

OLIVER KGADIME MATSEPE

LECTURE BY

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**DELIVERED DURING OK MATSEPE MEMORIAL LECTURE IN  
POLOKWANE**

**ON TUESDAY MARCH 19TH, 2019**

# **Towards the changing of the mindset of the African section of the RAINBOW NATION of the RSA.**

## **1. Introduction**

Tonight my lecture will be on one of South African illustrious literary giants in the field of African Languages of our country, Oliver Kgadime Matsepe, popularly known in his community as Phukubjane. Perhaps it will be proper to introduce him to you properly before I look at certain distinct aspects elaborately expressed in all the nine novels that he wrote in his short life of forty-two years. Not only do we celebrate his legacy tonight, but also his birthday. He would be eighty-seven if God spared him for us.

### **1. Who is this literary icon?**

We are fortunate that we could get a letter from JL Van Schaik when he was applying for work. Oliver introduces himself as follows. I quote:

” I was born on the 22 March, 1932 at Chief Hlakudi Matsepe’s location (Brakfontein) in the district of Nebo. I grew up at Nebo where my father was a policeman, and I started school there where I passed my standard VI in 1949. From 1950 to 1952 I was at Botšhabelo High School, Middelburg Tvl, where I obtained my junior certificate in the first class. From 1953 to 1954 I was at Kilnerton High School, Pretoria, but passed my Matric through private study in 1955. I failed English Higher Grade and could thus not be awarded the Matriculation certificate. I joined the Department of Bantu Affairs and Development and have been in Soekmekaar, Groblersdal, Potgietersrus and back to Groblersdal, where I resigned in 1969

To start a general dealer’s business at Chief Matsepe’s new place, Eensgevonden 457. The business is still going on alright but I decided to return to my former work as a clerk under the Department of Bantu Administration and Development where I find enough time to proceed with my writing.”

Signed

OK Matsepe

In the letter above, Matsepe did not mention other important aspects of himself because that was only an application for a job... By nature Matsepe was a shy, humble and reserved man, always striving to maintain peace with other people. But like his father, Malau, he would not countenance maladministration, injustice, moral improprieties, snobbishness and conceit. This was to bring him at loggerheads with his chief, which rift his father struggled unsuccessfully to heal.

All in all, it would seem that Matsepe was in search of something big. Indeed he was. He wanted a job which would give him a chance to write books after hours. A job which will also provide material for his works. In addition, information obtained from

members of his family, friends and relatives shows that his life and the society in which he grew up had a close bearing on the works he has written. In order to view and understand the relationship and aspects of his works, we shall look at his biographical information according to some sections.

## **2. School life and philosophical attitude**

Matsepe gave some information contained in this section briefly in his letter to Van Schaik Publishers, without giving details. Matsepe obtained his primary education at Phokwane United Christian School from 1942 to 1949. The seeds of his religious outlook towards life were undoubtedly sown there and matured as he grew up. Matsepe came from a non-Christian family. During his primary years, his schooling was interrupted in 1945 to enable him to attend the circumcision school. Unlike most boys from traditional societies, who leave school after returning from the mountain school, Matsepe did not discontinue formal schooling after this. He continued and wrote the Standard VI examination in 1949. In 1950 he went to another mission school, namely Botšhabelo High School. Here too he was subjected to religious teaching and practices of the Berlin Lutheran Church. The milieu he found at Botšhabelo High School did not differ much from the one he was subjected to at Phokwane United Christian School. Two

remarkable incidents in his life took place at Botšhabelo High School. Matsepe was baptized, thus embracing the Christian religion over and above the traditional religion in which he was brought up. Later he also attended confirmation classes and received full membership of the Lutheran Church. In this way his religious outlook, which was to become a feature in almost all his literary works, was given a sound foundation.

## **3. Religious roots in Matsepe's novels**

At Kilnerton, Matsepe's religious outlook which took roots in the previous mission schools, developed into a strong view of life. However we must not lose sight of the fact that he drew most of his experience from the traditional society which nurtured him. In other words the three mission schools he attended, became a world in themselves in his latter works. Together with the traditional institutions such as initiation school, tribal laws practices and customs he created a credible world in which both the Christian and traditional world co-exist without either of them causing friction.

It is, we believe, at the mission schools that he came into contact with the golden rule, which he threads through his novels – people must at all times strive to live harmoniously together, a principle that guided him throughout his life. This is not only applicable in a Christian community but in any community that seeks to lead a peaceful life with its neighbors. Here is a suitable example from a traditional family.

When Tlabego in *Tšaka mafuri* differs with his parents over the question of marriage, Matsepe seems to sound a warning to those who may follow this ungrateful behaviour of a son who does not respect his parents. He says:

Ke mo go botse bjang gomme go ratega bjang ge bana ba motho ba dutše gammogo ba ratana. (1972:50)

[How beautiful and how desirous it is when children of one man stay together and love one another.]

Matsepe took exception when the missionaries first came to our land and called every one of us a heathen. What they did not know is that the Christian and traditional religions are complementary each to the other. Just as the Christian believe that they must go through Jesus Christ to communicate with God, Matsepe believes that the traditionalists can communicate with God through the gods (ancestral spirits). Here is another appropriate example of how we relate to the Supreme Being. He is the only one who takes us out of all our troubles. Matsepe adds. When Mmatshupo could not find help out of her troubles, she then decided to appeal to God and her ancestors:

Mmatshupo o ile a dira monyanya wa go leboga badimo ge ba kgonne go fihliša dillo tša bona go YENA woo a ba hlomogetšego pelo ka go ba phethela (Kgati 1974:140).

[Mmatshupo made a thanksgiving feast, for the gods who were able to pass over their complaints to Him Who felt pity for them and granted their requests.]

The compatibility of the two worlds – secular and Christian – reaches its consummation in the last novel of OK Matsepe, *Mahlatse a Madimabe* (1981: 141)

Kgoši Molobi says after their meeting with white missionaries:

Fela tabakgolo ke le kgopela go amogela thuto ya baeng bakhwi yeo fela e sa rego o ile sa gore le sa gore eupša e rego tsebang le be le rapeleng Modimo yo badimo ba mo tsebago ba bilego ba ba mo rapelago. (1981:1410)

[But the main thing that I would like to request you to do, is to receive the education of these visitors, which of course, does not say you must abstain from this or that but which says know and pray to God whom the gods know and worship.]

#### **4. Marriage and Family life.**

Matsepe married two wives. He married Maselo the daughter of Magampa of the Rammopudu Kopa clan in 1958, who bore him three sons and one daughter – Mepudi (s), Gobakwang (d) Sekhwiti (s) and Sello Malau (s). In 1967 he married Gobakwang, the daughter of Morare of the Boleu clan who did not bear him any child. The second marriage took place in the face of opposition from Maselo, assisted by her mother and her mother-in-law, who are second cousins. As Phukubjane, whose father was then incapacitated by paralysis, was now head of the family, he piloted the marriage through. Maselo, though green with jealousy, was a steadier character, while Gobakwang was very possessive, temperamental and a shrew. This state of affairs promised no happiness for the sensitive Phukubjane.

On the occasion of receiving the SE Mqhayi Prize in July 1964 at the University of the North, for his novel: Kgorong ya Mošate, Oliver spelled out what he was going to do from that year onwards. I quote:

*Op skool het bit my getref dat die voorgeskrewe boeke baie eensydig is. Die tema van meeste boeke was dieselfde. Gewoonlik het dit gehandel oor 'n jong Bantoe wat na die groot stad gaan, in slegde geselskap verval, aan misdadig meedoen en dan na sy geboorteplek terugkeer nadat hy tot ander insigte gekom het. Ek het besef dat daar n behoeftes is aan boeke wat ook ander fasette van Bantoe se lewenswyse en kultuur uitbeeld*  
(Bantu, July, 1964:308)

The statement shows clearly that, Matsepe has had it with books that talk about young Africans moving to the cities and become corrupted. They return to their places of birth, human rags and some on them at the brink of death. Matsepe seems to wonder why the writers do not write on other facets of life of the African people and their cultures. Hence from this day on, Matsepe set himself a goal in his mind never to write about the Makgongwe motif. He never looked back or change this mind set to the end of his days.

Ladies and gentlemen, I think I have leveled the playing field now and you will be able to follow my arguments in the sections that follow. Throughout his writing career Matsepe concentrated on man, and his fellow men in a changing world. Later on we will look closer to his nature and how it impacts on the traditional and modern world in which we live.

One of the most distinct aspects of Matsepe's novels is his creation of different kingdoms ruled by different types of kings with different character traits which are to a large extent similar to the rulers we have in our own world of the twenty-first century. Since every novel of OK Matsepe uses king characters of diverse traits, we will not discuss them all. One may ask why Matsepe writes about kings and their subjects in a traditional society. Matsepe himself comes from a royal family, though not the ruling one and so had access to all the gatherings at the kgoro. Let us look first at kingship. What does Matsepe say?

## **5. The Institution of kingship in African Communities**

### **(a) Kingship**

One of the most important legacy which was passed from generation to generation by those who came before us, in this world is the institution of kingship and the rule of kings

The institution of *kingship* was to a large extent, part of the African people throughout all the states that comprise the African continent. When we achieved democracy in 1994, it seems that we thought it was a fitting substitute of kingship. So we excluded

the kings from the active participation in our newly acquired democratic dispensation. We clipped them of some of the powers they had over their communities, by introducing councilors and mayors. Furthermore we divided the country into municipalities. It seem with hindsight, the government introduced their new position – *Council of Traditional leaders*. They were no longer regarded as MAGOŠI/kings, in the full sense of the word, but traditional leaders or chiefs, the name which was introduced by the English when they colonized us. Probable one of the reasons why decolonization of the mind is overdue.

All of you in this honorable House are products of some villages in the Limpopo Province where they were brought up under the rule of some local Kgoši. Kgoši is the fulcrum of any community in our province. Why do we still remember men and women who built our nations? A Venda man or woman will be very happy if you associate him or her with the man who was founder of their nation, *Ramapulana wa Venda (Thobela!)* On the other hand the Tsonga man or woman will be delighted to be called, *Ntukulu wa Gaza*. The Bapedi prefer mostly to be addressed with their totems which indicate their origin. A Mopedi man or woman will be greatly delighted if you address him or her thus: *Mokgaga wa Makubela! Tau ya Seokodibeng, Kgwadi ya meetse, Tloukgolo, ya Mabulepu, Mohlalerwa! Ad infinitum.*

Let me pause here now. I have given you the background to the discussion in this section. I am now inviting Oliver Matsepe to join us in our conversation. What does he say about the institution of kingship? If he could rise from the dead and join us in this conversation physically, he would not believe what he sees or hears. In all his novels, the central figure is a KING. Or a QUEEN. He has always shown admiration, reverence and respect, to him/her. Kingship is sacred and must at all times be held in high esteem despite the unpleasantness that accompany the man or woman or woman who occupies the position.

It is necessary at this point to tell you what Matsepe has actually written about kingship and the king. This is what he says Lesitaphiri:

Bogoši bo a tswalelwa ga bo apolelwe bjalo ka kobo, gobane kgoši ye e sego ya geno ke molata. (1963:48)

[Kingship is hereditary, it is not given like a gown, because a king who is not yours, is like commoner,]

The significance of kingship is further illustrated in the following extract from Kgorong ya Mošate. He says:

Gobane gar'a Baswana bogoši bo phala dihlahamo le mahumo ka moka (1962:15)

[For among Blacks kingship is better than all decorations and wealth]

Although kingship is a sacred and respected position in both modern and traditional communities, we should not lose sight of the fact that it has its pleasures and displeasure. It is fraught with problems. Matsepe corroborates this statement by further saying:

“Bogoši ke namanetona ruri - wa okametšwago ka bjona o ikhwetša o le mokgethwa go fetiša seo le wena o sa se tsebego. O ikhwetša o le yo mokgethwa o swanetše go khunamelwa go fetiša ka moo wena o khunamelago Yena (Modimo); go ba bangwe o tloga o hwetša ba sa kwešiše gore sehuba sa bona se ka tshwelwa godimo ga o mongwe motho, woo fela a swanetšego go opa diatla a re: Sebata sa Mabala” . (1974:66)

[Kingship is a cumbersome thing – once you are given it, you deem yourself holier than you yourself do not know. You find yourself a saint who must be adored more than you adore Him (God); to others you will find that they do not understand why their sputum should not be spat on another person who however, must clap his hands and say: “The colorful Great Lord.”]

The above extract reveals the happy side of kingship. The sarcastic tone of Matsepe in the above passage clearly shows that he has no respect for rulers who misuse this sacred office by not only demanding unquestionable obedience from their subjects, but also by looking down upon their Creator.

Matsepe concludes this section on kingship with a sound warning to all those who occupy this position. He says to them all:

Ke tšona tseo, ka gore ge motho a o botša a re bogoši ke sera, wena o lebeletše fela ge ba lemelwa ka diatla, ba bile ba hlagolelwa. (1974:78)

[There they are, because when a person tells you that kingship is an impasse, you only consider that they plough for them by hand and hoe for them.]

## **(b) The king**

You will be surprised to find out that in all the nine novels of OK Matsepe, most of the principal characters are kings. Probably this stems from the fact he himself comes from a royal family, this then confirms his almost total respect and regard for the royal office. To him kingship is sacred and must all the time be held in high esteem despite the uneasiness that accompanies the man who occupies such a position.

I will give you some examples to clarify this argument. In *Lešitaphiri*, Matsepe says:

Gobane ka nnete ka Sesotho kgoši ke Modimo wa lefase yoo a fapanago le wa magodimong ka gore Yena o re le batho ba ka moka, mola wa lefase a re motho ke nna ke nnoši. (1969:99).

[For in reality, in Sesotho, a king is the god of the earth who differs with that of the heavens because he says you are all my people while that of the earth says, I am the only person]

In the extract above one can see the influence and impact that religious education had on Matsepe. Now and again he refers to God and gods as you will see later when we discuss his religious stand point.

The reverence with which the king is regarded in a traditional society, is reflected by the numerous nomenclatures that he is given. Among others the king is called in Sesotho as:

- Sebata sa Mabala (The multi-colored Sebakgomo(Lord))
- Thobela (Great Ore)
- Tau dikgomong (The Lion among the cattle)
- Tau e kgolo (The Big Lion)
- Mmušo (Government)
- Tau ya ka meetseng (The Lion of the waters)
- Taurabatho (Father of the people)
- Mong wa ka (My Lord)
- Pharephare (Overlord)
- Tloukgolo (Big Elephant)

The king must not only be called by the names which reveal his position in his community, but he is also likened to fierce animals, utility items, domestic animals and God himself. In *Kgorong ya Mošate*, the narrating character says:

Kgoši ke poo yeo e ikgapago. Kgoši ke letsogo la Modimo. Kgoši ke kotse le lerumo le sebo sa rena. [1962:7)

(A king is a bull that takes care of itself. King is the right hand man of God, because he is our god. A king is our shield and spear and fortress)

Let us refer to the last words of Matsepe about the king; He says:

Ga go bose bjo bo fetago go ba kgoši, ga go bohloko bjo bo fetago go ba kgoši. Nnete gona bose bja go ba kgoši bo fetwa ke bohloko bja go ba yona, ka gobane mola o bago kgoši o fetoga thothobolo yeo go yona, tše di sego botse di tšhollelwao ntshe. (1974:9

[There is nothing as pleasant as being a king, there is nothing more painful than being a king. The truth is the pleasures of being a king, is surpassed by the pain of being one, because as soon as you become one, you turn into a dumping ground where all the bad things are all dumped.]

Before I end this section on kingship and the king I will refer just one item that indicates the relationship of the king and his subjects. Matsepe says:

Kgoši ke Kgoši ka batho, batho ke batho ka kgoši ba swanetše go kukišana morwalo wa boima wa bophelo bjo. (1962; 143)

(A king is a king by the people, people are people because of the king, and they have to carry together the heavy load of this life.)

I am sure you wonder why I have given you so much about the king, kingship and people. I was trying hard to look for the reasons how we can restore the kingship and the role of our kings in rebuilding our communities. I am apprehensive that this important legacy of our forebears may disappear in the next two or three decades. It is a legacy that Africa cannot afford to lose. I am aware that their voices are not



always audible in the corridors of our government institutions. The democratic systems that they used in their daily Kgoro gatherings is gradually giving way to modern democracy. Let that suffice. We all have to introspect and revisit our decision about dikgoši, who knows we may retrieve all the good things that their history has left us with. We will refer to their traditional judicature later in our discussions.

## **6. The Man, his nature and world**

We are living in a rapidly changing world marked by mysterious activities of MAN. Whatever you see happening around you, man must be involved in it. You will see as we discuss his nature and world. In our modern world we are perplexed by his desire to be better than his fellow men. Today we are faced with unbelievable activities of man. His desire to amass wealth for himself through foul means. Our courts are full day in and day out listening to cases of different kind committed by man. Among these case are, fraud, corruption, robbery, and sheer greed... I do not include ugly cases like rape, murder of innocent women and children by man.

You may ask yourself what is happening in the mind of a human being. The truth is no one can reads another man's mind. Period! We all know that when man is determined to do something, there is no one who can stop him/her until he/she gets what he wants. In many incidents his actions are a result of striving to be better than others despite the fact that we do not know what makes others to be better that we are.

In recent years this competitive spirit has become a nightmare in our own country. One commission of inquiry follows another with the sole purpose of finding what exactly makes man wants to reap where he has not sown. It seems that this has become a way of life. One gets arrested, serves a sentence and complete it or is released on parole and thereafter, he returns to his way of life from where he stopped when he was arrested.

Tonight I would like to share with you what Matsepe says about man (MOTHO) in general irrespective of his/her colour of the skin, creed, beliefs and race. He has numerous views with regard to the nature of man and his world. We cannot discuss them all tonight, but will mention the outstanding ones. Matsepe open's his discussion of man in the following words:

Man is the only creation of God endowed with the power to rule other creations. In the execution of such duties, he sometimes assume powers beyond his control – in other words he wants to usurp the powers of his Creator. (1993:269)

In *Kgati ya Moditi*, one of his novels, Matsepe says of man:

Ga go sera se fetago motho ka go dira le go gapeletša taba yeo e sego ya lebana yeo e bilego e dirwa ke motho goba batho bao megopolo ya bona e budulego e bilego e kwetše dinokabokane gobane nnete gona, ga go mpa ye ratago go selela ye nngwe. (1974:45)

*[There is nothing more evil than man by doing and forcing matters which are not appropriate, more still, done by a person or persons whose minds are mature and well-seasoned: for, truly, there is no stomach that wants to feed another one.]*

He continues to say that man is selfish, he wants to have the very best in life and is not keen to share what he has with his fellow men. It is this selfish nature of man that often makes life bitter and unpleasant for him. This idea of selfishness is aptly expressed by Matsepe in *Megokgo ya bjoko*. Matsepe writes:

Re llela go phela re llišwa ke go phela, re llela go phala ba bangwe, re llišwa ke go phalwa ke ba bangwe. (1969:1)

*[We yearn to live, we are made to cry by life, we yearn to beat others, and we are made to cry by being beaten by others.]*

You and I know that you cannot read the mind of another person. It is equally difficult to know his intentions unless he acts publicly. It is then that you may determine his traits. We are all aware that people who want to change their lives mysteriously are often caught, even before they reach the stage of being better than others.

The enigmatic nature of man is brought out clearly by Matsepe when he compares man to a secret and an ocean. He writes:

Motho ka noši ke sephiri, ke lewatile leo go sa tsebjego gore kua maleng a lona go eng yeo e le bedišago gore le ipope dithaba (*Kgorong ya Mošate* 1962:34)

*[A person is by himself a secret, he is an ocean the bottom of which is covered with unknown things, and no one knows what makes it boil and how it forms itself into mountains. (Waves)]*

The idea of the secret nature of man brings us further to another one. When man is determined to do something, it is hard to stop him, because one cannot read his mind. He does not care whether what he is doing is good or evil or whether it has a detrimental effect on his fellow men. Let's pause a while and look into what is happening in our country now.

- Cars and trucks hijacking, heist of cash in transit vehicles; bank Robberies; shoplifting, car theft;
  - Theft of computers, tablets, printing papers in our schools and Government offices and homes.
  - Mugging of people to and from work or visiting friends ad
- Infinitum

There is no doubt that some of you here tonight have experienced this scourge of plundering of the state, companies, private homes and offices assets by our own kith and kin. Matsepe expresses this kind of theft in the following words:

Go roba pelo ya motho ke go leka go kgalema ledimo gobane ge motho a phegeletše, tsebe ya gagwe e gana go kwa se ka rethefatšago pelo gore go buše pefelo fela. (1962:83)

[To quell a man's heart is like exhorting a storm, for when a person is determined, his ear refuses to hear that which will calm the heart so that only anger prevails.]

If we take into account that Matsepe wrote his novels long before the scourge of crime and corruption, became every day occurrences in our beautiful South Africa. Then we must marvel at Matsepe's vision, intelligence and insight into man's nature.

*God bless Africa and its people!*

Not only is man hard to please and to satisfy, but has also other attributes which make him an unfathomable creature under the sun. Matsepe says of this trait of man:

Motho o tswetšwe le megabaru, motho o tswetšwe le tseba, motho o tswetšwe le borumulane, motho o tswetšwe le askatika. (1963)

[Man is born with greed, man is born with jealousy man is born with aggression, man is born with trickery.]

Perhaps Matsepe's assertion here stems from the fact that man has a more flexible mind than all living creatures, in this way he is able to harness his mind to all sorts of purposes. There is no doubt in our minds that human nature is an enigma, it is a mystery that man himself cannot unravel. It is like death. This makes him unintelligible to his fellow beings. Let me close our discussion on man, by citing the last two quotes from Matsepe. In *Letšofalela*, Matsepe says:

Seo se dirilego gore moth a hlolege, lefaseng ke sephiri, Yena o bjalo ka lehu. Gobane lona o ka se le kgotsokatše. (1972: 33)

[That which made man to be on the earth is a secret. He is like death because you cannot understand it.]

Here is the last quote man about man. It is from his novel, *Megokgo ya bjoko*

I quote:

Ge eba ka nnete lefase le ke la banna le basadi, gona, go bolela nnete ye tletšego mohla re falalelago aretse - di tla šita baahlodi, gobane ga re apee selo ka ntle ga potsa fela. (1969:31)

[If it is true that this world belongs to men and women, then to tell the truth in full, the day we emigrate to I-do-not-know-where matters will be very difficult to judge, for there is nothing we are cooking except badly cooked porridge.]

## **7. Advent of women and Albino power**

It would seem that Matsepe was already waiting for the time in which women will share power with men in the running of community matters. The issue of gender equality was taking roots. For before this, Matsepe has been making men to lead their communities alone. The reasons they gave were in many respects, flimsy, biased and unacceptable. I will mention just one or two examples that show that men dominated over women just because they were physically strong and energetic more than the

tender and delicate women. This was a way of protecting them from being dominated by women. What do men say about women?

In *Kgorong ya Mošate*, Matsepe states why men look down upon women. He says:

Mosadi ga gagwe ke ka lapeng, monna ga gagwe ke kua Kgorong (1962: 151)  
[A woman's place is in the home, a man's place is the kgoro.]

The fact that men and woman are allocated different duties at home presupposes that they differ in status. This is the view of the traditionalists which has been in use for many years and hard to change. It is not surprising that even in our modern democracy rule we still have men who think women are inferior. In *Tšhelang gape*. Matsepe in through the mouth of one character that he has created to stand for man power..: The man says:

O re lapa la mang, le a tšilego nalo neng mo kgorong ya bomang? Monna yo o reng a sa nkadime mosadi yoo, ke be ke tla mo sokollela yena? Letšatši; le ke mmušetšago go yena ruri o be a ka se kgolwe gore afa eya e tloga e le yena! (1974: 49-41)

[To whose courtyard is she referring, and when did she bring it along? Why does this man lend me the woman, I would convert her for him. Even on the day I return her to him he would not believe that she is really the same woman]

Here is the last example that shows the dominant attitude of man

Towards a woman; Matsepe in *Lesitaphiri* says:

Monna ofe le ofe ke lerumo le kotse ya motse ya lapa la gagwe (1963:24.)

[Every man is the spear and shield of his courtyard, every woman is a child of her husband's courtyard.]

Let that suffice. Let's look at the flip side of the human coin. What do women say about men? I will use the character of Mmatshupo in *Kgati ya Moditi*. Matsepe's vision of the future of women in our country or the world who occupy the leadership role. Mmatshupo is one of the female character in the novels of Matsepe. She represents a new type of leadership in traditional society...

The man who became a regent of Mmatshupo's husband does things not according to tradition, When Mmatshupo saw all his action, she decided to take over the leadership of her people against all fierce opposition from the men of her kingdom. Here is a brief dialogue between the younger brother of her late husband and her.

"Seo ke se nka se se dirego," (Ntshwarele)

"Lebaka?" [Mmatshupo]

"Ke bja mogolwagwe?" "

"Nna ke bja monna wa ka." "

"Ga o madi naye."

[That is what I will never do (Ntshwarele)

Reason? (Mmatshupo) (Kgatri,1974:11  
It is my elder brother's  
With me, it is my husband's  
You are not his blood,,,]

After this dialogue Mmatshupo became dominant as the following utterance show:

After attending a meeting and having got suggestions from the men, Mmatshupo overrides them and give them her view: She says:

“Ya ka kakanyo ke gore ka ge e le lena le lletšego tate, seo le mo lletšego mabapi le sona ke swanetše go bowa naso, e tla re morago ga phularo ya ka go ya badimong la šala le bona gore le tšwa bjang mo mararankoding a motse wokhwi wa lena.ka sona.” (Kgati, 1974 24-25

[My suggestion is that since you are the ones who pleaded with my father, that which you pleaded with him for, must remain with me, and then after my departure to the gods, you will see how to come out of the matter of your village.]

Allow me to give you the last quote about women's power in this novel of Matsepe, After all the meetings of the village Mmatshupo makes this final demand from her people. She says to Ntshwarele who did not have respect for: what she said because he still believed that women cannot lead men. But when he heard her words:

“... ge a ekwa mohumagadi yoo a re o se ke wa mpona go tšwala thetho le ntepa, wa gopola gore ke fo ba mosadi go swana le ba bangwe ge o ka mpefediša, go fetiša tekanyo ke gona o tlogo go tseba wo e lego mokgwa wa ka” (Kgati:1974:25)

[. when he heard that woman saying he should not think she is an ordinary woman like others because she wears *thetho* and *ntepa*, for if he can anger her, it is then that he would know her true colours.]

After these words Ntshwarele did not hesitate to hand over the king's crown to Mmatshupo. There are many more examples of the attitude of women towards men. They also refer to men as their children who need to be care for.

Matsepe does not only introduce a woman to be a leader of a community but he also introduces an albino to take over the kingship of Mmatshupo, when she retires. This caused a storm in the community of Mmatshupo. The main reason being that an albino cannot lead them because according to one of them. He is a *persona non grata*. When Mmatshupo and the mother of the albino realizes that he is rejected by girls, they decide to get him a bride without telling him. On hearing they were doing that he became furious, He says to them:

“”Ge le ntebeletše le gopola gore nna nka tloga ke forwa ka leswafo e tšwe le sa mpotšiše gore se ke se nyakang ke eng? Gore ke fela ke ekwa hidihidi ke tla ntšha woo e lego mokgwa wa ka.”... (Kgati1974: 70)

[When you look at me you think you can deceive me and you do not even ask me what I prefer?]

These strong words from Nkgotlelele (the albino) are not only proof positive that he wants to be accorded full human rights. But also that he can take a firm stand against those who are undermining his integrity... It did not take; long before Nkgotlelele confronted his mother a demanded to marry an albino, but the mother does not approve... She says:

“Wena le mothepana wa mohuta woo ga la tla go belega selo ka ntle ga ona fela.

“.. Nna ke phetha la yo a gore, mmapelo o ja serati, senyakelwa g a se rate.

“Batswadi ba ka ba se be ona eupša ba kgona go le tswala bjang?  
(Kgati 1974:82):

When ultimately Mmatshupo decides to hand over the reigns to him despite loud protests to the contrary, we feel that justice has. We feel that at least his protest is not in vain...Someone has realized that an albino is a fully-fledged human being capable of carrying out the task of leadership. Also with this character Matsepe shows how complicated the problem of succession can become, thereby inevitably alluding to the necessity that society should be evaluating the validity of the current value system [1995:64].

## **8. Conclusion**

Ladies and gentlemen

If we want to look into all the novels of OK Matsepe, we will have to be prepared to spend the night and the following day before we can say, we have discussed all the aspects that Matsepe has reflected in all the nine novels. There are many important views of Matsepe that will require our attention. But for tonight, I think I have talked about some of the outstanding views in his novels.

Matsepe was a knowledgeable man. This is reflected by the fields which are embraced in his worldviews, His knowledge of traditional life cannot be doubted. It does not only deal with human activities, but also with flora and fauna.

It is amazing that though Matsepe was born and bred in a traditional community, should have such vast knowledge of the Christian teachings.

His views on kings and kingship are illuminating. They show clearly that he believed in peaceful co-existence, He asserts that man must live with his fellow men.

In peace and love. Rulers who ill-treat their subjects, must be severely censored,

In his life Matsepe was an advocate of social reforms, All in all he believed that problems of royal succession could be reduced to a minimum if only the king could marry his principal wife first before marrying the other women...

The world was too much with him and sometime one will be inclined to say, he was pessimistic. To him the world is full of evil and unless man is prepared to live peacefully with his fellow men, there is no hope for humanity in this world.

Matsepe's basic belief is this: The world would be a paradise if men lived peacefully together and accepted that the world was created by a loving God who wished them to be loving too. I wonder whether we are exceptions to what Matsepe is saying.

A good writer is broad-minded, knowledgeable and a good thinker. His frequent reference to biblical texts shows his broadmindedness and unique themes and world views are almost aspects of his life.

Matsepe's knowledge of the Sepedi language, is shown by his skilful use of proverbs and idiomatic expressions. Both proverbs and idiomatic expressions help to build an appropriate milieu in which his characters interact I wonder whether the children we are KGOWAFATSING by kombing, minibusing and vanning to white schools in town will ever know what a proverb is in Sepedi... **Eja!** We are fighting a losing battle. Our efforts to change the mindset of our people is fruitless. Re palate! We still believe that one is learned if he/she can **speak English**. I wonder what Matsepe would say when he sees this state of affairs. We always talk about decolonizing the mind when we are in company but ignore that pipe dream when we are alone. It would seem that the sun is setting for African languages and one colour of the rainbow has faded, only six are still shining bright... WHITHER AFRICA!

The main concern of Matsepe in his literary works was common humanity on and around traditional court life, from there rippling outward to civilian life and from there returning to court life with greater intensity.

There is not a single novel of Matsepe whose plot ends in disharmony even though wars may have raged during the course of the narration. The reason is not far to seek:

*Go botse bjang ge bana ba motho ba dutše gammogo gomme ba ratana,*

*I THANK YOU!*

*KE A Leboga! NDSA KHENSA!*

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