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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to:

The memory of my Mother, to my dear Father.

To all my dear brothers and sisters.

And to all my family, friends especially AghilesFerhad.

Abstract

*The following research paper aims at analyzing and comparing William Shakespeare's play **Macbeth** (1606) and Thomas Mofolo's novel **Chaka** (1925), by referring to Aristotle's theory put in his famous work **Poetics** (335BC). The present research is divided into three chapters. The first chapter deals with the tragic plot structure as it is explained in Aristotle's theory of Tragedy. The second chapter treats Shakespeare and Mofolo's tragic heroes. While the last chapter is devoted for the mythical dimension in both works. Finally, we reached the conclusion that both **Macbeth** and **Chaka** are two literary works that match with the Aristotelian tragic plot, and that the use of myth along with tragedy gives an accentuated sense for the tragic events, and this renders the reader overflowed emotionally, but more convinced and closer to them.*

Contents

Acknowledgments	i
Dedication	ii
Abstract	iii
Contents.....	iv
I-Introduction	1
1. Review of the literature	2
2. Issue and Working Hypothesis	6
Endnotes.....	7
II- Method and Materials	8
1. Method	8
a. Aristotle's Poetics	8
2. Materials.....	10
a. Summary of William Shakespeare's Macbeth	10
b. Summary of Thomas Mofolo's Chaka	11
3. Methodological Outline	13
Endnotes	14
III. Results.....	15
IV. Discussion	17

Section One: Tragedy in Shakespeare's Macbeth and Mofolo's

Chaka	17
a. Plot "as a Whole" in Shakespeare's Macbeth and Mofolo's Chaka	17
b. Tragic Plot in Shakespeare's Macbeth and Mofolo's Chaka	23
Endnotes	28

Section Two: The Tragic Hero in Shakespeare's Macbeth and Mofolo's

Chaka.....	30
a. Macbeth and Chaka as Tragic Heroes	30
b. Pity and Fear Evoked by Macbeth and Chaka's fall.....	35
Endnotes.....	37

Section Three: Myth in Shakespeare's Macbeth and Mofolo's

Chaka	38
Endnotes	48

V. Conclusion.....	50
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VI. Bibliography	52
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Introduction

The following research paper is a comparative study of William Shakespeare's **Macbeth** (1606) and Thomas Mofolo's **Chaka** (1925). Shakespeare and Mofolo hold a prominent status in world literature. Through our reading of these two works, we have noticed that Thomas Mofolo's portrayal of his main character Chaka resembles very much the one of Macbeth. Despite the fact that these two works are published in two different eras, we think that they share two important elements in their writings: tragedy and myth.

The two authors present the story of two characters with heroic qualities which bring them to a higher position in the beginning of their life. However, despite their good qualities, they have some imperfections which lead them to tragic ends. Both stories are tragic, and the events are built around the figures whose every action is followed by an excess of ambition. Macbeth and Chaka's ambitious quests lead them to their own downfall, and to their tragic end, as the consequence of their own choice, even though each of them is aware that wrong doings end up dramatically, it did not prevent them from following the wrong way. In addition to this, the popularity of the two works, the structure of their plots, are the incentives among others that made us opt for their study.

The purpose of this research paper is then to show the common elements between Mofolo's **Chaka** and Shakespeare's **Macbeth** in terms of Tragedy and Myth. Considering Tragedy, we notice that these two literary works are linked together, because they share the same tragic plots as it is described by Aristotle. From the tragic events that the protagonists perform, we can extract a strong feeling of pity and sorrow, but most importantly, these two works match perfectly with the Aristotelian tragic plot chart, because in **Macbeth** and **Chaka** we notice the success of events that rendered the two works to be considered as tragic works. As far as Myth is concerned, the two authors considered the historical counterparts of their protagonists as a support on which to build their own stories and in this way, they contributed

to the formation of their heroes as mythical figures because of the alterations and exaggerations they added to them in order to shape their own stories. Through the use of myth and their legendary narratives, they succeed to transmit their message which consists in making the audience inter-act with the protagonists and the tragic events, through evoking the audience's feeling.

As it is said above, the authors of the two literary works share the same vision in many ways. The focus on the following study will be on tragedy as it is defined by Aristotle in his book **Poetics** (335 BC). William Shakespeare and Thomas Mofolo make use of tragedy to create conflicts, resolve the problematic, and then reach the dramatic end of the story. These works can be considered as tragedies in the sense that they are painful mysteries but also represent a conflict that is in a progressive disaster. The two authors emphasized the mythical dimension that we can find in their protagonists, in order to make their readers emotionally awake and reactive to the tragedies that Chaka and Macbeth face all along their lifetime. Due to the fact that myths are generally regarded as subjects of interest, with an over accentuated attention from the part of the reader. The presence of Myth in Shakespeare's **Macbeth** and Mofolo's **Chaka** made these two works convey the readers about the importance of these works as it renders the two authors' message more vivid.

Review of the Literature

William Shakespeare's **Macbeth** and Thomas Mofolo's **Chaka** have received a large bulk of criticism by well known critics and scholars all around the world. On the one hand A.C Bradley, a specialist of Shakespeare argues in his **Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on Hamlet, King Lear, Othello and Macbeth** (1904): "Macbeth's imagination is active, we watch him fascinated, we feel suspense, horror, awe, in which are latent, also, admiration and

sympathy.”¹This quotation shows that the tragedy of Macbeth evokes inside the mind of the reader the feeling of pity and wrath, because of the tragic end that Macbeth has witnessed.

In his **A Preface to Shakespeare's Tragedies** (1991), Michael Mangan looks at the Shakespearean plays from different perspectives, and he studied them from different contexts, the cultural, ideological and the political context which produced them. Thus, when considering the tragedy of **Macbeth**, he puts emphasis on Macbeth's image and argues that: “Macbeth's identity is defined from the beginning as being steeped in blood; his sword ‘which smok'd with bloody execution’ might be emblematic of his later career as regicide and tyrant”². This quotation shows that the character of Macbeth is tight to blood and violence from the beginning of the play, he embarks into the large horizon of tragedy as he proceeds further in his demonic path.

Then, in a reflective essay, entitled **Discussing Shakespeare's Macbeth** (2003), Frank Kermode comments: “in no other play does Shakespeare show a nation so cruelly occupied by the powers of darkness, and Macbeth, is for all its brevity, his most intensive study of evil at work in the individual and in the world at large”.³ In the play, Shakespeare dramatizes not only the way in which the forces of darkness enter into Macbeth's whole world, but also the destroying effect they have on him after he submits to his malicious ambition

As far as Thomas Mofolo's **Chaka** is concerned, it is also the subject of many critics and scholars. In his article, **The Definitive Chaka** (1976), Ayi Kwei Armah considers Chaka to be the best illustration of a self made man as he highlights his good behavior and characteristics. In the end, Chaka's fall down in a tragic way, alters the image of his personality from being good to bad, and this is what makes Chaka a tragic hero:

There is an admirable stark, clarity in the way Mofolo presents Chaka's childhood and growth; he shows his childhood as thus crucial formative period, the seed time for all the crisis for his adult life. As a process of Chaka's growth, Mofolo shows it us a difficult, complex progression⁵

In his quotation, Armah shows admiration for Mofolo in the way that he portrays his main character. As an infant, Chaka is marked out as a child outside all norms. So, this is considered as one of the justifications for his violent and uncontrollable adult life he leads.

Beside this, Albert Gerard in his book **Fourth African Literatures** (1971), he characterized Mofolo's Chaka as:

A narrative tragedy in prose, this implies, I suggest that Chaka does not just convey a very dramatic and in the end a profoundly tragic life story of the controversial Zulu King, it also illustrates a general and very basic human question. It is the problem of evil which transcends psychological and sociological terms of reference which Mofolo's novel explores.⁶

From this quotation, Albert Gerard focuses on the tragic events which come successively to ruin Chaka's life in the end. He also raises the question of the struggle against evil, which, according to him, charts the tragic end for those who cannot handle this inner struggle, and as a result, they end up in a tragic way.

Moreover, we also point at what Professor Bouteldja Riche argues in his article entitled **Thomas Mofolo and Ayi Kwei Armah: The Bankruptcy of The Warrior Tradition and The Quest For a Legacy of African Intellectual Heroism** (2010). The latter focuses on the African warrior tradition in general, taking Chaka as an example. Most importantly, he describes the way Thomas Mofolo introduced his fictional character Chaka that does not resemble much his historical counterpart "Shaka", The Zulu King. Riche then re-explains what Armah says about Mofolo:

Among other literary offences, he reproaches him for not having questioned the idealism of the Western versions of Zulu history prevailing in his own time. Mofolo has "twisted historical facts because he did not eschew the idealism inherent in colonial theory's articulation of the history of the Zulu as synonymous with Chaka's biography. From Armah's criticism, we gather that Mofolo's work is successful at the level of poesis "maker" but not as history⁶

Mofolo, in his novel shifts from the field of history to the field of literary creativity in which he mixes “historical facts with fiction”⁷. In this way he succeeds in the long process of building the mythical figure of Chaka.

Furthermore, in his translation of the novel of **Chaka** by Thomas Mofolo, entitled **Chaka: An Historical Romance**, F. H. Dutton argues that: “The tragedy of Chaka is the apocalyptic vision of a monstrous beast, consumed by an ill destroying blood lust.”⁸ Dutton does not only describe the image of Chaka as being disastrous, but also brings evidence and details to justify and explain his degeneration. Chaka’s excessive ambition and desire for more violence is also the result of his rejection by his own community.

Issue and Working Hypothesis:

From this review of literature about William Shakespeare's play **Macbeth** (1606) and Thomas Mofolo's novel **Chaka** (1925), one can notice that both works have been treated from different perspectives, so the issue of Tragedy has been studied in the two works separately. However no one has dealt with this issue in a comparative study. Yet, to my knowledge, critics have given less importance to the study of Myth in the two works. Therefore, the following research tends to fill this gap in a comparative study by showing to what extent both **Macbeth** and **Chaka** are tragedies, and also exploring the mythical dimension that exist in both Macbeth and Chaka as characters.

In this dissertation, we are going to put in perspective Mofolo's **Chaka** and Shakespeare's **Macbeth** in order to highlight the tragic aspect of Macbeth and Chaka's consuming ambition. We will also argue that like Macbeth, Chaka is a power-hungry leader; however, his quest for power does not make him a villain character. This is because we cannot consider ambition to be bad in itself, but rather it is what we do after reaching power that really matters.

In analyzing the portraits of Macbeth with that of Chaka, we are going to remove the discussion from history to the field of myth. Again, like Shakespeare, Mofolo is keen to situate his main character at a level similar to that of Classical/Greek tragic heroes like Oedipus. For that, we can say that Mofolo follows in the footsteps of his English counterpart, by including and infusing elements of the supernatural and mystery in his work. These elements are far from being simple borrowings from the Zulu's ancestral oral traditions. They are strategies used by major classical authors, whose works Mofolo had probably read in the French School in which he took his knowledge of literature.

Methodological Outline

To achieve our aim, we have chosen the IMRD method, which stands for Introduction, Method, Results and Discussion. In our introduction then, we have exposed our theme in general, in the section of Method and Materials, we have explained our method and then we summarized both the novel and the play. In the Results section, we will expose our findings. In the discussion section, that we are going to divide into three parts, each part will focus on a specific subject. First we are going to analyze the two works' tragic plot structure. In the second part of our discussion; we are going to take into consideration characterization. Finally, the third part is devoted to the study of the mythical dimension in the two works. In our conclusion, we will end up by showing what we have reached as the final resolution to our problematic and issue.

Endnotes

¹A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedies: Lecturer on Hamlet, King Lear, Othello and Macbeth*, (London: Macmillan, 1904), 327.

²Michael Mangan, *a Preface to Shakespeare's Tragedies*, (Longman Group United Kingdom, 1991).

³Frank Kermode, *Discussing Shakespeare's Macbeth*. (2003). Viewed on September 5, 2016.

[http:// Sharonbenalloun.worldpress.com/2013/12/18/Macbeth-article-by-frank-kermode](http://Sharonbenalloun.worldpress.com/2013/12/18/Macbeth-article-by-frank-kermode).

www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/criticism/hazlittw-charsp/charsp-titlepage.Html.

⁴Armah Ayi kwei, *the Definitive Chaka*. 1976. viewed on august 12, 2016.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2934982?seg=page-scan-tab-contents>.

⁵Albert Gerard, *Fourth African: Xhosa, Sotho, Zulu, Amhari*, (University of California Press. 1971), 117. Viewed on July 4, 2016.

<http://book.google.dz/book?id=pAUinZLUcb8c&pg=PA106>.

⁶Riche Boutelja: *Thomas Mofolo and Ayi Kwei Armah: The Bankrupt of the Warrior Tradition and the Quest for a Legacy of African Intellectual Heroism*, El-Tawassol n° 25 Mars 2010.

⁷ Armah Ayi kwei, *the Definitive Chaka*. 1976. viewed on august 12, 2016.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2934982?seg=page-scan-tab-contents>

⁸Dutton, F. H, *Chaka: An Historical Romance*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 13.

Method and Materials

1- Method

As it is mentioned, the present research deals with the issue of Tragedy and Myth in William Shakespeare's play **Macbeth** and Thomas Mofolo's novel **Chaka**. To achieve our aim, we are going to make reference to Aristotle's theory of tragedy as it is explained in his book **Poetics** (335 BC). Aristotelian theory contains the main elements that are applicable in these two works, because of the fact that both Shakespeare's **Macbeth** and Mofolo's **Chaka** are tragedies, and their plot is made of tragic events. Aristotle defines tragedy as follows:

An imitation of an action that is serious, complete and of a certain magnitude, in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play in the form of action, not of a narrative, through pity and fear affecting the proper purgation of these emotions.¹

In tragedy, the actions indicate things as they are. That is to say, the actions are dramatic, and they can happen to anyone. Moreover, tragedy must have a serious issue that is believable. Thus, the tragic actions raise in the audience the feeling of pity and fear or what Aristotle calls "Catharsis" because of the dramatic acts being performed.

For Aristotle, tragedy has six main elements: plot, characters, thought, diction, melody, and spectacle. But, in our work we are going to focus only on the two elements that Aristotle considers to be more important: plot and characters.

Plot is the main element that constitutes a tragedy. It is defined by Aristotle as: "For by plot I here mean the arrangement of incidents"². Hence, the plot must be a whole with a beginning, middle and an end. In the beginning, everything goes in the right way but there is a rising action that brings the problematic into its climax in the middle; and at the end, the situation falls into a tragic end.

Another important element that constructs the plot is what Aristotle refers to by “Magnitude”. This is what makes the readers aware about the events of the plot; the tragedy should be neither long nor short in order to make the audience follow the events. The tragic plot focuses on the sequence of events and actions that build the tragic story³.

Aristotle goes deeper to discuss the structure of an ideal tragic plot. According to him, the plot must be simple or complex, by simple he means: “when the change of fortune takes place without Reversal of intention and without Recognition”⁴. A complex plot therefore, is “one in which the change is accompanied by such Reversal, or by Recognition or by both”⁵. By saying this, Aristotle considers complex plot as the most suitable in order to form a perfect tragedy.

“Reversal”, “Recognition” and “Suffering” are the main features of a tragic plot. Aristotle defines Reversal as: “a change by which the action veers round to its opposite”⁶. This means that the events are reversed from good to bad. Recognition is “a change from ignorance to knowledge”⁷, the events that happen throughout time make the protagonist aware of his misdeed, and indeed the misfortune brings a suffering that will be disastrous in the end.

As it is said above, the second main element of tragedy is characters. As for tragedy “is not an imitation, of men, but of an action and of life”⁸. In other words, the emphasis is put on the actions of the character rather than on the character himself. The protagonist in tragedy is known as a ‘tragic hero’. So, a hero is a person with a great status and a high position that allows him to change his fortune from good to bad not the contrary, as Aristotle claims: “the change of fortune should be not from bad to good, but, reversely, from good to bad”⁹. The tragic hero should not be a man with “virtuous” action nor “vices”, but he must be a mixture of these two qualities. Therefore, the change in fate of the character is due to his own errors, and this is what Aristotle calls “Hamartia”¹⁰.

Shakespeare's **Macbeth** and Mofolo's **Chaka** are tragedies that match with Aristotle's theory of tragedy. In **Macbeth** as in **Chaka**, the characteristics of the tragic plot are identified in the same way as those of Aristotle's. The events of these two works start with a beginning wherein no dramatic, but rather when they progress till reaching the climax. As an aftermath, we notice a denouement in **Chaka** and in **Macbeth**, the way Aristotle mentions it in his book.

2- Materials

a- Summary of Shakespeare's Macbeth

Macbeth is a tragedy written in (1606) by William Shakespeare, mainly set in Scotland. The play begins with the appearance of three witches. The latter discuss when they are going to meet Macbeth. Then Shakespeare introduces Duncan, the king of Scotland and his sons. Duncan hears that the battle fighting against Macdonald is won and the victory is ensured by his two generals; Macbeth and Banquo. Duncan is surprised by Macbeth's heroic actions in the defence of the kingdom.

The two generals meet three Witches; these ones predict that Macbeth will become a king. Macbeth's wife also desires kingship for her husband that is why she encourages him to kill Duncan. Within the whole play, Lady Macbeth is represented as the fourth witch in the way she pushes her husband to do so. Then, Macbeth decides to murder Duncan. Macbeth's character now is regarded as being evil. His ambition to be king of Scotland leads him to kill innocent people including Banquo, Lady Macduff and her children. Macbeth is far from his wilderness, his hands are full of blood, and he has lost hope, love and life. After these inhuman acts, Lady Macbeth's conscience tortures her and makes her imagine things like hands covered with blood and she gets mad, and finally she commits suicide. In the end, Macbeth's story becomes terrible; evil and tyranny shape his personality. His rule of the terror leads to his murder by Macduff who promises to take revenge for his family.

b- Summary of Mofolo's Chaka

Chaka (1925) is a famous novel by the writer Thomas Mofolo of Lesotho. Chaka is the name of the king who is the founder of the Zulu kingdom. Senzangakhona, a local chieftain has three or four wives, but he has no son to inherit him. To correct the situation, he decides to take another wife, Nandi. Later on, she becomes pregnant and gives birth to Chaka, he is much loved by his father, since, he is the first-born son but, his situation began to decline after senzangakhona's wives start to speak of Chaka's illegitimacy, because Nandi becomes pregnant before marriage. His father fearing to be ridiculed from by wives and people; that's why, Chaka and his mother are pursued from Bakone to Nandi's village. The illegitimacy of Chaka spread throughout the villages making him the object of mockery and persecution; he is often rejected by the community. So, Nandi fearing for her son's life seeks help from her "native doctor" to strengthen Chaka with "potent medicines". After this, Chaka becomes strong, courageous and a brave boy. Indeed, he kills a Lion and saves a girl from a Hyena; by doing this he gains fame.

Chaka's desire for more success leads him away. During his journey to self discovery, he encounters Isanusi, the powerful magician who uses witchcraft and evil medicines to help him in his destiny. As a result, this creates in him a hunger and thirst for fame as well as great kingship. Furthermore, with the help of Dingiswayo, the king of Mthetwas and Chaka's adoptive father, he establishes his own kingdom. After this, Chaka becomes more powerful and more violent culminating in an incessant flow of blood. "The number of people killed by him in the way we have described, is equal to the number of the Bosotho, counting every man, woman and children, multiplied three-fold. Imagine them all killed!"⁹. Chaka's consuming ambition to become the most fearful king in all the Zululand, leads him to sacrifice the blood of his beloved Noliwa and kill his mother. Significantly, the death of

Noliwa and Nandi saw also the beginning of Chaka's disaster. In the end, Chaka's violent behaviour paved his way to evil. His quest for power and Kingship leads him to his downfall and his death under the hands of his two half-brothers.

Endnotes

¹Translated by S. H. Butcher, *The poetics of Aristotle* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1902), 23.

²Ibid;. 25.

³Ibid.

⁴ Ibid;. 39.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid;. 41

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid;. 27.

⁹Ibid;. 47.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Translated by: Daniel Kunene, *Thomas Mofolo: Chaka* (London: Heinemann, 1981),153.

Results

Our present research has allowed us to discover two famous literary works by two well known writers which are William Shakespeare's play **Macbeth** (1606), and Thomas Mofolo's novel **Chaka** (1925). Our issue in the following research consists on highlighting the tragic aspect of these two works, and also putting an emphasis on the mythical dimension in the two protagonists. To do so, we have chosen to rely on Aristotle's theory of tragedy as it is explained in his book **Poetics** (335 BC).

For Aristotle, tragedy is an action that is serious and complete in itself, by this way we can consider that both Shakespeare's **Macbeth** and Mofolo's **Chaka**, are two tragic works that can be approached from the Aristotelian perspective. The first point that we have noticed when dealing with these two literary works is that they fit with the Aristotelian tragic plot chart since they start with a beginning that is completely empty with tragic events, and then they reach the climax before going into the denouement. We have also noticed that these two works follow what Aristotle calls a "Complex Plot" as they contain "Reversal", "Recognition" and "Suffering".

We have also deduced that both Macbeth and Chaka are two tragic heroes that are of a noble background characterized by good qualities, but suffer a self-inflicted fall because of their limitless ambition. Throughout our analysis of these two works, we come to the conclusion that both works are tragic and the events turn around figures whose relentless excess of ambition drive them away into wilderness and reach a point of no return.

The problematic that we are confronted with is finding out how the use of myth in general accentuates the tragic flow of the events, and then we reached the result that when myth is mixed with tragedy, the audience's catharsis reaches its culminating point due to the fact that when dealing with a mythical figure the audience's gets completely involved and

embarked with what the mythical hero endures. Therefore, we can say that these two works allowed us to explore the subject of tragedy in a particular way since we have related it to the field of myth.

Discussion

Chapter One: Tragedy in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and Mofolo's *Chaka*

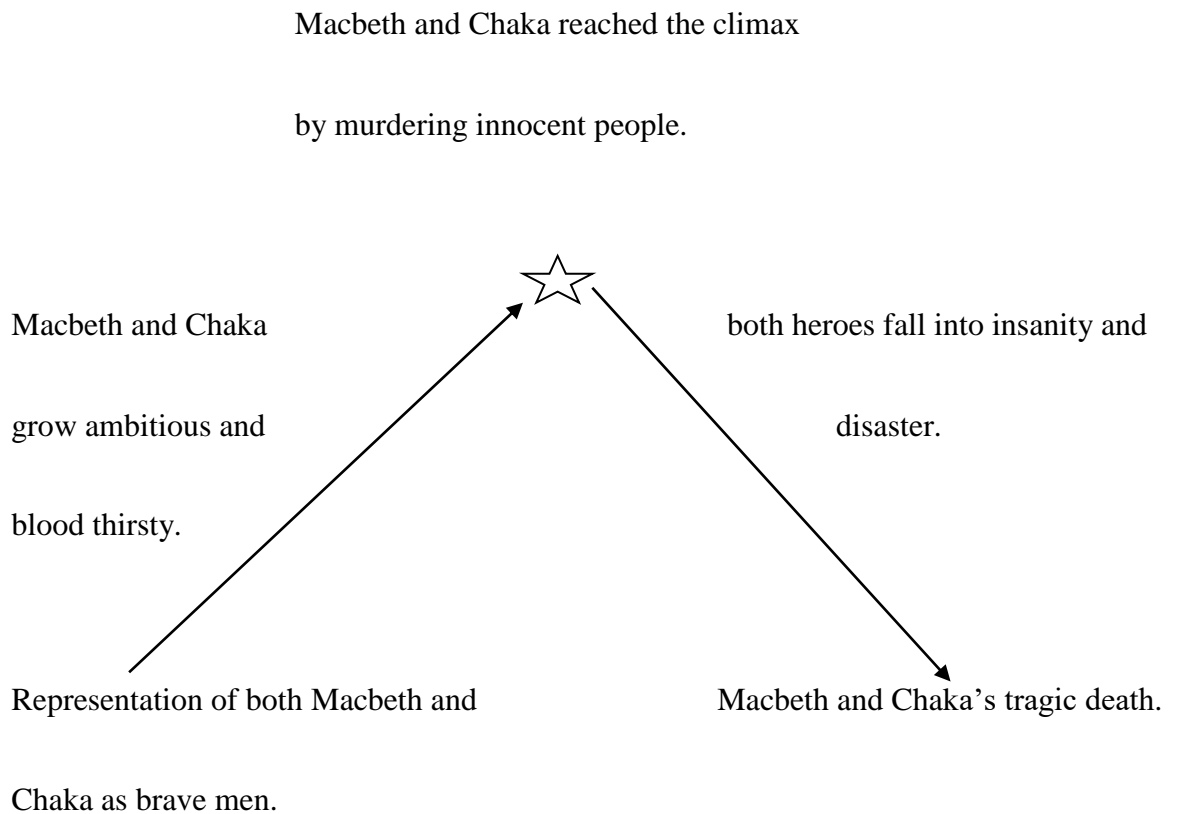
William Shakespeare's play **Macbeth** (1606) and Thomas Mofolo's novel **Chaka** (1925) are two works that can be studied from the perspective of tragedy. Both works are tragic, since the events turn around the tragedy of heroic figures that are so ambitious to the point of destroying themselves. In his book **Poetics** (335 BC) Aristotle defines tragedy as: "An imitation of an action that is serious, complete and of a certain magnitude"¹this action makes the plot understandable and complete as it makes the literary work wide enough to be understood. This is obviously visible in both **Macbeth** and **Chaka**. Shakespeare's play centres on Macbeth's desire to take the throne from the king just like Mofolo's Chaka who longs for kingship, power and fame. Their ambition evokes in them a thirst for blood that is a serious action. It is also complete in a sense that at the end both protagonists fall into disaster. Shakespeare and Mofolo also follow Aristotle's idea that a tragedy must be of a certain "magnitude", which is very important, because it is impossible to pick out any incident from a whole. Within these tragic works, both writers succeed in addressing the readers a serious issue.

a- Plot as a Whole in *Macbeth* and *Chaka*

In the point of view of Aristotle, plot is the most important element of tragedy; all other parts, such as characters, diction, thought, spectacle and melody are of a second importance. Therefore, plot is: "the imitation of an action: for by plot I here mean the arrangement of the incidents"² the plot must be a "whole" with a beginning, middle and an end. In addition to this, the plot maybe simple or complex, Aristotle considers a complex plot to be the best one; indeed "Reversal", "Recognition" and "Suffering" are the main characteristics of the tragic plot.

The following chart is Aristotle's tragic plot that we are going to follow, as it seems suitable to represent the tragic events of both works:

- ***Aristotle's Tragic Plot Structure***³



Macbeth and **Chaka** are tragedies in the sense that they meet with the aspects of the Aristotelian tragedy. In Aristotle's tragedy, the action is complete in itself; Thus, Shakespeare's play, and Mofolo's novel provide what Aristotle calls a "whole plot", as mentioned in the following quotation:

A beginning is that which does not itself follow anything by causal necessity, but after which something natural is or comes to be an end, on the contrary, is that which itself naturally follows some other thing, either by necessity, or as a rule, but has nothing follow it. A middle is that which follows something as some other thing follows it. A well constructed plot, therefore, must neither begin nor end at haphazard, but conform to these principles.⁴

Relating this quotation to our two works, we identify these elements as the main elements that build the whole stories. At the beginning of his play; Shakespeare introduces Macbeth as a

brave and courageous man with a heroic behaviour especially in defending his kingdom, therefore, he wins the title of a hero “for brave Macbeth (well he deserves that name)”⁵.

It worth to apply the same structure to Mofolo’s **Chaka**, hence, Mofolo’s novel begins with the description of South Africa, but most importantly by figurations of the character Chaka as being brave, strong and famous. For instance, Chaka has accomplished so many good deeds “Chaka went running and shouting so that the lion should hear that someone was coming and not kill that poor man immmediately”⁶. In other words, the beginning of the two stories match with Aristotle’s beginning of the “tragic plot”, as there is no dramatic tension, and no crucial events. Therefore, we may say that in these two works, we find the same initial situation as in the Aristotelian tragedy.

According to Aristotle, the next situation that lies just after the initial one, and before reaching the climax, is the rising action, and this portion of the plot is often the longest one in the Aristotelian tragic plot diagram. It is one of the most important parts of the plot, because it contains all the circumstances and the growing tension in the events of the story, before reaching the turning point and denouement. This is clearly shown in both **Macbeth** and **Chaka**, as they develop in terms of events extensively in the “Middle” of the plot.

In **Macbeth**, this part includes the problematic that Shakespeare tries to present to the audience. Thus, it is at the middle of the play that the complexities of the events are sustained; the introduction of the supernatural element becomes apparent in the succession of the growing tragic events. When the Witches appear, they informed Macbeth about his future status, which is “Thane of Glamis that he shall be Thane of Cawdor and king hereafter”⁷. When Macbeth is unable to recognize what the witches are saying, the Scottish noblemen enter with the news that Macbeth is given the title of “Thane of Cawdor”. It is with this news that Macbeth’s thought turns to the weird sister’s prophecy. After Macbeth hears the Witches’

prophecies that he will become king in the future, his mind is changed, as a result, this can be considered as the first step into Macbeth's insane flow of tragic events.

Lady Macbeth learns about the Witches prophecies, that her husband will become the king of Scotland, and then she plans to murder king Duncan. At the beginning, Macbeth thinks of a plan of murdering and is revolted by it. He tells his wife "proceed no further in this business"⁸. In her side, she accuses him to be weak and lacking courage:

Lady Macbeth: Was the hope drunk,
Wherein you dressed yourself? Hath it slept since,
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so feely? From this time
Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard⁹

The complexities of the incidents are succeeding one after another, and this represents the bulk of the growing tension as part of the middle of the tragic plot according to Aristotle. Therefore, Macbeth's desire for kingship along with the aid of his wife, succeed to kill King Duncan during his visit to Macbeth's castle. Furthermore, Macbeth's personality which begins as being brave and heroic shifts into violent and bloodthirsty. In this way, Malcolm refers to him as "I grant him bloody, luxurious, and avaricious, false, deceitful, sudden, malicious, snacking of every sin"¹⁰. Macbeth now is in his deepest ambition, and the evil power grows inside him. His hands are covered with blood, Macbeth's ambition drives him away, and his greed to be a king forever creates in him a fear that Banquo's children will inherit the throne as the witches have predicted. Then, he plans to murder his friend and his son; therefore, he kills him without mercy. Although, Macbeth is a wealthy and powerful king, the ghost of Banquo appears to destroy him. He says that: "O full of scorpions in my mind"¹¹.

In similar way, **Chaka**'s events begin to rise and take another way. As Chaka grows up, he leads a hard life, suffering from the image of being an illegitimate child. Nandi fearing of

her son to be killed, seeks help from the doctor to strengthen him with “potent medicine”. Indeed, Chaka has now the power to fight and becomes a strong and brave boy. He proves himself throughout the village by killing a Lion and saving a girl from the Hyena. By doing this, Chaka has gained fame and love by the community. We can locate these events in the Aristotelian plot to be in the rising situation just before attaining the climax.

Chaka’s personality has known a speedy change especially when he meets the diviner Isanusi who strengthens him with medicines and promises him power and kingship. Of course, he becomes the leader of “Amazulu” land. Later on, Chaka falls in love with Noliwa, the woman he most loves and cares about. Due to his ambition to be a king, he dreams of a great kingdom in order to control everything and to be the one for whom all people tremble. Therefore, in order to achieve this, Isanusi told him that he must sacrifice the blood of someone he loves much in the world; as a result he kills Noliwa, “the medicines will be mixed with Noliwa’s blood”¹². So, he chooses fame and kingship rather than love, Isunasi told him: “Noliwa’s blood is going to bring you riches which will be a wonder to be hold”¹³, so, he mixes the blood of Noliwa with medicines and strengthens Chaka who becomes more powerful by controlling everything. Chaka’s personality becomes violent, cruel after being brave and courageous. Mofolo, in this sense, says that: “his greed has been aroused, and he is in search of something which even he himself does not know”¹⁴. All these events represent the rising actions in the plot as charted by Aristotle.

For Aristotle, after the rising actions, the events reach their climax and this represents the turning point which is a very important part in the development of a tragedy. In Shakespeare’s **Macbeth** and in Mofolo’s **Chaka**, the two protagonists reach the climax respectively. Macbeth’s most adherent atrocity and violent deeds reach the climax when murdering Lady Macduff and all her children on the one hand. On the other, Chaka reaches the climax of his deeds by killing his mother and a great number of people, including married people, old

people and even children. So, we can say that Chaka's spirit is full of evil, he leads a dark life and his anger drives him to insanity and he loses control. In this way, Shakespeare's **Macbeth** and Mofolo's **Chaka** fit with Aristotle's tragic plot's climax, since it is the crucial moment which changes the whole story.

Moreover, after the climax, the events enter another phase, referred by Aristotle as the "Denouement" which means the process that leads the events to the tragic end. In **Macbeth**, this is shown when Macbeth loses everything: his wife dies, and his life becomes a burden lowered to the bottom position, lacking peace and love. Finally, Macbeth is killed by Macduff during a battle. Like Macbeth, Chaka falls into loneliness and madness which weakens him, and as a consequence, he is murdered by his half-brothers.

To sum up, both Shakespeare and Mofolo succeed to represent their literary works by depicting all the tragic events. Their works fit to Aristotle's tragedy and their stories are similar, containing a beginning, middle and an end, so that the audience is aware of all details at each time. These two works start with rising actions, then they reached the climax, and they ended in a tragic way, so they perfectly match Aristotle's tragic plot.

b- Tragic Plot in Shakespeare's Macbeth and Mofolo's Chaka

Aristotle explores further his theory of Tragedy. According to him, the structure of an ideal tragic plot must be complex. Aristotle considers that the complex plot is the best one for a well made tragedy, because it contains a "Reversal", "Recognition" and "Suffering". As for "Reversal" it is the "change by which the action veers round to its opposite"¹⁵. He says that the actions are reversed from good to bad, and for "Recognition" it is "a change from ignorance to knowledge"¹⁶ the series of events happened throughout a time which makes someone awaken from his ignorance to awareness and "Suffering" which is the disastrous and finally catastrophe.

Both Macbeth and Chaka as protagonists are linked with tragic situations; this is what we obviously notice when reading these works. Shakespeare's portrayal of Macbeth at the very beginning of the play resembles Chaka's heroic actions. Macbeth is a great warrior and this is shown in act I scene II, while he fought in the battle to protect his kingdom against the enemy "like Valour's minion, carved out his passage"¹⁷. Macbeth's bravery spread throughout the king's castle quickly and he is thus admired by all the noblemen. In similar way, Chaka's good deeds make him a very admirable person in his village by his people: "the men and the young men were seized with shame when Chaka was being singled out of praise, and especially when it was said that they ran away and bolted themselves in their houses"¹⁸

What is interesting is that although the works stem from different cultures and countries, they fit with Aristotle's notion of "Reversal". All the great characteristics that Chaka and Macbeth share are reversed from better to worse, and the most prominent feature of both works is the protagonists' desire to avenge personal injustice and a wider interest of kingship driven by their pure ambition and self interest. In this respect, Chaka's personality is full of violence, ambition and thirst for revenge. His life falls into disaster after killing his beloved

Noliwa and the person that cares about him; his mother. Even though, he becomes a great king and a wealthy man: “the number of his warrior was equal to the stars in the sky, and no king before him had ever had so many”¹⁹, he suffers from pain which is “a gnawing sense of discontent in his soul”²⁰. His thoughts are in disorder and uncertainty; he can’t make a firm decision. Beside this, Chaka’s heart lacks peace and contentment and nothing pleased him. His strong desire is only for bloodshed “the reason for arranging the feast was that he should be able to kill the people easily when they were all gathered together in one place”²¹. Taking into consideration this reversal of actions being performed, we notice that Macbeth as a hero shifts to become an ambitious man as Chaka, Macbeth’s strong desire to take the throne leads him to commit many sins. He begins by the murdering of King Duncan. By doing such a violent act, Macbeth has paved his way to evil, and Macbeth emphasizes this by saying:

Lady Macbeth: who dares receive it other,

As we shall make our grief’s

And clamour roar upon his death?

Macbeth: I am settled,

And bend up each corporal agent to these terrible feet away,

And mock the time with fairest show

False face must hide what the false heart doth know²²

Macbeth’s evil actions go beyond imagination as he proceeds in the destruction of all what is good, at the same time he lacks peace in his heart. Macbeth’s imagination of blood terrifies him: “No, this my hand will rather the multitudinous seas incarnadine Making the green on red.”²³ His blood thirst grows unquenchable, as he kills his best friend and murdering innocent people like Lady Macduff and her children. From the study of both characters’ reversal in actions, one notices that heroism and brave attributes of the two heroes move to be violent and ambitious.

Moreover, “Recognition” is also another Aristotelian aspect that is included in both works. William Shakespeare throughout the whole play depicts his main character as a blind man; the only things he could recognize is his urge to be a king at any price, without making any importance to consequences. He is able to do anything to achieve his aim, this is shown in act I scene 7:

With his surcease success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here upon this bank and shoal of time,
We’d jump the life to come.²⁴

All these tragic events turn against him, Macbeth isolates himself and he is left more and more on his own especially when he loses his partner of greatness, Lady Macbeth. In the final act scene III Macbeth becomes mad. He repeats and contradicts himself. So, it is only at this moment that Macbeth realises that he is going to his unfortunate end, and becoming aware of his misdeeds. Macbeth awakes from his ignorance, when he says:

I am sick at heart
When I behold – Seyton, I say – This push
Will cheer me ever or disseat me now.
I have lived long enough: my way of life
Is fall’n into the sere, the yellow leaf
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.²⁵

From the above quotation, we understand that Macbeth recognizes that he loses his “Eternal Jewel” which is peace, life and love, and he even fears the night, just like Chaka who has never experienced joy and happiness. He often has painful and frightening dreams which

disturb him; Mofolo portrays Chaka by saying that: “when he recalled his deeds and heard these cries of the night, Chaka was seized with incredible fear and he wept bitter tears.”²⁶ Chaka falls ill and mentally destroyed, the images of the people he kills are now before his eyes, and he hears the voices of Noliwa and his mother. These terrible dreams make Chaka wake up and watch his crimes, he hears the voice of Isunasi saying:

Chaka, murderer of your own brothers, the blood of your own father! Murderer of your own wife, companion of your heart! Murderer of your own children, your very own blood. Murderer of your own mother, she who gave you birth!²⁷

From these sounds, Chaka recognizes all the sins he commits. So, like Macbeth, Chaka becomes aware of his blindness.

Therefore, for Aristotle’s plot structure “Suffering” means that the catastrophe is at the end of all events. Thus, the two protagonists’ end is tragic; Macbeth suffers an intense and painful emotional end. The feeling of fear evokes inside him anxiety and depression, in this way Shakespeare describes him as:

I have almost forgot the taste of fears.
The time has been my senses would have cooled
To hear a night-shriek, and my fell of hair
Would, at a dismal treatise, rouse and stir
As life were in’t. I have supped full with horrors²⁸

Macbeth feels an extreme pain in his body and mind, when he loses his wife. Macbeth endures a lot of suffering, and the world seems to him dark, full of gloom, but he could not run away from death. Similarly to Macbeth, Chaka ends up with suffering and sadness, especially from the nightmares that provoke in him fear and dread: “from that day Chaka never experienced again joy and the happiness he had once known. He often had painful and frightening dreams which disturbed his sleep”.²⁹ Chaka’s mood is full of melancholy and darkness, dying in weakness and loneliness.

To conclude with, we may say that **Chaka** and **Macbeth** are two different works that symbolize what Aristotle calls a tragic plot structure. Throughout our analysis, we can say that each event is important. It is impossible to neglect any incident from the “Whole Plot”. From the very beginning, Macbeth and Chaka lead a respectful life, because of their vaulting ambition for kingship, and their devotion for the supernatural powers of darkness, they fall tragically. The complexity of the human being makes that anyone who desires to hold something that they do not deserve, falls at the end, and their soul shifts from light to darkness. We can say that both Macbeth and Chaka harvest the fruit of their deeds.

Endnotes

¹Translated by S. H. Butcher, *The poetics of Aristotle* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1902), 23.

²*Ibid.*, 25.

³[http://www.google.com/search?q=Aristotle's tragic plot structure+chart&biw=1366&bih=65](http://www.google.com/search?q=Aristotle's+tragic+plot+structure+chart&biw=1366&bih=65).

⁴Translated by S. H. Butcher, *The poetics of Aristotle* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1902), 31.

⁵William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (Librairie du Libon, 1995), 7.

⁶Translated by: Daniel Kunene, *Thomas Mofolo: Chaka* (London: Heinemann, 1981), 17.

⁷William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (Librairie du Libon, 1995), 15.

⁸*Ibid.*, 37.

⁹*Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 129.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 83.

¹²Translated by: Daniel Kunene, *Thomas Mofolo: Chaka* (London: Heinemann, 1981), 102.

¹³*Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 106.

¹⁵Translated by S. H. Butcher, *The poetics of Aristotle* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1902), 41.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (Librairie du Libon, 1995), 7.

¹⁸Translated by: Daniel Kunene, *Thomas Mofolo: Chaka* (London: Heinemann, 1981), 19.

¹⁹Ibid., 154.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., 156.

²²William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (Librairie du Libon, 1995), 41.

²³Ibid., 51.

²⁴Ibid., 35.

²⁵Ibid., 155.

²⁶Translated by: Daniel Kunene, *Thomas Mofolo: Chaka* (London: Heinemann, 1981), 159.

²⁷Ibid., 167.

²⁸William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (Librairie du Libon, 1995), 161.

²⁹Translated by: Daniel Kunene, *Thomas Mofolo: Chaka* (London: Heinemann, 1981), 156.

Chapter Two: The Tragic Hero in Shakespeare's Macbeth and Mofolo's

Chaka

For Aristotle, characters hold the second position after the plot. The protagonist in tragedy is known as a "Tragic Hero". In tragedy, the hero must be neither "Virtuous" nor "Vicious", but they must be of a noble status, and well respected; thus, the tragic hero is of a high importance. "The tragic flaw" is a term coined by Aristotle, known as "Hamartia", which refers to the errors that the protagonist commits in a tragic situation. In other words, the events that occur in the tragic work are the reflection of that flaw, and the hero's downfall is caused by the hero himself. In this case, William Shakespeare's Macbeth and Thomas Mofolo's Chaka are two tragic heroes that match with Aristotle's definition of a "tragic hero"¹

a. Macbeth and Chaka as Tragic Heroes

Macbeth and Chaka can be identified and characterized as tragic heroes. Early in the two works, both characters are portrayed as being of a great status. Mofolo has presented his main character as strong, skilful, virtuous and honest. Although, Chaka endures a sorrowful childhood, as he experiences the refusal of his father in particular and the society in general, yet, he proves himself to be different with good qualities that everyone appreciates. He is a brave and courageous man; he has gained the title of a hero as he kills a Lion during his exile. Chaka's bravery circulates throughout the villages. By this deed, women and girls begin to sing on his name:

Here at our home, at ncube's there are no young men,
There is but one young man of worth,
Here at our home, at ncube's, there are no men,
For all men here are cowards¹

People start to admire Chaka and regard him with wonder and delight. The extraordinary deeds of Chaka are not limited to these acts, he seems superior comparing to the other young men when all people run away from the Hyena; it is Chaka who rescued the young girl. It is his bravery that brought his fame into his village. In this respect, Mofolo describes these heroic actions as follows: “he come right up to it and stabbed it under the four arms with a mighty strake and the spear went in and come out on the other side and pierced the ground mailing it down.”², Consequently, Mofolo reveals one side of Chaka’s personality and humanity which is full of pity, sympathy and mercy, especially when he encourages the girl: “you are safe, stop crying and rejoice. It is the Hyena that has died. Get up and see it, it is I Chaka”³. Mofolo goes deeper to depict his hero as a great warrior, he becomes the leader of Dingiswayo’s armies; Chaka is of a high position and great status. The manner in which people speak about him honestly indicates his respectable and admirable nature. His feelings grow up when he falls in love with Noliwa, with whom Chaka experiences happiness; however, his blind ambition to become more powerful and a great king drive him to insanity, cruelty and ultimate ruin.

In William Shakespeare’s play, the main character Macbeth, as Chaka by Mofolo, is the tragic hero. As it has been already explained, Macbeth is of a great and noble status, he is “the thane of Cawdor” he has received such honour because of his own glory that he has covered, but also considered as a man with high political importance. In Act I, scene II, Duncan addresses Macbeth as “valiant cousin, worthy gentleman!”⁴, he has received respect from his victory. As we notice, Macbeth can be considered as being good at the beginning of the play despite his imperfections. He is a good hearted man, in addition to these qualities, Macbeth is a gentleman, he shows his love and appreciation to his wife, he calls her “my dearest partner of greatness”⁵. Macbeth has heard of the Witches’ prophecies, his mind rejects to murder the king as he says: “Duncan hath born his mind faculties meek”⁶, Duncan is a

noble and humble king, and in the same speech, Macbeth lists Duncan's "great virtues". Following the structure of a tragic hero, both protagonists fall because of their tragic flaws, and the most obvious one is being their limitless ambition. As a consequence, the change in fortune from good to bad is the result of the hero's errors.

After Chaka has met with Isanusi, and the latter promises him to realise all his wishes. His desire for kingship and power along with the aid of the divine doctor, and his potent strengthening medicines, Chaka becomes the king of a great nation called "Zulu". The result of this is that, Chaka changes his benevolent personality to a violent and an evil one. Chaka dominates and controls everyone; his kingdom is build with the blood of innocent people. His crimes go beyond human imagination, Chaka's actions are fatal, and they culminate in a flow of blood; he murders his people and persecutes them one after another. Chaka's horrific deeds are intensified when he kills his beloved pregnant Noliwa. In fact, it is Chaka who makes the initial decision and chooses to follow Isanusi as he tells him that his medicines are considered to be "extremely evil, but it is also extremely good. Choose!"⁷. Thus, Chaka chooses to sacrifice the blood of Noliwa as an ingredient required in the medicines that will make him the greatest king. After this, Chaka commits horrible things:

In order to comprehend the fully, we should use the example that the number of people killed by him in the ways we have described, is equal to the number of the Bosotho, counting every man, woman and child, multiplied three or four fold. Imagine them all being killed!⁸

Chaka shapes his way to evil by his own, and then he falls into madness. He is the one who couldn't find happiness, if there is no bloodshed Chaka organizes a large feast during which he kills people. Thus, one can say that Chaka lives only to kill people in order to feed his thirst with the blood of his own people.

Like Chaka who is influenced by Isanusi, Macbeth is deeply influenced by the Witches prophecies and his wife. Macbeth's downfall is the result of his own choice not

because of his fate. The excess of ambition which grows inside him accentuates by the provoking words from his wife who influences him to take a bloody path to have access to the throne. Macbeth spends most of the play in immoral decision:

I have no spur,
To pick the sides of my intent but only,
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other⁹

From the above statement, we notice that Macbeth is aware of what he is doing, and he is in full control. But we also see the struggle and conflict in his inner self; thus, his ambition wins out and he chooses to follow a bloody path in order to achieve his own desires. So, he sacrifices his reputation and honour just to have power. As a king he has an extreme fear that anyone with noble ancestors will be a threat to him. For this reason, he chooses to be a tyrant rather than good. Macbeth's unfortunate fate and vaulting personality is not caused by his own thoughts, but by listening and going after the words and instructions of his wife and the Witches. Unfortunately, his excess of ambition has blinded him and does not allow him to see the destructive way he has followed.

As it is shown, the tragic hero's downfall is caused by the hero's own will. In Mofolo's work Chaka is responsible for his fall since he obeys Isanusi's instructions and this is revealed through his words: "I bind myself to abide by your commandments in every way in which you will command me"¹⁰. Chaka suffers from nightmares inflicted by his deeds; and these deeds cause his assassination by his half brothers. As far as Macbeth is concerned, the tragic hero learns through his suffering that is brought upon him from by his own actions. Macbeth suffers and this is very clear when he says: "will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood from my hand?"¹¹. In this quotation, we notice that Macbeth is unable to clean up his conscience from the murder of Duncan, and often he talks to himself:

A dagger of the mind, false creation,
Proceeding from the heat opposed brain?
I see yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw? ¹²

The Witches play with Macbeth's mind, but also try their best to convince him to murder people who are against him. Lady Macbeth also imposes herself on her husband, she enhances his ambition. So, Macbeth's tragic end is brought by his own hands when Macduff avenges from him.

Throughout our analysis of the two characters' tragic end, we can say that both Macbeth and Chaka are victims of their own ambitions. While Macbeth's ambition for kingship is awakened by the mixture of supernatural power and his wife's pressure, Chaka's sorrowful childhood is caused by his father who creates in him the harsh character that he is, which makes him the way to develop the feeling of being left aside and as a consequence, this leads him to be cruel towards others.

b- Pity and Fear Evoked by Macbeth and Chaka's Fall

In order to make a Tragedy more effective, according to Aristotle it must convey the emotion of pity and fear inside the audience through the misfortune of the “tragic hero”, Aristotle, in this sense argues: “A tragedy should, moreover, imitate action which excite pity and fear, this being the distinctive mark of tragic imitation”¹³. For Aristotle, the downfall and the misfortune of the hero, comes from a true flaw rather than from “Depravity” or “Vices”. The feeling of pity grows in the audience when they realize the downfall of the protagonists.

Both works evoke the feeling of sympathy and terror in the audience, because of the misfortune of the tragic hero, brought by “Errors” and “Frailty”. At the very beginning of the play Macbeth is a virtuous character that the reader and the audience appreciate through his numerous qualities and good deeds. When we see how Macbeth fights to protect his kingdom, the first impression that comes to the mind of the reader is bravery, and consequently, we feel respect and consideration for Macbeth. As the time goes, the image of Macbeth changes, then he is shown to the audience as a pitiable character, since we witness all the misfortunes falling into him:

When I be hold – Seyton, I say – This push
Will cheer me ever or disseat me now.
I have lived long enough: my way of life
Is fall'n into the sere, the yellow leaf
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath,¹⁴

This subtle alteration in the perception of Macbeth from the part of the reader creates in them the feeling of pity, due to the fact that when Macbeth meets the Witches, they completely change his mind and personality from good to bad, and the fact that his wife

challenges his manhood, this creates in the reader a strong emotion of pity, since Macbeth is perceived to be a good man who does not deserve misfortune.

Similarly to Macbeth, Chaka also evokes the feeling of pity and fear in the mind of the reader, because the latter too, suffers from an inflicted flaw of tragic events because he is rejected and chased by his own people, this leads him to misfortune in the end. Thus, Chaka suffers and leads a painful life because of the fact that he is chased out from his own family. This evokes the sentiment of pity in the reader because of undesirable events which fall one after another on Chaka, and most importantly, due to his ultimate ruin caused by his own deeds. Chaka is ruined to the point that he has no further power or envy to remain even in life: “When he felt the spears enter his body, Chaka, instead of fighting back, like a man, as he used to, turned around slowly and wake up from his waking sleep”¹⁵. Therefore, what evokes pity in the reader as we have mentioned above, is the downfall of Chaka. In general, as Aristotle claims “Tragedy is an imitation not only of complete action but of events, terrible and pitiful”¹⁶, hence, tragedy does not only focus on the tragic event itself, but also on the viewer’s reaction to it.

To conclude, we might say that the feelings of pity and fear are among the most important parts of tragedy, as they provoke and manifest the emotion of sympathy in the audience, and represents the direct link between the work and the reader, due to the fact that it is the most obvious interaction between the work and the audience.

Endnotes

¹ Translated by S. H. Butcher, *The poetics of Aristotle* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1902), 45

²Translated by: Daniel Kunene,*Thomas Mofolo: Chaka* (London: Heinemann, 1981),19.

³Ibid., 29.

⁴Ibid., 30.

⁵William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (Librairie du Libon, 1995), 7.

⁶ibid., 29.

⁷Ibid., 37.

⁸Translated by: Daniel Kunene,*Thomas Mofolo: Chaka* (London: Heinemann, 1981),43.

⁹Ibid., 135.

¹⁰William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (Librairie du Libon, 1995), 37.

¹¹Translated by: Daniel Kunene,*Thomas Mofolo: Chaka* (London: Heinemann, 1981), 41.

¹²William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (Librairie du Libon, 1995), 51.

¹³Ibid., 45.

¹⁴Translated by S. H. Butcher, *The poetics of Aristotle* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1902), 45.

¹⁵William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (Librairie du Libon, 1995), 155.

¹⁶Translated by: Daniel Kunene,*Thomas Mofolo: Chaka* (London: Heinemann, 1981), 167.

¹⁷Translated by S. H. Butcher, *The poetics of Aristotle* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1902), 45.

Chapter Three: Myth in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and Mofolo's *Chaka*

When reading works such as *Macbeth* and *Chaka*, we recognize that there is always a particular relationship between these literary works and the society wherein they are developed. They are written in a specific period of time in history; therefore, it is evident that a writer in his work of literature provides some instances from the community he comes from, that impacts them indirectly and has an influence over their writings. In order to best produce a good literary work, the writer thus, must be linked sharply with the social context of his era, as referring back to legendary heroes, myths or events that stem from their own culture and society. This is the idea that is developed by Stephen Greenblatt in his theoretical approach "New Historicism" which refers to the attempt of understanding the literary work through its historical and cultural context, and to use literature as a means of understanding the author's own history and culture. As Stephen Greenblatt argues:

New Historicism is an approach to literary criticism and literary theory based on the premise that a literary work should be considered a product of its time, place and circumstances of its composition rather than as an isolated creation of genius¹

Accordingly, the writers tend to lean on their culture and history when writing a literary work. From this, one can say that a writer is a reflection of his age and his literary work is the fruit of its context. Hence, we cannot start studying William Shakespeare and Thomas Mofolo without referring back to the influence of the environment and surrounding upon their thoughts.

Thus, when we come to deal with the influence of history upon the author's mind, we may consider the influence of myth on their writings, since myths are always linked with events that occur in the past history. Therefore, myths are generally stories that exist in every society, considering Thomas Mofolo's *Chaka* which serves as an example to look back to Africa's remote history. By writing such a work, he celebrates the African oral tradition of the

“Zulu” nation and empire ruled by the historical figure “Shaka” from 1816 until 1828. In the same way, Shakespeare’s cultural and historical influence predominates over his writings, such as the depiction of the historical Macbeth, King of Scots (1040) in his play **Macbeth**. Thus, Shakespeare’s character Macbeth originates from history, rather than being the creation of his own. From here one can deduce that both Shakespeare and Mofolo in their works have been influenced by their respective cultures.

Myth may be defined as: “traditional stories of ostensibly historical events that serves to unfold part of the world view of people or explain a practice, belief, or natural phenomenon”². It is a kind of an answer to explain certain things that lay beyond all what is natural. In other words, myths generally concern the supernatural in most of the cases, but there are still some exceptions that do not concern the supernatural. Myth is always linked with the society in which it is developed, even though we may find some similarities considering some myths which originate from different societies. There are so many scholars who have suggested different theories that try to explain this notion; each of them differs from one another. James Curey argues that myth does “Explain the present in terms of a creative act that looks in the past”³, which means that myth is linked with the remote past. Among other approaches that tried to resolve the question, we have the theory of “Euhemerism”. The latter explains it as “a mythological approach, in which mythological accounts are considered to have their origins from real historical events”⁴, this theory is in relation with the Greek mythographer, “Euhemerus”.

Our aim in this section is to relate the concept of myth to the Aristotelian tragedy, in the way that myth helps to accentuate and intensify the tragic events. In order to use a myth in a tragic work, and to convince the readers about its concreteness, it is better to talk about a myth that has a historical counterpart to make the tragic events appear to be very emotional.

The following quotation shows how some stories or events stem from historical facts modified through time, until becoming myths as Rajiva Verma says:

The chief characteristic of the mythical form of perception is its concreteness. Cassirer argues that mythical thought is incapable of conceiving abstractions as abstractions. Unlike the scientific mode of thought, which proceeds by synthesis and analysis, myth lives entirely by the presence of its object⁵

By relating this quotation to the character of Chaka who stands as a Mythical hero, we may say that Chaka is not only the result of Mofolo's imagination. On the contrary, he is the exaggeration and re-representation of the historical "Shaka", who lived and fought for his people and has been considered by a lot as a hero. By introducing myth to a tragic work, the impact of the tragic flaw of events in the mind of the reader amplifies, as the reader's emotions become vivid, and they feel the tragedy to be both appreciated and satisfying.

In this case, the mythical character Chaka does not stem from the imagination of Thomas Mofolo, but Chaka is the exaggeration and alteration of all what "Shaka", the historical "Zulu" king has been. So, by considering the above quotation, we can say that "myth" should have a concrete representation, or a material counterpart such as a person who stands as a hero. In *Chaka*, Thomas Mofolo has changed some elements in order to build his own story about the "Zulu" king. For instance Mofolo says, "At mid-day the messengers came to Dingiswayo and gave him their message, namely that the nation had installed Mfokazana in the place of his father"⁶. In reality, if we look back to history, the person who substituted Shaka's father is named 'Siguyana', as the following quotation shows, "Shaka realized that he could not succeed in deposing Siguyana alone, he asked for Dingiswayo's help, and Siguyana was defeated"⁷ In other words, there is always a detail that an author decides to modify in order to make his story unique. As such, Shakespeare and Mofolo are aware of the fact that the use of supernatural elements gives them the ability to accentuate the mythical dimension of their characters and works as well:

A hero ventures forth the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back in this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow men⁸

When the mythical characteristics are highlighted, the tragic events that come along with this mythical character become emphasized too. As a result, the tragedy becomes successful in the way that it satisfies the audience, or the reader's expectations from tragic incidents, since the audience is more interested in what a mythical figure experiences rather than what common people do.

As we have said above, the supernatural element plays a prominent and mysterious role in recounting a story based on fiction. In *Macbeth*, the Witches: "act as the catalysts to Macbeth's crimes"⁹. In their first appearance, they suggest to Macbeth that he will become "Thane of Cawdor" and then a king. When Macbeth is granted this title, it was like a confirmation of the witches' prophecies. Therefore, the witches spark the flame of Macbeth's ambition. On her side, Lady Macbeth "is often seen as a symbol of evil like the Witches"¹⁰. The Witches' predications have a more powerful effect on Lady Macbeth than on her husband. Therefore, Lady Macbeth is represented as being the one who reduces the good side of Macbeth and persuades him of all what is evil. When she receives the letter from Macbeth, she declares to kill King Duncan in order to help him to find the necessary determination. She uses all the spirits of darkness and evil to convince him to do wrong. Because of Macbeth's indecision to kill Duncan, Lady Macbeth plays on his manhood by testing him to see his courage and strength as she says:

Lady Macbeth: What beast was't then

That made you break this enterprise to me?

When you durst do it, then you were a man;¹¹

When Macbeth hears these words, he answered: "I dare do all that may become a man"¹². She also employed a very powerful language and images of horror and evil:

“unsex me here, and fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full, of direst cruelty!”¹⁴ She is impatient when her husband cannot carry out the plan of murdering Duncan. But finally she succeeds to persuade him to do so. Macbeth’s ambition drives him away, as he demands more from the witches about his destiny, and the spirit of evil dominates him. Through the witches and Lady Macbeth, Shakespeare represents all what is evil, because the two tempt Macbeth to the same way.

Similarly to Shakespeare who uses the evil spirit and witchcraft to build the story of Macbeth, Mofolo also uses a fiction to create the great Chaka. Isanusi like the Witches in Macbeth is the diviner doctor, the extraordinary sorcerer who is able to change the good soul into darkness and evil one. As Chaka plunges into his loneliness and weakness, Isanusi appears and learns that Chaka had a painful childhood willing to avenge his father. Hence, the doctor promises him to change his life “I still repeat that your hardships and sufferings are now all things of the past”¹⁵. From this, Chaka’s ambition aroused and went limitless. The diviner promises Chaka kingship, power and fame that he desired by strengthening him with blood medicines, “the medicine which I have vaccinated you is a medicine of blood, if you do not spill much blood, it will turn against you and kill you instead”¹⁵. As a result, Chaka becomes ambitious; he often wants more, so he kills people and spills too much blood. Isanusi is the evil who directs the extraordinary powers, which Chaka has been given, towards death and destruction. So, the witch doctor controls and turns Chaka to a monster. In this way, both Mofolo and Shakespeare succeeded to create mythical figures in their own heroes.

Moreover, myths most of the time are related with legendary stories, and in the case of Chaka and Macbeth they both represent their historical counterparts, even though Shakespeare’s character Macbeth does not really represent the historical Macbeth, King of Scots. The latter is the one whom the Shakespearean play originates from, but it was to refer

back to King James I who ruled over England at that time. “Shake” is also the historical fact from which Chaka stems from.

The use of myth in tragedy convinces and helps the audience to share the feeling of pity and sorrow, when we use myth; we satisfy the human’s inner desires as Rajiva Verma says in following quotation:

Myth in other words becomes a structural principle in literature. This is an idea often reiterated by Frye. He argues that myths and folktales (and in this context the difference between them is not important) are ‘pure verbal design’. This is so because they are as near as possible to the structure of human desires; they have not been ‘displaced’ by the demands of plausibility and Morality.¹⁶

Considering this quotation, again we notice that it is possible to alter the image or the deeds of a historical figure in order to form a myth that would satisfy the human mind and desire, as we have mentioned it earlier. In other words, Macbeth as a King exists as a person who ruled over Scotland, so it is not just the creation of Shakespeare, but he changed some facts and events to shape his own story, “Macbeth took the throne after killing his cousin, King Duncan I, in battle in 1040”¹⁷. Thus, Shakespeare for instance, makes Macbeth kill King Duncan in a coward way, just to alter the image of the real Macbeth and to build his own:

Lady Macbeth: When Duncan is asleep
(where the rather shall his day’s hard journey
Soundly invite him), his two chamberlains
Will I with wine and wassail so convince,
That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason.
A limbeck only: when in swinish sleep¹⁸

Because Macbeth kills the king while he was asleep, the image of the real Macbeth changes; as a result, the audience’s feelings come to a crossroad because of the mixture between their initial thought about Macbeth being courageous and loyal, and the coward act

that he commits in the end. This event sustains the idea that tragedy has to be appealing in the eyes of the audience, due to the fact that this alteration makes the audience confused about their reaction; hence, the tragic events of the story are highlighted thanks to the use of myth. In addition, we may say that it is not only Shakespeare who makes Macbeth to be considered as a myth, because a single person cannot decide to give a hero a mythical status, but he rather contributes through his play in an indirect manner to build the status of a mythical figure for Macbeth despite the fact that when writing the play Shakespeare was thinking about King James I instead of the historical Macbeth. Shakespeare is inspired by the real historical facts of Macbeth, King of Scots. As a result, one can say that it is the way that allowed Shakespeare to talk about King James I in a soft and indirect way. The play is written during the reign of King James I, and at that time Shakespeare wants to talk in an ironic way about King James I through the use of Macbeth in the play; Shakespeare wants to portray the harsh king James I to the audience.

Like Shakespeare, Thomas Mofolo has used myth in order to make his work more convincing, and this makes the tragic events included within the novel take another shape for the reader. Mofolo aggravates the events of the story, making them more tragic. In order to highlight once again this idea, we may point out at what Daniel Kunene, the translator of **Chaka** to English has explained:

By his own testimony, Mofolo in writing this book, did not intend to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about the Zulu king; but neither did he intend to tell nothing but exaggerations produced by a facile pen' as suggested by N.R.Thoahlane, a Mosotho reader writing in the Leselinyana La Lesotho in february 1927¹⁹

By relating the fact that myth could be an exaggeration or just as a cultural invention to Mofolo's character Chaka, we can sustain this idea by illustrating how Mofolo's **Chaka** does not represent an exception:

On the death of Shaka's father (c. 1816), Dingiswayo lent his young protégé the military support necessary to oust and assassinate his senior brother Sigujana, and make himself chieftain of the Zulu, although he remained a vassal of Dingiswayo²⁰

This quotation shows how the real Shaka usurps himself to the throne, and the way Mofolo neglects some details or alters in his novel. But this does not help us to say that Mofolo builds a mythical status for “Shaka”, he rather made his part in this long and complex process of the formation of a mythical figure.

The building of a mythical figure is always made upon a heroic character. Thus, in order to prove that most of the time ‘Myth’ is linked with heroism, Mofolo says:

As an infant, Chaka was lovable bouncing little flow with chubby cheeks who did not cry even when fell. Even when he was chastized he did not often cry, or he might cry only once and then keep quiet. Children generally squall when they are given a beating, and they beg for mercy, at the same time telling how repentant they are, or else they run away. All those were things which Chaka never did. He said that pleading for mercy gave such a satisfaction to the inflicter of the punishment. As for running away, he said that it was cowardice for when a person is chastised for a wrong he has committed, he must endure the punishment that from his wrong doing²¹

When analyzing what Mofolo tells about Chaka, we notice that he considers him to be a real hero, albeit he was a little child. As an adult, Chaka is portrayed to be a heroic leader who fought for his people with this strong reputation of heroism and courage at the beginning of the novel, before the events reach the climax. The following quotation shows how Chaka is so special, and how he is portrayed to be exceptional, and able to be considered as a mythical figure, “Chaka’s life, like that of epic heroes in various cultures is not ordinary. It combines with magic and other supernatural events unachievable by ordinary human beings”²²

In Shakespeare’s **Macbeth**, Macbeth is portrayed as a hero whose ambitious behavior made of him the tragic hero that he is. This idea is showed in the following quotation:

Shakespeare found the story of Macbeth in the book *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (1577) by Raphael Holinshed(?d.1582). Shakespeare alters the story considerably from Holinshed. He compresses the action into about a year, whereas in history Macbeth ruled for nearer twenty years. He makes Duncan old and Saintly, whereas in Holinshed he was young and feeble; he gives Macbeth a less good claim to the throne, presents Banquo- in reality an accomplice in Duncan's murder – as a good man, and in general takes every opportunity to blacken Macbeth's character²³

Myth also might be considered from a literary point of view. In this way; it could be regarded as a very important aspect within a literary work:

In fact even Shakespeare has been seen as using myths in order to give structural and thematic unity to his plays. What is more common and new in contemporary thinking on the subject is the use of Myths by critics to give shape and coherence to their perception of the work of art, even when there is no evidence of conscious use of myths by the artist²⁴

Therefore, we can say that the use of myth is very important in a literary work, because first it gives the author a subject that really matters and allows the readers to have an intense interest on his work, due to the fact that 'myths' are viewed by readers as an attractive theme that gives a sense of wonder. Second and more importantly, is the structural aspect or role that 'myth' has within a literary work. For instance, myths represent the main element on which the events evolve around, and when it is a tragedy, the tragic events appear as dramatic to the audience, "The shapes of the myths, when they enter literature, become 'the conventions that establish the general framework of narrative'. Myth, in other words, becomes a structural principle in literature"²⁵. Thus, Chaka and Macbeth as characters are the most important figures within these works. The character of Chaka is the backbone of Mofolo's novel because he represents the elements that construct the novel as a whole. Macbeth on his part, represents the basic element that makes the play stand as a tragedy.

In this part of our research, that is devoted to 'myth', we can say that in Mofolo's **Chaka**, and in Shakespeare's **Macbeth**, we notice that when the authors decide to use their protagonists as heroes and then as myths gives a totally different approach to their works.

They completely changed the course and the fate of their works because they succeeded in making their heroes as close as to display a mythical form:

The history of storytelling and literature has always revealed the presence of heroes in stories. They seem to be a prerequisite for stories as fiction and even histories to exist. They have been present in all forms of literature of all times. Here and there heroic deeds therefore seem to constitute the essence of literature²⁶

As a conclusion, we can say that when an author decides to build his story upon a mythical character, he jumps from the large horizon of creativity and alteration of the original story from which the myth stems. We may say that it is possible for an author to use myth just in order to refer to something else in an ironical way, as Shakespeare does with Macbeth. Many literary critics believe that Macbeth refers to King James I, because of “his affiliation or affection to sorcery and witchcraft”²⁷. Even, Mofolo has mixed fiction and facts to create a tragic legend. Thus, myths are regarded to be very important to build the general framework of a literary work and to give it a sense that makes the reader’s interest grow bigger as long as he goes through the whole story. They also make their tragic events closer to the reader’s mind.

Endnotes

¹Rajani Sharma, *New Historicism: An Intensive Analysis and Appraisal*.(Garhwal Central University, 2014), 2.

²Meriam Webster's dictionary.

³James Curey, *Orature In African Literature Today* (London: African Word Press, 1992), 20.

⁴<https://www.Britannica.com/biography/Euhemerus-greek-mythographer#ref 257>.

⁵Rajiva Verma, *Myth, Ritual and Shakespeare*, (Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2003) 128.

⁶Mpagi Tonny Ssewanyana, Walmala Zaid, *a History of South Africa Including Namibia* (O-level History Paper Four, 2010), .

⁷Translated by: Daniel Kunene,*Thomas Mofolo: Chaka* (London: Heinemann, 1981),76.

⁸Campbell Joseph, *The Hero with Thousand Faces* (Princeton University Press: Princeton and Oxford, 1949), 28.

⁹William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (Librairie du Libon, 1995).

¹⁰Stewart Martin: *Macbeth: William Shakespeare* (Ashford Color Press Ltd, 1994), 1.

¹¹William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (Librairie du Libon, 1995), 39.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., 3

¹⁴Translated by: Daniel Kunene,*Thomas Mofolo: Chaka* (London: Heinemann, 1981),41.

¹⁵Ibid., 45.

¹⁶Rajiva Verma, *Myth, Ritual and Shakespeare*, (Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2003), 154.

¹⁷William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* (Librairie du Libon, 1995), 39.

¹⁸Translated by: Daniel Kunene, *Thomas Mofolo: Chaka* (London: Heinemann, 1981), 76.

¹⁹<http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/king-shaka-zulu>.viewed on 02 September 2016

²⁰Translated by: Daniel Kunene, *Thomas Mofolo: Chaka* (London: Heinemann, 1981), 7.

²¹Koné K., *Thomas Mofolo's Chaka: an Epic Hero or Villain?*, (University Felix Houphouët-Boigny of Cocody, 2012), 4.

²²Martin Stephen, Philip Franks: *Studying Shakespeare* (Librairie du Liban and Longman Group Limited, 1984), 63.

²³Rajiva Verna, *Myth, Ritual and Shakespeare* (Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2003), 150.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 154.

²⁵Koné K., *Thomas Mofolo's Chaka: an Epic Hero or Villain?*, (University Felix Houphouët-Boigny of Cocody, 2012), 1.

²⁶ Michael Mangan, *a Preface to Shakespeare's Tragedies*, (Longman Goup United Kingdom, 1991).

Conclusion

In our research paper, we have tried to explore the main elements of the Aristotelian tragedy by relating them to Shakespeare's **Macbeth** and Mofolo's **Chaka**. We have also explained that myth plays a prominent role in making of Macbeth and Chaka distinctive figures since they perfectly match with Aristotle's definition of a tragic hero. Throughout this analysis, we have reached to the conclusion that both Shakespeare's Macbeth and Mofolo's Chaka appear to be similar in terms of their tragic actions through their relentless and vaulting ambition and persistent devotion to evil, which at the end ruins completely their lives. We have also found that the mythical dimension that exists in both Chaka and Macbeth as characters intensified the tragic events of the two works.

When we discussed Aristotle's tragedy, we put emphasis only on two of the six elements of the tragedy, which are the plot and the characters. We have not applied all elements of the Aristotelian tragedy on our works; instead we have integrated another element that seems to be suitable when comparing **Macbeth** to **Chaka** and that element is myth. When we depicted the mythical element in these works, we reached the conclusion that when an author decides to include myth within his literary work, it enables him to be more convincing due to the fact that in myths, there is always an exaggeration that provides the author the necessary power to express his thoughts and ideas in an accentuated manner. This is what Shakespeare and Mofolo have done when writing their stories. Macbeth and Chaka display many characteristics that render them mythical figures. When we worked on the tragic events that come one after another, we have been struck by the huge amount of events that could provoke in the reader's mind a deep feeling of sorrow because of the auto-destructive behavior of the protagonists. This is what makes the reader able to grasp the significance of

the tragic events with the use of myth as a tool in order to provoke the reader's emotions known as "catharsis".

Throughout our analysis, we reached the conclusion that Shakespeare and Mofolo are two prominent authors who successfully managed to follow the Aristotelian tragic plot structure. The use of myth helps the authors to make their tragedies distinctive in the powerful message they address to the audience. Tragedy and myth are inter-related, and they form a unit all together because myth puts stress on the tragic events. Thus, this research opens new horizons for future studies that would go deeper in this subject, or try to criticize our research due to the complexity of myth in itself and its different interpretations.

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