

A CRITICAL LITERARY SURVEY OF THOMAS
MOFOLO'S WRITINGS.

by

JOHANNES MÓLUPE MOKOENA TEKATEKA
HONS. B.A. (S.A.)

Submitted to satisfy the requirements for the
degree of M.A. in the Department of Bantu
Languages in the University of South Africa.

September, 1967.

+++++

Acknowledgements.

While my debt to all those, who have helped so generously in so many ways, is enormous, there are certain persons, however, whose aid must be individually acknowledged.

My heart felt thanks are due, first and foremost, to my supervisor or promoter, Professor D. Ziervogel of the Department of BANTU LANGUAGES, University of South Africa, for his many valuable criticisms; for much good advice and for his never-failing encouragement, without which I do not think this work could ever have been finished. Although I cannot hope to have done justice to his deep insight and understanding of Bantu Literature, still I gratefully acknowledge the fact that the way I have organised my material and the enthusiasm that has enabled me to complete this study, this and much more, I owe to his encouragement and guidance which led me to scrap a first draft and start again. I have benefited immensely from this privilege which is due to Professor's patience for which I am most grateful.

My profound gratitude goes to the grand old man, Mr. Z.D. Mangwaela, one of the old Basotho writers, who was generous indeed with both time and information. He knew Thomas Mofolo very well. They were at school together and later worked at Morija Printing Press and book depot. He allowed me to make use of his unique private collection of material and old copies of the newspaper, LESEDINYANE; and to draw on his great knowledge of the period under review. I have benefited greatly from the discussions we had with this friendly old man. His death, on the 25th October, 1963, was an irreparable loss for the country and for the students of Sotho Literature.

I am especially grateful to Mr. Mosebi Damane B.A. who was principal of BERENG SECONDARY SCHOOL. He put at my disposal

some of his books. Furthermore he allowed himself time, and freely transported me to Kgojane's, the birth place of Thomas Mofolo, and to Qomoqomong, the valley referred to in the dissertation.

Grateful acknowledgement is due to Mr. Victor M. Moloi for his excellent work in typing and setting up the manuscripts.

It is impossible to end this list without acknowledging the great debt I owe to Mrs. Ema Mmababy Mofolo, the step wife of Thomas Mofolo, for her valuable knowledge of her husband's history which she narrated to me so unreservedly.

J.M.M. TEKATEKA.

University of Botswana, Lesotho & Swaziland,
P.O. ROMA,
LESOTHO.

CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 9
II. "MOETI WA BOTJHABELA"	10 - 24
III. "PITSENG"	25 - 43
IV. "TJHAKA"	44 - 74
V. MOFOLO'S CHARACTERIZATION	75 - 80
VI. MOFOLO'S LANGUAGE AND STYLE	81 - 92
VII. AN EVALUATION OF MOFOLO AS A WRITER	93 - 98
BIBLIOGRAPHY	99 - 101

+++++

A CRITICAL LITERARY SURVEY
OF THOMAS MOFOLO'S WRITINGS.

CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

The Literature Until Mofolo.

Sotho literature before the advent of missionaries in Basutoland was an unwritten literature, a heritage of oral tradition which has been perpetuated in the memory of the people by repeated narration. Basotho oral literature is exceedingly rich and of diverse types: proverbs, riddles, war songs, praises, folk-tales, legends, historical tales, love songs, funeral homilies, fables and satiric songs etc. This oral tradition has been handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. The heroic deeds of kings and warriors were recounted in historic narratives or in songs and praises. Much of Basotho history especially wars can be traced through these war songs, (MEKOROTLO) and praises (DITHOKO). Proverbs (MAELE) form a great part of this heritage and do adorn Sotho literature of modern times.

Proverbs are a collection of the experiences of a people, experiences some of which have been learned the hard way. These experiences are stored in this special manner, and from generation to generation they passed on, ever fresh and ever true. The new experiences of the younger generations are themselves embalmed in this special manner, and in that way the language is enriched more and more.¹⁾

Riddles (DILOTHO) form another type of Basotho folklore.

Like proverbs riddles are educational in their content, which is based on experience and observation. Their main function is to entertain and are a test of memory and quickness of wit.

1) Prof. C.L.S. Nyembezi, Zulu Proverbs, p. xii.

they also contain elaborate and rich linguistic forms. Folk-tales and fables (DITSHOMO) are stories which are interwoven with songs (couplets and refrain) to hold attention, this being an excellent, old African way of telling stories. In this way such stories are at once instructive and entertaining. While oral literature instructs and educates it also fixes the form of traditional language which has remained pure and uncontaminated by borrowing from foreign languages.

We are more than grateful to Rev. E. Jacottet, the most gifted linguist and philologist, who wrote two volumes of Basotho folk tales which he collected and preserved for generations to come. In this way he assisted and encouraged the growth of the spirit and love for writing literature amongst the Basotho people. We thank Mr A. SEKESE who made a good collection of Basotho customs and proverbs in his book, MEKGWA LE MAELE A BASOTHO. We are indebted to Mr Zakea D. MANGWABLA for his wonderful collection of the praises of the Basotho Chiefs, DITHOKO TSA MARENA A BASOTHO. Also a mention, must be made in this connection, of a book, the title of which is SENKATANA by the late Dr. MOFOKENG, a drama in which the story of this legendary hero is recalled.

A Part Played by Missionaries in Sotho Literature.

Education as we understand it began in Basutoland under the leadership of the early missionaries. The members of the Paris Evangelical Mission who settled in the Country in 1833, were the pioneers. The Roman Catholic Mission followed in 1862, and the English Church Mission in 1876.²⁾

In 1833, no other European settlements were yet to be found on the northern side of the Orange River, with the exception of the missions established by the ...

2) Basutoland, Report of the Director of Education of the year 1954 P. 3.

London Society at KURUMAN and Phillipolis, and the Wesleyan Society at Platberg on the Vaal.

The French missionaries who settled at MORIJA in 1833 soon felt the need for books written and printed in Sesotho, the language of Basotho, which at that time had never been reduced to writing. In 1837 Rev. Thomas Arbousset published the first Sotho booklet ever produced. Its title was BUKANIANE EA TAPALO LE EA SEKOLE (Little Book of Prayer and School). It contained a short account of Bible history. The printing of this booklet was done in Cape Town. Then followed two other booklets (translations of the Bible or Bible extracts) namely SEYO SA DIPELO (The Food of the Hearts) by Rev. Arbousset, and TOPOLLO E ENTSWENG KE JESU KRESTE (Redemption by Jesus Christ) written by Rev. Eugene Casalis. In 1844 a hymn book known as DIFELA TSA SIONE containing 100 Sesotho hymns, words only, was ready. The new Testament was translated by Messrs S. Rolland and E. Casalis and the work was completed in 1855.

In 1860 Rev. Adolphe Mabile arrived in Basutoland and was placed at Morija.

He was the most accomplished representative of his generation. His influence over his colleagues, even the older ones, as well as over the Basotho themselves, was absolutely unique.³⁾

His aim was to evangelise the Basotho people through the Basotho themselves. To carry out such a plan the Paris Evangelical Mission Society aimed at producing sufficient and competent Basotho teachers or evangelists to man their schools and churches. The urgent necessity for a training institution was keenly felt by the new missionaries and particularly by Rev. Mabile.

He understood, better perhaps than any other South African Missionary, how greatly the development of a

3) Ellenberger, A Century of Mission Work in Basutoland, P. 116.

literature in the vernacular could advance the service of God.⁴⁾

He, on his own initiative, introduced Printing Press at Morija in 1861, and in 1862 a Book Depot was established. In 1864 he started the publication of a small monthly Sesotho Newspaper, LESEDINYANE LA LESOTHO (The Little Light of Basutoland), the oldest African Newspaper in South Africa. At this time many books in the vernacular were printed at Morija Printing Press. At this very time Rev. A. Mabile was busy translating John Bunyan's book, "The Pilgrim's Progress", one of the best books that could have been circulated among the Basotho Christians. Sesotho translation of this book is known as LEEFO LA MOKRESTE (The Journey of a Christian). Books printed from 1870 to 1880 have laid the foundation of any Sesotho literature we may have now and they form the substratum upon which all subsequent works have been built. "Sesotho Grammar" and "Sesotho-English Dictionary" appeared in 1876 and 1878. From 1882 to his death in 1894 Rev. A. Mabile printed a comparatively large number of new important books. He wrote a Sesotho phrase book called PUISANO. Till he died he was in charge of the whole work of the Printing Press and Book Depot at Morija. On his death-bed, his last charge to his sorrowing colleagues was:

Write books for the Basotho.⁵⁾

After Rev. A. Mabile's death the Mission Conference placed Rev. Alfred Casalis over the Printing Press and Book Depot. He wrote Sesotho-English Vocabulary. When he returned to Europe Rev. Samuel Duby succeeded him. He wrote a book known as TSA LEHODIMO LE TSA LEFATSHE (Lessons on Geography). In 1909 was started a new series of new Graduated Sesotho Readers known as DIPADISO TSA SESOTHO, adapted to new Basutoland school code. Most of the subject matter has reference

4) E. Jacottet, The Morija Printing Office and Book Depot, P. 12.

5) E. Jacottet, The Morija Printing Office and Book Depot, P. 13.

to South Africa or Basutoland, and nearly all articles were written by Basotho themselves, encouraged by Rev. S. Duby, the then manager of the Printing Press at Morija.

Mofolo's Life and Times.

Before attempting anything like a study of Mofolo and his works, it will be well to try and realise something of his surroundings, his contemporaries and the literature of his time. We have seen how indebted we are to the Paris Evangelical Mission Society for the beginning of Sotho Literature. They were the first to reduce the language to writing in order to further their own purpose namely conversion of pagans to Christianity. They were also the first to write grammars on the language; to compile vocabularies and dictionaries and to translate the scriptures into the vernacular. It was under the guidance and inspiration of these Christian Missionaries that the Basotho authors emerged. Morija is, indeed, the cradle of modern Sotho Literature. All the old Basotho writers were educated at Morija. They were trained as teachers in the training school, and as evangelists in the Bible school. Almost all worked at the Printing Press and Book Depot at Morija. Some even taught in both training and Bible schools.

Taking the chief writers of Mofolo's age roughly in their chronological order, we come first to Mr Azariel Sekese, (1849-1930) the writer of PITSO YA DINONYANA, a satire on Basotho procedure in their courts; and MEKGWA LE MAELE A BASOTHO (Customs and Proverbs of the Basotho), a valuable collection of Basotho folklore and tradition. The second writer is Mr Everitt Lechesa Segwete (1858-1923) who wrote RAPHEPHENG (Father of Scorpion) the name of an old Mosotho who tells us about the good olden days when Basotho used to be in their natural state, healthy, unaffected and untainted by Western Civilisation. Another book by the same author is

MONONO KE MOHODI KE MOUWANE in which the writer narrates his own personal experiences and escapades while he was wandering in the Cape Colony; and how ultimately he discovered faith that gave meaning to his life and was converted. The third writer is Mr Edward Motsamai (1870-1959), the writer of MEHLA YA MADIMO (In those days of Cannibals) a collection of exciting stories of that period of general unrest in the history of the Basotho people. The fourth is the most industrious and by no means the least distinguished of the writers of Mofolo's time, Mr Zakea D. Mangwaela (1883-1963). Influenced by Rev. R.H. Dyke and Rev. S. Duby, Mr Mangwaela was one of the writers that helped to produce graduated Sesotho Readers (DIPADISO). But his real first contribution to Sotho literature was a book entitled TSWELOPELE YA LESOTHO (Progress of Basutoland) published in 1911. His second book was HAR'A DIBATANA LE DINYAMATSANE (During the time of beasts and animals), a collection of short stories concerning the adventures of hunters and travellers with wild animals. He also made a collection of the praises of the Basotho chiefs which he compiled into a book known as DITHOKO TSA MAREFA A LESOTHO.

These writers, the contemporaries of Mofolo, deserve a special mention in the history of Sotho literature, for they distinctly mark the dawn of the new age, the real moment of birth of our modern Sotho literature. They are writers who have the barest rudiments of learning, and cannot boast of any literary ancestry. These pioneers of Sotho literature were beginning to shape the rough materials of their mother tongue into something like literary form for the various purposes of instruction and entertainment. In this way an appetite for literature has been fostered, and an immense impetus given to the growing love of everything that makes for the enrichment of life. The works of these early Basotho writers became a well-spring of inspiration to Mofolo and to many modern writers of Sotho

literature. Thus these budding Basotho writers made a remarkable contribution to the humble beginning of their own Sotho literature in their own Sotho language.

Having had a fleeting glance at the early Basotho writers, contemporaries of Thomas Mofolo, I must now dwell on the life history of Mofolo himself, and then discuss his achievement in the field of Sotho literature. Thomas Mofolo is the son of Mr. Abinere Ra-Mofolo and Alitta Mmapeko. Both were Christians, members of the P.E.M.S.'s church. Thomas was born in 1877 at Kgojane's in Mafeteng district. Afterwards his parents left Kgojane's and settled in Qomoqomong in the district of Quthing. He grew up among beautiful surroundings, in a fertile valley with excellent pastures and grain lands; surrounded by mountains, hills and kloofs which were still covered with natural forests. The streams flowed down the many gorges into the bigger river called Qomoqomong on whose banks were rich fields of wheat, mealies and sorghum. Mofolo gave this valley a characteristic name of PITSENG (At the pot) because to him it looked like a pot in shape. The name PITSENG became the title of one of his novels. Mofolo was a quiet, shy and reserved boy, who played and herded cattle with the other Basotho boys. He attended a small primary school in Qomoqomong under Mr. Everitt Lechesa Segwete whom Mofolo loved and admired so much.

Having completed his primary education in Qomoqomong Mofolo went to Masitise Mission school. From here he proceeded to Morija, where he studied theology in the Bible school, and then took a teachers' course which he completed in about 1898. It is at Morija Training where Mofolo met Mr. Z.D. Mangwaela, who had just come and was younger than Mofolo himself.

During his scholastic career Mofolo was advised and assisted financially by Rev. R.H. Dyke. After completing he was employed by Rev. A. Casalis at the Book Depot in Morija. He remained in this work until the end of 1899 when war broke out

(the Anglo-Boer war). The Morija Printing Press and Book Depot ceased to function on account of this war. Thomas Mofolo moved to LELWALENG industrial school where he qualified as a carpenter. From here he went to Bensonvale Institute where he taught for a year. Rev. R.H. Dyke called him back to Basutoland and gave him a teaching post in Maseru. After the war the Printing Press and Book Depot re-opened and started functioning once more. Mofolo was re-employed by Rev. A. Casalis and he remained in this post until 1910 when he was replaced by Mr Z.D. Mangwaela.

At the joint offices of Book Depot and Printing Press where LESEDINYANE the oldest Sesotho Newspaper was printed and published, Mofolo acted as a clerk and a proof-reader of the manuscripts of books to be printed. He read the religious and historical books then published, and some novels by European writers such as John Bunyan and Sir H. Rider Haggard, etc. Once more Mofolo left Morija and went to the Gold Mines in Johannesburg to do piece work. A certain Mr Taberer sent him back to Basutoland in 1912 to be a labour agent for the ECKSTEIN group of mines. But afterwards Mofolo recruited in his own name, and for whomsoever he wished. He recruited labour for gold and diamond mines; for sugar plantations in Natal; for collieries and farm work.

He opened business in Teyateyaneng where he had a grinding mill. He entered into some contract with the government to carry post between Teyateyaneng and Mapoteng at the foot of the mountains. He owned a trading store at Bokong in the mountain area of Basutoland. It is here where he did a lot of missionary work. He conducted Sunday services at different places; and with his own material (corrugated iron) helped to put up some churches, one at Madingwaneng, another at Kgopung. Ill-health forced him to sell his business in favour of a farm which he purchased in Matatiele district, where he

lived for four years. Thereafter he and his family returned to Teyateyaneng in Basutoland quite impoverished and sickly. He died in 1949, at the age of about 62.

Mofolo's long connection with the Morija Printing Press and Book Depot made him naturally interested in books. It gave him the opportunity of acquainting himself with the literary achievements of the other Basotho writers of his time. By proof-reading the manuscripts and reading books already published his love for writing was stimulated. His employers, Rev. A. Casalis and Rev. S. Duby encouraged him to write Sesotho books. In 1906 the Lesedinyane began to publish in a serial form his first book "Moeti wa Botjhabela" (The traveller of the East). This was followed in 1910 by PITSENG. His third and last book is "Tjhaka". It differed from the first two in that it did not have moral considerations, and it took missionaries by surprise. They were reluctant to publish it and this explains the reason why "Tjhaka" was published in 1925, long after Mofolo had left Morija. Each of these novels will be discussed critically and in detail in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 11.

"Moeti Wa Botjhabela"

The Plot.

"Moeti Wa Botjhabela" is the first of the three books Thomas Mofolo wrote and it was published in 1906. We do find some influence of John Bunyan's book in "Moeti Wa Botjhabela" but this influence does not begin until the height of Fekisi's internal conflict is reached and he decides to leave his home country, relatives and friends. Some comparison between Bunyan's book and that of Mofolo may clarify the nature of influence if any.

Bunyan's book the "Pilgrim's Progress" is the history of the struggle of human nature to overcome temptation and shake off the bondage of sin. It is the story of a man named Christian who sets out on a journey weighted with a heavy burden of sins. His story is delivered under the similitude of a dream. But Mofolo's man named Fekisi leaves home as a perfect man who led an exemplary life in a godless world, a world of sinners. He can no longer tolerate this world and would very much like to go to the world of eternal good and happiness. He carries no bundle of sins himself but is full of religious doubts and searching questions. He has no temptations to overcome. His main quest is to find that Eternal love who rules the universe, that is, God himself who is the source of life, light and truth.

Christian leaves home and is accompanied by Faithful. He delights in human companionship and undertakes a journey in hearty human fellowship which accounts for the homely and lively dialogue, which adds to the charming and pleasant style in which the "Pilgrim's Progress" is written. They engage in a conversation in a desire to divert each other and forget the destruction and death which they have left behind.

Christian was fortunate because he met the three angels who assured him that his sins were forgiven, and they gave him a comforting scroll to read and to serve as a testimonial to be handed in at the Celestial Gate. Fekisi, on the other hand, shuns man's company and runs away from it. He stole out of his own home and had nobody to keep him company and to share with him the troubles and the tribulations of his lonely journey. He had no paper or scroll to comfort him or to offer as a testimony. Unlike Christian he did not run away from any destruction and death; he did not err into the wrong paths. There were no powers of evil to snare him or entice him away from his chosen path. The steadfastness of his faith was unshaken by adverse circumstances. Faith was his comfort, prayer his source of hope and confidence. After every prayer he felt an inward voice encouraging and urging him with a force of commandment to seek for the truth and to look for God until he found him.

On the way Christian was clothed in armour, given a good sword and was ready for any eventuality. He was supplied with a loaf of bread, a bottle of wine and a cluster of raisins to satisfy his hunger and thirst. With a sword Christian fought and defeated Apollyon, the foul fiend who blocked the way.

✓ Fekisi left home armed with primitive Sotho weapons, the spear, a battle-axe and a shield. With these he managed to kill a lion and a lioness with which he came across unexpectedly. To alleviate suffering from hunger and thirst Fekisi depended on chance; wild animals extended to him some unusual kindness; lions left their prey for him to get meat; springbok presented itself to him to be killed in order that he gets meat and drinks its blood; another animal led him to a spring to drink water.

We miss from "Moeti wa Botjhabela" a host of familiar symbols found in the "Pilgrim's Progress", taken from the

personal impressions of the author, John Bunyan. He was able to observe many of his fellows. He gave his characters such apt names as Worldly Wiseman, Talkative, Hypocrisy, Watchful, Faithful etc; and noted the courage of some, the vacillations, the evasions, the various egotisms, and the hypocrisies of others. With a natural talent he was able to weave together his thousand observations into an allegory. What is also lacking in "Moeti Wa Botjhabela" is the superabundance of scriptural references found in the "Pilgrim's Progress".

In "Moeti Wa Botjhabela" Mofolo prays rather than quotes scriptures, and has always assumed that God has heard his prayer and has through a mysterious voice granted that which he requested in his prayer.

The only Major point of similarity between these books is that they both delineate life as a journey beset with pitfalls, dangers and despair to the next world. But they differ in their manner of execution. Bunyan sees to it that in addition to company, relief and joy Christian should be given hope and encouragement. Thomas Mofolo makes his hero trudge the arduous journey alone, in loneliness and fear as well as despair. He makes the reader doubt whether Fekisi will ever reach the desired destiny.

Before reaching his goal Christian sees in front of him a deep river, over which there is no bridge. The crossing of this river depended upon the depth and shallowness of his belief in God. He entered the river and began to sink. A great horror and darkness fell upon him and could no longer see. When he recovered he found that he had reached the other side. Similarly Fekisi saw before him a limitless sea which he did not know how to cross. His strength began to fail. He was weak and much enfeebled by fever. Finally he fainted. When he recovered his senses he found three white men standing around him. They took him into their ship and sailed across the sea with him.

From the above comparison it is clear that Mofolo did
* borrow some material from the "Pilgrim's Progress" but did not
imitate it. He took from Bunyan's book that which enriches
his own creation and does not destroy his individuality. His
own Sotho spirit breathes throughout the whole work. He made
use of his environment and drew much of his material from it.
He based his plot on local conditions and wrote about Sotho
society of his time. The idea that the life of man is a toilsome
pilgrimage to the next world is not really recondite and is as
likely to occur independently to a devout Christian like Thomas
Mofolo especially in those days when Christianity was beginning
to make its impact felt among the people. The kind of influence
Mofolo derived from John Bunyan cannot be manifested in likeness,
but in common seriousness of concern with essential human
issues. This profound seriousness is due to his evangelical
background and his reverent attitude towards life.

"Moeti Wa Botjhabela" is a story of a young man whose
love of man was always blended with reverent love of God even
though he had a very vague idea of the nature of God and his
whereabout. During his boyhood and for years there after, he
went through agonies of religious doubts as to whether he
possessed the faith to win salvation for his soul. His rare
gift, the capacity to see through material things, clouds,
rain, thunder, lightning, stars etc. to the spiritual behind
them, tormented him with an almost morbid consciousness of
his own worthlessness. At this very point he welcomed the
interposition of the divine grace which came to him in the
form of a dream. His dream pointed the way which he must take
to satisfy his quest for means of salvation. The way led to
the East, to NTSWANATSATSI a place which is known traditionally
to be the origin of all the Basotho people.

But "Moeti Wa Botjhabela" is an allegory. An allegory
is a kind of a story in which characters, objects and events

stand for ideas and relations among ideas. They are not to be taken as real but as representing certain aspects of character which are involved in the meaning. Usually such stories are relatively simple. The story in "Moeti Wa Botjhabela" is a sustained metaphor conveying a veiled moral meaning. The deeper meaning of "Moeti Wa Botjhabela" is how a soul can achieve its salvation and reach its destiny. Therefore "Moeti Wa Botjhabela" is a candid account of the author's own spiritual struggles, his internal conflicts, his gloom and despair; but finally he recovered assurance of grace and peace of mind. Fekisi is indeed the personification of the author's soul which is full of doubts and fears as well as discouraging apprehensions. Mofolo's enquiring mind forced him to find the cause and origin of things:

Pelo ya hae e ne e bala, e ne e batla Modimo.

Pelo ya hae e ne e tjhoba, e tjhobela Modimo.

Pelo ya hae e ne e lohotha ntho di le kgolo bosiu le motsheare.¹⁾

"Moeti Wa Botjhabela" is a story which centres on one person, a hard worked and travelling person, who suffers every vicissitude, good and bad, but endures them all. There is no real plot to be developed but a narrative unity which comes from the fact that it is Fekisi who is the chief character throughout the book; and he alone holds the main threads of the story together. Without him the whole story falls into pieces. He had to pass through a succession of scenes and was introduced to a great number of people and animals as he went from the low lands of Basutoland to the mountain area, through the Batlokwa land, the wilderness and the sea. His journey to the East is as good as taking a reader on a panoramic tour through society, a broad picture of life in Mofolo's time.

1) p.19 His heart was pondering, was yearning for God.
His heart was throbbing and throbbing for God.
His heart was meditating great things night and day.

"Moeti Wa Botjhabela" can be and is read for the sake of its narrative skill. Mofolo has a natural story-telling gift, and the power of so vividly presenting the essentials of a story as to make the reader thoroughly interested in the narrative for its own sake.

Characters.

Fekisi.

Fekisi is the hero and the only character who really counts in this book. He is introduced to the reader as a perfect human being, a virtue incarnate:

E, ke re motho; e seng motho sebopeho, le ho tseba ho bua feela; empa motho dipuong, motho diketsong, motho mekgweng yohle, motho sephiring le pontsheng, motho bohlokong le thabong, boiketlong le bothateng, tlaleng le naleng.²⁾

This picture of the man at the beginning of the book shows that Fekisi is not seen objectively by the writer as a character in the round. The author does not intend that we see in Fekisi a recognisable portrait of a human being like ourselves, but a personified abstraction; a symbol of virtue; the ideal to be aimed at.

Right through the book the author does not bother to make clear Fekisi's emotional development, or to take stock of his real character, because these are not within his terms of reference. He is concerned merely with the painting of a broad picture of life of his time. It is evidently not a picture in which depths of character are sounded, and in which

2) P. 1. Yes, I say a man, not only in appearance or in knowing how to speak; but a human being in speech,

in actions, in all his behaviour; a human being in secret and in public; a human being in grief and in joy; in tranquility and in hardships; in hunger and in plenty.

the heights of passion are touched. Fekisi is, therefore, a symbol of one aspect of the author's character; that aspect which concerns itself with the salvation and destiny of the human soul. Fekisi's great love for the real good, for perfection itself, rebels against the sinful world in which he lives. This love imposes a duty upon his soul never to rest until he finds this perfection which is God himself. Therefore the main motive that made Fekisi depart from home is this great desire to discover the highest good. He goes forth and seeks this highest satisfaction for his soul in the spirit of self-reliance and faith. He is unswerving in his love for the real good for whom he sacrifices everything and faces unknown perils. He turns his back on humanity in fierce hatred of its vices and follies. He renounces the temporal world in order to gain for his soul the lasting happiness.

Fekisi is a choice example, standing away from the mass of people and from the reader. This makes it difficult or impossible for us to enter intimately into his feelings. The little we know of his character comes from the author himself. He acts as a commendator for him. He describes and reports to the reader what he knows about his own creation. The reader cannot verify the report by putting it against Fekisi's actions, speech or against what other characters have to say about him. Fekisi speaks to nobody but to himself.

But in spite of all what has been said above, Fekisi's attachment to the general drama of life must be felt and understood. Fekisi has a fair and sympathetic heart, and he loves justice. He is appalled by the injustices of man. Deep in his heart he thinks it would be a thousand times better to die fighting for justice than live and watch the injustices perpetrated on man. This explains his firm stand against those who bullied other herdboys; and against those cruel men who indulged in beating boys for nothing. His burning desire

to see justice done was the main reason why he wanted to avenge the murder of Sebati and that of Phakwane's wife.

Fekisi is a man of deep contemplation, a dreamer whose mind is full of meditations. He had the habit of slipping into meditative or abstract thoughts. He had the habit of thinking and questioning things; in other words he had a searching mind. He had a great desire to know and understand the universe, the stars, the moon, the sun, rain etc; and about the nature of God and the relation between God and man. He appealed to the knowledge of the old people and enquired into the Old Basotho religion. But he did not receive satisfactory explanation to his questions. As a result he had rapid changes of mood. He was now gay and excited, now moody and depressed. At times he became lonesome because of his eccentric nature. He found happiness and comradeship among animals, particularly cattle, which alone were invested with the sympathy which he would not find in human beings. To them alone he bade goodbye when he departed from home. His soul finds solace and refuge in nature. Her beauty especially after rain captures and enraptures him so much that his heart is touched and tears drop from his eyes.

In appearance Fekisi was handsome, tall and of a good built. His voice was deep and pleasant. When he spoke no one wished him to stop. He was likable. There was rivalry among girls, each wanting to be married by him. But in spite of all his physical attractions which the author describes so vividly, his emotional life remains a closed book to us. He does not express in words or actions his passions of love or hatred, of joy or sorrow; except to his cattle which he showered with praises on the eve of his departure.

Fekisi was a dreamer of dreams and a man of visions. In addition he had some extra endowment, that of dreaming the right solution to his problems. This constant luck of his

makes him less and less human before the eyes of a reader, and detracts from the story the element of credibility. A reader fails to sympathise with Fekisi, and also finds it difficult to love or hate him because of his exceptional nature. He always does the right thing, chooses the right path, and goes through all his obstacles.

Fekisi was a man of prayer and faith. He prayed for the protection of his parents. He prayed for his cattle that God in his kindness should provide them with another herdboy. In despair, when human wisdom and efforts had failed he prayed for God's help. Finally Fekisi prayed for the whole of mankind with whom he identified himself and felt the weight of the sins of the whole world. These he confessed and asked God to forgive them all.

Fekisi had a strong faith which amounted to fatalism. He is so swept away by the course of fate that our sense of his heroism is weakened or lost altogether. When confronted by a difficult problem Fekisi prayed and relied on fate to provide a solution either in dreams or visions or mere chance. Fekisi believes that whatever happens to him, whether in dreams or visions it is in accordance with the will of God. He dreams because God wants to show him the way to Ntswanatsatsi where he dwells. His credulousness rather than conviction made him leave his home and friends and go to an unknown place. Only faith sustained him through mountains, desert and the sea. Only faith made him bear hunger, thirst and illness until he reached his goal, the Mount Zion, the home of the living God. Through vision he came face to face with his Creator and died at the foot of the altar.

Phakwane

Phakwane had great love for drinks and like many others during his time would not do without them. He went from place to place in search of beer. Having found it he drank excessively.

His will was weak and had no sense of values. The fact that he always quarrelled with other people and used obscene language when drunk shows that he could not choose between good and evil. Phakwane lacked self-control and had no sense of moderation. He could not drink moderately. He failed to control anger and he beat his innocent wife so excessively that she died.

Phakwane was a human being only when he was sober. But a beast when he was drunk. No traits of character are more striking as a mirror of the times and society than those of Phakwane in "Moeti wa Botjhabela". He is chosen here not as an exception, but as a representative of the whole society and the period during which the author lived. He represents the whole nation of men and women who flocked to beer drinks and returned home drunk. He is a replica of all those who fall over the precipices or dongas and meet their death; or those who sustained terrible injuries but still managed to reach their homes. He represented those who engaged in family quarrels and beat their wives and even killed some for no reason at all.

Phakwane represents a state of drunkenness in which men and women lose all sense of decency and start wallowing in sinful pleasures; the result of which is the birth of many unwanted children in whose names the history of their illegitimacy is perpetuated. Phakwane is singled out as a typical example of this society. He is also chosen by the author to be a direct opposite of Fekisi in order to heighten the effect by contrast. Phakwane represents the evil forces in this world while Fekisi stands for the children of light whose ideal is to lead life of righteousness. In Phakwane is embodied all the vices of the Basotho people of those days, who had no other occupation than drinking, quarrelling, cursing, fighting, making dreadful noise and beating wives. Phakwane's character has a meaning only when it is discussed in relation with and with reference to the society which it reflects.

Literary Comments.

In discussing "Moeti Wa Botjhabela" we must know that Mofolo started writing this book at a time when Christianity was beginning to shake up people's thoughts and feelings. It was making inroads into the traditional beliefs and customs of the people. It was ushering in new social and moral standards for people to accept. Mofolo took it upon himself to point the way to the East (a symbol of light), to Christianity, to God himself, hence "Moeti Wa Botjhabela".

Mofolo's knowledge of Scriptures made him thoroughly conscious of Christian morality. He then peopled his imagination and created a character such as Fekisi to project his own personality. Fekisi is therefore the personification of Mofolo's soul searching for religious truth. Nothing would satisfy this soul but the discovery of the whole truth. He appealed to the old and traditional religion; to the folklore and legendary history and to the experiences of the older people but found them inadequate. His burning desire to discover the real truth about the universe and the nature of God remained unsatisfied. He hoped to find these truths in man but was disappointed to learn that God himself has had to abandon man because of his wickedness and sin. Then he resorted to nature, the animals, the birds, the stars, the moon, the sun, the clouds, rain, water and all the atmospheric elements. Some of these like cattle afforded him an escape from the humdrum of his corrupt environment. Others, like lightning and the eclipse of the sun, confounded his already confused mind and made a gap between him and the creator desparately wide. It is then that he earnestly wished he could bridge the gap and get closer to God, who is both the light and the truth. Ntswanatsatsi is but a symbol of the dwelling place of this light.

No Mosotho writer in those days ever concerned himself more closely with the destiny of the human soul than Thomas

Mofolo. His "Moeti Wa Botjhabela" is an allegorical writing which is uplifted by an intense spiritual exaltation even though it appears simple and naive to some critics. As an allegory "Moeti Wa Botjhabela" is not a study of character but something in the nature of a drama, where the two chief players are a man (Fekisi) on the one hand, and his whole environment represented by Phakwane on the other. His environment was full of evil. People ate one another like beasts; truth was unknown, sin was the order of the day; people were jealous of one another; drunkenness was a common vice. This is the image of the world in which Fekisi lived. There was bound to be a conflict between this soul and the society which was so incorrigible.

Fekisi undertook the trouble of trying to reform this wicked world of his by playing the role of a peace-maker. He became the protector of those who could not fend for themselves. He fought against men who, mercilessly and for the pleasure of it, beat boys. He even wanted to avenge the death of Phakwane's wife and that of Sebati. But Fekisi soon realised that he was not much of a force to change his own society. He recalled to memory the story of Kgodumo-dumo, that symbolic monster which is an all-devouring sin from which all mankind had to be delivered by the son of a woman; but was in turn killed by the very same people he had rescued. He took this to be the height of man's ingratitude; and was disgruntled and dismayed. In despair Fekisi withdrew within himself and started brooding and meditating. He found everything in a state of confusion. Animals and people, including himself, were confused. The sun changed and turned black. There was darkness everywhere. Everybody was shivering with fright. In this atmosphere of terror and confusion when everyone was feeling certain that the end had come, Fekisi relied on faith and prayed to God for help. By faith and faith alone the gloomy atmosphere changed to brightness. At once

the rays of the sun appeared again; thunder, the instrument of fear, died away. Then Fekisi heard a voice full of good tidings:

O se ke wa tshaba, Fekisi, Modimo wa hao o utlwile
thapelo ya hao. Empa o batle nnete o be o e fumane.
O batle Modimo, o be o o fumane.³⁾

After this Fekisi regained confidence and felt committed to the will of God. He believed and accepted that it was the will of God that he should leave his home and go to the east where all his doubts and problems would be resolved. Fortified with this belief he was able to face all the difficulties and trials that awaited him on the long and tortuous journey to Ntswanatsatsi. He was now a different man. Faith brought him comfort and freed him from his melancholy. The sun, a symbol of this faith, had risen again, bringing him peace and love. Its message was one of good tidings to all mankind. He looked at the sun and thought deeply about its all-embracing nature; that it shines for everybody and brings warmth to all humanity. In it he perceived the image of God and his justice; and started acknowledging the limitations of his own person and that of mankind. At this point the central figure of this allegory ceased to be himself; he became humanity. He appealed to the efficacy of prayer, a means whereby the soul communicates with God. His prayer was an expression of faith, hope and charity. Of faith because he believed though he had not seen, that God would listen to his prayer. Of hope because he waited for and expected a favourable response, that a kind and generous God would grant what he has requested. Of charity because he prayed to God of justice, who was even more just than the sun. He then put himself into the position of evil doers or sinners; he identified himself with them as their

3) P. 28. Do not be afraid Fekisi, your God has heard your prayer. But you should seek for the truth until you find it. You should search for God until you find him.

child, the flesh of their flesh, bone of their bones. Their sins he confessed and asked for God's mercy and forgiveness.

Through Fekisi the author registers his rebellion against all evils, injustices, tyranny, drunkenness, murder, falsehood and sexual licence which resulted in the birth of illegitimate children. This revolt is symbolised by the departure of Fekisi from home to an unknown, different but idealised world, the world with God, the compensating heaven. His departure also marks the total acceptance of Christian standards and complete rejection of the traditional past. He needed a consolation of an escape from the stark realities of life. He hated the very sight of men and women with weak moral standards. His whole struggle against lions, starvation and thirst while trudging along the arduous and perilous journey was a fight not only for survival but also for salvation, a purification from sins. His death is marked by the toilsome passage over the wilderness and the limitless sea. His soul is borne and ferried across the sea by the three white men, who, like angels, accompany this soul to the city of God, where he saw a person of his dreams, the Son of God himself.

In "Moeti Wa Botjhabela" the author is endowed with visions of life in a perfect world. A world in the east, where no evil exists, where righteousness has found a home, where God dwells. It is this world that Fekisi longed for and prayed for. In this respect Fekisi becomes the personification of all mankind whose souls are yearning for this ideal world that lies beyond the desert and the sea, or in the words of the author:

Ka mose ho lebitla.⁴⁾

This underlying belief in a perfect world in which the soul finds its destiny is the real message of "Moeti Wa Botjhabela". The controlling didactic purpose and the allegorical form of

4) P. 67. Beyond the grave.

the story point to the missionary influence and the impact of Christianity on the writer and on some Basotho people of his day. "Moeti Wa Botjhabela" is dedicated to the improvement and instruction of mankind in the ways of piety and virtue of which Fekisi is the typical example.

CHAPTER III

"PITSENG"

The Plot:

"Pitseng" is a love story novel, the subject of which is marriage. The plot starts with a vivid description of the country and its people. We are introduced to a backward community which is untouched by Christianity and education. After this general introduction the plot divides itself into two parts each of which has its own principal characters. The first is the story of a young teacher who is at the same time an evangelist. His name is Mr. Katse. His main task is to spread the light of Christianity and education among the people of Pitseng. He wants to proclaim a spiritual standard of life to a generation that is still groping in the dark:

Wa Pitseng ya ntseng a le lefifing o na a le
lekgatheng la ho tjhabelwa ke leledi, hobane bosiu
bo se bo le lekgatheng la ho sa.⁵⁾

Mr. Katse is the man who influenced so deeply the life of many people in the valley of Pitseng. He seems to be the personification of the ideal teacher Mr. Mofolo would like to see in a world of his own creation. We must not forget that Mr. Mofolo was a teacher and evangelist by profession and could easily project himself into the pages of his novel. The book deals with school matters, school children, discipline in class, and the way children attend and ask questions. The reader feels that he is dealing with an experienced teacher who is not only conversant with the work of the classroom, but is also well versed in child psychology. It did not take Mr. Katse long to discover exceptional qualities in two of the children he taught, namely Alfred Phakwe and Aria Sebaka. Their future became his

5) P.20 Any inhabitant of Pitseng, who was still in darkness, was about to see the light, because dawn was fast approaching.

principal concern and the nucleus from which the plot grew and developed. To provide these children with moral principles on which to base their judgment and all their actions Mr. Katse prepared and preached the most memorable sermon. The sermon made a clear distinction between the aimless, frivolous love of boys and girls, and the true, purposeful love whose ultimate end is marriage. Love which is free from hypocrisy and cunning; dedicated and devoted love of husband and wife, the very foundation of a happy family relationship.

Then comes the dark phase of life, the illness and death of Mr. Katse. This is a portion of the story which offers nothing proportionate to the time it takes to read it. Apart from keeping the reader in a fever of suspense or exciting pathos, or causing Alfred Phakwe a mental anguish, it has very little connection with what follows thereafter. It is one of those devices which are employed by some writers when they want to put an end to their stories. In fact the author's handling of the illness and death of Mr. Katse is disappointing. He gives a cheerless conclusion to a life that gave light to the whole of Pitseng, a life which through its influence made characters such as Alfred Phakwe and Aria Sebaka reveal themselves. This very life is made to suffer the horrors of a long-drawn torture, and is denied even the least comfort of saying but one word to a devoted friend like Alfred. That Mr. Katse should die an inglorious death, and die in ignominy and away from Pitseng, so that the people whom he loved and served so long and so well should not have the opportunity of paying their last tribute to him, remains a puzzle to the reader.

The second portion of the plot is the love story which stems out of the first so naturally. Its chief characters are Alfred Phakwe and Aria Sebaka. These two are the end-product of Mr. Katse's teaching in Pitseng. The real theme of this part of the story is their virtue of moderation, self-restraint

and patience in matters of love. This virtue is exposed to the most tempting offers of love but it never yields. Aria Sebaka proves to be a difficulty to each and every one of her suitors:

E ne e le nonyana e qhalang naraba, e le hlapi e hanang
ho tshwaswa.⁶⁾

Alfred Phakwe was indifferent to all matters of love-making in Pitseng and elsewhere. No amount of wealth, persuasion or soliciting could induce these children to fall in love with anybody. This lofty repugnancy to falling in love is interpreted by some critics as a sign of immaturity or abnormal physical and emotional development on the part of these characters. But this view is not supported by facts because when the temptation takes the form of Alfred Phakwe, Aria's love and jealousy are aroused to a fever heat; and when it assumes the form of Aria Sebaka, Alfred falls in love at first sight. It is indeed surprising that they should now show such a complacent readiness to yield to temptation especially when this is in the form of mutual discovery.

E mong le e mong ho bona ba babedi o boletswe e mong.⁷⁾

The subsequent marriage between these two disciples of Mr Katse is a reward of virtue and the climax of the story. A reward is due first and foremost to Mr Katse, who through his untiring efforts and personal example, engineered this marriage. Secondly it goes to both Alfred Phakwe and Aria Sebaka who withstood all temptations and waved all distractions which might prevent them from eventually discovering each other in blissful marriage.

Alfred and Aria represent interests which Mr Mofolo wanted to use in his novel. Because of his intense moral preoccupation

6) P. 209. She was a bird that dissipates all the snares, a fish that avoids any net.

7) P. 359. Each one of the two was created for the other.

these two characters fitted well into his plan and he so channelled their actions that eventually the two had to marry. The fact remains that "Pitseng" has no subtlety of organisation in its plot because there is no richer matter to organise, and no personality to develop and bring up to maturity. Those Mr Mofolo has created are not capable of growing any further. The main defect in this book is that the author writes as commendator. The events are seen almost entirely from the author's own point of view, instead of treating them from the angle of several characters with different motives. In each case it is the voice of Mr Mofolo as a writer to which the reader must listen. But there is no doubt that Mofolo is a good story teller.

Characters.

Mr Katse.

Mr Katse is the dominant character in "Pitseng". A character from whom all others seem to draw their inspiration and shine through his reflected light. He is loved and respected by all in Pitseng. He is chosen by two of the pupils he taught in Pitseng as their guiding star in all their undertakings, and they resolve to emulate him in conduct, speech and actions. These children are Aria Sebaka and Alfred Phakwe, the heroine and the hero in this book.

Mr Katse is a man of a simple and hopeful nature; whose selfless devotion to the service of others and unconquerable love for a fellow man place him high and above the pale of ordinary people. In this selfless devotion and innocent hope he performs his duties towards each and everybody expecting nothing in return for his services. On his journey to Pitseng he rescued some men who were drunk and snow-trapped. They were exposed to bitter cold and would most probably die. He brought

them to the cave and provided them with food and warmth. Like the good Samaritan, Mr. Katse would not pass by a fellow man in distress.

There is something profoundly genuine and touching in Mr. Katse's kindness and hospitality. The case of one Mothepu's wife who was about to be confined, and had no friends or relatives is quite outstanding in this regard. He took her to his house where she safely delivered her twins. He nursed and protected her until the time of starvation was over. Owing to his good naturedness and generosity Mr. Katse visited the sick; cared for the aged and fed the hungry. During the said starvation Mr. Katse shared all the food he had with the poor. Mr. Majwale remarked that Mr. Katse could have become rich during this starvation but he would not sell.

Though Mofolo never identifies himself absolutely with any single character, yet certain of his creations make the impression of representing him more fully than others. Mr. Katse is one of these creations. Like Mofolo Mr. Katse is both a teacher and evangelist. Therefore he represents the kind of an ideal teacher Mr. Mofolo has always wished to see in the world of his creation. A teacher who has to make moral decisions and set good example for the children and for the members of his congregation.

Mr. Katse is deeply religious and he interprets everything religiously. He lives his religion; preaches what he believes and practises what he preaches:

Ha a kgetha temana o e kgetha hobane e le teng pelong
ya hae, mme ha a re phutheho e leke ho etsa kamoo temana
eo e bolelang kateng, yena a be a se a qadile.⁸⁾

Motivated by his deep religion he preaches true, godly love whose ultimate end is Christian marriage. He deplores the

8) P. 179. When he chooses a certain text, he does so because it is in his heart; and when he asks the congregation to follow the letter of the text, he, himself, was always the first to begin.

fact that young men's love lay not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes. Aided by his keen insight into character he discovered good moral qualities in Alfred Phakwe and Aria Sebaka; and ever since he had a burning desire to develop their personalities. In them he visualized an ideal family which must be nurtured for the world to emulate. Endowed with the capacity of looking into the future, Mr. Katse was fully convinced that a successful marriage between the two would guarantee the continuation of the work which he has started in Pitseng.

Out of sympathy and love of mankind he preached against frivolous love of boys and girls. He rebuked those young men and young women who, through want of circumspection, make hollow protestations of love and miss their golden chances in life. His well-meaning desire to see Alfred and Aria discover each other in true, purposeful love, prompted him to act as a sort of an intermediary between them. From time to time he wrote letters and made suggestive hints to the one about the other. Also by personal example Mr. Katse passed on to these two, his own qualities of self-control, patience and moderation in all things. He particularly wanted these qualities applied in love affairs.

Mr. Katse was devoted and dedicated to the service of other people. He was a man, who, in his affliction, thought of others first. In his long drawn illness he thought of the work he established in Pitseng; he did not forget the school children and the congregation. He felt and prayed for them. He wrote letters to Alfred Phakwe and persuaded him to return to his own people who were left without a real pastor and a school master. That Mr. Katse had deep and devoted love for Alfred Phakwe is demonstrated fully by the long mental anguish he suffered during the few last hours of his life when he awaited anxiously the arrival of this young man to have a word with him before he passed away. Nothing is more pathetic than

to hear from the lips of a dying man the words of despair:

Modimo e be wena ya no rutang seo ke neng ke lakatsa
ho mmelella sona. O no etse tshiya e matla tempeleng
ya hao, Morena.⁹⁾

In Mr Katse we see unmerited suffering which provokes our pity;
and to him we give our tears.

Alfred Phakwe.

Among the boys whom Mr Katse taught in Pitseng there was
one whose name was Alfred Phakwe. He was outstanding in
neatness and bodily cleanliness. At school he was always
quiet, trustworthy and reliable. He was intelligent and quickly
finished his primary education in Pitseng, after which he
proceeded to a teacher-training school in the Cape Colony.
After completing his studies he was honoured with a teaching
post at the same school. He was highly commended by one of
the inspectors as a very successful teacher.

One of the things that we like in Alfred Phakwe is his
genuine admiration of Mr Katse. It generates in Alfred self-
less devotion and true love for his teacher, whose character
is beyond reproach. Because he loves and admires Mr Katse he
does not like to disappoint him. He believes implicitly every
word that comes from Mr Katse's mouth. He regards Mr Katse as
his own guiding star and has resolved to emulate his good
qualities. This anticipates the development of Alfred's
character, which, on the whole, is based on the pattern laid
down by Mr Katse. He decided that he would not fall in love
with any woman until he discovers that true love which forms
the theme of Mr Katse's sermon, the love that culminates in
marriage. It is this reserve and shy reticence of all true
deeper natures that we see typified in Alfred, which has led

9) P. 368. God, let it be you yourself who teaches him what I
intended to tell him. Thou shouldst make him the
strong pillar of your church, Lord.

to the criticism by some commentators that Alfred was afraid of talking and proposing love to women, that he was undeveloped emotionally and therefore was abnormal. But a closer scrutiny of his character reveals the fact that Alfred was an honest man who would not pretend to love where there was no cause to do so. He was reserved and would not expend his energy in useless, idle talk like most of the young men of his time. Self-control, self-less devotion and true love are the essentials of Alfred's nature, and the cause of his reticence. This quiet strength of character is penetrated with an infinite love for his country and its people, whom he must serve and to whom he must return after completing his studies.

The stubborn taciturnity which he adopts especially when he is among young women broke down only when he was in the company of older people:

Alfred ditaba di ne di itlhahela habonolo, di kopotseha, ha a le ho ba baholo; athe ha a le thakeng e ntjha, moo barwetsana ba leng teng, di a fela.¹⁰⁾

We find Alfred happily discussing Aria Sebaka with his own parents, especially his mother, trying to solicit her approval. Again we see him talk at length with Aria's mother. He talks freely and without any sign of fear and is quite humorous. We see therefore that Alfred was both serious and dignified and would not engage in any cheap, purposeless talk of the young people. He had a natural aversion for the hypocrisy of his equals, to whom love is like a toy which wanton boys and girls take for their sport. When he is among these he shows clearly self-mastery and moral elevation of his character. For this, he was both feared and respected by most of his play maids.

Everybody, young and old, would like to see Alfred fall in love with a girl. But Alfred remained stoic and staunch

10) P. 200-201. Among the old people, Alfred narrated stories which flowed easily from his mouth. But among the young ones, where there were girls, he was as quiet as a grave.

as if he had no passions or feelings towards women. Chances were there for him to fall in love. He was much sought after by members of the opposite sex because Alfred was a man whom nature has so richly endowed with attractive physical qualities. But Alfred Phakwe, a disciple of Mr. Katse, has adopted and faithfully adhered to the doctrine of moderation in love. In Pitseng parents were anxiously waiting for Alfred to become their son-in-law. But Alfred constrained himself to practise moderation and patience. He would patiently keep in reserve his love for the woman he would select for a wife. As a result the suggestive attempts of Miss Mzondeki and others made no impression on him:

Alfred o na a sa rate ho etsa ntho e siyo pelong ya hae.¹¹⁾

As a wise man he obeyed the voice of reason, and subdued his personal feelings. He profited from the experience of such lovers as James Moraka, Ioda Msimang, Milton Thotho, and Linganiso Diniso; lovers who yield readily and hastily to their passions instead of being regulated by gentle moderation.

What he learned from their experience was;

Lefereho ke bosawana feela, ha se lerato.¹²⁾

But Alfred Phakwe is not a colourless, passionless character. He is capable of deep feelings. We have to think of his loyal devotion to Mr. Katse, a man with whom he corresponded very regularly. We have only to remember how grieved Alfred was at a mere suggestion that Mr. Katse was ill. It is loyalty, devotion and love that encouraged and sustained Alfred in that seemingly unending pursuit he made after Mr. Katse, his former teacher, and adviser, in order to hear the last words of a dying man. Though Alfred was known to be a virtuous and well-governed

11) P. 163 Alfred did not like to do anything that was not in his heart.

12) P. 265 Frivolous courtship is purposeless; it is no love.

youth, he could not resist the bewitching prettiness of Aria's face, and the charming sweetness of her voice. He was betrayed unconsciously into revealing his new-born feelings to the girl he was destined to marry. This revelation was noticed and read by Aria Sebaka, who concluded that

"Alfred o a tjha o a tuka".¹³⁾

For the first time in his life Alfred felt that he had no control over his own emotions. He has met the girl he loves and loves truly. Undulled by thoughts of what is customary, and unspoiled by artificiality, his emotions find spontaneous expression which fits the simplicity of his up-bringing. He failed to hide his feelings. He could not affect coyness or indifference where he loved most. Alfred fell in love at first sight.

Aria Sebaka.

Aria is one of the tenderest of Mofolo's creations, hard to be understood, yet simple and clear to those who have an insight into character. The writer gives us a perfect and visible picture of her sweet feminine nature. Her voice is ever soft, gentle and sweet, and she can sing very beautifully. Fortune has indeed showered the choicest gifts upon her. She was remarkably pretty, lovable and sweet-tempered, her manners were lively and pleasant. She has physical beauty and beauty of character. She was always tidy and well dressed, an excellent thing in a woman.

Though Aria Sebaka was only twelve years of age when Mr Katse arrived in Pitseng, she had a sense of appreciation. She admired the good qualities of her teacher and wished she could live up to his standard. Owing to this aspiration she is able to attain by self-mastery the lofty ideals in life. She has resolved to love sincerely and truly; never to marry for wealth but for love. She is brought up to be loyal to her

13) P. 281. Alfred is burning and is in flames.

family and to be dutiful to her parents. She represents the fair and gracious influences of life. Through all her conduct and bearing runs the strain of tender and artless simplicity of a soul that has never learned to deceive.

Aria must early have learned to school and repress her emotions. She never knew the bliss of young love. Her aim was to prove more true than many young men and young women who indulged in purposeless love affair. Her truthfulness of soul directed her to retain all of her love for him that would become her husband. She never promised love to anyone of the many young men who proposed love to her. When she speaks to her suitors she never speaks a single harsh word to anyone. She is always modest and tactful, but never yielding. Her coolness in meeting her suitors' demands for love gave the impression that she had no feelings for members of the opposite sex, and yet it is more to the point to regard her attitude as the natural revulsion from the hypocrisy of the other girls who would readily make hollow promises of love to each and every young man that came their way. Suitors realised with great disappointment that no amount of social standing, wealth and comfort, could ever make Aria marry without love.

Evidently strong will, tenderness and love with strongest devotion are the salient and the principal traits in Aria's character. Her strong will is shown in her reluctance to gratify the wish of her suitors; and in her curt dismissal of Dolphin Nkokoto and others. This shows also that she had an insight into the character of people. Everything about her shows that she had what one calls the strength of character. Although Aria proved difficult to all her suitors, beneath that hardness there lay a tender heart. Her feminine tenderness comes out clearly in her letters to Alfred. She addresses him in dear and loving terms. This is a proof that Aria was capable of deep love which came to the surface the mo-

saw Alfred for the first time, one Sunday during service. On that very moment her love was raised to a far more absorbing passion which Alfred noticed; and he could read from her face that:

Mahlo a hae a tshepisa, ha motho a itlhahisa a ka amohelwa.¹⁴⁾

Indeed Alfred had read correctly those voiceless tokens of true love which often lie too deep for a human eye to detect. The time had come for Aria's heart to be subdued to an implicit devotion to the man she has selected for a husband. She also fell in love at first sight.

James Moraka.

Mr. Moraka of Pitseng attended school in Bensonvale where he saw and was attracted by one of the Xhosa girls called Ioda Msimang. James was a sincere and devoted lover, who would not like to disappoint Ioda by falling in love with another girl. But while James was full of love and honesty Ioda was not.

A letter of rejection from Ioda almost caused his death. He could not stand the pangs of despised love. The thought of another man possessing the woman he loves was intolerable to him. No doubt the sense of insult and the impulse of revenge became most violent in James, and the next thing he could think of was to engineer a horrid scheme of revenge, which would involve Ioda in a total ruin. The scheme was that every young man in Pitseng should propose love to Ioda, promise her marriage but should not fulfil the promise; but should leave her in the lurch to avenge Mr. Moraka's disappointment. Now whenever Miss Msimang was in distress Mr. Moraka's revenging heart was happy and rejoicing.

Milton Thotho.

Milton was a young man whose home was in Herschel. He

14) P. 281. Her eyes are promising, if a person introduces himself he can be accepted.

was a mischievous and evil minded lad:

O na a le nekgwa, tsa hae ha di ka phetwa ke letata la nku. 15)

He was full of jealousy; and he hated to see Ioda Msinang in love with James Moraka. He made attempts to win Ioda's love but found it difficult at first because Ioda still loved James very deeply.

But when he did fall in love with her finally, it was but for wicked purposes. Mischievously did this artful young man turn the love of this innocent lady into her destruction. His deep-laid plans of mischief were: to promise her marriage but with no intention of fulfilling the promise; abduct another girl and so leave Ioda in the lurch to break her heart. These acts of jealousy and cruelty on the part of Milton did succeed. He undermined his hated rival James Moraka by inducing Ioda to reject him.

Ioda Msinang

Ioda Msinang of Jozana's Hoek, Bensonvale was a Xhosa girl. She was tall and hefty, with a big head and a flat nose. She walked rather heavily and clumsily:

Ho tsalayeng e hata ka boina thope ya Bokone, e qititsa, eke ho tla phunyeha fatshe ha a hata, etswe o na a le teng, hle. 16)

Ioda is bold and will not shrink or blush when she stands face to face with a young man. She can love and love thoroughly. She spent a large part of her youth in a devoted love to James Moraka; and when they parted, she, with the same enthusiasm loved Milton Thotho, and another young man whose name we do not know.

15) p.192. He was notorious, to reveal all his mischievous deeds would occupy too big a space (letata la nku - a big skin blanket.)

16) p.195. In walking the Nguni girl had heavy steps; she stamped the ground in such a way that it almost developed a hole; in fact she was too hefty.

But Ioda Msinang has passion for wealth, rank and society. For this reason she rejected James Moraka who was comparatively poorer than Milton Thotho. Milton, an heir to a wealthy family, had good prospects of becoming rich and would be in a better position to satisfy Ioda's aspirations in life:

Mahlo a Ioda a ne a tadinile maruo, e seng hakakang mong a wona. 17)

In this way she was unusually open to deception and was likely to act with little reflection. Consequently she unwittingly rejected a man who loved her sincerely and truly, and loved Milton with a love which proved to be her doom. Her fancy was quick and she followed it. She acted on her inclinations and involved herself in a tangle of misfortunes, which ultimately broke her heart, and she fainted.

Mr Majwale.

Majwale was an innocent and faithful attendant of Alfred Phakwe. He was dutiful and trustworthy and would not hide anything to Alfred. Like all the people of Pitseng he has pinned his faith on Alfred as a worthy successor of Mr Katse. His devotion to Alfred inspires him to disclose this fact to Alfred.

Majwale was very observant. He studied Mr Katse very carefully and had noticed remarkable daily improvement in his behaviour. His motive in this was his love for religion. Majwale was not a passive church-goer who paid little or no attention to what was going on. He listened quite attentively and appreciated every word that came from the mouth of Mr Katse, the evangelist. But Majwale was too credulous and naive. He saw in Mr Katse the image of Jesus Christ; that like Christ Mr Katse crucified his own flesh to free his soul to serve God; and that Mr Katse followed scripture to a letter and lived as

17) P. 257. The eyes of Ioda were fixed on the material wealth, not so much on its owner.

perfectly as Christ did while he was on earth.

As a man who loved and lived his religion Majwale was able to recollect every sermon which Mr Katse ever preached. His retentive memory and a sense of devotion enabled him to narrate almost word for word the sermons to Alfred. He did not only narrate the sermons but he showed some understanding by analysing them and interpreting them.

Majwale is a good narrator who draws living images of the starvation that took place in Pitseng. You seem to hear the crying of babies, or to see the picture of a young woman who was once stout and full, but who has now become thin and unable to speak. He graphically narrated the events that took place when Mr Katse bade farewell to the church and the school in Pitseng.

Literary Comments.

In considering "Pitseng" as a novel, one of the most important points to clarify is what sort of world the writer is dealing with, and what range of experience he is offering. Mofolo's world in this book is extremely circumscribed within the valley of Pitseng. All his characters are drawn from the country folk. All his heroes and heroines belong to this one small section of society. Only Alfred Phakwe has had contact outside his own group. He was educated in the Cape Colony; and travelled extensively in Southern Africa. Perhaps the reason was to equip him with the necessary training and experience which he so badly needed if he would be a successor to Mr Katse in Pitseng. The other characters outside Pitseng are Ioda Msimang, Mzondeki and Milton Thotho, but these play a very insignificant role in the story. Aria Sebaka only went as far as Mafeteng, a few miles from Pitseng. Not only are the characters in "Pitseng" confined to their particular social setting, but their activities are also very much limited.

They hunt animals, plough fields, roam about in search of beer, a few go to church on Sundays, some children attend school etc. Thus the community in "Pitseng" seem to be concerned only with trivialities of easy country life.

It is Mofolo's primary and genuine concern for human feelings in a concrete situation that captures our imagination. He proposes for himself to study men and women as they live in society. Hence in this novel the author is consciously attempting what no other Mosotho writer of the time was doing, namely the study of human relationships. The central relationship with which he is concerned is marriage, physically and spiritually, hence the sermon of Mr. Katse. Physically marriage had to take place between Alfred Phakwe and Aria Sebaka, the two children of Pitseng, who observed chastity before marriage and fidelity after marriage. Theirs was to give the world an example or model of a good Christian marriage which was to be a departure from the old, traditional marriage which was a matter between parents rather than the consent of the young man and the young woman concerned. Spiritually marriage is symbolised by the union between the church and Christ himself as we learn from the sermon itself;

Rona kereke re morwetsana ya ratilweng ke mora wa Modimo; O re buisitse, mme ra dumela, o bile a re nyala mohlang ola a fanyehwang mahareng a dihlola.¹⁸⁾

Mr. Katse has prepared his sermon specially to impress and guide Aria Sebaka and Alfred Phakwe in their future planning and intentions because it has always been his greatest wish to see these children discover each other in a kind of idealized love. The author believes that the greatest good and the greatest happiness is to be attained by the steadfast following of the ideal. Both these children were deeply impressed by the

¹⁸⁾ P.70. We, the church, are the lady who has been loved by the Son of God; he proposed love to us, and we agreed; he even married us the day he was crucified between the scoundrels.

idealistic conception of love as preached by the evangelist. They were so impressed that both started day-dreaming about a utopian world in which such love could be found. Both spent most of their time looking for this type of love; both did not find it except in each other.

Mr Katse's sermon was received differently by different people. The young ones made fun out of it, and found new expressions for love-making. The old, married folk, found an advice to repair their marriage relations. But the real significance of the sermon was to raise a moral issue. First to enable characters like Alfred Phakwe and Aria Sebaka to maintain the virtue of moderation, patience and self-restraint in love affairs; secondly to expose the weakness of those who, like Ioda Msimang, allow their passions to run riot and make them fall in love with whomever they meet, and in this way bring about their own downfall. What the author does and does so brilliantly with these sermons is to place his characters in situations in which they have to make moral decisions. He gives them a scale of moral values by which their actions can be judged. True, purposeful love pre-supposes happy married life; a good, faithful woman creates harmony and good family relationship; a good, devoted evangelist like Mr Katse, a man who preaches what he practises, can bring many souls closer to God and win for the soul the battle against the flesh. Those who depart from the scale of morals set by the author received their immediate punishment or retribution. The story of a young couple narrated by Aria Sebaka is a good example. Also by the fate of Ioda Msimang the author censures lovers who yield to passion instead of being regulated by moderation. Mofolo stresses the power to choose, the ability to judge, and to love not only passionately but also rationally. This is the moral issue in "Pitseng".

In the love scene the author creates and depicts an atmosphere which is unmistakably Sotno; an atmosphere out of

which he grew. He gives a clear indication of his own emotional life as a boy and as a young man. The reader feels this genuine personal experience of the author in matters of love-making. His experience covers even students in boarding schools in the Cape where Basotho and Nguni students are not handicapped by language differences to convey their love messages. He describes their characteristics and deportment so fittingly that we feel the writer is dealing with concrete passions of living people and not with abstract love. Young men and young women in this scene remain with us as vividly as though we had known them in life. Nothing could be more life-like and true than the bubbling merriment of boys and girls after school, who, quite oblivious of anything else, are actively engaged in proposing love to one another. Nothing truer than the good faith and the impatient aspirations with which young men of different standing address themselves to Aria Sebaka, the paragon of beauty, whom every one of them would very much like to possess as his life-partner. It is this love-affair that has made "Pitseng" so popular among the young people.

In "Pitseng" the author has transported his audience to a world of idealised characters of whom Alfred Phakwe and Aria Sebaka are typical examples. He so channelled their actions that eventually they led to a happy consummation of their love. They have much to do with carrying on and development of the story. They challenge the strain of closing up nature's outlet for emotion by never falling in love in their youth even when all the other children did so. But that these children should ultimately marry each other is made quite clear by the trend of events. Mr. Katse struggles to discover the secret that lay deep in their hearts. He includes them in his prayers, and has them in mind when he prepares his sermons. He even tried to act as a go-between by conveying from time to time artful messages to each about the other in his letters.

Mofolo is always endeavouring to teach by example. He worked a love story into his given material with a convincing skill and created a favourable atmosphere for a Christian marriage to take place between Alfred and Aria, the only characters who succeeded to practise the doctrine of moderation in love and repressed their emotional feelings towards members of the opposite sex. For this self-denial they were amply rewarded, because though love, as we know and understand it, was something as yet outside their experience or even their vision, they both felt in their breasts hammer strokes of love towards each other the moment their eyes met. This was the beginning of mutual discovery for which Mr. Katse has long been waiting. By their marriage the author wants to teach the younger generation the importance of self-control, patience and moderation in love affairs; and that those who enter marriage equipped with these virtues will always receive God's blessing and that of their parents; and their marriage will be a glorious success.

CHAPTER IV.

"Tjhaka".

The Plot.

"Tjhaka" is the third and last book Mofolo wrote. It was published in 1925. "Tjhaka" is a historical novel because it is based on material furnished by the past, and it includes historical events and characters. The following are some of these historical events and characters: the love affair between Senzangakhona and Nandi and the subsequent birth of Tjhaka; Tjhaka and his mother, Nandi, live as fugitives, Tjhaka kills a lion (E.A. Ritter in "Shaka Zulu" says it was a leopard P.21); Tjhaka is placed under the protection of Dingiswayo; Tjhaka kills a mad man; he becomes a warrior under Dingiswayo; Dingiswayo fights against Zwade; the capture and release of Zwade by Dingiswayo; Tjhaka recaptures the chieftainship of his father by killing Mfokazana; the killing of Dingiswayo by Zwade; the conquering of Zwade by Tjhaka to avenge the death of Dingiswayo; Tjhaka rules over Dingiswayo's and Zwade's people as well; Tjhaka introduces economic and social reforms; Tjhaka kills the cowards; he kills the witch-doctors also; he massacres hundreds of people to mourn the death of his mother, Nandi; the dissatisfaction and desertion of Mzilikazi and Manukuza; the assassination of Tjhaka by Dingana and Mhlangara.

But in this book Mofolo gives us more than the external panorama of history. The book is an image of life, not a mere record of experience. The following are fictitious events and characters in "Tjhaka": the doctoring of Tjhaka by Witches and diviners with their magic; the visit by the great serpent of the deep pool; the killing of a hyena to save a girl, the fiancée of Mfokazana; the fight which ensued and the subsequent banning of Tjhaka by Senzangakhona; the arrival of Isanusi who came from nowhere; the delivery of Tjhaka to Dingiswayo by

Isanusi; the sending of Ndlebe and Malunga to be companions of Tjhaka at Dingiswayo's place; Tjhaka is taken to the grave of his father by Isanusi and company; the tempting of Tjhaka with greater lordship by Isanusi; the murder of Noliwa by Tjhaka for medicinal purposes was the height of fiction; the supposed murder of Nandi by Tjhaka himself is fictitious (Nandi died a natural death suffering from dysentery according to "The Diary of H.F. FYNN" P. 132.); Tjhaka's bad dreams and visions are the products of Mofolo's creative imagination. These fictitious events and characters assist a great deal to suspend and to carry forward the plot and to sustain the interest of the narrative. They show the side of life of the Zulu chief which is unknown to the writers of history.

Starting as he did, with a single situation, a sin between Senzangakhona and Nandi, Mofolo had to discover from history, and to create from his fertile imagination characters that were best fitted to bring out its beautiful implications. Characters whose duty it was to precipitate action and help to make the story interesting and creditable. We are introduced into a state of affairs out of which the conflict arises. The conflict in the plot is the struggle between the innocent Tjhaka aided by his mother, against a host of those who are conspiring from self-interest to do him out of his fortunes. We see two different sets of forces: the advancing forces to which Tjhaka, his mother, Nandi, and for the time being his father, Senzangakhona, belong. To this group we may include Dingiswayo, witches and magicians. The opposing forces consist of the other wives of Senzangakhona, their sons * Mfokazana, Dingana and Mhlangana, who claimed succession to the chieftainship of Senzangakhona on the grounds that they were more legitimate than Tjhaka. To all these we may add the general public who hated and persecuted Tjhaka for no fault of his but the sin of his parents. It is then that Nandi employed

Tjhaka

the services of a witch to protect and preserve the life of the young Tjhaka from destruction by his enemies. The real purpose of resorting to magic and receiving the attention of the ancestors in the form of a snake was to give Tjhaka courage, hope and confidence. To arm him with an assurance of safety from the malignant influences of his enemies; and to allay the anxiety of his mother. As a result the herdboys soon realised that Tjhaka was more than a match for them. Men were put to shame by his dauntless spirit; Mfokazana and his followers were humiliated by the same spirit. Then under pressure of his wives and the public Senzangakhona had to join the opposing forces against Tjhaka and had him banned and commanded his men to kill him. This was a conflict which was more terrible than any Tjhaka had experienced before. In despair Tjhaka fled from home for good. The significance of this outward conflict is that it has influence on the fortunes of Tjhaka. It is a triumph for his enemies who will gladly and freely instal Mfokazana as a successor to Senzangakhona's chieftainship.

The coming in of Isanusi helps a great deal in the development of the plot. He it is, who initiates action. Through his appearance a gleam of false hope lights up the darkening scene. He gives hope that Tjhaka may yet escape. Tjhaka himself was overwhelmed with joy when he saw in Isanusi the fulfilment of one prophecy of the witch that a magician far superior in knowledge of witch-craft would come.

To show his genius Isanusi appealed to Tjhaka's master motive of ambition, and his belief in magic and ancestors, the two effective motive powers, which he gainfully employed in the rise and development of the conflict in the plot. Playing on these two aspects of the hero, Isanusi easily made Tjhaka succumb to his magical treatment. Cleverly too Isanusi harped on the fact that he himself belonged to the world of spirits and has close connection and could communicate with them.

Having thus gained his full confidence Isanusi made Tjhaka an agent of his own fortunes; and to achieve this he sent Tjhaka to Dingiswayo.

Then the author makes an appeal to another expedient which in Tjhaka's time was evidently powerful. He introduces battles. Wars were extremely popular in those days. They were a means of ascending to the highest pinnacles of glory and power. Moreover some of these battle scenes thrill the imagination of the reader. At Dingiswayo's place Tjhaka had the opportunity of displaying his unusual courage. It is here where he met Malunga and Ndlebe, the two mysterious fellows, who were sent by Isanusi to be the companions of Tjhaka in his wars and troubles. It is in these wars where Isanusi, Malunga and Ndlebe proved to be the leading characters who did not only initiate action but physically engaged in it. They became the chief agents of Tjhaka's ascendancy to power.

But Tjhaka had to be deeply involved in these wars in order to identify himself with the progress of his own fortunes. Under Dingiswayo Tjhaka showed himself to be a general of extraordinary prowess, who has covered himself with glory by destroying Zwide's power and by regaining his father's chieftainship by defeating his own brothers in the field of battle. In this war Mfokazana was killed. Tjhaka wanted to kill Dingana and Mhlangana as well but Ndlebe requested him to stay his hand; the most unusual thing that Ndlebe, of all people, should plead for mercy on behalf of somebody. Later it will be seen that Tjhaka made a fatal error of sparing these half-brothers of his. Tjhaka emerged from these wars an undisputed ruler of many tribes, those of Senzangakhona, those of Dingiswayo, and those of Zwide. Then he had time to attend to economic and social reforms at home.

Then Isanusi comes with a greater temptation, that there was yet another charm which would give Tjhaka a chieftainship

which is much larger than the one he already had. This touched the personal pride of Tjhaka and whetted his great ambition. But Isanusi would not give Tjhaka this dominance over the whole world unless he sacrifices Noliwa, the person he loved most. Knowing the great significance of the decision Tjhaka was about to take, Isanusi gave him an extension of time during which to think and make up his mind. When the time of grace had expired Isanusi once more convinced Tjhaka that by the death of his beloved Noliwa he would gain tenfold the glory of his chieftainship. Tjhaka surrendered to the temptation and decided that Noliwa must die in order that her blood might provide the necessary ingredients for the preparation of the charm. With these thoughts in mind Tjhaka entered Noliwa's hut and murdered her. Thus we have seen how events leading to this melancholy end were stage-managed by Isanusi the genius. How with fresh promises he drove Tjhaka forward until he reached this crisis in the story. To this crisis Tjhaka had to contribute dearly. This is the climax of the story and the turning point of the life of Tjhaka.

Now that the crisis has been reached we watch with keen interest for a happy consummation of the promised lordship of the world. But instead we get an immediate and crushing counteraction. We feel a sudden and tragic change in the direction of the movement, which after ascending more or less gradually, now turns sharply downward and precipitates the catastrophe or death of Tjhaka. This leaves the reader with a feeling of discouragement because after too long a preparation for a final effect, and after his senses and imagination have been assaulted by too great tension and anxiety, he merely sees "the ever-increasing lust for power" changing and becoming "the unquenchable thirst for blood" which only death and death alone could assuage. The assassination of Tjhaka by Dingana and Mhlangana brought about this necessary end.

This is the plot in "Tjhaka" which is based on an incident which became a social problem, the solution of which set the events moving. The plot has, as far as possible, remained faithful to the spirit and the external facts of the Tjhakan times. Mofolo has depicted both characters and action in harmony with the enveloping circumstances of witches and magic; serpents and spirits; fears and hopes; the anguish and the suspense that this atmosphere inspires. The plot is uniform and its narrative is unbroken by detached episodes. The whole story is concerned with character development and experiences of Tjhaka at different stages of his life. The plot develops logically from the beginning to the end, focussing attention on the central theme which is the gradual ripening of Tjhaka's personality. "Tjhaka" is a novel of a highly organised plot.

Characters.

Isanusi, Malunga, and Ndlebe.

These magicians are the chief architects of Tjhaka's greatness and also the agents of his downfall. As diviners who are usually known among the Zulus as "Izangoma" or "Isanusi", they possess an impersonal power, a force which can be controlled by persons who know how to do so and who are adepts of this art. This power is called magic force, and persons who control it are magicians. According to "The Social System of the Zulus" by E. J. Krige P.297, they are the only men with power to make known the will of the spirits and to interpret their messages. Isanusi says to Tjhaka:

Feela lebitso la ka ke Isanusi, ke lona leo ke buang le bafu ka lona, nne le bona ba ntseba ka lona.¹⁹⁾

They all have supernatural tendencies. They are not limited by time and space. But Isanusi does not share equal

19) P.42. But my name is "Isanusi". That is the name I use when I speak with the dead, and they know me by it.

power with the other two, he does not lose his supremacy. He is still the first, but first, not because he is isolated from the other characters, but because he has greater influence which springs from a domineering character and compels the loyal devotion of others. He adds life to all that is living in them. He does not put out their light but kindles it into a brighter flame of character. They burn all the brighter for his influence. A touch from him makes them reveal themselves. Tjhaka's observations were a correct assessment of this man's character. At first sight Tjhaka seemed to see a man more evil than any sorcerer, and more evil by far than any murderer, the very father of malice, wickedness and treachery. In keeping with this nature of his, Isanusi commands Tjhaka to be bold, merciless and bloody, he should put away mercy and compassion for he who shows these qualities is lost. He tells Tjhaka that his spear must be ever wet with blood, new blood, fresh blood.

But Isanusi was a real compound of good and evil. When Tjhaka takes a second look at him he found his face full of pity and compassion, a man with a perfect kindness and a sympathetic heart and the truest lover. Sympathy was the chief motive that prompted Isanusi to deliver Tjhaka, who was distressed and frustrated, from all his troubles and persecutions. It was through the motives of sympathy and love that Isanusi doctored Tjhaka with all the charms in order to free him from all manner of anxieties, and to immune him from the attacks of his enemies. By the same motives he sent him to Dingiswayo to ensure that he gets the protection he needed, and to provide a suitable environment where Tjhaka could display his prowess; because at Dingiswayo's place spears are wielded and the young men are praised for their bravery. Isanusi's great desire was that Tjhaka should win the favour of Dingiswayo, the man who would help Tjhaka to recapture the chieftainship

and fame which he so long desired. To eliminate any chances of error, and through pity, Isanusi gave Tjhaka permission to call the magic name of "Isanusi" whenever he found himself in peril; or when the enemies pressed hard and he saw that death was unavoidable. The mere mention of this name would dissipate his enemies and help would come to him instantly.

Pity, sympathy and love are the main motives again which induced Isanusi to provide Tjhaka with able companions, Ndlebe and Malunga. Their charge was to abide with Tjhaka, watch over him and be near him in all his wars. Isanusi had to see to it that Tjhaka wins all the battles of Dingiswayo who would in return assist Tjhaka to regain the chieftainship he was promised. The greatest wish of these mysterious characters, Malunga and Ndlebe was to provide means whereby Tjhaka's desire might be accomplished. Malunga, the wizard and the magician, qualities which are otherwise harmful, decided to employ them in a benevolent way to help Tjhaka. He attended to the warriors and treated them with his medicines to immunise them before they were engaged in battles; he so conditioned them that they obeyed and carried out any commands that came from the mouth of Tjhaka. But the evil tendencies of Malunga forced him to frighten Tjhaka by telling him that the magic charms in his body would act as a boomerang on him and kill him if he does not engage in bloodshed, and kill with his own hands.

x Ndlebe, the beast with keen animal senses, would scent troubles before hand and would advise accordingly. But in keeping with his bad, selfish nature he used this quality of his for purposes which were detrimental to Tjhaka himself. He and Malunga told a lie and prevented Tjhaka from ransoming Dingiswayo from his enemy Zwide because they wanted Dingiswayo to die. He spied on Nandi and her grand child and as a result Tjhaka killed them. He counseled mercy for Dingana and Mhlangana whom Tjhaka wanted to kill; because he wanted to spare them for the

assassination of Tjhaka himself afterwards.

These three, Isanusi, Malunga and Ndlebe, represent faculties or instincts of Tjhaka's own nature.

Isanusi is Tjhaka the evil genius, who stimulates Tjhaka's ambition and dulls his conscience;

Malunga is Tjhaka the warrior, and the magic power behind Tjhaka's forces;

Ndlebe is Tjhaka the beast with power to smell out and unravel things; he aids Tjhaka's suspicion, and is the force behind Tjhaka's murders and his wanton killing of people, relatives, friends and even the innocent babies.

They are the embodiment, in a visible form, of the evil forces which are ever on the alert to establish an unholy alliance with the criminal instincts of the human heart. They represent the evil without, which must meet the evil within Tjhaka.

It is this union of the outward and the inward which produces much greater imaginative effect. They know how to tempt and how to betray. Because Tjhaka has become too ambitious and dreams of unsurpassed chieftainship and fame they have great influence on him. To master his mind they appeal to his religion by taking him to an awe-inspiring place, the grave of his father, there to perform ceremonies that will impress Tjhaka and make him to believe that they were not ordinary people but the real associates of the ancestors whose language they spoke. Although they maintain that the aim was to enable Tjhaka to get blessings of his ancestors but we cannot fail to see the real selfish motive behind it: to identify themselves with the spirits of the ancestors to win the confidence of Tjhaka who should thereafter become an easy prey to their temptations.

Isanusi, Malunga and Ndlebe are in fact only personifications of the real internal tempting motives of Tjhaka himself. Their tempting predictions of chieftainship honours inflamed the

ambitious desires of Tjhaka and thus led him to criminal actions which would pave the way to his doom. They ensure Tjhaka's destruction by their deceitful promises and sweet assurances of safety. Isanusi tells Tjhaka that the blood of Noliwa will bring him untold riches; and that through the death of Noliwa Tjhaka will learn of many things. Yet what Isanusi really wants is to awaken in Tjhaka that proud ambition which will certainly lead to the melancholy fate of the young Noliwa. He also knows that Tjhaka's surrendering to this temptation will entangle him inextricably in the web of fate; that the death of Noliwa will precipitate his own catastrophe. Malunga and Ndlebe tell lies about the death of Dingiswayo fearing that his deliverance by Tjhaka from the hands of his enemy, Zwide, might slow down the tempo of events leading to the hero's end. The excuse they gave was that the death of Dingiswayo would enable Tjhaka to get to the chieftainship sooner than he expected; and yet this was a mere means to the real end, the death of Tjhaka himself.

These wily and cunning creatures were found to be repulsive and fearful by Dingiswayo. When they were introduced to him he shuddered and rose from the ground in fear. He saw in the eyes of Malunga deceit, guile and treachery and would not tolerate him. He and Isanusi would not appear before Dingiswayo because of fear lest he discovered their true nature. Only Ndlebe who disguised his real self by appearing an idiot was tolerated. But these men were capable of reading the thoughts of others and were a power exerting an influence which no person could evade or ignore. They give the story that supernatural element which provides so well the background to a tragedy such as "Tjhaka". Characters such as these haunt the imagination as no naturalistically conceived personages can do. As they had before hastened Tjhaka's rise by inflaming his master-motive of ambition, so after the death of Noliwa

they accelerate his fall by ministering to what has become his cardinal passion, the yearning to feel himself secure. They were the chief agents in dispelling his conscience. In fact what plunged Tjhaka into bloodshed was the discovery that his cruel aspirations found an echo in the voices of these mysterious associates of his, Isanusi, Malunga and Ndlebe.

Tjhaka.

992 To hide his own guilt, and influenced by his other wives, Senzangakhona neglected Tjhaka at an early age. Consequently Tjhaka and his mother, Nandi, lived as outcasts at Langeni, his mother's place. The boy had to pass through trials and triumphs; hated and ill-used by everybody, young and old, and even by his more legitimate brothers. He was the object of every one's malice and sport. He did not know what crime he committed to deserve all this cruel treatment. This left a wound in him that never healed; and it set up a neurotic condition from which he was never able to free himself. The taunts of his companions so rankled in his breast that he grew up harbouring a deadly hatred against all and everything in Langeni. His whole existence has become joyless and loveless. When he realised that the misfortunes which befall him arise from the injustices of the society in which he lived he developed hatred and revolt against it. In this the seeds of his revengeful attitude started to germinate. He never forgot and he never forgave.

The irony of life placed Tjhaka amid circumstances which seemed designed to further the triumph of evil. When his own father banished him from home and commanded his men to kill him, Tjhaka's frustration knew no bounds. In his exile he resolved to revenge himself when he became king. He came to the conclusion that might was right; and that he would kill both the guilty and the innocent alike. At this very moment when he was in this frame of mind Isanusi arrived. The effect

of his contact with this mysterious external influence which harmonises so strangely with his inner-most thoughts is profound. Isanusi told Tjhaka to put away all compassion and ordered him to kill mercilessly. Tjhaka found this suggestion fascinating because it tallied with his own original intentions.

Tjhaka has many fine qualities. He was a courageous man. As a boy he used not to cry even when he fell down or was beaten by somebody. As a herdboys he was hardened by incessant fighting and even developed a liking for it. During the fight his stick struck home and with such a force that his enemies were sent spinning to the ground. Finally he became the leader of all the herdboys in the neighbourhood. Later when he was already a young man, he is introduced to us as a man of extra ordinary prowess, who has covered himself with glory by killing a lion single-handed. He faced without flinching the great serpent of the deep waters and listened without a shudder to the ominous voices from among the reeds. He ventured out at dead of night to save a girl from the jaws of a hyena and managed to kill it alone. This action shows how chivalrous he was towards members of the weaker sex. Women all over sang songs that extolled his name and called him a hero, the defender of their kind. Noliwa says:

"Motho a ke ke a ba a re o nyetswe ha a sa nyalwa ke
ya kang mohale, Tjhaka.²⁰⁾

Through Tjhaka's bravery and strategy Zwide was captured and brought to Dingiswayo alive. At Dingiswayo's place he killed a much feared man unaided. In all these conflicts he showed great personal courage, a quality which he continued to display throughout the drama in regard to all plain dangers. He became a great warrior, masterful and rough, a man to inspire some fear and much admiration. His disposition

20) P. 67. A persons could not consider herself married unless she were married to a man as brave as Tjhaka.

was high, proud and commanding. He was born to rule, if not to reign over all nations. Through his valorous deeds he gained not only the chieftainship of his father but that of Dingiswayo, and that of Zwide as well.

Tjhaka was not only courageous but he also had a force of will. He was determined to get blood ingredient even if it meant killing his own mother or his own brothers. Even the fabulous amount of price Isanusi threatened to charge him would not deter him. He insisted on demanding the charm. He did not fear the consequences. But Tjhaka was also a man of honour. He told Isanusi that he had an obligation to honour his promise to marry Noliwa. Tjhaka's love and devotion to Dingiswayo inspired his resolve to ransom him from Zwide. His affection and respect dictated the duty of avenging his death.

Tjhaka was a greedy and jealous man. To cross the threshold of his harem (isigodlo), to hold conversation with females involved, if seen, summary execution. The harem was well guarded by day and by night by watchmen. Tjhaka legislated against love-making and prohibited marriage while he reserved for himself the right of indulging in criminal intercourse with the girls of his palace.

But Tjhaka was also a noble man, who inculcated in his people noble disciplines of life, such as submission to authority, obedience to the law, order and self-restraint; fearlessness and self-sacrifice. These high ideals in life spring from undisputed nobility of character and compel the loyal devotion of others. Tjhaka's greatest work as a lover of war and a martial genius was the creation, organisation and training of an unconquerable army for the purpose of building up a supreme Zulu nation. But these possibilities of greatness are annulled by too inordinate ambition.

Tjhaka was exceedingly ambitious. His ambition has been further stimulated by his remarkable success and by the

consciousness of exceptional powers and merit. His ambition became a passion or an obsession. This very ambition became the mainspring of the action in "Tjhaka". It is this selfish ambition, the unqualified passion to possess that unlimited power which no other ruler ever possessed, which calls into operation the forces that bring about the crisis (death of Noliwa) and its train of fearful results. This ambition has now become a weakness on the part of the hero. A weakness which Isanusi, with his terrible resources of evil influence, would never fail to exploit. Isanusi played on every motive of temptation and incitement which a swift brain and remorseless determination can suggest. He urged Tjhaka to achieve that which his ambition urged him to gain. Therefore even in the murder of Noliwa Tjhaka is not an innocent man. He has meditated the crime before his first meeting with Isanusi. The precise way in which Tjhaka would get the blood of this poor lady was deliberately planned by him. Isanusi only collaborated that which was originally suggested by Tjhaka himself. Tjhaka did not even startle when Isanusi suggested the killing of Noliwa to him. In fact nowhere in the book do we find that Mofolo meant the actions of Tjhaka to be forced on him by an external power, whether that of the witches, snakes, ancestral spirits or magicians. Isanusi merely becomes a symbolical representation of thoughts and desires which have slumbered in Tjhaka's breast and now rise into consciousness because of the external stimulus. Isanusi and his companions represent all the evil influences around Tjhaka which aid his own ambition.

Isanusi tempted Tjhaka to aim at a still wider lordship, the sacrifice for which must be the life of his betrothed Noliwa. But the fact remains that this temptation came as much from Tjhaka himself as from Isanusi. Not only was Tjhaka free to accept or resist the temptation, but he was again and again reminded of this freedom of choice. But because the

temptation was already within him, and that strictly speaking he was tempted only by himself; because of his great ambition, he decided that Noliwa must die. With this in mind Tjhaka entered Noliwa's hut to carry out his treacherous deed. But because of his sense of honour and because of inward protest of his deepest self against the deed he hesitated at first and left the room. But through personal appeal and through sheer force of will Isanusi crushed Tjhaka's inward protest, and then Tjhaka carried out his malicious intention and murdered Noliwa. Thus the crime which had originated in the promptings of ambition on the part of the hero is consummated, and ambition as a driving force is now exhausted. The irony of fate is that Tjhaka, blind folded by too great ambition, failed to understand that the murder of Noliwa meant his own death; that the kingship promised by Isanusi lay beyond the grave.

The death of Noliwa marks the culmination of the growth of that noble character, Tjhaka, who, up to this point, shared human feelings with the rest of mankind. After Noliwa's death there was no further scope for Tjhaka's ambition, its place was taken by an excessive imagination which becomes the ruling motive for Tjhaka's actions. Instead of peace descending on Tjhaka, his half murdered conscience rises and assails him with fresh horrors. He is full of imaginative fears. The terrible suspicions made Tjhaka to tremble at last. The guilty conscience gave birth to premonitions. He fears cowardice in his forces; suspects witchcraft among his people; and uses these as excuses for killing them all. His generals and warriors he suspects to be traitors who must be weeded out. Through jealousy he fears to see his own image in his offsprings because heirs have a way of hastening their advent to the chieftainship of their fathers and therefore they must be removed. Innocently Nandi wanted to save one of Tjhaka's children, unaware of the prying eyes of a spy, her secrecy was uncovered by the notorious

Ndlebe, and so the child was killed by Tjhaka. Thereafter Tjhaka showed his cruelty by bartering away the life of his own mother without the least compunction. Then he made a great show of grief at her death. His very indignation at those who would not mourn her death was admirably feigned. No act of Tjhaka shows his brutality more clearly than his regulations upon the death of his mother, Mandi. He ordered a wholesale, endless and indiscriminate butchery of people. The whole flood of evil in his nature was now let loose. A spirit more animal than human took full possession of him. His character has degenerated. Murder is an escape to him. He longs to see people die, killed by himself. There is a fever in his blood which urges him to ceaseless action in the search for oblivion. He hopes that after this purposeless butchery his own imagination will trouble him no more. He seems to have no choice but to go on strengthening his position by removing all who stand in his way. But even those who do not, for instance, Nongogo and Mnyamana, are the victims of his blood-lust. He killed some of his concubines because they had failed to calm his aching heart. He became an open tyrant, dreaded by everyone about him, and a terror to his people. He died having no friends, no loyal servants or subjects.

His imagination is productive of violent disturbances of mind. Through it he is liable to supernatural fears. The racking fears prolong themselves into the night and reappear as hideous dreams. Tjhaka is shaken nightly by the affliction of terrible dreams; and is subject to many dreadful fancies. He dreamed thrice during the same night and was dreaming about the same thing. Surprisingly he even feared his staunch friend, Isanusi, when he saw him in the dream. Thinking that sorcery might be the cause of his bad dreams and want of sleep in his old kraal, he abandoned it and preferred to live in the veld. Still his imagination gave him no rest. His most

painful dream was the one in which he saw a Zulu spear piercing his own heart. He also had visions of people whom he killed. Thus Tjhaka has become a victim of his self-torturing imagination.

Nandi.

Nandi belongs to the Langeni tribe. She was rich in attractive qualities and was a great performer at dances and songs.

Nandi was a seriously grieved woman, whose great honour and personal pride were debased by the fact that she, illicitly and without her will, became a mother. She felt doubly dishonoured because she came to Senzangakhona without a merry wedding feast. She was quietly installed as one of the chief's wives. There could be no ceremonial celebrations of the coming of a bride already with a child. Nandi found herself unwelcome and neglected. But in spite of all this Nandi was forgiving and loyal to her husband. She became passive and completely subdued. She accepted, though not without a bleeding heart, her husband's order that she and her son should depart from Nobamba to her home at Langeni. She was in this way denied the pleasures of a family life. We are amazed at her perfect composure against the unjustifiable demands of her co-wives, who were the cause of her leading a miserable life of a fugitive.

Nandi was capable of deep and constant love. Her affection for her son made her share with him all the trials and tribulations which he suffered in his youth. Together they had to bear the unsympathetic treatment and the taunts of the society in which they lived. Anxious to save her son and to protect him from the envious enemies who conspired to kill him and usurp all his fortunes, Nandi appealed to the services of a witch-doctor. This resort to magic was a desperate attempt on the part of Nandi, a discarded woman, whose child could not enjoy the natural protection of a father. The thought, that her beloved son was banished and therefore excluded from his lawful

inheritance by Senzangakhona, her husband, the man on whom she has lavished her deepest love, was intolerable and weighed heavily upon her soul. During this very period of uncertainty, when nobody knew where Tjhaka was and whether or not he was still alive, Nandi, the loving and devoted mother, suffered untold agonies in her heart.

Nandi's maternal love is revealed by her great desire and longing for grand children. To gratify this love she persuaded Tjhaka to marry in order to have children of his own. When Tjhaka refused, Nandi hid away one of the expecting lovers of Tjhaka until she bore a child. But this very action of Nandi exasperated Tjhaka and his anger swelled into a wellnigh uncontrollable flood. He pressed for immediate death of his own mother, and with his own hand killed her. Such is the irony of fate, that Nandi, who suffered so much physical strain and emotional anguish, should be killed by her own son whom she loved so dearly.

When we watch Nandi in her long drawn suffering and in her death it seems as if she has lost all personal and social pride, the feeling that she is approved of by her immediate associates. She accepted without questioning a kind of ostracism which was imposed on her and her son. In other words the society passed judgment on her, and as it were, sentenced her to life imprisonment. But when we look at her life again, we are penetrated by her motherly love, devotion and self-sacrifice for the preservation of the life of her son, Tjhaka. For him she sacrificed the pleasures of a family life, lived and died in exile, without even a grand child to bless her soul. Nandi is, indeed, a symbol of frustrated love.

Noliwa.

She is introduced to us as the youngest sister of Dingiswayo, whom Dingiswayo loved exceedingly. Other than a mere mentioning of her name, Noliwa appears in only two out of twenty six chapters,

and she speaks to a very few people. Yet no female character in Mofolo's works is more absolutely individual or more indelibly stamped on the memory of his readers than Noliwa. Her beauty has a magic charm which almost overpowered Tjhaka. He found it too rich to use, and too dear to destroy. As a result he, at first, hesitated to annihilate what has been to him the paragon of all created things.

Noliwa is not only extraordinarily beautiful but she has a generous nature, full of compassion, kindness and sympathy, qualities which are typical of her sex. It hurts her to see and hear other girls mock at and ridicule Ndlebe. She scornfully remarked:

Le se ke la mo tsheha, ke se bopuo sa Modimo, mo-tsheha-sehole o a ipiletsa, o tla se tswala.²¹⁾

She was always ready to give him food whenever he was hungry. She cared for him when everybody else regarded him as a fool and despised him.

Although Noliwa was the daughter of the principal chief she was never too proud. She has a considerate heart and a wealth of sympathy. She did not think of the lowly station in which Tjhaka was born. She knew that Tjhaka was a mere vagabond who sought refuge under her brother Dingiswayo. But still she sympathised with him, loved him dearly and even selected him for a husband.

Noliwa is deep, sincere and passionate in her love, which is all the time firm and constant. She is not too proud to reveal her own feelings. Openly she expresses her love for Tjhaka to Ndlebe in the following words:

Motho a ke ke a ba a re o nyetswe, ha a sa nyalwa ke ya kang mohale Tjhaka. Ha ke mo rate, ke ya tuka; ke se ke bile ke tshohile hobane ke lekile ho ipontsha

21) P. 66. Mock him not, he is God's creature. She who mocks a cripple brings ill-luck upon herself, she will give birth to one.

ka mekgwa yohle, empa eka yena o ntlodisa mahlo hodimo
feela.²²⁾

Thus what she feels finds spontaneous expression and is not controlled by thoughts of what is customary and proper. Her heart was subdued to an implicit devotion to the man she has chosen for a husband.

Noliwa is an innocent child of nature, who merely cowers beneath the inhuman action of Tjhaka. For her innocent and sincere love she must die and die a horrible death. Her last words, read in their context, bring out the pathos very clearly:

Tjhaka, moratuwa wa ka, wena o seng o le ntate, wena
Jobe, wena Dingiswayo, wena....²³⁾

We are not wrong therefore when we conclude that Noliwa is a martyr and a precursor of a better life in a land that is more glorious than the sun, a land to which Tjhaka must also go.

Senzangakhona.

When Tjhaka was born Senzangakhona had cause to rejoice. Happiness and joy made him act promptly and resourcefully to meet the situation as it arose. He informed his principal chief, Jobe, immediately that a baby boy was born to him; and that he would be his own successor in the chieftainship of the Zulu tribe. Once more when Tjhaka killed a lion Senzangakhona quickly sent it to Dingiswayo as an act of loyalty and respect to him. His other motive was to built up Tjhaka before the eyes of Dingiswayo, who would be too pleased to see and know such a brave young man. Thus we see and admire Senzangakhona as a realistic man full of action.

22) P. 67. None could consider herself married unless she were married to a man as brave as Tjhaka.....
I do not merely love him; I am ablaze with love.
I am already frightened, for I have tried every means to show my love, but it seems he has no eyes to see.

23) P.118. Tjhaka, my beloved, thou who art now my father, who art Jobe, who art Dingiswayo, who art....

But Senzangakhona is depicted as a cowardly person. His hasty actions and the unscrupulous manner with which he handled his affair with Nandi placed him in the most difficult situation out of which he could not free himself. His fear that his sin with Nandi might come to light had a paralysing effect on him and he failed to deal with or to control his other wives. Through hatred and jealousy against Nandi and her son, they forced the nervous Senzangakhona to reverse, verbally at least, his decision about succession. To appease his discontented wives he assured them that Mfokazana and not Tjhaka would be his successor. Further more he had Nandi and her son dismissed from his home at Nobamba to gratify the wish of his envious wives. Knowing the weak side of his character his wives forced him to choose whether he remained on the side of Tjhaka or he joined the group of his enemies. Through lack of strong will Senzangakhona had to join the forces that sought to destroy Tjhaka and deprive him of his fortunes. He submitted to the demands of his vicious and jealous wives and had Tjhaka persecuted and banned. He even imposed a penalty of death sentence upon him. He did all this merely to keep his shame concealed. From the beginning to the end Senzangakhona's actions are not motivated by hatred, dislike or aversion of Tjhaka or his mother, but are brought about by weakness and fear.

Looking deep into the whole behaviour of Senzangakhona we see the actions of a sinner agonised by remorse. The great crime which started everything was the sin of Senzangakhona and Nandi. Had Senzangakhona not committed this shameful act in his youth, Tjhaka would have lived at his home in Nobamba, the beloved son of his father. But in spite of his sin Senzangakhona does inspire in us much pity and admiration. We pity him because we seem to feel the depth of his shame and repentance and the frustrating thought that repentance does not annul the past. We admire him because in addition to naming Tjhaka a successor

Senzangakhona showed his loyalty and respect to Dingiswayo by acquainting him with the valorous deeds of Tjhaka. What is more Senzangakhona did not reverse officially before Dingiswayo, his original decision that Tjhaka would be his successor. Thus Senzangakhona was prudent and a man of his word. In this way he contributed to Tjhaka's accession to the chieftainship of the Zulus.

Dingiswayo.

He developed a great liking for Tjhaka who was introduced to his father, Jobe, as the named successor of Senzangakhona, and afterwards to Dingiswayo himself on the occasion of Tjhaka's killing a lion which was sent to Dingiswayo in recognition of his status as the principal chief. Dingiswayo has always longed to see and know Tjhaka, a young man who was so brave. Even when Tjhaka had disappeared from home and his whereabouts were unknown, and all had lost hope of ever finding him alive, Dingiswayo was still gathering together all the witch-doctors and diviners so that they might divine where Tjhaka was. This he did because of the great love he had for Tjhaka. When Tjhaka finally re-appeared Dingiswayo took the first opportunity of uniting him with his mother because he wanted to share with Nandi, the joy of seeing Tjhaka alive.

Knowing how kind, sympathetic and hospitable Dingiswayo was, Isanusi recommended him to Tjhaka and urged Tjhaka to obey Dingiswayo with true obedience and work for him with joy, because through him Tjhaka would win the chieftainship he sought. Also Tjhaka the vagabond, in his hour of need, thought of nobody else but Dingiswayo. He wished to be received and protected by him. Dingiswayo was, indeed, the man to heal the inward despair of Tjhaka like a spiritual comforter to a prodigal son. The hospitality which Dingiswayo had accorded to Nandi would be extended to her son, and Dingiswayo's home would be a perfect sanctuary for both. Dingiswayo was himself a brave man and a

warrior who fought in many battles, and commanded many regiments. He did provide suitable facilities for Tjhaka's war-like spirit. At Dingiswayo's place, says Isanusi, the sound of a spear banishes sleep, and the hearts of young men dance with joy when they hear the praise songs sung by the women of the place. Ungrudgingly Dingiswayo gave Tjhaka an ample scope to display his prowess and to win for himself the glory and fame which he desired so much. Prompted by love of Tjhaka and impressed by his acts of bravery, Dingiswayo promoted him to the rank of commander in chief of all the forces. Motivated by the same love Dingiswayo considered himself a father to Tjhaka whom he urged to marry and would pay lobola for him. Out of kindness, sympathy and love, Dingiswayo saw to it that justice was done to Tjhaka. He played a very important role in the restoration of Tjhaka to the chieftainship of the Zulus by giving him men with whom to fight and kill Mfokazana, the usurper. He was present on the occasion of Tjhaka's installation. On this very occasion Tjhaka extolled Dingiswayo with a heart full of gratitude and love. He thanked him for the very qualities of kindness, sympathy and love which made Dingiswayo protect and rehabilitate him and his mother who were then fugitives.

Dingiswayo was a reader of character and had a deep insight into human nature. Malunga says Dingiswayo is a prudent man, whose eyes can see what is hidden from the eyes of other men; they do not look upon the outside only, but pierce right into the heart of a man. When Ndlebe and Malunga were introduced to him by Tjhaka, Dingiswayo shuddered and rose from the ground in fear. Reading their characters he found Ndlebe to be an idiot whom he despised. But he did not like Malunga because his eyes were deceitful, full of guile and treachery. He feared him and would not tolerate him for a moment. Knowing that Dingiswayo was a shrewd judge of character, Isanusi cleverly avoided him and would not like to meet him. He

excused himself saying they hated each other.

After his early trials and travels Dingiswayo's general outlook in life had become considerably broadened and his attitude towards other people tempered with unselfishness and benevolence. He introduced social and economic reforms among his people. He gathered together workers of the same trade: workers in skins and hides, workers in wood and horns etc. He encouraged them by giving prizes to those who did better than others. He even attempted to instil a spirit of humanity into the tribe, but was ahead of his times. Dingiswayo was undoubtedly the most rational, dignified and honest character in the book.

Literary Comments.

Although "Tjhaka" is conceived in actual, concrete and particular terms, it is not a serious contribution to history at all. When writing this book Mofolo took into account the fact that the life of every human being has two sides: the first is that which shows on the surface, his actions and such of his spiritual existence as can be deduced from his actions and cannot escape the recording hand of a historian; the second is the hidden romantic side of a man's life which includes the pure passions such as love, hatred, joys, sorrows, fears, jealousies, ambitions etc., which fall under the domain of fiction. Mofolo has revealed this side of life which is not known to the writers of history and has given us a brilliant romance which is trustworthy as a picture of the life of the Zulu king. He has breathed life into the dry bones of history and made his historical characters fine pieces of imaginative recreation. Such characters as Senzangakhona, Nandi, Tjhaka himself, Dingiswayo etc. are made vital and human.

The author achieves a remarkable success when he deals with complex mental and moral conditions of men and women drawn directly from the African life he knows so well. He has pierced

into the very heart of the Zulu romance and made his book an imaginative piece of work. We have only to think of the imaginative effect of the witches and their magic; the snakes as messengers of good and bad omens from the world of ancestors; the river serpents with human character traits; the magicians who come from nowhere and are capable of disappearing into thin air; the spirits of the ancestors whose voices can be heard from inside their graves speaking the language of the living and giving advices to them; we have to think of the imaginative terrors and visions which stalk, haunt and beset the mind of the murderer. All these have the effect of keeping imagination excited and awake.

Mofolo's "Tjhaka" has a special atmosphere of its own which is quite perceptible though difficult to describe. The guilt of Senangakhona and Nandi was a thing of fear, and that which they felt became the spirit of the novel. A sense of fear, horror and mystery pervades the atmosphere of this tragic story of the historic Tjhaka. He is born in this atmosphere. He begins life with a conflict. He is born out of wedlock and therefore contrary to the law and custom of the society in which he must live. The society is unwilling to receive him. He must be cruelly persecuted or be killed in order that the society may rid itself of the evil.

In "Tjhaka" we find a world of witchcraft and sorcery which contributes to excite vague fear and even horror of hidden forces which operate on **mind unconscious of their** influence. To dispel a feeling of insecurity on the part of Tjhaka, the witch-doctors and the magicians must impress it upon his mind that he is now in the power of secret forces which alone can provide him with supernatural guarantee of safety from the machinations of his enemies:

It is only by fortifying our vital energy through the use of magical recipes, that we acquire resistance to

malevolent external forces.⁶⁾

The terrifying images of lions, hyenas, madmen etc. contribute to this atmosphere by stimulating fear in the hearts of men. One has only to think of the vivid picture of men who ran helter-skelter from a lion which some of them had not even seen. Another dreadful image is that of murder and blood, especially blood. It is not in vain that the image of blood, that ghastly and horrible ingredient of this general effect in the book, is forced upon us continually, not only by the events themselves, but by reiteration of the word itself.

After the murder of Noliwa we see Tjhaka swaying from feelings of security and unlimited confidence to the recklessness and brutality born of dread and of desparation. Therefore the atmosphere of terror does not end but it merely changes its shape. The same effect is continued in another form. It comes in the form of dreams, hallucinations and visions which spring from morbid imaginations of Tjhaka himself. We now see in him a soul tortured by an agony which gives it no respite. Dreams frighten him and drive away his sleep. In one of his dreams he sees a vision of a spear piercing his own heart. The mere howling of a jackal makes him start with fright, thinking it to be the war-cry of his pursuers. His mind was full of visions, the clearest of which was that of blood. On several occasions he resorted to acts of atrocities in order to dull the pain that was racking his heart. He took to a stop-at-nothing outlook on life in vain endeavour to save himself from the imaginative terrors and all other tortures that Nemesis can inflict upon him. He even abandoned his home through fear of sorcery. After this he became a midnight wanderer with his memory zig-zagging through the horrors of the past. He then saw in a vision "U Donga-luka Tatiyana" filled with the bodies of those whose lives he destroyed, with Nandi at one corner of

6) Placid Tempels, Bantu Philosophy P. 32.

it, and Noliwa at another. Then he heard the sound of a voice from among the multitude indicting him as the murderer of his own wife, his own brothers, his own offsprings, his own mother, etc.

Beset by terrors on every side, Tjhaka sought the counsel of his mysterious companions, Malunga and Ndlebe, but even these had vanished without telling anybody. He then realised that these ministers of darkness had betrayed him into deeds of great consequences and now that his hour had come they disappear and leave him to his fate. This was part of the Nemesis that Tjhaka had to face the approaching catastrophe alone.

The supernatural in "Tjhaka".

In this book Mofolo was able to tap a well of nationally cherished belief in magic, a belief still actual and operative. The author did not isolate Tjhaka from his own environment. Tjhaka lived in an atmosphere of magic and witchcraft; of witches and wizards with their malignant influences on man. These wizards and witches are men and women with flesh and blood like any other person. They are known as the enemies of society, who use the powers of the universe which they have learned to employ by means of magic for anti-social ends:

Medicine and magic thus go hand in hand, and the doctor must be well versed in all forms of magic, not only to effect his own cures, but to counteract the magic of the wizard, which is so important a function of the Bantu doctor.⁷⁾

Isanusi was such an adept in the use of magic. He was a great magician whose magic made graves talk. What he treated with his magic nobody could undo. Malunga doctored forces before they engaged in battle. Tjhaka himself was a symbol of magic power. His body was full of magic charms. His weapons, the club and the short spear were charmed. Magic offered Tjhaka a sort of psychological release from cares.

7) E. J. Krige, The Social System of the Zulus. P.335.

It gave him a feeling of security and unlimited confidence. When he found himself in a precarious situation he had only to put his hand on the magic charm upon his own forehead,, or call out the magic name of "Isanusi" to dissipate all his enemies or override all his obstacles:

Among the Bantu and, indeed, among all primitive peoples, life and death are the great apostles of fidelity to a magical view of life and of recourse to traditional magical practices.⁸⁾

But this magic power the diviners derive from the ancestors, who endow them with knowledge otherwise inaccessible to man. They must keep in constant touch with these ancestors. Isanusi told Tjhaka that the name "Isanusi" is the one he uses when he communicates with the dead or ancestors:

The real, vital religion of the Zulus is their ancestor-worship.⁹⁾

Ancestor-worship is based on the belief that the spirits of deceased relatives continue to have contact with their descendants on earth. The Zulus believe that the spirits of the dead appear in the form of certain snakes. Such snakes generally are treated with the greatest respect and veneration, and will never be killed. These spirits may also appear in dreams. As supernatural beings they are empowered to bless and defend their living relatives but also to punish them:

Tjhaka too knew his ancestral spirits, great and small; and if he feared no living man, he entertained a holy and wholesome dread of them. Though no longer in flesh, he knew they were living still, for he often saw them in his dreams, received their counsel and suffered their rebuke.¹⁰⁾

8) Placide Tempels; Bantu Philosophy. P. 13.

9) E.J. Krige, The Social System of the Zulus. P. 283.

10) A.T. Bryant, Olden Times in Zululand and Natal. P. 634.

Mofolo made use of this belief in ancestors. The visit of the serpent of the great pool strengthened and deepened Tjhaka's belief in snakes as messengers of the spirits of ancestors. This visit was a clear indication that Tjhaka was gladly welcome by his ancestors. The serpent must not be regarded as an illusion in the mind of Tjhaka or of Nandi who saw it. The appearance in the likeness of a snake is ominous of strange revelations to come. It is an essential part of Tjhaka's religion. The serpent represents the spirits of the ancestors who must take a real interest in their progeny. They must guard them from danger and attend to their needs. What Tjhaka wants is an assurance that his great ambition to become the ruler of the world will be gratified. To this inward feeling already present the serpent gives confirmation which is further corroborated by a mysterious voice from among the reeds saying: Tjhaka shall rule all the nations of men. For the first time Tjhaka is introduced into the world of spirits. The monster wound itself around him, welcoming him as it were into this world. It licked him as if to purify him and make him fit for this world of perfection. After this initiation, Tjhaka could patiently and without fear, await the arrival of the other members of this world in the persons of Isanusi and his companions, Malunga and Ndlebe. To strengthen Tjhaka's belief in ancestors, they took him to his father's grave to hear his actual voice and to receive his blessing and advice. All these and other magical performances of Isanusi are acts of orientation, preparing Tjhaka for the final act of identification with the ancestors through the blood of Noliwa, which must be spilt by Tjhaka himself. By killing Noliwa Tjhaka enrolls himself as one of the ancestors. But to be an ancestor one must die. Therefore by murdering Noliwa, Tjhaka signs his own death-warrant and seals it with the blood of his beloved wife. Then the words of Isanusi become quite significant:

Hona jwale lebitso la hao le se le kene palong ya Marena
a heso, le hona a maholo a phahameng.²⁴⁾

This is the meaning Isanusi attached to the choice he put before Tjhaka, a choice between the living Noliwa in the ephemeral, transient world of ours, and the spiritualised Noliwa in the eternal world beyond the grave. This is Mofolo's meaning by the death of Noliwa. With Mofolo, death is not an end but a liberation of the spirit; and in the world of Mofolo those we normally call the living and the dead exist side by side and are in communication.

Thus, on the one hand, these mysterious forces spurred Tjhaka on to his rise to the kingship; and on the other, they led him to criminal actions which would pave the way to his doom. This they did by means of the magic charms which aroused in Tjhaka, that mad feeling of invulnerability which made him believe that not even the basest acts on his part could possibly react back upon him. They did not only fortify him personally with their charms, but also rendered his forces immune and submissive to all his commands. They were the external forces in dispelling his conscience and in urging him to achieve that which his ambition urged him to gain. Here we have a man who is driven by some weakness from sin to sin until he is utterly ruined and death comes as a relief. His assassination by Dingana and Mhlangana is the rubber-stamping of an act already accomplished. In "Tjhaka" the obsession has been ambition, selfish ambition for power, which brought about total ruin of a man who was capable of far better things.

Mofolo's "Tjhaka" with its wonderful recreation of the life and atmosphere of the Tjhakan times is one of the finest historical novels we have in Southern Sotho Language. Mofolo has done the reconstruction with consummate skill, his mastery

24) P. 118. Now your name has already been enrolled among
the number of our chiefs, even the great and
mighty ones.

of its detail is complete. It has qualities which ensure permanence in literature; for it is full of creative energy; it keeps us in touch with the large currents of human life. It is full of the elements of great passion and strong action. Its grip upon the emotions of the reader is relentless and sustained. No wonder it has been translated into two of the European Languages, namely English and German.

CHAPTER V.

Mofolo's Characterization.

One of the rarest gifts of a novelist is the understanding and presentation of human characters. In two of his works, "Moeti Wa Botjhabela" and "Pitseng", Mofolo makes use of the two deepest human interests, religion and love, when he creates his main characters: Fekisi, Mr. Katse, Alfred Phakwe and Aria Sebaka. This gift for the creation of characters by the use of his moral imagination was revealed for the first time in "Moeti Wa Botjhabela" where Fekisi, with his habit of introspection and his intense spiritual life, clashed with a corrupt world.

This passionate and genuinely imaginative concern with moral existence was the essence of his approach to characterization. His characterization finds its meaning and its spring in his religious and moral favour. What all his characters share, in the first two works of his, is moral and religious consciousness. His main purpose was the depiction of moral characters. This central theme of moral imagination shows itself both with greater depth and with wider range in Fekisi and in Mr. Katse; both see life in terms of their religion. In Fekisi, we find the fluid confusions of the inner life, which lead to a point where they crystallize into a decision. We see an account of a spiritual conflict; an account of despair and of joy which Mofolo has drawn with such forceful and yet such subtle truth. In Fekisi, the author goes far beyond the individual and offers an image of mankind. Phakwane is but a representative figure; he hardly emerges as an individual character; he represents a common type. It is with Sotho society at large not with the precise quality of feeling of individual characters that Mofolo is primarily concerned. In Mr. Katse is manifested a compassion and a love for mankind, which are Mofolo's finest moral and religious message.

By these characters Mofolo wants to illustrate that the Christian life, and indeed any life, must be the expression of a dynamic will. He knows and by these moral characters, he demonstrates that spiritual man is not a simple product of natural man, but the result and the reward of a persevering struggle. Fekisi's path is strewn with obstacles: a difficult decision to make; a solitary journey to undertake; deserts and a limitless sea to cross; hunger and illness to face; lions to fight and kill, if he wants to achieve his goal. Alfred Phakwe and Aria Sebaka had to deny themselves the joys of youthful love in favour of a lasting happiness of married life. Mr Katse preferred a life of selflessness in order to serve his fellow men. This was the main spring of his happiness.

Mofolo's world is one in which things work out normally; goodness is on the whole rewarded and evil punished. He makes the good and the bad exist side by side as characters must often do in fiction, thus making a richer pattern by their contrasting qualities than they could ever make separately. For this reason Phakwane and Fekisi must live as neighbours; Aria Sebaka and Ioda Msimang must be contemporaries of the same world.

In his characterization, Mofolo takes love as a powerful factor in human relationship, which does illuminate the inner life of characters. Love has the power of conveying the emotional quality of a character's life. It manifests itself differently in different people. It is hypocritical in Milton Thotho; frivolous and purposeless in Linganiso Diniso; fanciful and materialistic in Ioda Msimang; sincere and grudging in James Moraka. But to Mofolo love is a noble thing. In fact it is too noble to be played with. Its nobility had to be demonstrated and exemplified by Alfred Phakwe and Aria Sebaka, who could moderate and control their emotions. Only these, in Mofolo's mind, could love truly and rationally. When depicting the characters of Aria Sebaka and Alfred Phakwe, of James Moraka and

Ioda Msimang and many others in "Pitseng" the author brought the power of love into conflict with the demands of property and social status; and according to this scale of values all other characters had to be measured or judged. Each of his characters in this book had to make a choice, either to marry for love or for wealth. Those who chose the material side of life like Ioda Msimang stumbled and fell; but those who followed the spiritual side of human life like Alfred and Aria, theirs was the happiness of indefinite duration.

The charge against Mofolo's character-drawing in "Moeti Way Botjhabela" and to some extent in "Pitseng" is his tendency of dissecting a character before the reader's eyes. He often makes intrusive moral comments upon his creations instead of presenting them in action and leaving the evaluation of their characters to the reader. This intervention on the part of the author interferes with the right response to the story itself. The effect produced by what characters do and say is weakened or dissipated by the author's direct comments. The characters and their experiences should be offered to the reader for his contemplation and moral judgment.

Mofolo's characterization in "Tjhaka" differs from what we have seen so far. He delves into the private feelings and secret motives of his characters and thereby achieves something quite different from the mere description of characters by their maker or creator. His real concern in this book is a full development of personality and the gradual unfolding of the inner man in his principal character, Tjhaka. He gives a realistic portrayal of the actual processes of life which underlines the community of man with man, with its various tensions, stresses and conflicts. The characters are seen in sufficient relation to the other characters of the novel. We see Tjhaka in depth because we see him against varying range of characters with sufficient vitality and elaboration to make their own demands on

our attention and interest. Characters like Dingiswayo and Isanusi do compete for our interest but do not overshadow the main character, Tjhaka. Instead they help to illuminate the inner life of the hero. Their remarkable achievement was to bring to the surface, the tremendous will power that lay deep in Tjhaka's bosom. It is this power and the desire to dominate that induced Tjhaka to sacrifice his own wife, Noliwa, and his own mother, Nandi with indifference.

In "Tjhaka" we witness dramatic self-revelation of a character through speech and action. All the characters are drawn through what they do and say; what they are said to think and feel, and not by direct comments upon them from their creator. This is a sign of maturity on the part of Mofolo that he can employ so ably the dramatically revealing possibilities of speech and action in depicting his characters. Their speeches and actions do reveal their moral dilemmas and conflicts. I may also point out that by these means characters are not only revealed but are also differentiated and placed by the quality of their speeches and their manner of acting. This method of characterization operates at deeper levels than the purely descriptive one which touches the external part of a man. It engages not merely our interest but our deepest powers of understanding, sympathy and moral sensitivity.

Mofolo's figures are shown in relation to their environment; they have as logical a relation to the world from which they spring. It is this constant sense of background which enables him to draw to perfection the ordinary man. It must be noted that in "Tjhaka" the author deals with two worlds, the real and the fictional. Each of these worlds has its own atmosphere, its own beings or characters which belong so completely to it that they appear unreal outside it. But no sharp boundaries between the real and the fictional are to be drawn; and the author allows us an easy transition from one world to the other. Isanusi and company have shown how easy it is to communicate with

both the worlds. Snakes, dreams and, in extreme cases, death form bridges between the two worlds. But it must be remembered that with Mofolo death is but a liberation. Senzangakhona, Nandi, Dingiswayo, Noliwa and Tjhaka himself had to die in order to be enrolled among those of the fictional world:

Motho ha ho thwe o shwele o a ba a sa shwa, o ile
lefatsheng le leno le kganyang ho feta letsatsi, mme a yo
phela teng e ntse e le yena hantle-ntle.²⁵⁾

Mofolo does not want us to leave the real world behind when we are confronted with the fictional world. In fact he compels us to keep both worlds and their inter-relationships firmly in our minds if we want to understand characters in "Tjhaka". We must accept as a fact that Senzangakhona had influence on Tjhaka in this world of ours, and that after passing into the imagined world he still could talk to him, bless and advise him. This fictional world is not only there as a habitat for the fictional characters but it provides a scope for the ever extending horizon for Tjhaka's unquenchable lust for power. To satisfy his ambition the real world, which we and Mofolo inhabit, is not enough. The fictional world is a world in which Mofolo believes because he sees it with intense clarity during the whole process of creation.

Mofolo's creative talent is displayed even more in the character studies than in the painting of the background. His literary creations include creatures which are endowed with something of the mystery of life, for example, the lord of the deep waters, and the talking grave of Senzangakhona as well as the mysterious characters such as Isanusi, Ndlebe and Malunga, who come from nowhere and who, at the end of their drama, vanish into thin air. Everywhere you feel the author's creative imagination at work, either in the portrait of unfamiliar characters or in the pictures of social life. The most detailed

25) P. 115. When it is said that a man is dead he has not died
..... he has gone to another land that is more
glorious than the sun, and he goes to live there retaining
his true nature.

portrait is that of Tjhaka himself, in whom Mofolo has fused imaginatively the good and bad qualities. His characters appear before us as creatures of flesh and blood. In the vitality of his characters in particular, he is unparalleled; no one else in Sotho literature has created so many characters whom we accept and treat not as figments of a novelist's brain, but as absolutely and completely alive. This gift alone would rank Mofolo with the great creative forces in literature. One feels the pressure of creative force and creative joy in Mofolo's method of characterization particularly in his most vigorous book "Tjhaka".

CHAPTER VI

Mofolo's Language and Style

Mofolo was without literary training and accomplishments. He had no knowledge of the theories of fiction. He lived at a time when no Mosotho writer ever regarded himself as an artist. He never resorted to the use of archaic or unfamiliar words, a cultivated literary device to hide emptiness of matter. He wrote clearly, vigorously and without affectations or mannerisms. His readers never feel that Mofolo is deliberately aiming at fine writing. His aim has always been to convey his meaning clearly, accurately and effectively, without thinking about style. With him literary beauty is not the main object but a by-product. Mofolo's narrative style no doubt springs directly out of his long practice of journalism in the Morija Printing Press and Book Depot. It is also fair to infer that his simple, homely, direct narrative style is due to the influence of the Bible, which formed a great part of his studies at the Morija Bible School. Another point to be kept in mind is that Mofolo's reading public, apart from the few missionaries that knew and could read Sesotho, was less informed and less diversified to have great influence on his style. The combined vividness and plainness of his writing is another remarkable feature of his style.

X In "Moeti wa Botjhabela" Mofolo employs plain, simple language which is appropriate to the uncomplicated, narrative style he inherited from the Bible. He does not give way to a mere verbal exaggeration of his feelings or thoughts. He writes straightforwardly and does not shun idiomatic phrases, proverbs, metaphors and ideophones. Mofolo has a way of repeating words or phrases with a tremendous effect. At the beginning of the very first chapter in "Moeti wa Botjhabela" the word MOTHO is repeated eight times; and in chapter three the phrase LA TJHABA is repeated three times, also in chapter 4 page 24, the phrase

TLASE LEFATSHENG is repeated four times; and so is the phrase BA ESA in chapter 5 page 36. This is one of his characteristic style. Another is that of reduplicating stems of some words to deepen his meaning:

Taba ena ya mo hlorisa hampe-mpe.

Didiba di runya-runya hohle-hohle.

Mehopolo e jwalo ya nna ya hlaha-hlaha.

Meokgo ya re sihla-sihla mahlong a hae.

Dipikoko tse masiba a matle-matle.²⁶⁾

He also uses compound words freely to bring out this effect:

E ne e le tsona dikgomo tse bitswang ma-tshoha-nonyana.

Mabele a le lekgaba, a le ma-ribeha-pitsana.

Mo-ikutlwa-pelo a ka buela moo a ratang.

Naledi ya meso se-ghala-matshwejana.²⁷⁾

Very often he uses the exaggerated penultimate length to achieve this effect:

E pulutswana ya dumaella tla-a-a-se.

A le tadima, a le tadi-i-ma, a le tadimisisa.

Lentswe le monate le nang le molodi o mona-a-a-a-te.²⁸⁾

In the following passage the author uses fitting words to express the idea of a soul which is longing for and is pining after God:

Pelo ya hae e ne e bala, e ne e batla Modimo. Pelo ya hae

e ne e tjhoba, e tjhobela Modimo. Pelo ya hae e ne e

lohotha ntho di le kgolo bosiu le motshehare.²⁹⁾

26) This matter worried him a lot.

The wells spring everywhere.

Such thoughts occurred frequently.

Tears dropped from his eyes.

Peacocks with very, very fine feathers.

27) It was the very cattle which were called "The bird-frightened (Ma-tshoha-nonyana).

Sorghum was young and green, with uncovered bloom.

The most daring can speak as he likes.

The morning star that disperses the little gatherings.

28) The grey cow lowed quite softly.

He looked at it (sun); he stared at it, he gazed at it quite intensely.

He heard a nice voice with a very sweet sound.

29) P. 19. His heart was pondering, was yearning for God.

His heart was throbbing and throbbing for God.

His heart was meditating great things night and day.

The writer gives a vivid description of the physical features of Fekisi in the following words and phrases:

O ne a le motle le sebopehong, botle bo tsotwang; a eme ka ditlhako, a itse rao, empa e se motollo; a teteane hamonate; a se motenya, a se mosesane; a le hare hantle. Sefahlehong o ne a le mosootho, a le motjhitja; moriri o le boleya, o se kgwidikwenyane; mahlo a le maphatshwana joale ka a lehodi; Mahlo a hae a le ntjhotjho, a le metsu, empa a le bonolo, a kganya kgotso ka mehla. Meno a le masweu twa; nko e le ntjhotjho hamonate, empa e se motsu jwale ka nko tsa makgowa; tsebe di tshabile moriri, di qahame, empa di se mahaha, di se disholo; moriri o sekeleditse hantle, o sietse phatla sebaka.³⁰⁾

In his descriptions Mofolo never hesitates to use ideophones for effect and to bring out precisely the meaning he intends to convey to his readers. In the following quotation he describes cattle which are frolicking in confused merriment and altogether beyond the control of their herdboys:

Tsa thala dipholo, tsa thala dikgomo, a dumela marole, ha re rwakga, ho ya mokgwabong. A re ka re o a di otlala, dioka tsa hana, tsa mo qhalanela.³¹⁾

The picture of these animals and what they were doing could not be made clearer in the mind of the reader. The sound they made with their feet is adequately and vividly expressed by

30) P. 60. His appearance was beautiful, a beauty which was startling. He was tall and held himself straight, but he was moderately heavy to balance his height; he was not too heavy and not too thin, but of good proportion. He had a brown and round face, he had sleek hair, free from tufts; his eyes were black and white like those of a starling his eyes were sharp and piercing, but soft and always full of peace; his teeth were very white; his nose nicely pointed though not as pointed as that of a white person, his ears were pricked and far from touching his hair, but not projected, and also not too short; the hair was nicely trimmed so as to allow sufficient space for the forehead.

31) P. 13. The oxen pranced and frolicked, the cows did the same, the calves joined in also, there was a tumultuous sound as they rushed to the drinking place.

one ideophonic word 'rwakga'. Also the author's way of playing with words gives a pleasant sound to the ear. This can further be illustrated by the following quotation:

Tshephe e tla nne e tloia, e be e tjhetjha. E tloia, e be e ikonka. E hlaka, e bile e hlakisa.^{32.)}

Note the power and effectiveness of ideophonic words in describing a situation:

Fekisi a ema tlekelele! Kwena ka morao, noha ka pele!
E kgutsitse tu.³³⁾

With an apt use of idiomatic phrases the author describes how surreptitiously Fekisi left his home village:

A tswa a hata ka ditshetshekwane har'a motse, a ngotlile mohwasa. A tswa ka lenyele, ho se ntja e mmoholang, ho se motho ya mo hlabelang mokgosi, ho kgutsitse tu.³⁴⁾

The image is so clear that you almost see him walk on toes in a tensely quiet atmosphere, where a little noise would destroy his plans and frustrate his efforts.

In this book Mofolo has used very little dialogue. We look in vain for an easy, homely and natural dialogue of John Bunyan in his "Pilgrim's Progress". Mofolo has written in a spirit of religious dedication and has shown didactic moral intensions in his style. He prays and makes a statement which involves a moral judgment or evaluation instead of describing concrete action and leaving it to the reader to draw an explicit moral lesson.

Pitseng

In "Pitseng" the author still uses a language which is clear and vigorous, free from verbiage and affectations; but a language

32) P. 15. The springbok would prance forward and backward, leap briskly and examine itself; play about and make a display.

33) P. 60. In a perplexed manner Fekisi stopped suddenly. A crocodile behind, a snake in front; it was quite motionless.

34) P. 37. Walking on toes he stole out of the village and quietly moved away without the barking of a dog or the alarm of any person; everything was dead silent. ✓

which conveys meaning clearly and effectively to the reader. While in "Mosti Wa Botjhabela" the writer was mainly concerned with telling a story and making a point, in "Pitseng" he also took delight in self-expression. The reader feels that he is approaching the great heights of diction, even though they are not as high as those we find in "Tjhaka".

On page 13 the author achieves great effect by once more reduplicating stems of some words when describing the fight between a certain young man and a baboon:

Ya fihla ya mo pota-pota....ba kopana, ba hebihebisana,
ho se ya yang ka tlase; a re o ntsha lerumo, ea mo
thefu-thefula, la ba la wa; a re o ntsha molamu,
ya mo tutla-tutla, wa ba wa wa.³⁵⁾

In the following quotation the writer describes in glowing terms the manner in which a young man from a well-to-do family, and one of the suitors of Aria Sebaka, was dressed. The author uses **birds** and animals as images in his description:

A fihla mohlankana, a fihla **ha** tsatsi le qala ho tete-
bela mobung, nme a fihla a inwele. Dikobò e le tse
tshwana-tshwana, dieta le tsona di le jwalo, molaleng
e le lekgwaba, peteng e le lethwele, matschong a le
manaila jwale ka pitsi e tshumu e manaila.³⁶⁾

Still more capturing is the description of a horse which the said young man rode, which walked in a characteristic way as if it were aware of the critical situation or of a very serious incident that was about to take place:

Ya hakala pitsi e sootho, ya phahamisa dikgaba, ya famola
dinko, ya qwabika, yaka hoja le yona e se e utlwa hore....

35) P.13 It came and moved round him quickly....they met; they grappled with each other without anyone falling; he tried to draw out a spear, it shook him until it fell; he tried to pull out a stick, it jerked him very violently until it fell.

36) P.217 The young man arrived; he arrived when the sun was beginning to sink back into the ground. He arrived well dressed, with a pitch black suit and black shoes to match. He had a white shirt which showed at the neck, chest ~~and~~ wrists, and resembled a horse with a white forehead and legs.

taba di teng..... Ere e tloha e hane ho tsamaya, pitsi e sootho, mme e nne e tule fatshe ka leoto la pele; ere e tloha e tsamaye ka lekeke e hlakothisitse tsela.³⁷⁾

On page 385 we almost hear the noise made by a flight of birds when they start flying simultaneously. We almost see them swaying and swerving in the air as they fly:

A bona dithaha di tutumolotseha ka dihlopha tse kgolo, di fofa-fofa, di boele di dula. Tsa boela tsa tutumolotseha, tsa feta haufi le bona, mme yare ha di le kae-kae tsa re hlana-hlana tsa boela tsa tla feta le ho bona ka lebelo le lehola ho boela lehlakeng.³⁸⁾

In all his works, one of the chief characteristics of Mofalo is that of making his expressions more precise and true. In fact he has an extraordinary gift of crystallizing his meaning in well chosen, memorable proverbial sayings.

- i. Thaka ena eo a neng a e sireletsa ho bo-mmampodi ya ikutlwa hore kajeno raka le shwetswe ke molebo.
- ii. Mona o jele setsi haholo.
- iii. Ha ho kgoho e qhwaelang e nngwe, kgabane ha di rwesane mekadi.
- iv. Methepa ya moo ha e je ditheohelang ka baka la hao.
- v. Moselekatse a ipelaetsa haholo ka hore mofufutso wa hae o tswela boyeng, jwale ka wa ntja.
- vi. Dingiswayo kajeno o tla busetsa molamu sefateng.³⁹⁾

37) P. 217-8. The brown horse became wild, pricked up its ears, and snorted; it stepped sideways as if it suspected something..... at times the brown horse became reluctant to go forward, it trampled the ground with its fore leg; at times it walked sideways avoiding the path.

38) P. 385. He saw a big flight of finches starting off and perching again; they started off again and passed near them, and after flying a certain distance, they swerved and swayed in the air, and then flew and passed near them swiftly to the reed valley.

39) i. The boys he used to protect against the bullies felt that they were now defenseless and insecure.
ii. Jealousy has spread too much.
iii. Each one for himself, two of a trade seldom agree.
iv. Girls of that place are anxiously waiting for a chance to fall in love with him.
v. Moselekatse complained that he has worked for nothing.
vi. Now Dingiswayo will revenge himself

It is in "Tjhaka" where Mofolo displays a wonderful vocabulary and a pleasing choice of words. His mastery of vivid and telling phrases is unrivalled. He is endowed by nature with a keener sense of the right word and correct idiomatic phrases. To illustrate this ability of the author we have to read first the description of Nandi's attractive features.

Nandi seemong o ne a raohile, a ema ka ditlhako; sebopehong
a le motjhitjana; lebaleng a le mokgunwana a le tlhaku ya
tekwane, mme a rotolohile, a bile a le seriti.⁴⁰⁾

Then comes the description of Tjhaka after being banished by his own father. He is depicted as a lonely and lonesome person, a fugitive who has nobody to take pity upon his soul, and who is at the mercy of anyone who came across him. He is described by means of meaningful, fitting proverbial sayings, each of which has an image of its own:

i. Efela Tjhaka e ne e se e le mmutla kotlwa-tsebe, e le
mohloka-baholo, nare ya se-ema-nosi, hobane bohle ba
mmonang ba mo lwantsha feela kante ho lebaka.

ii. Tjhaka ke motwai-twai, ke mmutl'a dintjeng.⁴¹⁾

In the above quotation Tjhaka cuts a sorrowful picture which is a sharp contrast to the following which was given under changed conditions; that is, after he had been restored to the chieftainship of his father:

Marena ha a mo tadima, a bona morena e motjha, letlobo
le tshepisang haholo; basetsana ha ba mmona ba bona
kgalala, sekwala har'a ba batjha kaofela, mohlankana ya

phethehileng kahohle, ya hloakang kodi, thahadima ya sebele.⁴²⁾

40) P. 4 Nandi was tall and upstanding; she was round in appearance; had a ruddy-golden colour and a smooth skin. She had a plump body and a dignified personality.

41) i. Tjhaka was indeed made the butt of every man's anger and contempt; an orphan and a friendless person because everybody who came across him attacked him without any provocation.

ii. Tjhaka is a fugitive. He is the hare that must be attacked by dogs.

42) P.80 When the chiefs gazed upon him they saw a chief in the making, a young shoot of great promise. When maidens gazed upon him they saw a leader in songs and dances, a young man of outstanding beauty, perfect, complete, without spot or stain, a paragon.

The above quotation shows clearly how far Mofolo can go with his pleasant choice of words. As a man who has an enormous wealth of vocabulary he is capable of drawing varied word pictures which are quite realistic and true. His description of Ndlebe leaves nothing more to be desired:

Mohlankana wa bebedi yena e le nyafu-nyafu, obu-obuhadi e dihileng ditsebe, e rephisitseng melomo, ditsebe di le kgolohadi ho feta tekanyo, di le mahaha, di kakeleditse moya, re ka re, ditaba; mahlo a le mokedikedi, a tletse bolotsana le bohlabapho..... moriri o le dikgobe o entse manyetse a thibasellang ka mahlong le ka morao... mehlare e hohometse, e le diphobe, seledu se kgopanetse hodimo..... mmomo e le monotshadi, maoto e le metjwebebe e diphara..... maoto e le ditlhotse feela tse manga hohle diretheng, esita le ka har'a bohato.⁴³⁾

Mofolo did not shun the use of ideophones if in his mind these ideophones could convey his meaning clearly. Some of his ideophones are charged with emotional significance. Expressing the emotional reaction of Nandi when she was re-united with her son at Dingiswayo's place the writer used few but choicest words:

Nandi ditsebe tsa qahama, tsa theetsa, a akela mahlo har'a lefifi ho tadimaya buang..... Nandi a re jaa, jaa, ka ntswe le bohloko, a ba a wa fatshe a re tsii.⁴⁴⁾

In another emotionally charged situation, when Tjhaka had saved a girl from the devouring hyena, the girl gave a far more

43) P. 53. The second youngman seemed flabby with drooping ears and a loose mouth. His ears were the largest ever seen; they were like caves to receive wind, or rather tidings. His eyes were watery, full of deceit and treachery. His hair was curled, flapping over his eyes and down his neck. He had high cheek bones and hollow cheeks and a protruding lower jaw..... His shins were long and his feet thin and sinewy..... the skin on his feet was parched and chaps covered his heels and even the soles of his feet.

44) P. 46. Nandi pricked up her ears, listened attentively and then looked piercingly through the darkness to see him that spoke. Hysterically she gave a sharp piercing cry, fell down and swooned.

heart-rending cry when she realised that she had escaped death; and that she would again experience the happiness and blessing of life. Mofolo describes the reaction of this girl in more fitting terms and crystallizes the meaning by means of a small ideophonic word "tla" which expresses the inner feelings of the girl:

Melello kaofela jwale ya boya, tsenene ya lefu le bohloko
ba yona ya feta; kganya, monono, le monate wa bophelo
tsa boela tsa hlaha; a re tla, tla, tla, a imamarela ka
Tjhaka a mo hlwa hodimo, a mo aka, a etsa ntho di le ngata.⁴⁵⁾

In all these quotations the writer employed ideophones because of their appropriateness to the total effect which he wants to express.

Mofolo's books are littered with idiomatic sayings and expressions which make his language precise and accurate. The following idiomatic expressions need no comments, they speak for themselves:

- i. Lefung lena la morena wa hae a iphumana e le ya setseng potong, tsaeng la mokoptjwane.
- ii. Ya nyetseng a hopole mosadi le bana, ebe moo a seng a di bona matswele.
- iii. Kgoba matshwafu re lebelletse feela.
- iv. Ke a bona tlotjotjo e hlomile sesela.
- v. Isanusi ke motswalle wa hae wa hloho ya khomo.⁴⁶⁾

45) P.27. Her senses now came back to her. The sting of death and the terror of it were past she experienced again the joy of life, the blessing and happiness of being alive. She said tla, tla, tla, and clung to Tjhaka and jumped on him and kissed him again and again.

46) i. As a result of the death of his chief, Tjhaka found himself desolate and bereaved of the one whom he trusted and under whom he had taken refuge.

- ii. The married one would remember the wife and children and then run away.
- iii. Take courage and let us merely watch.
- iv. I see that they have regained self confidence.
- v. Isanusi is his bosom friend.

Mofolo's writing is further embellished by the frequent use of figures of speech. He employs them not to tickle the ears of his listeners, or to display his own skill, but only to bring his meaning home more effectively. The following figures of speech can be traced from his works:

Hyperbole:

Alfred sefahlehong seo se ka pele ho yena a bona didaemane tse ngata, tse hlwekileng, tse fetang tsa Kimberley ka bongata, le ka ho hlweka, le ka kganya. Sefahlehong sena sa moradi wa Sebaka se ka pele ho yena a bona gauda e hlwekileng, e tshekilweng hantle, e fetang hole-hole digauda kaofela tsa mekoti ya Johannesburg.⁴⁷⁾

Palo ya bahlabani ba hao e lekgatheng la ho feta dinaledi tseo o di bonang lehodimong ka bongata.⁴⁸⁾

Similes:

- i. Isanusi a dula hodim'a lebitla jwale ka kgoho e fuameng.
- ii. Letsoho la hae le ne le hlohlona jwale ka meno a ntja ea setsomi.
- iii. Kganare e ne e mo ja ka hare, e mo harola jwale ka pere e jewang ke papisi.
- iv. Ngwana o nka mekgwa, dipuo ho ya mo hodisitseng jwale ka ngwana wa lekgala.⁴⁹⁾

Metaphor:

- i. Fekisi e ne e le modisa, e le motjodi wa sebele.

⁴⁷⁾P.349. On the face that was in front of him, Alfred saw diamonds which were numerous and more sparkling than any that are found in Kimberley. On this face of the daughter of Mr. Sebaka he saw gold which was crystal clear and specially selected, and which surpasses by far the gold which is found in all the mines in Johannesburg.

⁴⁸⁾P.116. The number of your warriors will soon be greater than the multitudinous stars you see in the heavens.

⁴⁹⁾

- i. Isanusi sat on top of the grave like a brooding hen.
- ii. His hand was itching like the teeth of a hunting dog.
- iii. A great fire was consuming him inside, devouring him like a horse which is afflicted with bots.
- iv. A child, like a little crab, imitates the way its guardian behaves and speaks.

- ii. Tjhaka ke ledinyane la tau, ke mootlwana wa sebata,
ke tawana e ntjha.
- iii. Aria ke nonyana ya seqhala-maraba, ke hlapi ya se-hana
ho tshwaswa, se-kwenya dilope.⁵⁰⁾

Symbolism.

In both "Moeti Wa Botjhabela" and "Pitseng", the writer uses the symbolism of darkness and light, symbolising thereby the primitive past of paganism and the approaching light of Christianity respectively.

Wa Pitseng ya ntseng a le lefifing o na a le lekgatheng
la ho tjhabelwa ke lesedi, hobane bosiu bo se bo le
lekgatheng la ho sa.⁵¹⁾

Euphemism.

Mofolo uses euphemisms out of politeness. He describes some ugly situations in pleasant-sounding words, as may be seen from the following quotations:

- i. Tjhaka o ne a ikgethetse barwetsana ba batle.....
a nna a ya ho bona, a kgola tjhakatsa ya botjha ba
bona, mme ere mohla ba wang matswele, ha ho thwe ke
kgaba le ileng, a ba fetisetse ho matona a hae.
- ii. Nandi a ya ho Senzangakhona a se a holetswe.
- iii. Lebonenyana la bophelo ba hae la tima.
- iv. Tjhaka a fihla ha Dingiswayo moo lerumo le
tlohang boroko.

50) i. Fekisi was a herdboyc and a good one indeed.

ii. Tjhaka is a lion's whelp, he is a wild beast cub;
he is a new little whelp.

iii. Aria is a bird that scatters all traps; she is a fish
that refuses to be caught, the swallower of fishing hooks.

51)P.20.The inhabitant of Pitseng who was still in darkness
was about to see light because the night was about
giving place to the day.

52) 1. Tjhaka chose for himself the most beautiful young
womenhe visited them often and plucked the
flower of their youth, and when their breasts had
fallen, it was said that their bloom had gone, and
he passed them on to his counsellors.

ii. Nandi went to Senzangakhona's place already pregnant.

iii. The brief candle of her life went out.

iv. Tjhaka arrived at Dingiswayo's place where the spear
becomes red with the blood of the foe.

Dialogue.

In "Pitseng" and in "Tjhaka", the reader is introduced to a cleverly controlled dialogue that almost reveals the exact tones of voices of Mofolo's characters. From their talks the following character traits come out distinctly: Dolphin Nkokoto is the most eloquent and the most proud; Aria Sebaka is polite in speech and respectful but does not yield; Aria's mother's anxiety about the future relations of her daughter with Alfred Phakwe comes out clearly from her remarks; Linganiso Diniso is never serious, does things for the fun of it; Majwale is sincere though naive; Tjhaka is ambitious as well as malicious; Isanusi is wily and can read the thoughts of others; Dingiswayo is cautious and has insight into the character of other people. Thus the reader gains through this dialogue the exciting experience of seeing the personalities of the characters mirrored in their speeches. Mofolo is endowed by nature with a genius for style.

CHAPTER VII.

An Evaluation of Mofolo as a Writer.

A knowledge of Mofolo's personal life which forms part of the introduction to this dissertation helps us to understand him as a writer; and to realise that two different lines of influence have determined the character of his works. On the one hand there are those influences which come to him through his direct contact with the missionaries at Morija, and through his theological studies which led to a thorough knowledge of the Bible from which he quotes freely and copiously in his second book, "Pitseng". On the other hand, his more intimate and profound knowledge of African life and thought, his history, his customs and his beliefs, made him turn to the dim past where he unearthed the little incident in the life of the Zulu king, the sin of Nandi and Senzangakhona, which had fascinating complications lurking in it. This he pursued and magnificently built a logical sequence of events and a gradual development of personality out of it.

Mofolo was essentially a man of his time, and was completely at one with his age. Endowed with a passionately earnest nature, he was undoubtedly one of the greatest moral forces of his age. He wrote at a time when Christianity was new in this part of the world. The different attitudes and interests which were prevalent at the time these novels were written, made Christianity topical. To write about religion especially Christianity in those days, was the height of achievement. Its influence is apparent in his writing and thinking in his first two books. When he wrote them, moral considerations were always uppermost in his mind. He was a student of theology and a passionately religious man, who wrote these books from the depth of his religious experiences and convictions. This explains the reason why there are strong didactic tendencies

in his earlier works. The author's aim was not only to depict and, by depicting to amuse; he took his work seriously, and knowing the moral standard of his people and time, he sought also to correct and teach:

Mofolo is a soul by nature, Christian, and sees in every crisis the clash of good and evil.¹¹⁾

There is, therefore, this distinct ethical purpose in his earlier works. His tone and manner are those of the pulpit. He teaches lessons of virtue and at the same time makes himself a delight of his readers. He appeals to the religious conceptions and feelings of his audience; the conceptions and feelings which are also predominant in himself. This shows that predisposition to certain kinds of emotional experiences plays a part in, and influences the writer. He was more and more concerned with the problem of salvation and the first two of his works are attempts to grapple with this problem and to find a solution to it. These are novels of contemporary social, religious and domestic life, the interest of which depends upon the doings of people in a familiar setting. The world of his works is not the world of romance, but of contemporary Lesotho with her types, manners, foibles, affections etc. In this way, Mofolo initiated a fresh movement towards a modern novel of characters and manners.

Mofolo is the only man in our literature who has ever succeeded in writing a prose allegory and in filling it throughout, without any sacrifice of the symbolism, with the absorbing interest of a real human story. He confronted his reading public with this imaginative writing which involved the full personality of the author and laid him open to the gaze of the reader; and committed him to a confession of what he is and what he aspires to be. This marvellously effective use of fiction as allegory was something new and exciting. Despite

11) Henry Newbolt, Introduction to "Tjhaka"'s Translation. P.xii.

its simplicity of subject matter it was so fresh in character and interest that it scored an instant and sensational success. Mofolo was not content with literature based purely on individual experience. He looked for an all-embracing vision which should encompass all things in heaven and earth. He touched the three dimensional planes of relationships: the plane of relationship between an individual and his fellow human beings; the plane of relationship between man and nature; and the plane of relationship between man and his creator. This is the master image of human relationship we find in the earlier works of Mofolo. To interpret this image he resorted to allegory and symbolism. Light and love are the corner stones of this symbolism. Light represented the coming of Christianity, which came to replace the old pagan religion. Love symbolised the relationship between Christ and the Church or the faithful; and is a common and basic factor of all good relationships such as marriage. Both concepts were invested with a luminous quality which linked them together in his imagination. Both brought about enlightenment and enlightenment was the watchword of his age.

Mofolo's books are adorned with proverbial and idiomatic expressions as well as ideophones. The essential quality of his style is precision. He never attempted to pursue elegance, and was never conscious of the shape and structure of his sentences. His real concern has always been to convey his meaning clearly and well. His writings are littered with figures of speech which have the effect of crystallising the meaning. His enormous wealth of vocabulary plus the necessary skill of adding more meaning to the words by reduplicating their stems is another remarkable feature of his writing. Fewer writers, no matter what their training and accomplishments, have in fact never shown a keener sense of the right word and a pleasing style of phraseology. His habit of exaggerating

penultimate length has the effect of charging words with emotional significance. His way of repeating words is never tedious or monotonous but has always a pleasant effect of deepening the intended meaning or sense. In his mastery of vivid descriptions and a pleasing choice of words, Mofolo is unrivalled.

In his later work, Mofolo is inspired by issues, experiences and observations which are different from those we came across in his earlier books. He does not write as an observer but as a creator of fictitious life. Perhaps it will be interesting and stimulating to note that of all the Basotho writers, Mofolo was the first to write on imagined occurrences; on things that were never present physically until his fertile imagination presented them in fictitious events and characters. He wrote fiction and made us behave towards it as though it were an actual occurrence in the lives of certain people at certain times. It is Mofolo who introduced creative novel-writing into Southern Sotho literature. He rose above the plane of story-telling of the early and the New Basotho writers. His wonderful imagination gave him a place almost by himself in unimagined age. He had a gift of creating and imparting life to his creations. He appealed to the imagination of his readers by landing them in strange countries and making them see visions of the unknown world. Fekisi carried them across the seas. Alfred Phakwe and Aria Sebaka transported them to a utopian world of bliss and happiness. Isanusi gave them a peep into the world of spirits, and made them change their ideas and convictions about death.

Mofolo also wrote as a typical African versed in African culture and tradition. He had the power of weaving tragedy out of home-spun materials, materials which are taken from the life and history of an African king; materials taken from the beliefs and customs of the African people themselves. He knew

the folklore of his people. He could narrate the stories of the legendary heroes such as Senkatana; he could tell very adequately the fabulous story of Kgodumo-dumo; he could compose and sing the praises of man and animals.

In his later work Mofolo no longer restricts action to purely human agencies. He makes use of the supernatural elements commonly believed by the African people: portents fill the atmosphere; spirits rise from their graves and take keen interest in the welfare of their relations; snakes assume human characteristics and act as messengers of good and evil from the ancestral world; witches and magicians, with their magical performances, control and dominate African life. By this work Mofolo has clearly demonstrated the fact that imagined life is clearer than reality; and by so doing he has put to shame the pride of documentary history found in some of our literature books. He gives a picture of common life enlivens it with humour and sweetens it with pathos. He crowds this picture with real portraits, not only of individuals known to the world or to the author, but of created personages impregnated with traits of human character. All these creations add to Mofolo's genius as a writer and, of all his works, "Tjhaka" is the book which represents his genius best. With Mofolo creative writing, imagination and conflict are a 'sine qua non' of fiction.

In his last work Mofolo shows maturity. From the novels of contemporary, social, religious and domestic life, to the tale that seeks to give both a sense of terror and a sense of the past, Mofolo makes a startling transition. He now gives shape and form to his attitude towards life and evaluates life by means of the actions, thoughts and expressions of his characters. He resorts to the gradual unfolding of the inner man; and he possesses the secret of making even his historical characters vital and human. His Senzangakhona, Nandi, Tjhaka, Dingiswayo,

Zwide, Dingana, Mhlangana etc. are fine pieces of imaginative re-creation. He introduced conflict into his characters to act as fuel to drive the fascinating events of his novels.

He had a unique power of dealing with other people's emotions from the inside, and of making unfamiliar characters, such as Isanusi, Ndlebe and Malunga, live rather than become catalogues of qualities without reality and life. In them we see actual men moving amid real scenes and taking part in various incidents.

- His characterisation shows a remarkable development which must be regarded as a stage in the evolution of the genuine novel in our literature. When we consider imaginative writing, creative energy, conflict and patient microscopic analysis of motive and passion found in his last work we are compelled to conclude that Mofolo still holds an undisputed, pre-eminent place in Southern Sotho literature.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

I have listed only those books which I have found useful in preparing this study. The bibliography is divided into three parts:

- I. books on English Literature,
- II. books on history and social life of the Zulus, and
- III. one of the Literature of Lesotho.

A. Books on English Literature.

1. Kettle Arnold: An Introduction to the English Novel. Vol. 1.
Hutchinson's University Library,
Hutchinson House, London, W.1.
2. Forster E.M.: Aspects of the Novel.
London, Edward Arnold and Co.
3. Muir Edwin: Structure of the Novel.
London, Hogarth Press.
4. Liddell Robert: A treatise on the Novel.
Jonathan Cape, Thirty Bedford Square,
London.
5. Lubback Percy: The Craft of Fiction.
Jonathan Cape, Thirty Bedford Square,
London.
6. Brooks and Warren: Understanding Fiction.
Appleton - Century - Crofts, INC.
New York.
7. Buchanan-Gould Vera: Not Without Honour.
Hutchinson & Co. (Publishers) Limited,
London.

8. Richards I.A.: Principles of Literary Criticism,
2nd Edition.
London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
9. Warner Alan: A short Guide to English Style.
London, Oxford University Press.
10. Bradley A.C.: Shakespearean Tragedy.
London, Macmillan and Co. New York,
St. Martin's Press.
11. Harvey W.J.: The Art of George Eliot.
Chatto and Windus, London.
12. Talon Henry A.: John Bunyan for British Council and
National book league, by
Longman's Green and Company.
13. Buchan John: Sir Walter Scott.
Longman's Green and Company,
Toronto, Canada.
14. Murry J. Middleton: Problem of Style.
London, Oxford University Press.

B. Books on history and Social life of the Zulus.

1. Bryant A.T.: Olden Times in Zululand and Natal.
2. James Stuart and D. Mck. Malcolm Editors: The Diary.
of Henry Francis Fynn.
3. Ritter E.A.: Shaka Zulu, A panther book.
Longman's Green and Company.
4. Krige Eileen Jensen: The Social system of the Zulus.
Shuter and Shooter,
Pietermaritzburg.

5. Rev. Placide Tempele: Bantu Philosophy.
Presence Africaine, 42, rue Descartes,
Paris. 1939.

C. A book on the Literature of Lesotho.

6. Franz G.H.: The Literature of Lesotho.
The University of the Witwatersrand Press,
Johannesburg.