo ea hae ea
boela ea thonkheha, a touta hore na a ka pholosa
ngoana hae joang, empa a sitoa ho fumana
tharollo, kaha o ne a se na letho leo a ka lefang
chelete ea morui ka lona*
(Chobokoane 1992:18).

(When 'Mamahlehlele saw her son, she once more became disturbed. She thought deeply as to how she could save her child, but she failed to find a solution as she had no money to repay the rich man.)

Mahlehlele's change of personality

Mahlehlele never wanted to go to school even though he and his peers were happy to have the

opportunity given to them by their parents. He felt embarrassed among his classmates as he was older than all of them and they were also cleverer than him. This is why he felt that he should leave school as the narrator says:

*A iphumana a le sebakeng se sebe ka mokhoa
o tsabehang, a eketsa ho hloea sekolo ka pelo
eohle ea hae*

(Chobokoane 1992:21).

(He found himself in an unpleasant situation and
he therefore hated the school even more.)

As a matter of fact, Mahlelehlele decided to change his attitude and began to use vulgar language when talking to people and even when guiding the cattle. He actually adopted bad manners from some of his peers. Mahlelehlele was punished at school and this again motivated him to leave. These problems not only caused serious concern about Mahlelehlele but also for 'Mamahlelehlele herself. Tension was ruining the family.

'Mamahlelehlele's contribution in Mahlelehlele's tragedy

'Mamahlelehlele had a weakness in over-protecting her son, Mahlelehlele. She would not consider the essence of what Mahlelehlele had done instead she would only consider that her son was ill-treated. In this way, Mahlelehlele had nobody to reprimand him when doing wrong or to give him direction in life. This is why the narrator mentions that:

*Kapele ngoana o phakisa ho lemoha
lerato lena, 'me le eena a qale ho
ithepetlisa le ho tefa ...*

(Chobokoane 1992:23).

(Very soon the child noticed the love of his

mother and began to misuse it. He became spoilt)

'Mamahlehlele also never bothered to go to school to fight against the lady teacher who had punished her son, Mahlehlele. We pity her because she thought that she was exercising her right as a parent while only spoiling her son. Mahlehlele was not only a nuisance to his teachers at school but also to his mother, 'Mamahlehlele. This is why the narrator states that:

'Mamahlehlele o ne a se a tenehile ke botlokotsebe ba ngoana ea bokotsoang
(Chobokoane 1992:24).

('Mamahlehlele was already tired of the bad manners of her spoiled son.)

Mahlehlele's bad behaviour bothered his mother and in addition to that, he started telling lies. He would get up to do mischief and come back to his mother and tell her lies in order to escape punishment. He once let the cattle of Mosuo damage other people's crops but told his mother a different story for her to support him when Mosuo charged him.

We have already indicated that 'Mamahlehlele had a tragic flaw and therefore did not reprimand her son even in this particular case. When faced with problems caused by Mahlehlele, 'Mamahlehlele even remarked that:

Ee, ke 'nete thupa e otlolloa e sa le metsi; hoja ka tlohella Mahlehlele ho kena sekolo, ka thusa basuo ha ba mo khalemela kahohle ka moo ba ka khonang, litaba li ka be li se tjena ...
(Chobokoane 1992:30).

Yes, it is true that the child should be properly

guided while he is still young. I should have supported Mahlelehlele in his school career and also assisted his teachers to guide him in whatever manner possible; we would not have had this kind of experience.)

For the very first time we are introduced to 'Mamahlelehlele appearing as the one who caused problems for herself as suggested by *ke lesheleshele leo a iphehletseng lona* (he destroyed himself). 'Mamahlelehlele herself confirms that *ke lesheleshele leo ke iphehletseng lona* (I destroyed myself). This brings us closer to the theme of the novel in the sense that the author tries to show us who, among characters involved in this novel, should utter those words of the title of the novel.

Mahlelehlele always proved to be irresponsible in the way he served Mosuo as well as Mpalipali. However, Mpalipali treated Mahlelehlele very well and even gave him some of his cattle. Mahlelehlele attacked Sefatsa and beat him to a point where he even thought that Sefatsa died. Mahlelehlele then disappeared and left for Johannesburg to escape from being convicted. Mpalipali was then accused by Sefatsa on behalf of Mahlelehlele and this problem also reflected badly on 'Mamahlelehlele.

Makgoweng-motif

Like other people who go to Johannesburg for many other reasons, Mahlelehlele escaped and went to Johannesburg to seek for employment and to hide from the police who might be looking for him for what he did to Sefatsa. As an employee of Robinson Deep Mine in Randfontein, Mahlelehlele got new names such as *Pheo-le-phatsoa* and *Seakhi* to suit the new environment he found himself in.

Dreams as the driving force towards the development of the plot

In Johannesburg, Mahlelehlele dreamt of his mother and began to worry that she might be

thinking that he had passed away. This served as an incentive to come home even though he was still preoccupied with the thought of the *death* of Sefatsa and that he regarded himself to be the culprit.

Mahlelehlele encountered many problems at the Robinson Deep Mine as he broke his hand and his leg and nearly died. Shortly after this tragic event in the mine, he was brutally attacked by a gang of Russians. He was seriously beaten and again survived death beyond description. It was at this moment when he decided to return home as the narrator points out:

*A etsa qeto ea hore o tlameha ho ea hae; a ka mpa a ea
tsoaroa, a ea teronkong a ntse a phela, ho na le ho shoela
Makhooeng
(Chobokoane 1992:46).*

(He decided to go back home. He would not mind being convicted and imprisoned, if only he did not die in foreign urban areas.)

The fact that Mahlelehlele came back from the Robinson Deep Mine without anything at all in terms of money or clothes, signifies that *ke lesheleshele leo a iphehletseng lona* (he destroyed himself) that is, he suffers the consequences of his own actions. Mahlelehlele experienced a series of tragic events as stated by the narrator:

*Pelo ea hae ea boela ea sisa, meokho ea keleketla
marameng ha a hopola hore, o tla a ikapere, a se
na letho. A itherela ho fihla hae e le ka phirima,
ho se motho ea 'monang ...
(Chobokoane 1992:49).*

(He became sad and tears ran down his cheeks but he came back empty-handed. He decided to arrive

late in the evening so that people could not see him)

The depth of Mahlelehlele's tragedy is captured by the specification of time during which he preferred to arrive at home *e le ka phirima, ho se motho ea 'monang* (it was in the evening and nobody could see him). He deliberately decided to arrive at this time because his actions were as dark as the night. The author associates Mahlelehlele's evil behaviour with the darkness of the night. Perhaps he experiences the dark side of his life.

Mahlelehlele experienced physical torture on several occasions. Firstly, he was attacked and beaten up by a man when guarding the calves. The event added tension to this narrative. The event is appealing to the emotions of the readers and is significant to justify the narrative text as a tragedy. Secondly, he was again beaten by the principal at school.

The author tries to ensure the nature of the novel as tragedy through these painful events. In order to continue building the tragic effects in this tragedy, Mahlelehlele had another unfortunate experience. He broke his leg and hand at the Robinson Deep Mine. Mahlelehlele was again beaten by a gangster of the so-called Russian Mafia till he almost died. This is yet another setback in the life of Mahlelehlele as the tragic character.

The author builds the image of the tragic situation that Mahlelehlele experienced when he came back home. We are told that his mother felt pity for him which implies the condition in which Mahlelehlele was when he came back home. The narrator goes further to explain that:

*Le hoja 'Mamahlelehlele a ne a thabetse ho bona mora
a fihla a phela, o ile a hlomoloa ka ho fetisisa ke ho
bona sebopeho seo a fihlang a le sona*
(Chobokoane 1992:49).

(Though 'Mamahlelehlele was happy to meet with her son, she felt very sorry to see him in such a bad condition when he arrived.)

The state in which Mahlelehlele arrived at home when he reconciled with his mother, is deliberately noted to signify the torture that the young man had suffered at the mine. The narrator outlines the state in which Mahlelehlele was:

*Le hoja Mahlelehlele a ne a le liaparo
tse 'meleng feela, liaparo tsena li ne li
se li tsofetse, e le matairi, li bile li le mali ...*

(Chobokoane 1992:49-50).

(Though Mahlelehlele was left with the clothes he was wearing, they were worn out, tattered and torn as well as spotted with blood....)

The narrator sums up the tragic events that Mahlelehlele experienced by indicating that from the outset he always had the clothes he wore and nothing else. This has an inter-textual relation with Nqheku's *Arola naheng ya Maburu* when Arola came back from work in the world of the Boers without any luggage whatsoever except only the garments he wore. The narrator points out that:

*Mahlelehlele o tlohile habo, a e-ea ha pelo-nkise,
a ineha naha, a se na letho, haese liaparo tse
'meleng feela*

(Chobokoane 1992:50)

(Mahlelehlele left home, wandering in the unknown, without any luggage except the garments he wore.)

*O ile a fihla a sebetsa 'Mate, ha Mpalipali ... Empa
le teng o tlohile a se na letho, haese liaparo tse
'meleng feela ha a balehela merafong ...*

(Chobokoane 1992:50)

(When he arrived, he served Mpalipali at Mmate ...
But he left once more without any luggage except
for the clothes he wore when he went to the mines)

*... ke mona o boela hae a se na letho, haese liaparo tse
'meleng feela. O khutlile le se mo isitseng*
(Chobokoane 1992:50)

(... he returns home once more without any luggage except
the garments he wore. What made him leave also made him
come home.)

The recurrence of *a se na letho, haese liaparo tse 'meleng feela* (he had nothing except the garments he wore) signifies that Mahlelehlele had been a victim of circumstances and never enjoyed or prospered in life. We feel pity for Mahlelehlele that whenever he encountered problems, he thought it wise to run away from home, to run away from reality but in the process he lost whatever he had before. This is why he would be left with the clothes he wore and nothing more.

Good state

Mpalipali felt sorry for Mahlelehlele and gave him some of his cattle and actually wanted to make a rich man out of Mahlelehlele. Mahlelehlele came back to collect his mother and they both moved to stay at Mpalipali's place on a permanent basis. Mahlelehlele became a rich man and decided to get married.

Bad state

As a rich man, Mahlelehlele married one woman after the other. He only married a woman to divorce her later because of the attitude of his mother to his wives. 'Mamahlelehlele created an unpleasant situation for her son's wives for the simple reason that she wanted Mahlelehlele to

maintain her and not bother about his family life. Mahlelehlele married and divorced Mamosenyehi as reflected in Chapter Twelve and also divorced Malibakiso in Chapter Thirteen of Chobokoane's *Ke lesheleshele leo a iphehletseng lona*.

In Chapter Sixteen of this novel Mahlelehlele tried to ill-treat Mathabang as he used to do with the other two women who came before her. He was unfortunate as Mathabang poisoned his mother 'Mamahlelehlele and the poor woman died. As Mahlelehlele continued to ill-treat Mathabang even after the death of his mother, Mathabang negotiated with Motsoalipakeng (her power-doctor) to get rid of Mahlelehlele himself. Mahlelehlele was then also poisoned and died.

Mathabang was left alone with all that Mahlelehlele possessed and this attracted many men to come in and share Mahlelehlele's belongings with her. Rabohlale came into Mathabang's life and as he also tried to ill-treat Mathabang, she decided to poison him but she was unfortunate enough to be poisoned herself. Mathabang also died and Rabohlale was then left alone to enjoy Mahlelehlele's belongings.

Rabohlale was attacked by Mathabang's father, Senkatana and Thabang, son of Mathabang also plotted to kill him. The ancestors came as *deus ex machina* to end Thabang's internal conflict as he plotted to kill Rabohlale. In a dream, Thabang was convinced that the ancestors were ordering him to leave Rabohlale alone. Senkatana as well as Thabang went to ask for forgiveness from Rabohlale.

The author ends the story by drawing attention of the readers to moral issues such as respect, domestic violence, awareness of the fallacy of some of the power-doctors, the use of *phehla* (African poison). Finally, the author insists that a man and his wife should live happily trying to avoid problems and maintaining peace and stability throughout their lives.

4.6 *Lehlaba la lephako* (1999)

Seabata is the main character who has a flaw due to the state of affairs in his surrounding social situation. His life shifts from good to bad as he happens to occupy the position of supervisor on

the farm. This position causes him to be on bad terms with his co-workers as he is all out to please Swanepoel, his employer, at their expense. It would be good for him to stay in Swanepoel's favours but as time passed he was trapped and caught with the result that he had to be discharged from work. This state of affairs meant serious and devastating conditions that he and his family had to face. It obviously meant hunger and suffering which is what he had always been trying to avoid in honour of his father's advice:

*O ne a nthutile ntho e le nngwe ya bohlokwa ho ya ka moo
a neng a nahana ka teng: ke hore ke tshepahale ho monnga
ka ke tla kgora, lelapa la ka le tla phela ha monate*
(Mohapi:1999:102).

(He taught me one basic moral lesson which in his opinion was good:
that I should be loyal and honest to my employer in order to obtain
food to maintain my family decently and happily.)

What led to Seabata's total downfall is the fact that he did not interpret his father's moral lesson properly or meaningfully. He actually distorted the fundamental message around his father's point of view. To show loyalty to his employer, Seabata misconstrued to mean that he should at all times try to win the favour of his employer by operating behind the back of his colleagues. The reader feels pity for him in the sense that he had a specific reason for doing that, namely, to maintain his family. Nevertheless, Seabata had a flaw by only protecting his family and ignoring his fellow co-workers.

Seabata also appeared unpatriotic to his land and society. This point is confirmed by his attitude towards other people in his society, his fellow Black African people against the White man in the person of Swanepoel. In this way he violated one of the basic moral principles underlying African culture, specified by Sekese (1975) namely, that:

Mofuta ha o nkgwe ka nko e se qoba la kwae
(Sekese 1975:102).

(One may not speculate about the nature of foreign people.)

This principle can also be contextualised in *Lehlaba la lephako* where Moruti Nkgelwane tries to convince Seabata that he should not dissociate himself from his fellow Africans and remarked that:

Seabata o dikalaneng, hodimo, re sitwa ho o fihlella.

Theoha hle o be le rona re tla ba le wena re o thuse,

o ngwana borona ...

(Mohapi: 1999:84).

(Seabata you are too high for us. You are inaccessible.

Come down to us for us to be with you and for us to

help you, you are one of us)

If we look at this remark again we realise that reverend Nkgelwane was actually trying to instil the idea of *ubuntu* and develop the spirit of harmonious relationship within Seabata. He tried to show him that he may not make it in life as an individual if he ignores other people. The fact that Nkgelwane promises that they would help Seabata if he associated himself with his colleagues, is indicative of the fact that Nkgelwane understands the principles of humanity and operates within the African understanding that:

Motho ke motho ka batho ba bang.

(Sekese 1975:212).

(People tend to help one another.)

From this philosophical background underlying the social life of an African, it was clear that Seabata was operating outside the framework of what is expected from him as an African. It is tragic too to realise that at the end Seabata finds himself in strained relations with the very

Swanepoel, his employer, who created a rift between him and his African people. This move spells out the imminent poverty on the part of Seabata. Seabata enjoyed a better life than anybody else on that particular farm but eventually stood in front of the court of law still poor and suffering *lehlaba la lephako* (the pain of hunger).

The poor and low socio-economic position led Seabata to commit a crime as he needed to maintain his family very decently and fulfil the responsibilities of a family man. This position adds more tragedy to Seabata's life as a result that readers identify with his problems and empathise with his position because they would do the same if they were exposed to the same kind of situation.

Early point-of-attack

Confrontation between Seabata and his wife, Mmabatho

Seabata's tragic life should be seen in totality and not only partially in the sense that it does not only cripple him at work or in society, but also in his family life. This state of affairs frustrates Seabata's family. He does not have time for his wife but is always preoccupied with the state of affairs at that particular farm. He has sleepless nights as he seems to have developed a repulsive obsession on account of his negative attitude towards his fellow workers on the farm.

What is more tragic is the fact that he does not seem to be aware that his attitude towards other people can never afford him the chance of living happily in day to day social interaction. As an African who should observe the African culture and tradition, namely, communal life as it relates to African people, Seabata is fast approaching disintegration and loss of manliness in his life. His life appears to be shattered and meaningless as a result of which his position is not recognised by anybody in that particular society.

Seabata's attitude could not go unnoticed for a long time and that is why people decided to retaliate. They demolished his house and also killed his fowls. This action has once more literary relevance as it has always been his ambition to avoid hunger and to properly maintain his

family. This event reversed the process and brought Seabata back to the state of poverty and hunger strike. In this way, the life of Seabata seemed to form a circle of tragic events. Along the pipeline, there seems to be no solution to his problems whatsoever. This implies nothing else but the tragic circumstances in his life. His becoming poor and experiencing hunger strike was a matter that seemed inevitable at that stage. Avoidance of hunger which was a matter of prime concern in Seabata served as the unifying element and a possible sub-theme underlying the text.

Conflict and the expression of tragedy in *Lehlaba la lephako*

Mmabatho disapproves of Seabata's meanness to his fellow workers on the farm although Seabata wants people to know that the farm belongs to his friend, Swanepoel, whom the farm labourers commonly refer to as Sepanapodi.

Seabata has a tragic flaw in the sense that he is convinced that he is innocent in what he is doing namely, his bad treatment of the other farm labourers. He is preoccupied with his idea that for him to survive he has to please his master in whatever manner, even if it means that his own people should suffer.

Confrontation between Seabata and Nketsi

Seabata suffers not only spiritually but also psychologically. This point is verified by the fact that he does not seem to realise that he is too young, in terms of age and experience. He ignores the golden advice of Nketsi with regard to his approach to his immediate social situation.

Seabata's flaw manifests itself in his treatment of an old man such as Nketsi only to please Swanepoel, the farmer. In this way he sacrifices his conscience, respect and dignity in order to earn a better living and to avoid hunger strike or the pain of hunger.

Too late Seabata realises that what he is doing is absolutely wrong. It is also too late for him to realise that his actions are not only unacceptable to Nketsi as an individual but also opposed to the basic principles of the Basotho according to their African traditional religion where respect

for the elderly serve as the fundamental principle for that particular form of religion.

Confrontation with Mohanelwa, the school teacher

Seabata made sacrifices with his own people in various facets of life. In this case, he sacrifices the educational opportunities of his people. He pleases Sepanapodi by instructing Mohanelwa to release pupils from their school work to go and serve on the field as unpaid assistants working without food. Seabata's treatment did not only bring about physical suffering to his society but also meant a blow towards the educational development of children in that specific farm.

Seabata and his relationship with other farm labourers

Seabata tried his best to please Swanepoel at the expense of his co-workers on that specific farm. He, for instance, did not care to transport people (women in particular,) in an open truck which normally transported cow dung. He enjoyed better facilities which he could not share with his fellow workers. He lacks sensitivity and respect for women. He orders women to ride an open truck and being exposed to the sun and the falling rain. However, we feel pity for him because circumstances enforced him to behave like that. We feel pity for him because he tried to make ends meet for himself and his family. In the process, he also sacrificed one of the aspects enshrined in his culture, namely respect for a woman.

The readers feel pity for him in that he misconstrues his position as the supervisor to obtain promotion at the expense of his co-workers. Readers also experience an in-depth fear that they should find themselves in a similar position where they do the same as Seabata (*catharsis*).

Seabata and the local minister of religion

The minister tried in whatever manner he could to advise Seabata to come to his senses and to treat other people as human beings. The fact that Seabata was poor could not be the reason why he should adopt such a negative attitude against his fellow-men. Endeavours were all in vain. Seabata acted in blindness as determined by the flaw in him.

Seabata and Swanepoel

Swanepoel turned Seabata into a *robot* as he did not allow him to motivate his actions in his capacity as the supervisor at the farm. He expected Seabata to accept without any word if he was confronted with anything that he is accountable for. Seabata had to show responsibility by citing reasons why other workers did not perform the work to the likes of Swanepoel but Swanepoel would not allow him such an opportunity to state his case. The rift between Swanepoel and Seabata became bigger and bigger. It is no wonder that Swanepoel informed his wife about Seabata's change of attitude as he remarked that:

*Seabata e se e le tsebanyane, o se a re re ise basebetsi
boitjhorisong ba tle ba ithute ... ka tjehelete ya mang?
(Mohapi 1999:96).*

(Seabata thinks of himself as clever. He wants us to send our employees to the training college to learn ... with whose money should it be?.)

Because he was poor, Seabata fell into a trap as he stole Swanepoel's sheep. This action could not go unchecked. It is tragic to realise that Swanepoel did not bother to consider the fact that Seabata had always been his right-hand even though he offended him. He did not feel sorry for him even though Seabata used to let everybody know how deeply he loved his master. He forgot all the favours that Seabata used to do for him. We therefore feel pity for Seabata because he did not know that at the end everybody would turn against him, including Swanepoel who happened to be his favourite idol.

*Monnga polasi yena o ne a tjalaka seka yona nkwe hantle
ha e patetswe ke ditshwene. O ne a bona nako ya ho dula ha
lekgotla ho tla ahlola Seabata e mo diehela hobane o ne a batla
ho mo tshwara ka matsoho a etse ha e phetwe
Mohapi (1999:99).*

(The owner of the farm was pacing up and down like a wounded tiger being attacked by baboons. For him the court case against Seabata was too long to wait for as he aimed to assault him brutally.)

At the end of the novel it is heartbreaking to realise that Seabata's fellow farm labourers, including his wife, Mmabatho, were not allowed to attend the court during his hearing. He therefore became disappointed and humiliated as he could recall all the difficult tasks he had to perform to satisfy Swanepoel. He recalled his negative attitude to his fellow-men and also how he used to appear as a nuisance to them.

The last straw

At the end it was tragic for Seabata to realise that Tshediso had always spied on him and served as Swanepoel's informer. It was too late for Seabata to find this out (*anagnorisis*) and to retaliate against Tshediso (*peripeteia*) and readers feel pity for him (*catharsis*) as they know that Seabata had tried his level best to satisfy Swanepoel even though he did not know that Swanepoel employed Tshediso to watch on him. This is why Tshediso had all the evidence against Seabata during the court case:

*Tshediso a ntsha ditaba eka o ne a phela le Seabata
a ba a ntsha le tsa hore Seabata ebile o kile a tshakela
polasing ya ha bomoholwane wa Nketsi*
(Mohapi 1999: 101).

(Tshediso provided all the evidence as if he had been staying with Seabata and he even included the fact that Seabata once visited the farm where Nketsi's brother was living.)

Controversy between communal and modern life

Through his life Seabata expressed what one could refer to as the controversy between communal and modern life. This point is significant in order to show that he was confused and undergoing much stress in his life. When his father gave him the advice that he should uphold just principles if he had the opportunity of being employed, Seabata failed to understand that actually his father only meant that he must be loyal at work. He did not mean that he should necessarily make enemies with his colleagues in order to achieve that goal.

Lehlaba la lephako (pain of hunger) manifests itself as a modern tragedy in the sense that our main character, Seabata, does not play the role of a king. It is for that reason that the text cannot be reckoned as involving tragedy of great magnitude as in Mofolo's *Chaka*.

In terms of the basic expectations in tragedy, one would expect that the main character would eventually die, but in *Lehlaba la lephako* (pain of hunger) we are exposed only to the crisis situation in which Seabata finds himself. The crisis situation causes tension and readers experience pity and fear (*catharsis*) that what happened to Seabata could happen to them too.

The entire life of Seabata seems to be a mechanism through which the author conveys his fundamental message to his readers. In other words, it becomes clear that Seabata in his personal capacity and in what he says it becomes clear that his whole life presents the theme of the novel. Mohapi uses Seabata as the tragic character to present a moral lesson to his society that anti-social behaviour leads to misfortune in life.

4.7 Conclusion

a) *Peo ena e jetswe ke wena*

The novel *Peo ena e jetswe ke wena* distinguishes itself as a modern tragedy. Samina characterises herself as an ordinary character without a royal status. The presentation of tragedy in this novel is plot-centred as it largely focusses on the tragic events around Samina. The author moralises against the unsocial behaviour as attributable to sex workers and exposes how manipulative they can be on their partners. Samina is a woman with no self-respect and does not

hesitate to exploit the sexual desires of men such as Kgwapo, Amos and Natona, for her financial gain. The author therefore moralises about the fact that money is the root of all evil. We therefore conclude that tragedy expressed in this novel is basically caused by poor socio-economic factors. These conditions result in money becoming the purpose of life, exploitation of men by women or *vice versa*.

b) *Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha*

The novel *Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha* distinguishes itself as a modern tragedy. The tragic character, Kgama, is presented as an ordinary person who lacks respect for his parents. Plot or the narrative cycle in this novel signifies the deterioration process of Kgama from good to bad state. Events in plot are meaningfully arranged in order to express the deterioration process as a kind of transition in the life of Kgama as the tragic character. The author condemns Kgama's immoral practices and his tendency of disrespecting the traditional customs. The fact that Kgama dies serves as a moral illustration that good will always triumph over evil. This is precisely the reason theme is expressed in terms of binary oppositions, good triumphs over bad. The author moralises in terms of the theme in this novel that one should have respect for one's parents.

c) *Nna ke mang*

The novel *Nna ke mang* is a modern tragedy. Tsholedi is an ordinary character who does not originate from a royal family. It is precisely for this particular reason that tragedy in this novel cannot be recognised to be of great social magnitude. The plot has been employed to reflect on Tsholedi who had formerly been a character of good characteristics but changed to become a bad character. Tsholedi is an embodiment of the theme good versus evil as reflected in this novel. Tsholedi's human nature is dominated by flaws which eventually lead him to his total downfall. However, readers feel pity for Tsholedi as he was forced by unforeseen circumstances to change his behaviour pattern in that fashion.

d) *Ke lesheleshele leo a iphehletseng lona*

In the novel *Ke lesheleshele leo a iphehletseng lona*, tragedy is presented in terms of

Mahlelehlele as the tragic character. Having a tragic flaw and being an ordinary character, Mahlelehlele influences the classification to be a modern tragedy. Plot is based on a series of tragic events in the life of Mahlelehlele. Mahlelehlele encountered devastating moments in his life due to lack of respect and responsibility. It is precisely because of Mahlelehlele's lack of responsibility that the author bases the theme in this novel. In other words, the author utilises the theme in condemning the unbecoming social behaviour of Mahlelehlele. In this way, theme presents a strong moral lesson against the current forms of immoral behaviour (as embodied by the character, Mahlelehlele).

e) *Lehlaba la lephako*

The novel *Lehlaba la lephako* identifies itself as a modern tragedy. Seabata, the tragic character tries to win the favour of Sepanapodi and attract promotion at work at the expense of his fellow workers. Plot reflects tragedy in terms of Seabata's acts of discrimination and harassment of other fellow colleagues including the women. As a result, Seabata experienced a devastating crisis and eventually found himself having lost his personal dignity, his family and his job by being detained for an indefinite period. The theme confirms the fact that one's social disregard, discriminating tendencies, lack of cooperation and insensitivity for the welfare of other people is tantamount to one's ultimate individual problems. The theme presents a great moral lesson against these negative forms of qualities based on the behaviour of Seabata as the tragic character in this novel.

We now focus on our observations and conclusions in Chapter Five after analysing all the selected Sesotho novels.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study set out to investigate the expression of tragedy in Sesotho novels. Attention was paid to character, plot and theme in early and later Sesotho novels. The novels selected from the early literary period 1925 to the 1970s are *Chaka*, *Mphatlalatsane*, *Moiketsi*, *Mosali a nkholo* and *Leshala le tswala molora* whereas the later Sesotho novels from the literary period 1970s to the 1990s are *Peo ena e jetswe ke wena*, *Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha*, *Nna ke mang*, *Ke lesheleshele leo a iphehletseng lona* and *Lehlaba la lephako*. We present our findings and conclusions as follows:

5.2 THE EXPRESSION OF TRAGEDY IN EARLY SESOTHO NOVELS

A. *Chaka* (1925)

We observe that tragedy in *Chaka* is expressed in terms of the process of deterioration of the tragic character. Chaka deteriorates on account of the error of judgement (*harmatia*) which develops an excessive desire (*hubris*) of becoming the most famous Zulu king in Southern Africa. Tragedy in this novel is reckoned to be of great social magnitude because Chaka's downfall affected the entire Zulu society. Moloi (1974) confirms the role of Chaka as the tragic hero in this novel as follows:

Chaka was a tragic hero. He fell at the hands of his half brothers, Dingane and Mhlangana because of his inherent weaknesses. His unquenchable desire to become greater than any other monarch, and unreasonable desire for revenge (sic)

(Moloi 1974:72.)

Chaka's tragic flaw justifies Chatman's (1978:85) view that *a noble hero fails through miscalculation, which arouses pity and fear* outlined in Chapter Two. This implies that readers

empathise with Chaka and experience *catharsis*. In terms of Chaka's flaw and his stature as king, the novel can therefore be classified as a classical tragedy.

Tragedy as it unfolds in plot in *Chaka* is observed to be character-based. This implies that all events are centralised around the character, Chaka. His life improves from bad to good and deteriorates from good to bad. These events are not haphazardly presented but are unified and constitute one single plot. This is so because there is no single event that does not relate to other events. All events have been properly arranged in terms of a cause-effect relationship to express tragedy in the life of the tragic character. We can therefore conclude that the expression of tragedy in *Chaka* is presented in terms of a uni-linear plot which enables the author to clearly express the change in the life of Chaka from good fortune to misfortune.

The fact that events occur in a single plot implies further that there are limited possibilities for sub-plots as well as sub-themes in the expression of tragedy in this novel. Conflict serves as the base on which plot develops in this narrative tragedy. In the development of the narrative cycle of the novel *Chaka* we have observed that it begins *ab ovo* as we are introduced to the family background of Chaka. *Ab ovo* is normally used in narrating the life history of the character (from birth) so as to trace and explain the change that took place in his life. Using the early point-of-attack to introduce conflict, the author manages to build the relationship between events in constituting a meaningful plot.

Theme in *Chaka* expresses tragedy in the sense that it is developed in terms of binary oppositions reflected through the life of Chaka. Chaka experiences tragedy in his relationship with two distinct sets of characters who maintain opposing ideologies and philosophies of life. Oppositions are reflected between the two qualities, namely good which is constructive and evil which is destructive. On the positive side, Chaka was associated with Nandi, Noliwa, Nongogo, Mnyamana and Dingiswayo whereas on the negative side, he was corrupted by the evil forces in the person of Isanusi, Ndlebe, Malunga and *morena wa madiba* (king of the deep). Isanusi led Chaka into misery as a result of which the theme could be drawn in terms of the relationship between these two binary oppositions, good and evil. This means that theme can be explained in terms of Chaka's strong and weak points. Theme is also captured in the presentation of Chaka

as a thematic character. Chaka emerges as symbolic and representing a specific general idea as Moody (1971) states that:

*Sometimes characters will seem to perform a more
symbolic role, in standing for certain general ideas
or themes*
(Moody 1971:49.)

The fact that Chaka is cast as a thematic character is also confirmed by Zulu (1999:55) in his contention that theme in both *Chaka* and *Mosali a nkholo* is determined on the basis of binary oppositions of good and bad. The theme is observed as it unfolds through the life of Chaka.

B. *Mphatlalatsane* (1947)

Tau is presented as an allegorical character who is only made to play the role of a type character or a caricature. As a result, he assumes a one-dimensional type of human nature and thus seems to lack the human element. This type of personality has a bearing on the expression of tragedy as readers are not encouraged to empathise with the tragic character. In other words, the character is presented in such a way that he seems to be distanced from qualities of a normal person. As a result, such characterisation in a way diminishes the opportunities for readers to perceive the effective expression of tragedy. Nevertheless, the presentation of tragedy in terms of characters of Tau's calibre verifies the fact that tragedy cannot necessarily be presented by way of round characters only, but also through flat characters.

The name *Tau* is used metaphorically and symbolically considering that the character Tau has the qualities of a lion. Images of the lion as the oppressive king of the wild are conjured up in the readers. Similarly, Tau does not heed advice from anybody. When advised by Moholo to kill Maphatsoe, his favourite bull, he simply ignores the advice and performs the *pseudo* or faked killing of Maphatsoe which eventually leads him to experience tragedy. In other words, the personality of Tau has a specific influence on his attitude towards other characters. The novel distinguishes itself as a classical tragedy on the basis of the high position assumed by Tau in

relation to other characters. He is a king and therefore his action affects his subjects. Tau as the tragic character has been made to play a prominent and central role in relation to other characters. Tragedy in this novel implies social upheaval and has serious repercussions in the society as a whole. It is therefore a classical tragedy.

Plot in *Mphatlalatsane* involves the development of serious events that signify tragedy not only to Tau but to the entire community as well. Nevertheless, the brutal attacks on Tau signified the climax in the unfolding of plot. Events are presented in such a way that the entire society experienced tragedy. A series of the brutal attacks on society implies that tragedy is expressed through a plot-centred novel. We also notice that these events are only based on one single issue (love of a bull) which motivates us to perceive plot as uni-linear. However, the author uses the late point-of-attack to present the conflict in this narrative tragedy as well as to find time to introduce the bull Maphatsoe. The bull Maphatsoe is initially introduced precisely because it turned later on to be the cause of conflict in this narrative tragedy.

The theme in *Mphatlalatsane* presents tragedy in terms of the unfolding of a series of tragic events. In other words, the author utilises events in order to present the underlying message regarding the plight of the society due to the fake killing of Maphatsoe. In this way, after the occurrence of tragedy there is a moral lesson expressed in that the author seems to encourage honesty and reliability as important aspects of life. Viewed from another perspective, Tau has led his people to experience tragedy due to his flaw. Seeing that Tau could not distinguish between right and wrong, theme could be based on his flaw in terms of the binary oppositions: good triumphs over evil.

We realise that the author provides a moral lesson reflecting only on what could happen to a character who fails to heed to the strict advice he has been given. The result, as presented, becomes bitter and tragic as it happened with Tau.

C. *Moiketsi* (1958)

Moiketsi is a modern tragedy. The character Moiketsi is presented as the tragic hero and

distinguishes himself as the central figure around whom the story unfolds. He presents his flaw by being irresponsible and adopting a care-free type of lifestyle. As a modern tragedy is characterised by characters being individuals who are ordinary people and whose miscalculations and downfalls do not affect the community, this novel therefore qualifies to be a modern tragedy. In terms of these features, we understand that Moiketsi experienced deterioration from good fortune to misfortune. Moiketsi distinguishes himself as a round character in terms of his capacity to shock readers by changing his lifestyle from benevolence to malevolence.

Tragedy in *Moiketsi* is largely plot-centred. This means that events play a prominent role. The fact that we are introduced to various instances when Moiketsi suffered because of his unbecoming moral behaviour, implies that the expression of tragedy hinges on successive events around Moiketsi as the central character. We also realise that plot in *Moiketsi* is simple and uni-linear in the sense that it only focuses on significant events that are relevant in expressing tragedy in this novel.

Theme in *Moiketsi* is presupposed by using the name *Moiketsi* meaning 'self-destroyer'. The name is deliberately given to the character in order to express the theme. The title of the text can be taken as the theme in this novel. Moiketsi destroyed himself. Given the name *Moiketsi* as the title of the text implies that readers can actually speculate what the theme would be as based on what could happen with the tragic character. Moiketsi's actions are significant in the establishment of the theme. Through Moiketsi's tragic experiences the author manages to convey the theme that an individual has to heed advice from his associates, peers and parents. Otherwise such a character would be doomed to misery. Moiketsi's entire life has been used to express the moral lesson that if one does not adhere to the advice of one's parents, one will eventually experience tragedy.

D. *Mosali a nkhole* (1960)

Tragedy in *Mosali a nkhole* is expressed in terms of Mosito as pre-eminently virtuous and of high social standing in relation to other characters. This characterises the novel to be of classical tradition in terms of the Greek philosophy regarding tragedy. The tragedy of the novel is

character-based as it is centred around the life of Mosito as the tragic character. Mosito is functional in the expression of tragedy in this novel as he allows himself to be swayed from his decisions in life by his wife at the end of which he had to be hanged. He fails to follow his father's advice of adhering to his manliness and independence and this brings his ultimate flaw.

Tragedy in *Mosali a nkholo* is intensified by the use of the name *Mosito*, which implies incapability or weakness. It is the very incapability of Mosito to uphold his father's advice that led him to calamity and this explains the expression of tragedy in this narrative tragedy. It is Mosito's human weakness of negligence and irresponsibility that lead him to tragedy. The name *Mosito* is derived from the verb *sitwa* meaning *being incapable*. The tragic atmosphere and tension is built into the novel because the human nature projected by the author about Mosito as the fallen hero is moving and emotionally appealing on the part of the reader.

Plot signifies tragedy in *Mosali a nkholo* in that it focusses on the deterioration process in the life of the main character, Mosito, from good fortune to misfortune. This generates elements of tragedy such as pity and fear (*catharsis*) on the part of the readers. Furthermore, the plot in this narrative tragedy is simple, which implies that it has one single issue and constitutes a uni-linear plot. The central focus in most events is on Mosito as the tragic character and this ensures a strict succession of events.

Theme in *Mosali a nkholo* presents Mosito being cast as a thematic character in the sense that events from the beginning show him as a good character who is forced to do bad. He is therefore the embodiment of the theme, good versus evil, where good triumphs over evil.

E. *Leshala le tswala molora* (1962)

Tragedy in *Leshala le tswala molora*, is expressed in terms of Teboho who is the tragic character employed to express tragedy in this novel. The tragedy is presented in terms of contrast of behaviour between Teboho and his father, Ramailane. Teboho's tragic flaw was that he failed to emulate his father Ramailane (in terms of good behaviour), who as a parent set a good example for him. He therefore forfeited his chances to pursue education but instead he engaged himself

in trivial love affairs as a consequence of which he even plotted to kill his wife, Lefulesele.

Unlike other characters (in other Sesotho tragedies) who do not notice their flaws, Teboho realises his weakness (*anagnorisis*) but tries to hide it. He once deceived his father, Ramailane about the death of his wife but unfortunately his secret was openly revealed beyond his expectation. This was the final moment for Teboho to realise his weakness but upon realising his flaw he collapsed and died.

Plot in *Leshala le tswala molora* is the unfolding of the tragic events experienced by Teboho. Tragic events are structured in such a way that they form a linear relationship with character and theme. In expressing tragedy, events form a strong relationship in this novel. Events follow each other in order to express the tragic change in the life of the main character, from good fortune to misfortune.

Theme in *Leshala le tswala molora* is based on the contrast implied by the concepts *leshala* (amber) and *molora* (ash) in the title of the novel. The words, namely *leshala* (amber) and *molora* (ash) signify direct opposites between Ramailane and his son, Teboho. Within the context of this novel, *leshala* (amber) refers to Ramailane whereas *molora* (ash) refers to his son, Teboho. It is self-evident that the author creates the impression that Teboho was as useless as ash. These antonyms are deliberately used to express tragedy in the life of Teboho who decided to adopt a useless and unbecoming type of life. In this way the theme implies that coal has produced ash. An explicit comparison between Ramailane (amber) and Teboho (ash) has been used to express tragedy in this novel. In this way, the author presents binary oppositions (good and bad) to express tragedy in this novel. We understand the moral lesson to be that Teboho reduced himself to nothingness (in terms of his behaviour) in the same way as ash is doomed to be useless.

5.3 THE EXPRESSION OF TRAGEDY IN LATER SESOTHO NOVELS

A. *Peo ena e jetswe ke wena* (1982)

The character in *Peo ena e jetswe ke wena*, namely, Samina, is presented as a one-dimensional character who represents a specific philosophy of life without changing even under strict circumstances. She is used as a flat character in terms of Forster's (1974) view regarding the classification of characters. Tragedy in the case of the above-mentioned character is basically not expressed in terms of the deterioration process but it is a matter of consistent defiance of specific and basic principles of humanity. Samina is the main character who has a flaw of seeking money in an unscrupulous way. She engages herself in a secret love affair with another woman's husband. To underpin her flaw, she has developed a tendency to disrespect Kgwapo's wife. She has also developed an excessive pride (*hubris*) that she has discovered human weaknesses in men and takes advantage thereof.

The name *Samina* has an extra-textual reference as it is derived from the name *Safira* in Acts Chapter Five in the Bible (Safira is reflected as an evil woman in the Bible) and the name is extrapolated to Samina who has common features with Safira. On the other hand, Samina is contrasted with Kgwapo, a family man who is haunted by his responsibility as a family man against his relationship with Samina. The name *Kgwapo* also has a specific significance as it implies waking up with a shock. Kgwapo was unprepared when taken up by Samina and when he realised his flaw, it was already too late. Readers therefore feel pity for him as he never planned to be emotionally and financially abused by Samina. As Samina is an ordinary person who does not command great influence on society, this novel can be classified as a modern tragedy.

Plot in *Peo ena e jetswe ke wena* is plot-centred and involves a single plot in a uni-linear pattern employed in this novel to present tragedy in the life of Samina, the main character. Significant events are linked together to effectively express tragedy in this novel. The events involving other supporting characters also relate to Samina as the central figure. These events develop in phases depending on the intensity of conflict in each phase. These events culminate in the total downfall

of the tragic hero. Samina intervened in the life of most of the characters and frustrated them without realising that at some stage those characters will also take revenge against her. In this regard, Samina wrecked and ruined the life of Kgwapo to the point that Kgwapo had to leave his family and disappear into the wilderness. Amos Mwana was crippled financially. Natona Khulatsi also fell into the trap of Samina even though he tried to escape. This is why the narrator presents Samina's remark about Natona as follows:

*Ha ho kgathalehe hore o ka leka ho qwaya hakaakang, o tla be
o pitlwe ke sefi sa ka, ha ho potang*
(Moephuli 1982:32).

(It does not matter whether you recognise it, you will eventually
fall into my trap. There is no alternative.)

The remark portrays the personality of Samina as an opportunist. It becomes also clear that social problems such as poverty and lack of financial resources motivated Samina to be involved in these kinds of events. In other words, the significance of the socio-economic factors cannot be under-estimated in trying to establish the motive behind the development of plot in the expression of tragedy in this particular novel.

Theme in *Peo ena e jetswe ke wena* involves the use of the title *Peo ena e jetswe ke wena* (you are the cause of trouble) which is repeated in the novel. The title operates as *leitmotif* and suggests the theme in the sense that it implies that there is someone who is the culprit. The use of *ke wena* (it is you) in the title motivates the underlying theme, namely to eradicate evil and to maintain the principles of righteousness. Theme is presented in terms of binary oppositions, namely the idea of righteousness (represented by Kgwapo) contrasted with evil (represented by Samina, an opportunist). Put simply, the theme can therefore imply that righteousness triumphs over evil. In this way, this novel has a specific moral lesson, namely that one should work for oneself and not depend on others. Kgwapo maintained a high moral ground even during difficult times whereas Samina has been consistent in abusing other characters emotionally and financially. In this way the author employs Samina to convey the message that one will reap the

fruits of one's toil. Samina could not expect to be free and live happily whereas she unnecessarily causes tension in the lives of her fellow characters.

The author has given Samina (as the tragic character) a typical human nature as a result of which she becomes convincing and generates pity and fear on the part of the readers. In this way readers feel empathy and place themselves in the position of Samina who only needed financial support (though in unscrupulous ways).

As a matter of fact, it becomes clear that tragedy in this novel is well-presented through the relationship between the three aspects of tragedy, namely, character, plot and theme.

B. *Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha* (1991)

The character in *Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha* namely, Kgama is presented as the tragic hero. Kgama is an ordinary person made to play a role of the tragic hero in this novel. This novel therefore qualifies to be a modern tragedy based on the nature of the tragic character. Kgama experiences internal conflict and eventually decides to leave school. This decision marks his tragic flaw. His flaw intensifies further when he leaves home to stay with his girlfriends, Dibakiso and later Sentebaleng. Kgama's tragic flaw is also characterised by his tendency of alienating himself from society by virtue of prejudice. He was too pompous and as such, adopted a foreign culture that runs parallel to his original culture. The modern lifestyle he adopted was opposed to the traditional practices prevalent within his social setting. The reason for Kgama's change of attitude (*peripeteia*) was mainly the peer influence in urban areas. Such influence even taught Kgama that his own culture, tradition and values are inferior from those of the urban and the modern. This is why Kgama deviated from his own culture and adopted an individualistic modern lifestyle.

Tragedy in *Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha* is presented in terms of a character-based plot. Events in Kgama's life are used to reflect his tragedy. These events have a specific meaning in terms of cause or effect relationship with reference to the ultimate downfall of Kgama. In all the instances of his love affairs with both Dibakiso and Sentebaleng, Kgama has not been successful

but suffered serious exploitation. In the worse scenario, he had been attacked by the two men who nearly killed him. Kgama can be perceived as a round character in terms of his change of attitude and his capacity of shocking other characters. Seeing that the changes in the life of Kgama signified a shift from good fortune to misfortune, the novel characterises itself as a tragedy.

Theme in *Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha* is moralistic in the sense that the author seems to use Kgama in order to demonstrate the frustration that one would encounter if one decides to leave home as well as abandon one's education. It becomes easy for the author to express the theme because he focuses on the process of deterioration in the life of the character. The theme communicated seems to be that one has to be able to distinguish between good and bad and make correct choices in one's life. It is within the context of these binary oppositions that theme is formulated. Character and plot as aspects of tragedy are unified and used in expressing the underlying message or theme. Kgama becomes the thematic character in the sense that he has been given a role to play in order to communicate the specific theme. As Kgama decided to alienate himself from his family, the author seems to communicate the message that society condemns such behaviour unequivocally and insists that one should adhere to one's culture.

As a matter of fact, it becomes clear that tragedy in this novel is expressed through a close relationship between the three aspects of tragedy, namely, character, plot and theme. It therefore follows that each aspect of tragedy has a role to play in the presentation of tragedy in this narrative tragedy.

C. *Nna ke mang* (1991)

The character in *Nna ke mang*, namely, Tsholedi, is the tragic character who is presented as an ordinary person but has a tragic flaw. In this way, this novel distinguishes itself as a modern tragedy. Tsholedi alienated himself during difficult times and decided not to share his problems with other characters. As a result, he contemplated killing people in retaliation. We therefore realise a change in the life of the character (*peripeteia*). Tsholedi as the main tragic character was the centre of focus in all events in the novel. In many ways other characters are related to him.

Tsholedi, for instance, was offended by his wife for selling liquor at his place without any permission. Nthapeleng took advantage of the fact that Tsholedi was poor and he therefore proposed love to his wife. Moferefere took advantage that Tsholedi left home and also proposed love to Mmatsekiso. Tsekiso wanted to keep his father informed about what happens at home but instead such reports aggravated more tension on the part of Tsholedi. Despite the fact that Tsholedi had been honest and responsible as a man in maintaining the family, he was eventually led into tragedy and given a life sentence. Tsholedi, the tragic character had in-deed been the victim of circumstances.

The author employed names such as *Mmatsekiso* and *Nthapeleng* indirectly to signify tragedy in the life of Tsholedi. It is no wonder that Tsholedi changed and assumed a different type of lifestyle as Kgodumodumo (Gigantic monster). The name *Kgodumodumo* has been deliberately used to show that Tsholedi has changed and assumed a position in which he can be perceived as a threat and hazard to the lives of other characters. The emotions of pity and fear are generated as Tsholedi obtains a death sentence. Readers know that Mmatsekiso is the one who instigated the whole mess to disintegrate and destabilise the family.

The development of plot in the novel *Nna ke mang* is character-based and structured in such a way that we realise a change in the life of the tragic character. Events are centred around the life of Tsholedi as the tragic character. These events are meant to express tragedy in the life of Tsholedi in terms of a significant change in his life from good state (Tsholedi) to bad state (Kgodumodumo). As a matter of fact, events reflect that the change in the life of Tsholedi has been realised when he left his place and acted as if he is going to seek employment in Johannesburg. As in *Mopheme* by Matlosa, Tsholedi disguised to be an old man called Kgodumodumo so that he could not be recognised when he retaliates against those people who always visit and drink beer at his house.

He always complained that those drunkards spoiled his house and thus lower its dignity.

Theme in *Nna ke mang* is expressed in terms of Tsholedi's efforts to fight against evil (benevolence as opposed to malevolence). In this sense, binary oppositions are employed to

explain the establishment of the theme. As Tsholedi experienced a change in his life from good fortune to misfortune, the author utilises this process of deterioration to communicate the message that one has to accentuate the positive in life. Readers are actually moralised through Tsholedi's tragedy that they should try to persevere in life but not lose hope or resort to violence in solving problems.

D. *Ke lesheleshele leo a iphehletseng lona* (1992)

The character in *Ke lesheleshele leo a iphehletseng lona*, namely, Mahlelehlele acts as the main tragic hero even though her mother, 'Mamahlelehlele also played a pivotal role. Mathabang who had been Mahlelehlele's girlfriend also played an important role towards the expression of tragedy in this novel. The negative attitude that Mahlelehlele displayed is his change of attitude to people because he was overprotected by his mother. This made him to always fight women at home, except Mathabang who killed him by feeding him an African poison. 'Mamahlelehlele played a significant role that resulted in the process of deterioration of her son. Mahlelehlele is in this sense the tragic character who encountered tragic events throughout his life because of his weakness of allowing his mother to overprotect him. He is also presented as an ordinary person who does not command any influence on the masses of the people in his society and therefore tragedy in this novel can be described as modern.

Plot in *Ke lesheleshele leo a iphehletseng lona* is based on events centred around Mahlelehlele, the tragic character. We are introduced to a series of events where Mahlelehlele serves people to earn money so that he can also maintain his mother. In this way, we realise that the development of plot is reinforced by the socio-economic factors. Mahlelehlele's life was not happy as he was unsuccessful in all events during his marriages. He could not manage to live happily with any of his wives because of the influence that his mother had over him which affected other people in their society. We conclude therefore that tragedy is presented in terms of a plot-centred novel. Seeing that Mahlelehlele was involved in a number of events where he experienced tragedy, it becomes clear that the author aims to express tragedy through events.

Theme in *Ke lesheleshele leo a iphehletseng lona* involves the role of Mahlelehlele. It

demonstrates the suffering of a spoilt child with a view to present a moral lesson. As we have already indicated that other characters such as 'Mamahlehlele and Mathabang had specific roles to play, their involvement in the development of conflict affect the theme. There are therefore possibilities for sub-themes based on ideas represented by these other characters. The main theme is however implied by the title of the novel itself. This means that in all the tragic events the character is to blame himself. In all the events we find Mahlehlele having nothing at all except the clothes he is wearing.

Before Mahlehlele left for Johannesburg, it was remarked that he had nothing at all but even when he returned, he still had nothing at all. The idea is probably to show that Mahlehlele is to blame himself for having turned his life into nothingness. In this regard, Mahlehlele should blame himself for leaving school, joining gang in Johannesburg, being attacked by an unknown gangster and for being poisoned by his girlfriend Mathabang. Another major weakness that ensures that Mahlehlele should blame himself is that he was irresponsible at work and as such he often lost jobs. This implied tragedy in the life of Mahlehlele which he imposed on himself. The tragic events that Mahlehlele encountered confirm the theme of self-destruction and the tragic repercussions thereof as suggested in the title of this particular narrative tragedy.

E. *Lehlaba la lephako* (1999)

The character in *Lehlaba la lephako*, namely, Seabata is presented as a flat character who plays a one-dimensional role in the narrative tragedy. This characterisation has an influence on the expression of tragedy in that it reduces the effectiveness of tragedy on the part of readers. In this way, readers are convinced that Seabata is merely a character and does not have human qualities. We should remember that tragedy emulates life and the seriousness of tragedy can only be realised when readers empathise with the tragic character.

Seabata is the tragic character whose flaw is to sacrifice his own people, his own culture, and his own fellow men to please a foreigner. His tragic flaw was his ignorance as he never thought that some people may disclose his secret to his employer. Very little did Seabata realise that he would eventually land in trouble by harassing people. Tragedy generates pity and fear on readers as they

realised that Seabata was facing tragedy unwaveringly. It was too late for him to change and that is what brings about tragedy in this novel.

The name *Seabata* is derived from the verb *bata* meaning *cold*. Seabata has *cold* relationships with other characters. He is the cause of tension in his family as he does not listen when his wife advises him to cease harassing his fellow workers. Swanepoel turned his back on Seabata when reported about the crime he committed.

Tragedy in *Lehlaba la lephako* is plot-centred. Significant tragic events are organised together and are unified in a single plot to express Seabata's tragic end. Tragedy occurs through rising action and falling action as a result of which Seabata experiences tragedy. Seabata discovered in vain that Swanepoel was actually not trusting him as he always thought. Events are structured in such a way that we realise the development of plot and the establishment of the theme.

Theme in *Lehlaba la lephako* is moralistic. In terms of Seabata's relationship with other characters, the author tries to show that Seabata communicates an unpleasant theme to his fellow characters. His tragic fall is rejoiced in the sense that it implies that good triumphs over evil. The tragic end of Seabata links with Chatman's (1978) identification of the fatal plots as specified in Chapter Two. Despite the poor socio-economic conditions Seabata and other farm labourers were exposed to, it was necessary for a person in his capacity to maintain good human relations at work. The character of Seabata is employed by the author to communicate the moral values as part of the theme and educate the reader about a sound working environment and how it affects production in a job situation. In this way, the theme is also emphasised. As in other modern tragedies, the relationship between the character and the plot culminates in the theme of the novel. We can therefore conclude that theme in this novel can be established through fixed relationship between character and plot.

5.4 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Regarding the characters in most tragedies, we realise that in many events characters leave home, abandon school, engage in trivial love affairs, do not heed any advice from other characters and

deteriorate eventually due to disrespect towards their parents and their teachers. We can therefore conclude that tragedy in early and later Sesotho novels is greatly influenced by environmental and social factors within which the character finds himself.

Most characters in early Sesotho novels originate from royal families and therefore assume positions of great social magnitude with the exception of *Moiketsi* and *Leshala le tswala molora*, tragedy presented in their case is classical in terms of the Greek tradition. Unlike in early Sesotho novels, characters in later Sesotho novels are ordinary people who merely act blindly because of the social needs in the environment where they find themselves. This is why later Sesotho novels are regarded as modern because characters tend to neglect communal life (communalism) but operate in terms of their own individual needs (individualism).

There is basically no difference in the use of the plot in early and later Sesotho novels because in the two periods tragedy is presented as uni-linear. This is so because events are consistent on one central issue in every narrative tragedy. Events are arranged in such a way that they constitute a meaningful whole, namely, the expression of tragedy. In *Chaka*, for instance, we find a complex change from bad to good but again end the tragedy with the most significant change, namely, a change from good to bad. This implies that tragedy is determined by what finally happens with the main character. In this particular case, the final event should imply the suffering, torture, misfortune or even death of the tragic character, hence tragedy.

Regarding theme, tragedy in most early Sesotho novels is caused by the socio-political factors. In early novels kingship is of high social preference whereas in later Sesotho novels the socio-economic factors are more favourable. In early novels characters are inclined to boost their ego by fulfilling their own individual needs at the expense of others. Sesotho novelists moralise against any form of unsocial behaviour. This serves as the reason why most themes in early and later Sesotho novels are moralistic. There are other thematic factors such as low economic factors, *makgoweng-motif* which account for the tragic flaw relating to some of the tragic heroes in Sesotho novels.

We have also realised that there are adverse social factors such as poverty, family problems, lack

of employment opportunities, juvenile delinquency, witchcraft and many others that cause the main characters to have flaws that lead them to experience tragedy. Because different characters adopted different coping strategies against these negative factors, both early and later Sesotho novelists moralised against non-social and unethical behaviour and showed through themes how characters' actions culminated in tragedy. This is the reason most themes in the selected Sesotho novels are interpreted in terms of the thematic factors (good triumphs over evil). Themes selected in early and later Sesotho novels are based on thematic characters employed to determine and actually explain the theme through their actions. In this regard, the character experiences the deterioration.

Round and flat characters are used as tragic in early and later Sesotho novels. We have observed however that the expression of tragedy does not rely on the 'flatness' or the 'roundness' of the character. What is important to note is that the character experiences tragedy if he made miscalculation of his chance in life. We can even add that the magnitude of tragedy does not depend on whether the character is round or flat but on the specific status that the character has in his particular society.

Also, the titles of the novels *Moiketsi*, *Leshala le tswala molora*, *Peo ena e jetswe ke wena* and *Ke lesheleshele leo a iphehletseng lona* are too self-explanatory and as such precipitate speculations of the underlying themes in those novels. In terms of these titles, the specified novels seem to be monologic as titles diminish the possibilities for diverse interpretations of possible themes and sub-themes in these novels. However, the early novels such as *Chaka*, *Mphatlalatsane* and *Mosali a nkholo* seem to be polyphonic novels in terms of the open titles used. These titles are open in the sense that they increase possibilities for various interpretations of themes in these novels. Furthermore, the reader is encouraged to have an active participation in the establishment of themes as well as empathise with tragic characters in the given polyphonic novels.

Unlike Aristotle who gives preference to plot and Altenbernd (1966) who gives preference to character, the researcher in this work maintains that all the aspects of tragedy function inseparably in the expression of tragedy. When Zulu (1998) determines that there is a symbiotic

relationship between character and plot, the researcher takes it further that such a relationship is regulated by theme. This means that theme serves as the unifying system of all aspects of tragedy. We can generally conclude that the three aspects of tragedy, namely, character, plot and theme function jointly and inseparably in the expression of tragedy in the Sesotho novels selected for the purpose of this study.

The expression of tragedy in Sesotho novels has shown that there is a change from drama (*mimesis*) to novel (*diagesis*) as available channels through which tragedy is expressed in Sesotho literature. In this way, the expression of tragedy in Sesotho novels implies that another channel is open through which tragedy can be expressed in Sesotho literature. This also implies that there is a development in Sesotho literature in general and Sesotho novels in particular (from *mimesis* to *diagesis*). This observation confirms Jafta's (1996) view that the contemporary view of tragedy is that it extends beyond drama (the tragic). In other words, all the Sesotho novels selected for this study can either be tragedies in terms of the deterioration process of the tragic character or the tragic in terms of the presentation of tragedy beyond the confinement of drama.

Even though Jafta (1996) distinguishes between tragedy and the tragic, the researcher maintains that there is actually no significant distinction between the two. The researcher maintains further that the two concepts, namely tragedy and the tragic can actually be used interchangeably seeing that they both signify the tragic end of the character. What Jafta specifies as a difference is only a matter of technicality regarding the literary genre used in the expression of tragedy. Otherwise, the events experienced by the tragic character are the same in either case. We can therefore conclude that tragedy and the tragic essentially mean the same.

Finally, this study should be considered as another way of ensuring the development in the recording and improvement of tragedy in Sesotho literature. It also places Sesotho literature in its proper literary perspective in its relation with other forms of literature. In this regard, the expression of tragedy in Sesotho novels is an index of the development of Sesotho tragedies in relation to other famous tragedies like the Greek tragedy. Researchers and readers in general can study further in developing the expression of tragedy in Sesotho novels. We submit as part of our contribution in this research that early and later Sesotho novels can be taken as yet another

channel (except drama) through which tragedy can be expressed in Sesotho literature. We have also shown that there is a development in the presentation of tragedy in Sesotho novels from the early classical to the later modern Sesotho tragedies.

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