

**A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE POETRY OF
E.P. NDHAMI AND W.Z. NKONDO**

by

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DECLARATION

"I declare that *A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE POETRY OF E.P. NDHAMI AND W.Z. NKONDO* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references".


K.J. NKUZANA

28 NOVEMBER 1988



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D E D I C A T I O N

*Dedicated to my wife, Misaveni, and
my children: Vongani,*

Vukatimuni,

Vulani and

Maseda Mulunghisi

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I would like to express my appreciation to the following people:

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S U M M A R Y

This is a comparison of Ndhambi's and Nkondo's poetry. Ndhambi who appeared in the literary scene much earlier than Nkondo, wrote poetry of a traditional style, whilst Nkondo adopted the style of modern poets. Ndhambi and Nkondo make use of the general poetic devices such as rhythm, rhyme, repetition, parallelism, refrain, stanza, tone, imagery, symbolism and personification. Both Ndhambi and Nkondo write poetry that abounds in both direct and indirect satire. Ndhambi's and Nkondo's styles differ. Ndhambi's poetry uses the praise poem style whereby natural objects are praised. He also uses personification, which is prevalent in traditional poetry. Nkondo, on the other hand, is subjective and philosophical in style. This is characteristic of most modern poets in Tsonga. Various themes emerge in the poetry of these two poets. Ndhambi shuns themes dealing with death, whereas Nkondo has written three poems on death. Both poets have many poems on nature.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIM OF THE STUDY

- 1.1.1 The main objective of this study is to give a critical evaluation of Ndhambi's and Nkondo's poetry with the express aim of highlighting differences and/or similarities in their styles and approaches.
- 1.1.2 The traditional and the modern approaches to poetry as applied by these poets will be investigated, in order to understand the old and the new techniques employed in poetry in general and in African poetry in particular.
- 1.1.3 At present there is a dire need for a study of this nature, due to the fact that the few known scholars who contributed greatly towards the scientific study of Tsonga, such as H.W.E. Ntsan'wisi in his *Tsonga Idioms (A Descriptive Study)* (1965), C.T.D. Marivate in his *The Ideophone in Tsonga* (1982), C.P.N. Nkondo in her *The Compound noun in Tsonga; a synchronic study of its derivation, usage and structure* (1973) and G.S. Mayevu in his *The Predicative relative construction in Tsonga; a descriptive study of its form and function* (1978), were more inclined towards linguistics than literature. Therefore, this study is intended to serve as basis for further investigation by budding Tsonga literary critics.
- 1.1.4 Tsonga poetry should be critically evaluated in order to expose the flaws of previous poets, so as to help inexperienced Tsonga poets to attain an improved standard of writing poetry. Moloji (1968:3) is of the opinion that:

No literature may develop in any cultural group unless it is accompanied by serious analysis and penetrating criticism. Readers must be emotionally alive and intellectually drawn to works of art in order to create a healthy climate in which a reflection on our culture can be enriched.

1.1.5 Furthermore, this study is an endeavour to show the relevance of the poetry of Ndhambi and Nkondo to everyday life. It is only in mature literature that the experiences and thoughts of an individual can be indelibly marked.

1.1.6 Another fact to be investigated in depth in this evaluation, is the structure as well as the techniques of Ndhambi's and Nkondo's poetry. Theoretical aspects of poetry such as rhythm, rhyme, imagery and satire, will be dealt with. In this respect, Moloi (op. cit.: 6) has this to say:

It must be noted that the form of a poem is something more than a morphological composition of verse ... a mere organization of morphemes and units. An idea, mentally conceived, is given form by the poet's careful use of the ... elements of poetry.

By **form** Moloi (op. cit.: 6) refers to the physical structure of a poem, i.e. rhythm, rhyme, stanzas and syntax. He also implies that the message of the poem is perceived by looking at the careful use of the elements of poetry.

1.1.7 It is envisaged that this dissertation will help eradicate views such as were expressed by Vilakazi (1938:271):

We have no critical opinions of men of taste and knowledge, whose qualifications today enable them to judge a work by certain positive standards.

It is clear from the above quotation that Vilakazi laments the fact that there is a lack of qualified literary critics in African literary art. This also applies to the status quo in Tsonga

literature. There are no literary critical studies in Tsonga today. Therefore, this kind of study should help to close the gap that currently exists in Tsonga literature.

✓ 1.2 SCOPE AND WORKS SELECTED FOR THIS STUDY

SCOPE

- 1.2.1 In the first chapter we shall define the concepts: *traditional poetry and modern poetry* with a view to showing whether Ndhambi's or Nkondo's works could be classified under these two types of poetry. Short biographical sketches of Ndhambi's and Nkondo's lives will be given, to provide information that may be of significance in understanding their works.
- 1.2.2 Chapter 2 will be devoted to the theoretical aspects of poetry. This is done in order to give a broad outlook of what characterizes poetry in general.
- 1.2.3 In chapter 3, Ndhambi's and Nkondo's poetry is reviewed with the main objective of relating it to the general techniques as outlined in chapter 2.
- 1.2.4 In the fourth chapter we shall identify some of the satirical poetry of these two poets to establish whether or not their poems are really representative of satire.
- 1.2.5 Our task in the fifth chapter is to give a critical evaluation of a few selected poems from Ndhambi's and Nkondo's works. The main emphasis will be on evaluation of their poetic style, i.e. the manner in which they use language to convey their message to the reader.
- 1.2.6 In the sixth chapter we shall investigate the various themes which emerge as we study the poetry of Ndhambi and Nkondo. The main objective will be to examine the predominant themes in the poetry of each poet and to evaluate the handling of these themes.

- 1.2.7 The last chapter will be a general conclusion which will encompass the main findings regarding Ndhambi's and Nkondo's poetry.

WORKS SELECTED FOR THE STUDY

- 1.2.8 The two volumes of poetry by E.P. Ndhambi, i.e. *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949) and *Switlhokovetsetelo swa vana* (1966) together with Nkondo's *Mbita ya vulombe* (1969) are the works which have been selected for this study.
- 1.2.9 It is also important to indicate why Ndhambi and Nkondo were chosen for this study. They each belong to a particular period characterized by a distinct type of poetry. This is owing to the difference in their age. For instance, Ndhambi, as one of the first poets in Tsonga, wrote in traditional praise poem style, in which a chief, or a hero, for example, is praised. This is in contrast to Nkondo who wrote poetry of a subjective and philosophical nature. This kind of poetry is more personal than praise poetry. The thoughts and feelings of the poet on certain issues are what matter most. Ndhambi first appeared in the literary scene with *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* in 1949, whilst Nkondo's *Mbita ya vulombe* appeared 20 years later, in 1969. This is a clear indication that these two poets belong to two different periods in literature. The two titles are such that one can differentiate the kind of poetry that they contain. The title *Swiphato swa Xitsonga*, literally translated as *Praise poems of Tsonga*, explicitly suggests that Ndhambi has written poems of a mostly traditional praise poem style. *Mbita ya vulombe* by Nkondo, means *Pot of Honey*. This is a metaphorical title, because poems are referred to as something palatable and appealing to the taste.
- 1.2.10 The difference in age and poetic style of the two poets is of great interest to a student of poetry. Essentially, these two poets represent two different eras in the history of Tsonga poetry, which could be of particular significance to a literary

critic. In this investigation, Ndhambi represents a traditional praise poet and Nkondo a modern poet.

1.3 DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPTS: TRADITIONAL AND MODERN POETRY

1.3.1 In order to have a clear idea of this investigation, it is important to understand what *traditional* and *modern* poetry are.

TRADITIONAL POETRY

1.3.2 Marivate (1984:30) defines traditional poetry as

... that type of poetry where chiefs, national heroes and other tribal leaders are praised.

1.3.3 Traditional poetry is often referred to as praise poetry. People who have achieved heroic deeds and have gained public recognition are praised through this type of poetry. These people could also start praising themselves on the spur of the moment after defeating the enemy. Praise poems are composed spontaneously by a person who, when he sees his chief, hero or any object that he reveres, becomes emotionally moved. Ntuli (1978:16) defines praise poetry as

... a specific type of ... poetry found among some Bantu tribes. We confidently call this poetry because it has universally acknowledged components of poetry like imagery and symbolism.

1.3.4 Lenake (1982:150) refers to traditional poetry as *proto form* because both in form and structure it resembles Sesotho praise poems known as *dithoko*, which are recited by the bard at community ceremonial functions, whereby a chief or a hero is praised.

1.3.5 When poets of Ndhambi's calibre began to write poetry, they were greatly influenced by the traditional poems, hence they adopted praise style.

- 1.3.6 The man who delivers a traditional praise poem is highly creative and imaginative, hence his language is highly figurative and he makes extensive use of imagery. Vilakazi (1938:107) says:

This creates symbols and figures of speech which embody for him a certain complex emotional experience, which he seems to use in most of his lines as emotional shorthand.

- 1.3.7 The poet expresses his feelings in an evocative tone and is full of pride to perform this special self-imposed task. For example, in his *Swiphato swa Xitsonga*, Ndhambi (1949:35) recorded a traditional praise poem to the mountain *Ribolla*. In this praise poem Ndhambi praises the mountain by describing its height, appearance and all the animals which are found on it. The last line *Lexikulu khoma vito ra ka hina* (Most importantly, hold our name in high esteem) indicates its significance to the community. The first five stanzas of this poem are as follows:

- (1) *Ribolla ribye ndzhombo wa nyoxi.
We ximinta mpfhuka nkanghala wa tilo,
Hunguva ya wena a yi tivi nkarhi.
U munghana wa mapapa xitlha'tilo,
We mavoniwa kule marhandza moya.*

*Hlawuleka exikarhi ka matiko.
Yimeka, tikombe we jaha-xo-bomba!
Bombisa vumbhuri empfhuken' wa tilo.
Mineka exikarhini ka tintshava.
O! ha kunene u xitsakisa-mahlo.*

*Ribolla, ndzi ku yin' ku ku ndzhundzhuse!a!
Leswi maganga ya ku a ma hlayiwi,
Magova ya ku a ma heti' hi munhu,
Tinthavela ta wona a ti hlayiwi,
Ni swihlahla swa ku rhandza hi masiku.*

*Xonga ntshava yanga tiko ra tatana!
Wena kaya kanga, siku ro sungula
Erendzweni ra mina ra misava.
We misava ya jiho, ya ku rhandzeka,
U xirhandza-mani tiko ra tatana.*

*Ribolla, n'waxiwiselo maka'nsuna,
Ndzi hlayisele mikondzo ya tatana,
Hlayisa swiharhi ka swihlahla,
Hlayisa swihlovo matlhelwen' ya ntshava,
Lexikulu khoma vito ra ka hina.*

*(Ribolla the stone, the sting of the bee.
You who swallow the open space of the sky,
Mist is always found on you.
You are a friend of the clouds that are high on the sky.
Be recognized by all countries.
Be ready to show yourself, gentleman!
Pride yourself for your beauty high in the sky.
Stick out amongst the mountains.
Oh! you are really wonderful to look at.*

*Ribolla, how should I praise you?
For your hills are innumerable,
Your valleys are not known to any person.
Their swamps are also without number,
The bushes love you always.*

*Be beautiful my mountain, the country of my father!
You my home, the first day
In my journey on earth.
You lovable red clayey soil,
You love everyone, the country of my father.*

*Ribolla, the place of rest with no mosquitoes,
Preserve the footprint of my father,
Keep animals in your bushes
Keep the fountains at the side of the mountain,
Most importantly, hold our name in high esteem.)*

MODERN POETRY

1.3.9 Marivate (1984:31) defines modern poetry as a

... subjective kind of poetry in that it is more personal ... The thoughts and the feelings of the poets on certain issues are what is important. The modern poet divides his/her poem in stanzas alright, and the stanzas are like paragraphs carrying a certain thought, and the number of lines in a stanza need not necessarily be equal. What determines the number of lines in a stanza is the thought involved. Further, rhyme is no longer strictly adhered to. Most of this type of poetry is philosophical. The poet expresses his opinion and philosophies on what goes on around him. He does not praise, he expresses his opinion.

Marivate (op. cit.:31) is quoted at length because he gives a

comprehensive explanation of modern poetry. From this long quotation, it is clear that modern poetry refers to contemporary poetry which deviates from the idea of praising. It is subjective in that it expresses personal feelings and emotions, and it is also characterized by the philosophical inclinations of the poet.

The operative terms in the above quotation are *personal*, *stanzas which need not be of equal number*, and *philosophizing on what goes on around the poet*. These terms characterize what we call modern poetry.

1.3.10 Nkondo, in his *Mbita ya vulombe* (1969:9), writes in modern poetic style. He philosophizes on life situations. The poem *Mpfula* (op. cit.:9) is one of these modern poems:

(2) *We murhandziwa,*
Yima, u tsutsumela yini?
Nkhensa mpfula leyi.
Ku tsakama ka mina na wena i nkateko.

Mufundhisi a a nga ta swi kota,
Mina na wena a ta hi tsakamisa ku hambana;
A chela wena, a ta chela mina
Kasi mpfula yin'we ya hi nela
Yi cheleta kan'we ximilani xa rirhandzu ra hina.

(My darling,
Wait, why do you run?
Welcome this rain.
Our getting wet is a blessing.

The minister of religion would fail.
He would pour water on us differently;
Pouring it on to you first and on to me thereafter.
But the same rain falls on us,
Watering the plant of our love simultaneously.)

The philosophy of this poem revolves around the theme which is: GOD HAS NO FAVOURITISM or GOD IS FAIR TO ALL MANKIND. It is also clear from the expressions such as *We murhandziwa* (Darling) in the first stanza, and *Mina na wena* (You and I) in the second stanza that the poet is engaged in expressing a personal feeling. The two stanzas in this poem do not consist of the same number of lines.

- 1.3.11 From the remarks made so far on the nature of modern poetry, it is evident that this kind of poetry is characterized by the individual's expression of his or her personal thoughts and emotional feelings on issues that concern life as a whole.
- 1.3.12 The poems quoted above indicate that Ndhambi's poetry is of the traditional praise poetry style, whilst Nkondo's poems are of modern poetry style.

1.4 BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF E.P. NDHAMBI AND W.Z. NKONDO

E.P. NDHAMBI

- 1.4.1 Etienne Penyisi Ndhambi was born on the 9th November, 1912 at Tlangeleni Mission Station, then known as Mavulweni, in the Malamulele District of Gazankulu. He married Hidrecca neé Makaukau in 1942. They have seven children: five sons and two daughters.
- 1.4.2 He completed his primary education at two schools: Tlangelani Primary School up to Std IV, and Valdezia Primary School where he completed his Std V and VI in 1934. He then proceeded to Lemana Training Institution, where he obtained the Native Teachers' Certificate in 1938.
- 1.4.3 Ndhambi started teaching in 1939 as an assistant teacher, but was promoted to Principal after two years' experience. He was Principal of three schools, viz. Tlangelani (1942), Mashamba (1945-1947) and Ribolla (1947-1958). In 1959 he was appointed Assistant Inspector of Schools for the then Bantu Education and was first stationed at Louis Trichardt. He was later transferred to Sibasa and then in 1966 to Tzaneen under the Gazankulu Education Department. In 1971 he was again transferred to Malamulele Inspection Circuit, his home district, serving in the same capacity of Assistant Inspector.

- 1.4.4 Ndhambi indicated to me during my visit at his home that he started writing in 1949, while teaching at Ribolla. The mountainous environment of this part of Gazankulu influenced him greatly. He used to wander alone in the thickly vegetated bush of the Ribolla mountain and compose poems on various subjects. In that year, he published an anthology of poems entitled *Swiphato swa Xitsonga*, the book whose material forms part of this investigation. In 1953, he wrote a novellette called *Mambuxu*. In 1966 he again produced a book of poetry, which was mainly meant for children. This book is entitled *Switlhokovetsele swa vana*.
- 1.4.5 Ndhambi is better known as a poet than as a linguist. He wrote in praise poem style as will be revealed in this study. He has a rare gift of metaphor, which has made his poetry loved by old and young.
- 1.4.6 Apart from literary works, Ndhambi wrote a language manual in collaboration with Mr. S.C. Marivate entitled *Xitsonga xo saseka* (1954). This book is mainly intended for Standard 5 and 6 pupils.
- 1.4.7 Ndhambi was very interested in the development of the Tsonga language, to the extent of becoming the first Secretary of the Tsonga Language Committee under the Department of Bantu Education. He did primary work in the coining of Tsonga words for the new technical terms in the official languages. Ndhambi also acted as examiner in Tsonga for Standard 6, Junior Certificate and Primary Teachers' Certificate for many years.
- 1.4.8 Ndhambi retired as an Inspector of Schools in 1978 and immediately thereafter was requested to be acting Principal of Mphambo Secondary School in the Malamulele Inspection Circuit. He held this position for only a year and was soon thereafter hampered by ill-health. He died in October 1986 after a long illness.

W.Z. NKONDO

- 1.4.9 Winston Zinjiva Nkondo was born in 1943 at Pfukani in the district of Zoutpansberg. He attended Pfukani Primary School, where his father Ephraim Nkondo was the headmaster, and passed the standard VI examinations in the second class.
- 1.4.10 Having completed standard VI, Winston proceeded to Douglas Laing Smit Secondary School, popularly known as Lemana, where he passed the matriculation certificate of the Joint Matriculation Board in the second class.
- 1.4.11 He then proceeded to the University of the North - Turfloop, where he enrolled for a B.A. degree, which he abandoned at course III level owing to domestic difficulties.
- 1.4.12 Immediately after leaving the University, Nkondo accepted appointment as an administrative clerk in the Gazankulu Government, and was stationed at Mhala Magisterial offices. His stay at these government offices was short-lived, for in 1973 he was employed by Lintas Advertising Agents in Johannesburg, where he worked as an advertising executive. Whilst employed by Lintas, Nkondo met Dolly Mthembi of Meadowlands Zone 5, whom he married in 1975. They have one son.
- 1.4.13 W.Z. Nkondo started writing Tsonga poems whilst still at the University of the North. Most of his poems were written to amuse his fellow Tsonga students. He used to invite them into his room to read them his newly composed poems with the aim of testing their reaction to his compositions. This is how his anthology of poems, *Mbita ya vulombe* (translated: Pot of Honey) was written.
- 1.4.14 Besides being a poet of outstanding repute, Nkondo has a keen interest in judo and karate. These specialized sports have greatly assisted in moulding his personality. He is quiet, reserved and disciplined. Above all, he is a person with a criti-

cal mind who never leaves a situation unquestioned.

1.4.15 Nkondo has so far produced one volume of Tsonga poetry, viz. *Mbita ya vulombe*, but this contribution to Tsonga literature is immense. This anthology has ushered in a new trend in the writing of Tsonga poetry. Instead of slavishly following the Western style of writing an equal number of rhymed lines in stanzas, Nkondo took liberties in form and manner of expression as will be revealed in this treatise.

1.4.16 A more comprehensive and critical analysis of the poetry of Ndhambi and Nkondo will follow in the ensuing chapters, in which the theoretical characteristics of poetry will be discussed, and the poetry of Ndhambi and Nkondo analysed in relation to these characteristics.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF POETRY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1.1 It is best to begin with the assumption that the meaning of any poem is the total effect it has upon the reader, who will respond to it intelligently and emotionally according to how the words in the poem influence his or her feelings, personality, knowledge and experiences of the world at large, and to some extent his or her mood. This is not to say that one interpretation is as valid as another and that any kind of subjective statement of the meaning of a poem is acceptable however outrageous it might appear to others. Opinions based on theoretical knowledge are likely to be sounder than those based on arbitrary opinion. Therefore, the best critic is likely to be one who is knowledgeable about the theory of poetry. He can probably perceive the poet's intentions. He can also predict the reactions and responses of intelligent readers to poetry.

A good critic is one who is likely to make the reading of a poem a more enjoyable and satisfying experience for others, and is one who is widely read in this genre in order to acquire disciplined standards of comparison.

- 2.1.2 Therefore, in order to understand the nature of Ndhambi's and Nkondo's poetry, it is advisable to examine the general theoretical aspects of poetry. An in-depth study of these aspects is necessary in order to perceive the message which the poet intends to convey. Before these theoretical aspects of poetry are discussed, an attempt will be made to define poetry.

2.2 POETRY AS DEFINED BY LITERARY CRITICS

2.2.1 The definition of poetry is an arduous task. Boulton (1959:1) stated that things most interesting and of value to an individual are extremely difficult to define. Thus, attempting to define poetry is, to some extent, attempting the impossible.

2.2.2 Just like Boulton (op. cit.:1), Grace (1965:55) acknowledges the difficulty of defining poetry. He is of the opinion that:

There is something unusual and distinct about poetry, something hard to define but somehow of the highest importance.

2.2.3 The difficulty of defining poetry is also emphasized by Jennings (1976:37) when he says:

There is as yet no satisfactory definition of poetry ... the true definition of poetry when at last it is made will have to include the statement that "poetry is an expression of emotion through words ...".

2.2.4 Despite remarks made by literary critics like Boulton, Jennings and Grace above, we do find scholars of literature who have attempted to define poetry.

2.2.5 Heese, et al., (1983:3) define poetry as

... a form of music, its first appeal being through the ear direct to the emotion.

2.2.6 Nkondo (1982:16) defines poetry in English as follows:

Poetry is a broad term that includes a number of sub-types Essentially poetry is a compressed and often highly emotional form of expression. Each word counts for more than in prose and the basic arrangement is separate lines rather than paragraphs, and can sometimes correspond to chapters.

2.2.7 Jennings (op. cit.:38) attempted a definition of poetry as

... a verbal expression of emotion, based upon truth and beauty.

2.2.8 The aspect of emotion in poetry is also endorsed by Phythian (1970:122) who quotes William Wordsworth as saying that:

Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind

2.2.9 From the definitions cited above, it is apparent that it is extremely difficult to give a sufficient definition of the concept 'poetry'. Brooks, et al., (1983:2) maintain that the difficulty in providing an absolute definition of poetry is a result of the fact that poetry involves experience and expressions of emotion. Nkondo (1982:16) tried to avoid the problem of giving an outright definition of poetry by referring to terms like *broad* and *compressed*, which have special connotations. For instance, she used the term *broad* to indicate that poetry includes emotional feelings, expressions of elevated thought and something which is composed in the soul. The term *compressed* illustrates that through the use of minimum words the poet has at his disposal, he can fully express the idea which would otherwise need a whole gamut of words to be comprehensive. It is indeed true that poetry is the best words in the best order.

2.2.10 In totality, poetry can be defined as an emotional expression evoked by words arranged in a manner that is comprehensible to the reader. It is through the collocation of lexical items within a poem that we are able to realize that every poem has its own poetic devices.

2.3 THE MOST IMPORTANT TECHNIQUES OF POETRY

2.3.1 The term *technique* is defined by Cohen (1973:198) as

Any resources or any combination of means used by an author to shape his material, such as his choice and arrangement of words (style), and his organization of his material (structure)
 ...

In this definition we are mostly concerned with the phrase *any combination of means used by an author*, which implies that a technique is a device, an element, feature or an attribute used by a poet to present his emotions or ideas in a poem. The poet makes use of certain techniques to give shape to his poem. These techniques are classified into the musical and non-musical attributes of poetry.

2.3.2 Before we delve into the various techniques that fall under musical and non-musical attributes of poetry, we would like to quote a few opinions by critics on writing poetry. It is often said that the poet is free to write as he wishes because he has what is known as 'poetic licence'. This idea emanates from the fact that poetry, as an expression of emotional feeling, cannot have its flow limited by any arrangement of lexical items. We would like to differ from this manner of thinking, because writing poetry is a painstaking undertaking which has much to do with intellectual capability. Riccio (1980:xi) asserts that

... writing poetry takes work. It is not like humming or doodling with a pencil. There are marvellously intricate things that have been done with language, and none of us can really understand them until we analyze the techniques employed and attempt to use them in our own voice.

We are mostly concerned with techniques that are employed in writing poetry and in this regard, Riccio (op. cit.:xi) says:

In art nothing dies. What we think as a 'new' approach - free verse for example - often has

its roots in poetry that was written more than two thousand years ago.

2.3.3 It might be argued that Riccio (op. cit.:xi) was only referring to English poetry and that what he says has no relevance to African poetry. His assertions may only be refuted after a thorough investigation of the constituents of African poetry. Riccio (op. cit.:xii) elaborates on the importance of the techniques of poetry without which expressions would just be subjective ramblings. He (op. cit.:xii) describes "... rhythm and meter as 'the middle ear' - that intricate source of balance. Poetic elements which include diction and tone, figures of speech and symbolic suggestions that give a poem the sense of being alive, are called 'life signs'".

2.3.4 Hodza and Fortune (1979:43) emphasize that:

Poetry is a special form of language. All the elements of language, sound, grammar and meaning are necessary ingredients in the material of poems. What distinguishes poetry from the freer use of language called prose is the fact that these ingredients are usually combined in distinctive patterns, not normally those of common speech.

2.3.5 It is important to indicate all these 'necessary ingredients' which are the essential elements of poetry. The creative nature of one poet differs from that of another in the manner in which each uses these poetic devices. In other words, we should learn how poets like Ndhambi and Nkondo employ the techniques of poetry in their works. It is in the basis of these theoretical devices that we shall be in a position to evaluate Ndhambi and Nkondo as poets in the true sense of the word.

2.3.6 For the purpose of this investigation, we shall differentiate between the musical and non-musical attributes of poetry.

MUSICAL ATTRIBUTES OF POETRY

2.3.7 An attribute of poetry is any property, quality, aspect or characteristic that can be ascribed to poetry. A musical attribute can be defined as the theoretical aspect of a poem that has to do with the sounds of the words which make music within a particular poem. Words that we utter are realized by means of sounds. Every language has its own sound system. Consequently, there are certain musical attributes which are important in poetry. When the poet composes his poems, he has at his disposal a variety of these musical attributes. In order to write poems which are laden with meaning, the poet is bound to include these musical attributes. These musical attributes of poetry are, amongst others, rhythm, rhyme, parallelism and repetition.

2.3.8 Literary critics such as Grebanier (1975:117) are of the opinion that:

It is still common for poets to speak of poetry as 'song', and many of them would insist that in the frenzy of composition they are often more led by the music of the lines than by anything else. (emphasis added)

This quotation implies that the rhythm and the sound of words make the music of a poem; hearing such 'music' is essential in comprehending the total meaning of the poem.

RHYTHM

2.3.9 The word rhythm, so says Stauffer (1962:192), is actually derived from the Greek verb *rhein*, which means 'to flow'. The poet, through the use of language, can arrange words in such a way that they produce the 'flow' through time. In this context, time refers to the measure that exists at regular intervals to produce rhythm. In order to achieve this flow, rhythm is the sole force, for sounds in a poem are not static like blobs of colour on canvas.

2.3.10 Rhythm in poetry may be defined as a pattern of alternation or just a balance between emphasized and unemphasized syllables. These are called stressed and unstressed syllables. Stress, in ordinary usage, means pressure - the amount of pressure or force that is put on a syllable.

2.3.11 There is great affinity between musical rhythm and the rhythm of poetry. As we read a poem aloud, pausing as we would naturally do after the commas and sentences, we will miraculously find that the very life of the expression is depicted. Hodza and Fortune (1979:87) have the following to say in this connection:

Formal praise poetry appears to be spoken in lines of equal duration and spaced at what is felt to be equal intervals of time.

3.2.12 Hodza and Fortune (op. cit.:87) do not specifically mention the concept 'rhythm' in the quotation above, but they are implicitly referring to it. The phrase "... equal duration and spaced at what is felt to be equal intervals of time ...", indicates the existence of rhythm in poetry.

2.3.13 It is difficult to attempt to provide any hard and fast rule of how rhythm is achieved, because different languages differ in respect of the prosodic elements that are responsible for its production.

European languages, especially English, have rhythm as a result of stressed or accented syllables and unstressed or unaccented syllables. This actually means that when words are being uttered, some syllables have a slight stress, whilst others have none at all. The stress might fall on the first, second, or third syllable. These variations give rise to rhythm.

2.3.14 Tsonga does not make use of stressed and unstressed syllables to produce rhythm, but the vowel of the penultimate syllable of Tsonga words has some measure of length which can be manipulated to produce a certain amount of rhythm. Vowel length in a syllable

is indicated by means of a colon after the vowel, e.g. *du:!* (of sitting silently). In normal words, vowel length occurs on the penultimate syllable at the end of a sentence or words uttered in isolation. For example:

- (3) *hinkwa:vo* (all of them)
Tihomu ti nghena xivale:ni (The cattle enter the kraal)
Ti nwa ma:ti (They drink water)

2.3.15 The determination of vowel length on words in isolation does not help us much in a poem, because the whole sentence should be taken into consideration in order to discover the rhythm involved.

2.3.16 The following stanza from Ndhambi's (1949:18) poem *Khongoloti* illustrates the rhythm in question:

1 2 3 4
 (4) /Hi mi:na/ khongolo:ti/ vi:to/ ra mi:na/

1 2 3 4
 /Mufa:mbi/ ni mua:ki/ tikwe:ni/ ra mpfu:la/

1 2 3 4
 /Ndzi tsha:ma/ emisave:ni/ ha:nsi/ ka mi:rhi/

1 2 3 4
 /Lo:ko/ ndzi etle:le/ ndzi fa:na/ ni ha:ri/

In this stanza we recognize groups or syntactic units which are determined by meaningful pauses. Each unit is uttered with some measure of emphasis at its penultimate syllable. In this stanza each line has four syntactic units and consequently four instances of slight emphasis at the penultimate syllable of each unit. The penultimate syllable at regular intervals lends rhythm to each line of the stanza. Each line in the stanza has four syntactic units, which provide balance to the whole stanza.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RHYTHM

- 2.3.17 Heese, et al., (1983:23) indicate the importance of rhythm when they assert that

... rhythm is (an) ... important element where poetry is concerned. Indeed, much of the delight to be derived from the reading of poetry stems from the pleasure one experiences in contemplating patterns which are not only decorative but meaningful. (Brackets added.)

- 2.3.18 It is clear that rhythm contributes more than any other musical attribute of poetry to the experience of a person who appreciates poetry. Also, as a result of the rhythm in poetry, the bard moves to and fro as he recites and his movements tally with the rhythm of the poem.

- 2.3.19 Stauffer (1962:192) also comments as follows:

Effective rhythm in poetry rouses our spirits and then dominates and soothes them, holding us as if we were in a transit of heightened awareness.

- 2.3.20 It is therefore not surprising that nursery rhymes are very popular amongst small children. This is because of their rhythmic pattern. Students of poetry are generally captivated by the sound of a poem even before they really understand the meaning of the words that constitute the poem. What fascinates them is the rhythm of the poem.
- 2.3.21 One of the main functions of poetry is to produce excitement and pleasure in the reader. This excitement is enhanced by the regularity of the rhythm established as we recite the poem.

RHYME

Definition

2.3.22 Cohen (1973:194) defines rhyme as

... the use of matching sounds, generally vowels, at the end of two lines or more of poetry.

2.3.23 Rhyme is also defined by Peck, et al., (1984:59-60) as the

Identity of sounds between two words, extending from the last fully stressed vowel to the end of the word ... usually employed at the end of lines, but poets can make use of internal rhyme.

2.3.24 The two definitions cited indicate that rhyme is the repetition or correspondence of identical or similar sounds in the terminating words or syllables of two or more verses, one succeeding another immediately or in close succession.

2.3.25 All the stanzas of the poem *Khongoloti* by Ndhambi (1949:18) illustrate rhyme:

(5) *Hi mina khongoloti vito ra mina,
Mufambi ni muaki tikwen' ra mpfula.
Ndzi tshama emisaven' hansi ka mirhi.
Loko ndzi etelele ndzi fana ni hari.*

*Ndzi sakamela laha ku tsakamaka,
Ndzi xitimela kambe musi ndzi hava
Na milenge ya mina a yi na ntsengo,
Hi me kombeleni hi dyambu ra tilo.*

*Mbhuri ya khongoloti va hlaya mina.
Mina nguvu ya ntima xikala thyaka
N'wamilenge-ku-tala xikala-ntshuri,
Nhloko ya mina i ntima wa mubodi.*

*Ndza dzuneka etikweni ra majaha,
Miri wa mina i swingwavila ntsena,
Ndzi ambexa tintiho hi swingwavila,
Ndzi lahliwa etintihweni ta vanhwanaa.*

*Ndzi mupfuni etikweni ra Vampfumu.
Ndza dzunisiwa mina xikala-nandzu,
Sirha ra nga ri le makhwirin' ya vona,
Me mbhuri ya khongoloti murhandziwa.*

*Vuxika ndza venga, ndzi chava ritshuri.
Timpfula ndza rhandza ku hava ritshuri.
Suka ka mina we khwiri ra nghinghiya.
Tanan' ka mina majaha ni vanhwana.*

*(I am the millipede,
The traveller and the inhabitant of the
rainy area.
I stay on earth under the trees.
When asleep I look like a coil.*

*I move on moist places,
I am a train but without smoke
And my legs are innumerable,
I am scarce when it is thundering.*

*I am the beauty of a millipede.
I am black but very clean
I have numerous legs but with no dust,
My head is pitch black.*

*I am praiseworthy amongst the lads,
My body is made of rings only,
Fingers can be dressed with my rings,
My grave is at the fingers of lasses.*

*I am the helper at the Mpfumu area.
I am praised because I am without guilt,
My grave is in their stomachs,
I am the beauty of a millipede, the one
who is loved.*

*I hate winter, because I fear dust.
I love rains because there is no dust.
Leave me alone you the fowl family,
Lads and lasses, come to me.)*

In this poem, a few sounds recur, setting up relationships between words. The poet employs the vowels -a, -i and -o to create rhyme in the poem. For instance, the first two lines of the first stanza end with the same vowel -a, while the third and the fourth lines have -i as their terminating vowel. This gives the rhyme scheme aabb, i.e. the second line rhymes with the first one and the fourth line rhymes with the third one. This pattern is maintained throughout the whole poem.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RHYME

2.3.26 Rhyme obviously contributes to the musical quality of a poem and sometimes to its meaning by drawing attention to important groupings of words with similar vowel endings. Ntuli (1984:207) has the following to say about end rhyme:

Generally speaking end rhyme is not so conspicuous, and therefore less effective, when it is limited to only one syllable ... This is because the final syllable is usually short, except in some styles of reciting ... when it is long.

Ntuli (op cit.:207) feels that rhyme becomes effective when the poet starts his rhyming elements from the vowel of the penultimate syllable. This is because the vowel of the penultimate is usually the longest and most conspicuous in the last word. There is more emphasis on this vowel than on the consonant.

2.3.27 Smith (1985:67) is of the opinion that

... poetry is using the sound of words to evoke a whole experience, not to imitate isolated sensations.

He (op. cit.:68) further mentions that:

It (poetry) is setting up connections. It is enabling meanings to be held and combined and made subtler and preciser. It can create an echo which enables new words to refer back to earlier words. It is setting up a network which allows interconnections beyond those provided for by the grammatical road map.

2.3.28 In the above quotation Smith (op. cit.:68) implies that after coming to the end of the line, one automatically expects to hear the echo of a sound similar to the one which one has heard before. This anticipation pre-supposes a close relationship between the ideas of that particular stanza. Smith (op.

cit.:68) uses the words '... network which allows interconnections ...' to indicate the harmony or the orderliness that is maintained by employing a rhyme scheme in poetry.

- 2.3.29 In languages such as English and, particularly, French, rhyme has always been very important in a poem. In African languages, critics such as Milubi (1983:11) argue that

... rhyme is neither a precondition nor a pre-requisite for good poetry. Where it appears, it comes spontaneously.

This quotation implies that rhyme is not one of the basic requirements which must be adhered to for a poet to write good poetry. This obviously implies that one can write good poetry without any use of rhyme.

- 2.3.30 Makuya (Limi, 1977, No.12:38) has also indicated that rhyme is not an essential element in African poetry, as he says that:

To say that rhyme is not an essential element in ... poetry is not to belittle its importance. ... poets who have written memorable rhymeless poems have produced good poetry. For rhyme had better be absent from a poem if it is not doing something effectively; if it is not fulfilling any worthwhile function it is only an empty convention or an affectation.

- 2.3.31 Ntuli (1978:240) clearly indicates that:

Composers of traditional Zulu poetry never made an attempt to use rhyme in their poetry. This is obviously because their poems were not written, and there was, therefore, no opportunity to work out schemes whereby endings of the verses could be similar. What we find in traditional poetry is the repetition of whole words or sentences.

Ntuli (op. cit.:240) further indicates that Zulu poets introduced rhyme into their poetry after observing it in hymns and Western poetry.

2.3.32 Lenake (1984:150) is also of the opinion that:

In African languages with their different syllabic structure consisting mainly of a consonant-vowel combination, the rhyme possibilities are more restricted than in a language such as English. The vast majority of words ending on a vowel ... pose problems of their own: there are only seven basic vowels with four variants - a fact that limits the possibilities for rhyme to a considerable extent in comparison with European languages where words may end on almost any consonant or vowel. (Emphasis added.)

This differs slightly from the opinions of Pollard (1980:129) who points out that in Tswana (which is an African language):

... daar is nie rym nie, soos ook onderstreep word deur Von Staden (1975:169). Waar tekens van rym mag voorkom, is dit heeltemal toevallig, of hang dit toevallig saam met een van die ander verstegniese middele, byvoorbeeld parallelism of is dit deel van die taal self.

2.3.33 On the basis of the remarks made by Milubi (1983:11), Makuya (Limi, 1977, No.12:28), Ntuli (1978:210), Ntuli (1984:207), Lenake (1984:150) and Pollard (1980:129), we could conclude that rhyme is used sparingly in African poetry because African languages have limited vowels with which syllables are formed.

REPETITION

Definition

2.3.34 Repetition could be considered as an all-embracing term that includes parallelism and refrains. We say that it embraces these concepts because of their close relatedness. For example, parallelism has to do with the repetition of a syntactic pattern or of words at the beginning of lines of poetry. The following stanza from *Xirilo* by Nkondo (1969:1) serves as an example of such repetition.

- (6) Wena rirhandzu ra mina,
Wena rirhangu ra mina,
Wena rivoningo ranga,
Wena mupfuni wanga,
Wena makomba-ndlela,
 U ndzi siyele yini?

(You my love,
 You my protecting wall,
 You my light,
 You my assistant,
 You who show me the way,
 Why did you leave me?)

The underlined words in this poem illustrate the repetition under discussion.

- 2.3.35 Cohen (1973:56) also speaks of incremental repetition, where a poet not only repeats words, phrases or clauses, but also adds details with each repetition. The following poem: *Vuxaka ni ntumbuluko* by Nkondo (1969:6) has each stanza beginning with the line: *Ndzi vonile munhu* (I saw a person), but it is, in each instance followed by additional details, to stress why the poet saw the person.

This type of repetition resembles refrains, but it differs from the latter because of the details that immediately follow it. The details following this type of repetition classify it as *incremental repetition* as opposed to a refrain.

- (7) Ndzi vonile munhu
 A titshemba ngopfu,
 A tshika ku nwa swakunwa
 A babarhuka milomo.

Ndzi vonile munhu
 A nga rimi masimu,
 A nga rhandzi swakudya
 A phoveka marhama a kwaxuka.

Ndzi vonile munhu
 A nga rhandzi swa mavoko,
 A tshika na k'ambala
 A tshwa hi mumu - a oma hi xirhami.

*(I saw a person
He trusted himself very much,
He neglected drinking refreshments
His mouth became dry.*

*I saw a person
He did not plough the fields,
He did not like food
His cheeks were sunken.*

*I saw a person
He hated manual work,
He even neglected wearing clothes
The sun scorched him - he froze.)*

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF REPETITION

2.3.36 Boulton (1959:46) is of the opinion that repetition in poetry is particularly useful to the writers of free verse (which is poetry that breaks from metrical regularity or fixed patterns), because it creates pleasing echoes akin to rhyme, without the restrictions of regular end-rhyme, which is a recurrence of corresponding sounds at the end of lines.

2.3.37 Repetition, because of its frequency, helps to set the tone of the poem. By sheer repetition of a word, phrase, clause or sentence, the reader comprehends what the poet intends to convey.

2.3.38 The repetition of words is used for emphasis in several cases. In this connection, Boulton (1977:73) says that:

The repetition of a word or phrase for the sake of this intellectual effect - to emphasize a fact or idea - is quite different from the function of repetition in a refrain or chorus.

REFRAIN

Definition

2.3.39 Heese, et al., (1973:43) define a refrain as

... a line or portion of it which is repeated at regular intervals throughout the poem.

2.3.40 A refrain is defined in more or less similar terms by Ntuli (1978:237) as

... a line or portion of it which is repeated at regular intervals.

2.3.41 It is significant to note that the critics referred to in the latter two paragraphs make reference to the concept 'repetition at regular intervals'. This regularity suggests some degree of order in occurrence.

2.3.42 Ndhambi's (1949:26) *Xifufunhunu* is an appropriate example of the refrain. The first, third, and last lines of each stanza are repeated throughout the poem, and the last line in each stanza is a repetition of the third.

(8) *Xifufunhunu xi na masingita,*
Loko xi ndzi vona khakhanana!
E! xi rhwele xi na masingita,
Ku tama xi ku tama tama!
E! xi rhwele xi na masingita.

Xifufunhunu xi na masingita,
Ku vumbulu ga! ku vumbulu ga!
E! xi rhwele xi na masingita,
Ku vumbulu! vulongo i mbuva,
E! xi rhwele xi na masingita.

Xifufunhunu xi na masingita,
Tshuku keru! fuku fuku keru!
E! xi rhwele xi na masingita,
Nkundla wu gubiwile hi nhompfu,
E! xi rhwele xi na masingita.

Xifufunhunu xi na masingita,
Ntswinye! hi xindzhaku ka ngeniwa,
E! xi rhwele xi na masingita,
Mbulwa ya vulongo xa ngenisa,
E! xi rhwele xi na masingita.

*(The beetle is amazing,
When it sees me it rolls down!
Yes, it is amazing.
Walking whilst rolling on its sides,
Yes, it is amazing.*

*The beetle is amazing,
It rolls upside down,
Yes, it is amazing!
It rolls, the cowdung is its provision,
Yes, it is amazing.*

*The beetle is amazing,
Shakingly, shakingly!
Yes, it is amazing!
The hole is dug by the nose.
Yes, it is amazing.*

*The beetle is amazing,
It moves backward and enters,
Yes, it is amazing!
Its load of cowdung is put in.
Yes, it is amazing.)*

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF REFRAIN

- 2.3.43 The refrain is used in order to produce a dramatic effect and for the sake of effective expression of an underlying idea. In the example quoted above, the refrains: *Xifufunhunu xi na masingita* (The beetle is amazing) and *Xi rhwele xi na masingita* (It is amazing) help to intensify the wonder that the beetle inspires and the fact that, while busy pushing its rolled cowdung, it appears as if it cares very little for what other creatures are doing. It appears to concentrate only on its immediate purpose.

PARALLELISM

Definition

- 2.3.44 Parallelism is defined by Cohen (1973:192) as:

The balancing of equal parts of a sentence, the repetition of a sentence pattern, or the repetition of words at the beginning of lines of poetry.

This balancing of equal parts of a sentence necessitates a close resemblance or similarity in the structure of the words at the beginning of lines. The following stanza from *Vona* by Nkondo (1960:15) illustrates this phenomenon:

(9) *Makwerhu, vona -
 Vona vanhu entsungeni, hi lavaya!
 Vona, va hi kombetela hi matlhari.
 Vona, va virile.
 Twana, va hi tlhava hi marito ya vona.*

*(Brother, look -
 Look at the people across - there they are!
 Look, they are pointing spears at us.
 Look they are furious
 Listen, they challenge us with words they utter.)*

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PARALLELISM

2.3.45 The use of parallelism also contributes to the musical effect of poetry. When a poet frequently stresses the equal parts of a sentence, the word *balanced* is used to describe his style. This is characteristic of the stanza quoted above. The balance is brought about by the parallel repetition of the word *vona* (look) in the second, third and fourth lines of the poem. Used consistently at the beginning of three consecutive lines, the word evokes the urgency of the message of the poet.

NON-MUSICAL ATTRIBUTES OF POETRY

2.3.46 All poetic devices which have nothing to do with the sound of words but which are essential in bringing out the meaning of a poem, as opposed to musical attributes, are termed non-musical attributes of poetry. For our purpose, it will suffice to discuss only the *stanza*, the *sonnet*, *tone*, *imagery*, *symbolism* and *personification*.

STANZA

Definition

- 2.3.47 A stanza of a poem is generally known in literature as a verse. It actually refers to any group of lines in a poem dealing with a single idea. Shipley (1970:375) defines a stanza as

A group of lines of verse (any number, most frequently four) with a definite metrical and rhyming pattern, which becomes the unit of structure for repetition throughout the poem

... .

- 2.3.48 A sixteen-line poem might be divided into four equal units of four lines: these units of verse, separated by a space in the printed text, are called stanzas. Four-line units (quatrains) are the most common form of stanza, but the term refers to any such group of lines. Each unit normally contains the same number of lines, and usually the same rhyme scheme is employed. In long poems, where there are divisions at irregular intervals, each unit of verse is referred to as a verse paragraph. The following poem illustrates how stanzas have been arranged by Ndhambi (1966:42) in his poem *Mapapa*.

- (10) { *Namuntlha tilo ri kampfunya mapapa,
Ma tshukunya ma huma vugimamusi,
Ma fikisa ndzhuti henhla ka misava.
Ha! ku saseka wonge i swa ku hanya.*
- { *Dzongen' ku khunguluka magegetsu
Wonge i swihlenga swa vulombe nkokwen'.
Vonan' tingalava ta tilo hinkwenu,
Lwandle ra Vuxa ri le ku hlaselen'.*
- { *(Today the sky is spitting clouds,
They move from the horizon,
Bringing a shadow on the earth.
O, it is as beautiful as life itself.*
- { *In the south scales are rolling
It is like honeycombs on the trail.
See the ships of the sky you all,
The sea of the east is attacking.)*

2.3.49 The braces in the above poem show the grouping of lines to form stanzas. This grouping does not necessarily imply that all the stanzas of a poem always have an equal number of lines. The number of lines in any one stanza may vary. As a result, many stanzas have no special name and often a poet will invent a stanza form for a particular poem. But there are some patterns that are widely used, e.g. the *couplet*: a pair of rhymed lines, and the *tercet* or *triplet*: three lines with a single rhyme.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF STANZA

2.3.50 There is always a reason for the organization of a poem into stanzas. The poet employs a regular pattern that creates order within the poem. In this regard, Ntuli (1978:275) argues that:

We expect each stanza or paragraph to imply some unit of thought which is separated from that contained in the other portions of the poem. This is not an independent thought, though, but is a step in the arrangement of a series of ideas which are contained in the poem.

2.3.51 Each stanza represents a single thought, which connects logically with the following one in the next stanza. From this series of ideas, we are able to determine the theme of the poem.

2.3.52 On reading the poem, the first significant feature is the general typographic shape encountered. There is, firstly, a perception of either a stichic accumulation or a stanzaic organization, and the manner of reading the poem will depend in part on one's first awareness of these typographical shapes. The aural experience, i.e. the ear's confirmation of the form given to sounds by rhyme, and the visual experience, i.e. the eye's measure of the physical form of lines and stanzas, gradually confirm if the poem is good. Nevertheless, *one should not forget that stanzaic forms are never more important than the overall meaning of the poem.*

TONE

Definition

2.3.53 Cohen (1973:198) defines tone as:

The author's basic attitude toward the people, situations, emotions, and ideas with which he has constructed his literary work.

This definition implies that tone is the author's attitude towards his audience and his subject.

2.3.54 In most cases, when the term 'tone' is mentioned, one immediately thinks of the tone that is found in music. In this context, tone does not refer to the sound of a definite pitch, which is determined by perceptual organs. Tone in this context is the author's attitude towards his subject as well as to his readers. Brower (in Calderwood, et al., 1968:101) says that tone is:

... the implied social relationship of the speaker to his auditor and the manner he adopts in addressing his auditor.

2.3.55 Brower's quotation implies that the individual is in a position to be understood by his fellow man through the manner in which he conveys his message. The social relationship between the speaker and his audience, which is referred to as the 'auditor' by Brower, is of vital importance.

2.3.56 The poem *Sevengwani* by Nkondo (1969:23) illustrates the tone of the poet:

(11) *Xi voni hi lexiya,
I Sevengwani; xi ngirimela switepisi.
Swirhendze tintlhongwe tinene,
Ntwa-twa-twa -
Xisuti ndziwii!
Xo cukumetiwa xi ya hala ni hala.*

*Nsisi onge i kamba ra nkupekupe,
Wu biwile wu sirhelela mombo
Wu rhurhumela emoyeni
Onge wo ku khalutela.*

*Hi nga xi vona n'wana wa xihlangi,
Tihlo ra kona onge ro khudzehela
Onge ro tumbelela, ri vona, ri thumba
Loyi a nga ta tixisa a hoxa ra yena
A anakanya onge a nga voniwi.*

*Hi lexiya!
A xi voni na munhu
Eka xona hi xona ntsena;
Yukhegulu ngulumelo hase ka lwandle,
A hi ntiyiso;
Xa rivala leswaku hi xona
Laha tshangava ra timbyatsu
Ri nga etlela kona.*

*(Look at her, there she is
She is Sevengwani; descending the stairs
Heels are just sticks,
Tapping lightly (on the stairs) -
Suddenly, the waist is swung around!
It is swayed in all directions.*

*The hair looks like a drooping leaf,
It is styled to cover the forehead
Trembling in the air
As if beckoning you.*

*Look at her, young as she is,
The eye seems to be slumbering
As if it is hiding to see and discover who will,
perchance,
Look at her thinking that he is not being noticed.*

*There she is!
She does not see anybody
To her, she is the only one;
Old age is an echo beyond the sea.
It is not a truth.
She forgets that she is
where the valley of wrinkles is found
i.e she is the cradle of old age.*

- 2.3.57 The tone here is satirical. The poet ridicules the boastful behaviour of Sevengwani, a young lady who is ignorant of the fact that her youth will pass. One is able to deduce from the language of the poet that he scorns the manner in which Sevengwani walks, as well as the way she looks at other people. Her hair-style is also indicative of her vanity. In the fourth

stanza, Nkondo pities this young lady for her short-sightedness. She does not realise that old age is gradually encroaching upon her.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TONE

2.3.58 Tone and attitude can be used interchangeably, but in practice tone embraces attitude, moods and emotions. The aim of tone analysis is to delineate exactly who is speaking in every poem we read. It is important to know how the tone of a poem is determined. We can establish this by answering questions such as 'What is the social relationship implied?' By so doing, we can clarify and express the state of relationships which project the tone of the poet-speaker.

It should be remembered that it is not possible to demonstrate the tone of the poem on the basis of the physical structure of that poem. It is only after reading the poem very attentively that one can assess the tone of the poem.

2.3.59 An author's tone may vary greatly. Tone can be pessimistic, cynical, ironic, optimistic, objective, satiric, comic or tragic. It is also possible to find a combination of tones in one expression. In the case of combinations one should try to determine whether the change in tone is logical or purposeful.

2.3.60 Furthermore, tone is related to style; for example, irony and sarcasm both definitely influence an author's choice of words.

2.3.61 The analysis of tone is, in effect, the analysis of the poet's mind at work and through this analysis one can become aware of the vitality of literature - the creativity of the poet's mind as reflected in his words.

IMAGERY

Definition

2.3.62 Imagery is defined by Cohen (1973:187) as

... a direct sense appeal, a figure of speech, or both, which lead a reader by a process of association to combine at least two elements inherent in the figure.

2.3.63 Hess (1978:265) defines imagery as

... mental pictures produced by descriptions and figurative language.

2.3.64 From the two definitions cited above, it is clear that imagery refers to the process of creating images or pictures in the mind through the help of mental association. The mental pictures that are produced by description and figurative language, refer to the images that we perceive. An image is the mental impression or visualized likeness conjured by a word, phrase or sentence. A poet is able to use figurative language, such as metaphors and similes, to create images as vivid as the physical presence of the objects and ideas themselves. When Nkondo (1969:10) in the poem *Fambelo ra Ntumbuluko* says:

(12) *A hi ri karhi hi tlanga
Emoyeni wa mixo.
Siku ra ha ri rintsongo;
Hi hlekana malanga hi tiphina -
Malanga ya vuntshwa byerhu.*

*(We were busy playing
In the airy morning.
The day was still young;
Laughing at one another's pulse from the eyes -
The pulse of our youth.)*

he actually refers to the youthful stage in the development of a man's life. The poet aptly employs images to attain his goal. Words such as *tlanga* (play), *mixo* (morning), *rintsongo* (young),

malanga (pulse from the eyes) and *vuntshwa* (youth), are images that refer to a youthful state.

- 2.3.65 It is through mental association that an idea, a feeling or an attitude which is alluded to by a word, is linked with the real object, sensation or experience. Marivate (1984:27) argues that:

A great deal of the effect of poetry depends on mental association. All metaphor depends on mental association and metaphor is the very life of poetry. Metaphor conjures up pictures in our minds and enriches the idea.

- 2.3.66 From the remarks we have made so far with respect to mental association, which helps to create images in our minds, it is clear that *imagery is the chief characteristic of poetry*.

- 2.3.67 It has been clearly stated that images are evoked in the mind by word pictures, i.e. similes and metaphors. Similes and metaphors have the ability to affect imagination to the extent that we are able to create mental pictures. For example, in the poem *Afrika* by Ndhambi (1949:39) the first stanza demonstrates the way this poet uses word pictures to evoke images in the mind of the reader:

(13) *Afrika! Afrika! Afrika! Afrika!*
U nguvu mavala tindzimi ku tala.
Khoma, tamela tinxaka ta misava
Londzovota, mamisa vana va wena.
O! nkhenseka wena tiko ra Vantima.

(Africa, Africa, Africa, Africa!
You are a multi-coloured cloth and of many
languages.

Grip, carry the nations of the world.

Save, suckle your children.

Oh, be appreciative you the land of the Blacks.)

In the above stanza, one gets the impression that Africa, as a big continent, is able to accommodate millions of people of different nationalities. The underlined words in this poem

create pictures in our mind that forcefully convey the poet's message. For example, the second line: *U nguvu tindzimi ku tala* (You are a multi-coloured cloth and of many languages) explicitly expresses this idea of many different nations with different languages.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF IMAGERY

2.3.68 In poetry, the full meaning of a word may stretch beyond that which it has in everyday speech. Heese, et al., (1973:60) say:

The words employed by the poet need not be different in themselves from ordinary words used in straightforward prose or everyday speech; but in the context of a poem they may acquire that extension of meaning characteristic of poetic diction, which stimulates and delights the imagination.

2.3.69 The poet is able to extend the meaning of a word in a poem through imagery. This simply means that a meaning not implied in the everyday use of the word is revealed through the use of figurative language.

2.3.70 When looking into the significance of imagery in poetry, one should also take cognizance of the fact that imagery encompasses every concrete object, action and feeling in a poem. However, the term imagery covers not only these basic elements of presenting the situation, but also the *figurative* use of language in poetry, such as metaphors and similes.

2.3.71 Milubi (1983:14) indicates the significance of imagery by saying that it is

... a significant poetic device for intensifying, clarifying, enriching and giving the reader an insight into what is being described.

This implies that the poet does not merely present the symbol of an object, but his description allows one to 'see' and 'hear'

the object itself.

SYMBOLISM

Definition

2.3.72 Shaw (1976:266) defines symbolism as:

The practice of representing objects or ideas by symbols or of giving things symbolic (associated character and) meaning.

2.3.73 Heese, et al., (1983:66) have also defined the term *symbolism* and their definition does not differ much from that given by Shaw above, the only difference being in the phraseology; symbolism is:

... a representation rather than a comparison - it is a way of making the abstract concrete and it is based not on direct correspondences but on more general associations. Usually, it appeals particularly to the emotions.

These definitions imply that a symbol is an object, character or idea which stands for something else or suggests something else. The word 'symbol' can also be interpreted as a synonym for 'sign'. Therefore, one could also argue that all words are symbols, i.e. verbal 'signs' which stand for objects and concepts. For example: to a Christian, a *cross* is a symbol of suffering; *darkness* is a symbol of evil, fear and guilt; and *green* is a symbol of life and growth. Poets of note are able to convey various ideas to their audiences by means of symbols. For example, in *Nambu wa vutomi* by Nkondo (1969:3):

- (14) *Languta nambu wa vutomi wu hobomulana.
Hlangula malanga
U vona makhukhuri ya vutomi.
Basisa mahlo ya wena
U vona ndzhope ya vutomi.
Hundzuluxa mahlo nakambe
U vona ku tenga ka mati ya vutomi.*

*Ina - I vutomi bya mani na mani.
Makhukhuri; ndzhope; ku tenga,
Swi endla vukulu bya vutomi.*

*(See the river of life in flood.
Wipe off the pulse from your eyes
To see the debris of life.
Cleanse your eyes
To see the mud of life.
Turn your eyes again
To see the purity of water of life.
Yes - it is everyone's life.
Debris; mud; purity,
All make the greatness of life.)*

reference is made to *U vona makhukhuri ya vutomi* (You see the debris) and *U vona ndzhope ya vutomi* (You see the mud of life). *Makhukhuri* (debris) and *ndzhope* (mud) are symbols of the difficulties that one encounters in life. The poet deliberately likens the progression of life to the flowing of a river. As it flows, it carries debris and mud, which represent trying periods of life. These symbols are used in the poem quoted above.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SYMBOLISM

2.3.74 The significance of symbolism in poetry is indicated by Irmscher (1975:70) when he says:

Like metaphor, symbol-making is a natural process. It is a way of simplifying the complexities of thought and experience by hitting upon one thing as representative of many. The symbol may be used as a reminder, a signal, a call to action. It is a means by which men seek to express the unity of their perceptions and experiences. It is a hook to hang on to.

2.3.75 The fact that a symbol can simplify the *complexities of thought*, indicates that it is capable of compressing the emotional impact of an overwhelming experience into a brief descriptive passage.

2.3.76 In this regard Roberts (1982:100) says that a symbol

... has its own objective reality - if it did not have such validity, it would be artificial and therefore weak - but it is used to carry greater meaning than its simple presence might indicate. When a symbol is introduced, it is understood to signify the very specific things intended by the writer.

This quotation suggests that a symbol serves as a vehicle for a significant idea or emotion. Symbolic language of this kind has a vividness and force which go far beyond any kind of ordinary description.

2.3.77 The importance of symbolism in poetry is summed up by Nowotny (1965:174) when he says:

... symbolism purveys a purer intuition of a higher or more important kind of reality and uses words not less but more meaningfully than is usual.

PERSONIFICATION

Definition

2.3.78 Personification is defined by Shaw (1972:207) as:

A figure of speech in which abstractions, animals, ideas, and inanimate objects are endowed with human form, character, traits, or sensibilities.

2.3.79 Shaw (op. cit.:207) further indicates that in personification

... an entirely imaginary creature or person also may be conceived of representing an idea or object.

2.3.80 Cohen (1973:193), on the other hand, defines personification as

... giving human characteristics or shape to an inanimate object, to an emotion or instinct, to a moral quality or spiritual concept, to an event like death, or to an invisible essence like the soul.

2.3.81 The definitions by Cohen (1973:193) and Shaw (1972:207) indicate that personification consists of the attribution of human characteristics or feelings to non-human organisms, inanimate objects or abstract ideas.

2.3.82 Ndhambi's poetry in *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949) and *Switlhokovetsele swa vana* (1966) is marked by regular use of personification. In the poem *Vhiki* (Week) (Ndhambi, 1949:23), the week is personified. The following two stanzas will suffice as examples:

(15) *Hi mina vhiki xipima tinhweti,
Lembe i nhlengeletano ya mina.
Ndzi ni vana va ntlhanu na vambirhi,
Vutomi bya vona i vhiki ntsena.*

*Ndzi ni Nsota n'wamativula-swi-nga-heli,
N'wamurhandziwa siku ra ku wisa.
N'wina vanhu hinkwenu ambalani!
Komban' Xikwembu ku tenga ka n'wina.*

*(I am the week measurer of months,
The year is an amalgam of mine.
I have seven children,
Their life lasts for a week only.*

*I have Sunday which becomes the first born every
time,
The loved day of rest.
All you people dress elegantly!
Show God how sanctimonious you can be.)*

The poet personifies the week. The week speaks in the voice of a parent who has children with a lifespan of only seven days. These children are the days of the week, i.e. Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Sunday, which is the first day of the week, is referred to as the first born. This first day of the week is quite unique. It is the only day when every individual is expected to dress elegantly

because each has to attend a church service, indirectly in order to show God how sanctimonious he is.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PERSONIFICATION

2.3.83 The coupling of inanimate or abstract forces or concepts with human behaviour evokes images that generally would not be expected. Personification, thus, brings objects and creatures closer to the living human being.

All these lifeless objects are brought within the sphere of human experiences so that the reader can appreciate more of the world he lives in.

2.4 SUMMARY

One should note that the definitions of poetry quoted earlier evade the issue of an outright and absolute definition of poetry. An attempt at an exact explanation of poetry, is to some extent an attempt to do the impossible. Poetry is most effectively defined as an expression of emotions through the use of figurative language. The poet's sentences are such that they express an intended idea. Economy of words is characteristic of poetry. In order to respond properly to poetry, it is important that one should have a clear conception of the general techniques used in poetry. These are rhythm, rhyme, repetition, parallelism, refrain, stanza, tone, imagery, symbolism and personification. It is from the presence or absence of these poetic features that one is able to evaluate the standard of poetry. The musical and non-musical attributes of poetry were examined, as were their contribution to the meaning of a poem. It is essential to note that poetic style includes more than conciseness and imagery. Most poetry depends heavily on patterns of sound or musical attributes. The music and the language of poetry are inseparable, as the poet's choice and arrangement of words create the sound of his poem. Although prose narratives may contain rhythm as one of the musical attributes, it is the poet's concentration on the devices of sound which generally distinguishes poetry from prose.

It is also significant to point out that imagery, as the most important poetic device, is all-embracing, for it includes symbolism, personification, metaphors and similes. This view is also held by Heese, et al., (1983:62) who employ the word 'image' as a general term and the words 'simile', 'personification', 'metaphor' and 'symbol' as specific terms that indicate various types of images. This is due to the fact that all these figures of speech have one common characteristic viz. that of comparison.

CHAPTER 3

NDHAMBI'S AND NKONDO'S POETRY IN RELATION TO THE TECHNIQUES OF POETRY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 In this chapter we intend relating all the main theoretical aspects of poetry discussed in the previous chapter (i.e. rhythm, rhyme, repetition, parallelism, refrain, stanza, tone, imagery, symbolism and personification) to the poetry of Ndhambi and Nkondo, with the express aim of discovering the extent to which both poets employ these techniques. In the process, similarities and differences in the manner in which the two poets use these theoretical aspects will be highlighted.

3.1.2 Through comparing the use of the theoretical aspects of poetry by these two poets, an understanding of the fact that a poem is something more than its morphological composition of lexical items and verses will be gained. The poet's careful use of all the elements of poetry mentioned above plays a vital role in the determination of the meaning of a poem.

3.2 RHYTHM IN NDHAMBI'S POETRY

3.2.1 In paragraph 2.3.10 above, rhythm was defined as a regularly patterned flow of sounds or movement as a result of recurring stresses and pauses.

3.2.2 It is, however, not an easy task to establish a hard and fast rule for the determination of rhythm in Tsonga. In English poetry, the beat arises from a pattern of stresses and unstressed syllables. This basic pattern is called a metre.

The stressed and unstressed syllables could in simple terms be called strong and weak syllables respectively. The regular alternation of strong and weak syllables in the lines of poetry creates a pleasing rhythmic pattern, pleasure being an integral part of the poetic experience (Hayden, 1983:30). Stress, which is an important feature of metre, is extraneous to the sound system of Tsonga.

The fact that metre is foreign to the poetry of the Bantu languages is also observed by Taljaard (1979:99) when he says:

Die feit dat metrum soos in Westerse poësie bekend, nie op poësie in die Bantoetale van toepassing gemaak kan word nie, word deesdae allerweë aanvaar. Die struktuur van hierdie tale maak die skandeer van verse onmoontlik. Daarom word die term 'ritme' dikwels gebruik wanneer daar veral na mondelinge poësie verwys word, maar gewoonlik sonder 'n duidelike verklaring van hoe ritme in hierdie poësie gebruik word.

The use of the term 'onmoontlik' which is the Afrikaans equivalent to 'impossible' in English, emphasises the explicit impossibility of scanning poems in African languages on the basis of metre. This assertion is also accepted by Ntuli (1984:221) when he says that:

It is difficult to give a fixed description of how exactly ... rhythm is achieved because some languages have characteristics which others do not have. While languages like English have patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables, languages like Zulu use patterns of tone and length.

Swanepoel (1980:176) too, is of the opinion that African languages do not make use of metrical patterns in determining rhythm. He asserts that:

Met die intrapslag moet dadelik gesê word dat in die poësie van die Bantoetale nie van die klassieke metriese patrone gebruik gemaak word

nie. Nêrens sal daar op grond van die metriese indeling gepraat kan word

The sentence 'Nêrens sal daar op grond van die metriese indeling gepraat kan word ...' identifies the crux of the problem that faces critics of African poetry as far as metre is concerned.

- 3.2.3 The remarks by Taljaard (1979), Ntuli (1984) and Swanepoel (1980) are a clear indication that the determination of rhythm in a poem by means of metrical concepts is rather foreign to African languages, which are referred to as *Bantoetale* by Taljaard and Swanepoel above. Tsonga, which is also an African language, is not an exception to this rule. Therefore, we observe that in Ndhambi's poetry meaningful pauses and slight emphasis on the penultimate syllables of words, as a result of the slightly longer vowel, contribute to the determination of rhythm.

Meaningful pauses

- 3.2.4 Ndhambi's poetry constantly reveals rhythm which is determined by the recurrence of regular meaningful pauses. By meaningful pauses is meant the use of the pause whenever sense dictates the presence of a break before the reciter continues with his reading. This simply means that the reciter depends on the meaning of the poem and pauses accordingly. In the first stanza of the poem *Vurhongo* (Ndhambi, 1949:59) the pauses are a result of the punctuation marks, except in the second line where meaning is responsible for the pause:

(16) *Yingisani n'wina vanhu ndzi rungula:
Me vurhongo tiko ra ku hlawuleka
Xandlala-misava n'wana wa ku rhula,
Ndzi ni rito eka leswi copetaka,
Tanan' ndzi ni ngalava ku kota Noa.*

*(Listen you people as I narrate:
I, the sleep, a fine country
I cover the earth as the seat of peace,*

*I have a say to all the living,
Come, I have an ark like that of Noah.)*

In this stanza, the reciter is compelled to read the whole line before he can break for a slight pause. These pauses are found at the end of each line of the stanza at regular intervals and they are indicated by two slanting lines (//) as follows:

(17) *Yingisani n'wina vanhu ndzi rungula//
Me vurhongo tiko ra ku hlawuleka//
Xandlala-misava n'wana wa ku rhula//
Ndzi ni rito eka leswi copetaka//
Tanan' ndzi ni ngalava ku kota Noa//*

Pauses of this nature are found in almost all Ndhambi's poems in *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949) and *Switlhokovetselo swa vana* (1966). In reciting the first stanza of the poem *Nhlalala* (Ndhambi, 1949:65), these meaningful pauses are found at the end of each line. For example:

(18) *Nhlalala nyanyana ya ku hlawuleka//
Hakunene u tiko ra ku nona//
Vanhu va tsaka hi tinsimu ta wena//
Varisi ni vahloti va tshemba wena//
Tiko ra wena i vurila-nhlalala//*

*(Honeyguide you are a special bird,
Indeed, you are a fertile country, i.e. food is
found from you.
People are happy to hear you singing,
Herdboys and hunters rely on you,
Your place of abode is called the
place-where-honeyguide sings, i.e. a place
where only birds are found.)*

In this stanza pauses are regularly found at the end of every line, giving us a rhythm that we anticipate. Ntuli (1984:225) is of the opinion that:

If we use the pause as our key concept we shall have more agreement because we can use it to mark the end of a rhythm segment irrespective of the presence or position of length in the preceding syllables.

Taljaard (1979:103) agrees with the argument that the pause is a better criterion for determining the boundary for a rhythm segment. He says that:

... die aanvangswoord met sy uitbreiding vorm nou 'n ritmiese eenheid wat by die pouse ten einde loop. Die begin van 'n volgende woord wat na die pouse herhaal word, markeer dan die begin van 'n volgende ritmiese segment.

The double slanting lines at the end of each line of the example quoted above, indicate the rhythm segments under discussion. Therefore, in this stanza we find five rhythm segments.

Rhythm as determined by means of the immediate constituents

- 3.2.5 In Ndhambi's poetry we also discover groups or syntactic units called immediate constituents, i.e. grammatical elements such as subjects, objects, noun phrases, possessive phrases and verb phrases, which form word boundaries. Each immediate constituent is uttered with some measure of emphasis at its penultimate syllable, as a result of the slightly longer vowel. Ntuli (1984:221) has also identified these emphases at the penultimate syllables of Zulu words. He says:

In Zulu certain syllables are sometimes articulated with a measure of emphasis. We regard this emphasis as stress, and it normally goes together with length, especially the length of the penultimate syllable.

In Ndhambi's poetry, the emphases occur in the lines of the poems which are more or less of equal length. Therefore, a rhythmic pattern pleasant to the ear is created in the poem, because the emphases occur at well-regulated intervals. In the following stanza, slightly longer vowels have been underlined, while brackets have been used to show the immediate constituents. Each syntactic unit, i.e. each immediate constituent, thus marked could be likened to a foot, with one slight emphasis. In English poetry, a foot, for example, usually consists of

one stressed and one or two unstressed syllables. The following stanza from *Vhiki* (Ndhambi, 1949:23) is marked as follows:

- (19) *Line 1: (Hi mina) (vhiki) (xipima-tinhweti)*
Line 2: (Lembe) (i nhlengeletano) (ya mina)
Line 3: (Ndzi ni vana) (va ntlhanu) (na vambirhi)
Line 4: (Vutomi) (bya vona) (i vhiki) (ntsena)

The penultimate syllable of each immediate constituent (IC) has a slightly longer vowel. Therefore, line 2 has only three IC's, hence three penultimate syllables. We can also observe that each line, i.e. lines 1 to 3, has three IC's and consequently three instances of slightly longer vowels at the penultimate syllable of each unit. The emphasis on each penultimate syllable at regular intervals lends rhythm to each line in the stanza. Since each line in the stanza has three syntactic units, this lends balance to the whole stanza.

- 3.2.6 The idea of syntactic units could be likened to nodes as referred to by Lestrade (1935:4) when he says:

Dynamic stress is the basis of Bantu prosody. Each line of verse is made up of a number of groups of syllables, which we shall call nodes, usually three or four, each node containing one stressed syllable and a varying number, usually two, three or four, of unstressed syllables grouped around the stressed syllable.

Ntuli (1984:222) appreciates the view advanced in favour of nodes, but points out that such divisions are only likely to reveal themselves when one speaks slowly or when a reciter deliberately articulates each word in isolation.

Individual style of the reciter

- 3.2.7 Each individual reciter, for example, the poet who recites his own poem or any person who recites a poem by somebody else, has his own preferred style when reciting a poem. He might choose

to read the poem fast and as a result he will have few pauses, or he might wish to have staccato on each and every word. In this case, his recitation will be characterized by his own individual style. Therefore, it is not surprising that Ndhambi arranged his lines so that they are more or less of equal length in order to secure the rhythm of his preference as he recited his own poems. He has also punctuated his lines of poetry using either a comma, an exclamation mark or a full-stop, to create the pauses that he needed at well-regulated intervals. It should, however, be remembered that meaning plays a significant role in making these pauses.

3.3 RHYTHM IN NKONDO'S POETRY

3.3.1 We have already indicated in paragraph 3.2.2 above that it is not an easy task to establish an absolute rule for the determination of rhythm in Tsonga. As far as Ndhambi's poetic rhythm is concerned, we discovered that he manipulates meaningful pauses and slight emphases at the penultimate syllables to create rhythm.

3.3.2 When we look at the stanza forms of Nkondo's poetry, we find a total absence of the regularity in the number of syllables found in Ndhambi's poetry. Does the absence of this regularity in the number of syllables per line imply that there is no rhythm in Nkondo's poetry? In this regard, Grace (1965:86) asserts that:

In more recent times, when so much of our finest poetry has been written in free verse, we are forced to depart from the traditional assumption that meter, in the sense of regular metrical pattern, is essential in poetry. In fact, we realize that free verse is in itself a very adequate form of poetic expression.

In the light of this quotation by Grace (op. cit.:86), it is obvious that Nkondo, as a modern poet, has also written in the so-called free verse. Free verse is defined by Lenake (1984:121) as having

... a freedom or absence of the typical formal features of poetry such as sustained rhyme and metre. ... Rhymelessness, however, is but one of the characteristics of free verse.

Nkondo's poetry is termed free verse, for it breaks away from metrical regularity or fixed rhythmic patterns. The verse lines of his poetry frequently unfold into lengthy lines. The last stanza of the poem *Swi herile* (Nkondo, 1969:3), aptly illustrates this phenomenon:

(20) *U nga ha ndzi nyiki nomo na voko ra wena
Na vuswin'we, ndzombo wa rirhandzu.
Ndzi pfumeleri ntsena, ku lata nhloti egandzelweni,
U nga tshuki u heta nkarhi
U ambexa hi miehleketo, leswi hundzeke.
Swi herile.*

*(You should no longer give me your mouth and your
hand
And our togetherness which is the sting of our love.
Allow me only, to lay my tears on the place of
worshipping the ancestors.
You should not waste time
Reminiscing on what has gone past.
It is all over.)*

3.3.3 Nkondo's stanzas have long lines because his poems are of a contemplative nature. In them he ponders on the problems of youth and human life. He therefore uses long lines to express such feelings. The length of the line retards the pace of reading. As a result, we have a slow pace which agrees with the mood of the poem.

The following extract from the poem *Rirhandzu* is a good example of the long lines employed by Nkondo (1969):

(21) *Vanhu va nghanile eswidziveni ni le malwandle ya
misava
Nhlamuselo ya rirhandzu va yi pfumele.
Vanhu va hahe mimpfhuka ni mimpfhuka,
Va rhendzeleke n'weti ni misava;
Hlamuselani rirhandzu n'wina, ko fana ni kwala.
Migodi ya misava yi ni nsuku, silivhere ni dayimani,
Swicelwa swa nxavo lowukulu,
Kambe a swi xavi hambu ku hlamusela rirhandzu.*

*(People have plunged into pools and oceans of the earth
They have failed to get an explanation of love.
People have flown heights and heights,
They explored the moon and the earth,
But when they had to explain what love is, they failed.
Mines of gold, silver and diamond,
Precious minerals,
But all cannot buy or explain love.)*

- 3.3.4 Elements such as tone of voice and speed of delivery influence, to some extent, the rhythm of the poem. In this regard, Ntuli (1984:221) states that:

Apart from the stress resulting from penultimate length, stress on any other syllable may depend on the reader's interpretation of the poem, and his individual style.

From the above quotation, we observe that emphases can be placed anywhere in the line of poetry depending on how the reader interprets the poem.

In the following example:

(22) *U nga tinyungubyisi wena lontsóngo.
U nga hleki timbyátsu ta mína
Matimba ku háva - u nga hléki
A hi fénya; i ntiyiso -
Ntiyiso wa ndlela ya ntumbulúko.*

*(Do not pride yourself you the young.
Do not laugh at my wrinkles.
There is no energy - please do not laugh
This is not a joke, it is the truth -
The truth of the way of nature.)*

the reciter, because of the meaning that he wants to convey to the listeners, stresses the syllables marked with the sign ('). This sign can be placed on any syllable in the word depending on his interpretation. Because it is his own individual style, we have no choice but to accept the way he recites.

3.3.5 It is difficult to write perfectly regular lines, especially when the poet's focus is his desire to convey a particular message. He is bound not to be mechanical and rigid. The meaning emphasises some words and leaves others without any emphasis.

3.4 RHYME IN NDHAMI'S POETRY

3.4.1 In paragraphs 2.3.22 and 2.3.23 above, rhyme is defined as the use of matching sounds, especially vowels, at the end of two or more lines of poetry. Rhyme intensifies the meaning of words by calling attention to important pairings of words.

3.4.2 Ndhambi's poetry indicates clearly the importance he attached to rhyme. Of the 120 poems he wrote in *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949) and *Switlhokovetsele swa vana* (1966), 114 have some type of rhyme. It is not surprising that such an attempt was made, because, being the first Tsonga poet, Ndhambi thought writing good poetry necessitated an emulation of all the poetic techniques characteristic of Western poetry.

3.4.3 Ndhambi uses the last vowels of words in the end of lines to create rhyme in his poetry. This type of rhyme is commonly known as end-rhyme. Two examples will be used to illustrate his use of rhyme. The first example is *Donki* (1949:25) and the second one is *Byanyi* (1966:30). Rhyming syllables are indicated by means of underlining at the end of each line:

(23) *Yingisan', yingisan', vamakwerhu!*
Me ndzi rhwele ngula ya maxangu,
Misava yi ndzi komba tinxangu,
Nhlomulo wanga a wu na mpimu,
Miri wanga wu fehla vuxungu.

Vavasati, vana, vavanuna
Va hangama nhlaneni wa mina.
Maganga ni magova ndza famba,
Vusiku nhlekanhi i swa mina,
Nkhavi ni nhonga swi tiva mina.

Loko mpungu wu wa ndza singila,
 Nhlaneni ndzi tshala ra mikwama,
 Golonyi yi ndzi tshemba xifuya,
 Tikwen' ra vavasati ndza rima.
 Ku rhula ku ndzi hundzula nhlonga.

Oh! ndzi ta ya kwihi misaven'?
 Mahlomulo yanga ndzi ta ma byela man'?
 Xana ndzi onhe yini misaven'?
 Vutomi bya mina byi le ndlelen'?
 Rifu ndzi tamele etintihwen'.

Yoho! mina malahla-na-nhlonge!
 A ndzi hanyi xivaleni xin'we,
 Ndzi tshikiwa ntamu ndzi helelwe,
 N'we vamakwerhu mi katekile.
 Ndzi fike makumu swi ringene.

(Listen, listen, my fellow men!
 I am in great trouble,
 The world is a difficult place for me to live,
 My distress is unmeasurable,
 My body is aching because of pain,

Women, children, men
 All ride on my back.
 I travel on hills and valleys,
 I do not mind whether it is during the day or in the
 night,
 I am familiar with small and big sticks.

In times of famine I go far to beg for food,
 My back is a platform for bags,
 The cart is drawn by my chest,
 I am easily used by women to plough fields.
 My calm disposition has turned me into a slave.

Oh! where shall I run to in this world?
 Whom shall I tell my sufferings?
 What wrong have I done in this world?
 My life is spent travelling,
 Death is on my finger-tips, i.e. I can die at any
 time.

Oh, I am buried with my hide, i.e. no coffin is
 used.
 I never stay at one kraal,
 When I no longer have any strength I am abandoned,
 You fellow men are blessed.
 I have reached the end and no more.)

The final vowel u dominates all the words at the end of all the lines in the first stanza. Besides the occurrence of the vowel u at the end of all the lines of this stanza, the second, third

and fifth lines terminate with the syllable -ngu, which gives this stanza a rhyme scheme of **abbab**. This arrangement is changed when we come to the second stanza, which has a succession of the vowel a as the terminative of all the words at the end of lines. The final syllables of the words at the first, second, fourth and fifth lines of this stanza are exactly the same. This brings about a rhyme scheme of **aabaa**, which differs vastly from that in the first stanza. The vowel a is again used in the third stanza as a means to achieve rhyme. The similarity of the final syllables is only found in the second and fourth line of this stanza, which produces the rhyme schemes in the first two stanzas of the poem.

A more interesting means of creating rhyme is found in the fourth stanza, where the final vowels of the syllables at the end of the lines have been elided. This produces lines that end in a nasal sound throughout the whole stanza.

The manipulation of vowels to create rhyme is once more observed in the last stanza of this poem. Here, Ndhambi makes use of the vowel e.

In this poem, the pattern of employing one phoneme throughout the whole stanza is conspicuous. It appears as if the poet deliberately repeated the same vowel or the same nasal in the stanza in order to create a type of contrived rhyme.

3.4.4 The second example to illustrate rhyme is *Byanyi* from Ndhambi's *Switlhokovetsele swa vana* (1966:30):

(24) *Misava ya tiko leri yi ni ringhala,*
Ringhala ra byanyi bya tinxakaxaka
Mbume na muhulani 'mavito ya byona;
Tshenga, ritlangi na xidari i man'wana.

Byanyi i swimila leswa ku xonga ngopfu,
Ku saseka loko byi londlana hi moyā
Swonge 'misisi eku londliwen' hi kamū.
Bya le ntlangasin' i voya bya xinyimpfana.

*N'we byanyi mitirho ya n'wina yi tele;
 Varimi vonan' ritlhava-ngula fusin',
 N'we vaaki vonan' byanyi bya masule,
 N'we swa-ku-fuyiwa humelan' thahen.*

*N'we swihari kuman' ku dya ni swikhundla,
 N'we tinyoka chavelani rifu byanyin,
 N'we tinhwari kuhlelan' mandza ka byona,
 N'we byanyi bolelanan' henhla misaven.*

*(The ground of this country is hairy,
 It is hairy because of grass of different types:
 Thatch and hay grass are their names;
 Long thatch, 'kweek' and 'xidari' grass are others.*

*Grass is a very beautiful plant,
 It becomes beautiful when swayed by wind
 Just like hair when well combed.
 Grass found at swampy places looks like the sheep's
 wool.*

*You grass, your work is varied:
 Farmers, see the grass that weaves large grain
 baskets in the fallow fields,
 You builders, see the thatching grass,
 Domestic animals, get to the grazing lands.*

*Animals get something to eat,
 Snakes run away from death into the grass,
 Partridges lay eggs in them,
 You, grass, rot on the ground.)*

In each stanza of this poem two vowels alternate to produce rhyme, except in the first stanza where only the vowel a is used. The variation of two vowels in one stanza creates an expectation of a regular sound to follow. This regularity gives us the rhyme scheme of *abab* in all the last three stanzas.

- 3.4.5 It should be emphasized that almost all Ndhambi's poems have rhyme (cf. par. 3.4.2 above). We are not justified in objecting to the way Ndhambi manipulated the vowels to produce the rhyme that he desired. Ntuli (1984:204) is of the opinion that

... an artist cannot be limited in the devices he wants to employ. A poet is free to borrow or emulate patterns which are used by other artists in other cultures. Why should there be an objection when a poet wants to decorate his piece with similar endings?

Ndhambi's employment of rhyme is justified if we accept Ntuli's argument. The fact that Ntuli refers to the term *decorate* in the above quotation, implies that the devices used may not contribute anything towards the meaning of the poem.

3.5 RHYME IN NKONDO'S POETRY

3.5.1 Nkondo in his *Mbita ya vulombe* (1969) employed rhyme in only 12 of his 35 poems. His rhyme differs from Ndhambi's in *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949) and *Switlhokovetsetlo swa vana* (1966), because he does not make use of the terminative vowels at the end of each line. Nkondo arranges similar syllables in succession at the beginning of the lines of his stanzas. When the reader comes to the beginning of each line, he is reminded of the previous sound. As a result, the poems could be considered as having some rhyme. For illustrative purposes, let us look at the poem *Phapha ra huwa* (Nkondo, 1969:13):

(25) *Ndzi languta henhla,
Mahlo yanga ya tlumbana na papa-
Dyipapa dya nsiti wa ntima.
Dyi ri karhi dyi vokotsa dyi mpfhumpfha-mpfhumpfheka
Dyi pfurha ndzilo;
Dyi hafemuteka;
Onge dyi ta swi tirha hi ku hatlisa.*

*Ndzi ve ndzi dyi kondzelela,
Ndzi rhiya tihlo ndzi ku nhwii!
Ndzi pfala nomo ndzi ku thuthununu!
Ndzi tshamiseka ndzi ku tikitiki!
Ndzi vona xivon'wa.*

*Dzinga ku huma nyuku wena,
To, ko fana na kwala.
Ro va phapha ra huwa.*

*(I look up at the sky,
My eyes see a thick cloud -
A big pitch-black cloud.
Roaring in all directions
Burning fire;
Time and again breathing;
As if it would work it out quickly, i.e. bring rain.*

*I had to tolerate it,
I looked at it steadfastly!*

*I closed my mouth and kept quiet!
I sat comfortably!
To see what had to be seen.*

*Nothing perspired, i.e. no rain came.
It was all in vain.
It was just an empty vessel.)*

In this poem, the initial syllable dyi in the third, fourth, fifth and sixth line of the first stanza forms a pattern that results in rhyme which we call initial rhyme, i.e. rhyme found at the beginning of lines of poems. The repetition of the subject concord in the second stanza produces rhyme. This is the pattern of rhyme that we find in almost all twelve of his poems where traces of rhyme are observed. Cf. *Ku tihlamusela* (p.5), *Vuxaka ni ntumbuluko* (p.6), *Fambelo ra ntumbuluko* (p.11), *U ta vuyeriwa Gaza* (p.12), *Muxe na Vukatimuni* (p.16), to quote but a few. It should be indicated that these subject concords do not occur in all stanzas. As a result of this irregularity, some stanzas have rhyme whilst others do not. Therefore, we could conclude that Nkondo's succession of these subject concords came spontaneously. If it were deliberate, he could have inserted this patterns into each stanza.

- 3.5.2 The arrangement of Nkondo's (1969:1) rhyme in the poem *Xirilo* is of great interest. The underlined words in the following stanza produce rhyme:

(26) Wena rirhandzu ra mina,
Wena rirhangu ra mina,
Wena rivoningo ranga,
Wena mupfuni wanga,
Wena makomba-ndlela,
U ndzi siyele ku yini?

(You my love,
You my protecting wall,
You my light,
You my helper,
You who shows me the way,
Why did you leave me?)

The absolute pronoun wena, is repeated in the beginning of the

first, second, third, fourth and fifth lines of this stanza. At the end of the first two lines, rhyme is achieved by the repetition of the absolute pronoun *mina*, whilst the possessives *ranga* na *wanga* in the third and fourth lines respectively, are employed to complete his rhyme pattern. The use of these absolute pronouns in apposition intensifies the strong relationship that existed between these two lovers. They were great lovers until death made them part. The question *U ndzi siyele ku yini?* (Why did you leave me?), reveals that the speaker is greatly touched by the death of his beloved.

- 3.5.3 Nkondo uses rhyme only in few isolated instances in twelve of his 35 poems. In Nkondo's (1969) poetry, rhyme appears spontaneously, whereas in Ndhambi's (1949 and 1966) an effort was made to devise schemes whereby endings of lines could be similar. This type of contrived rhyme, where words have been forced to adhere to a desired pattern by the poet, tends to degenerate into a decorative device which does not contribute anything to the ideas and intended meaning of the poem.

3.6 REPETITION IN NDHAMBI'S POETRY

- 3.6.1 In chapter 2, paragraph 2.3.34, repetition was highlighted as an important theoretical technique in poetry. In *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949), which has sixty poems, Ndhambi employs repetition in ten poems. In his *Switlhokovetsetlo swa vana* (1966), which has also been selected for this study, repetition is used in twenty of the total number of sixty poems. In this latter publication, Ndhambi uses repetition more than Nkondo does in his *Mbita ya vulombe* (1969).

The poem: *Mbilu* by Ndhambi (1966:14) shows this tendency:

(27) *We mbilu nthavela ya ngati vutomin'*
Wena tsawu ra rirhandzu, rirhandzu vanhwin'
We fundzu ra rivengo, rivengo tikwen',
We nyoka, nyoka ya le hansu misaven'
We baku ra xihundla, xihundla mhaken'.

*(You heart the fountain of blood in life,
 You the seat of love, the love in people,
 You the knot of hatred, hatred in the country,
 You the snake, the snake under the ground,
 You are the secret, the secret in the affair.)*

The underlined words in this poem indicate instances of deliberate repetition. Repetition in this instance is mostly intended for emphasis.

3.7 REPETITION IN NKONDO'S POETRY

3.7.1 Comparatively speaking, Ndhambi appears to be a master of repetition, whereas Nkondo employs it sparingly. The poem *Vona* (Nkondo, 1969:15) is an appropriate example of repetition in Nkondo's poetry.

(28) *Makwerhu, vona -
 Vona vanhu entsungeni, hi lavaya
 Vona, va hi kombetela hi matlhari,
 Vona, va virile.
 Twana, va hi tlhava hi marito ya vona.*

*Makwerhu, vona -
 Vanhu hi lavaya hase ka lwandle
 Vona va hi honolela
 Va hlota ku hi lwisa.*

I vanhu lavaya, a hi hina.

*(Brother, look -
 See those people there
 Look, they are pointing spears at us,
 See, they are furious.
 Listen, they shout at us.*

*Brother, look -
 There are people along the sea
 See how they look at us
 They are looking for a way of provoking us.*

It is those people, and not us.)

In this poem, the underlined words are instances of repetition. The words *makwerhu* and *vona*, particularly, are repeated. Their syntactical position is more or less the same in the first and the second stanzas. Nkondo uses this technique to create

rhythm in his poetry. Lexical items such as *makwerhu* and *vona* which recur in these stanzas at more or less regular intervals, help in creating rhythm.

3.8 PARALLELISM IN NDHAMI'S POETRY

3.8.1 In paragraph 2.3.44 above, it was mentioned that in parallelism each unit in the first member of verse is balanced by another unit in the second member. This is an important theoretical aspect of poetry often used by Ndhambi. Such use of parallelism contributes to the musical quality of his poetry.

3.8.2 The first and the last stanza of *Vana va tatana* in *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949:33), indicate the extent to which Ndhambi employs parallelism. The two stanzas under discussion are as follows:

FIRST STANZA

(29) *Mawaku loko ndzi ri xihlangi,
Loko ndzi nga si kuma vutivi,
Loko khokholo va ri vatswari,
Loko ndlala mina ndzi nga yi twi,
Loko tilo mina ndzi nga chavi.*

*(How good it was when I was still a child,
When I was without any knowledge,
When I still depended on my parents for protection,
When I did not know hunger,
When I did not fear lightning.)*

LAST STANZA

*Mawaku loko ndza ha ri ntsongo!
Loko ndza ha kurisiwa byongo,
Loko ndza ha dyisiwa mukapu,
Loko ndza ha ambexiwa nguvu,
Loko mahlo ya tele vusiku.*

*(How good it was when I was still young!
When my brain was still being developed,
When I was fed with soft porridge,
When I was still clothed by another person,
When my eyes were full of the night, i.e
when I was still ignorant.)*

The structure of these two stanzas indicates Ndhambi's deliberate creation of a specific form for this poem. The word *mawaku* is used in the first stanza, and repeated in the last stanza. The use of *Ioko* in both stanzas is of particular interest to us. The use of *Ioko* in the second line of the first stanza balances with *Ioko* in the third line. The same is true of *Ioko* in the fourth line which balances with *Ioko* in the fifth line. This phenomenon is referred to as parallelism.

- 3.8.3 Both stanzas deal with early childhood. Infancy is characterized by the inability of the individual to perform simple personal duties such as eating, clothing oneself and thinking in a constructive way. It also indicates the dependency of the child on the parents.

3.9 PARALLELISM IN NKONDO'S POETRY

- 3.9.1 Nkondo (1969:5) in the last stanza of *Ku tihlamusela*, employs parallelism as follows:

(30) *Ndzi languta mati, mapapa,
Ndzi languta na nhweti na tinguva ta lembe
Ndzi hlamusela leswaku hi swona, a hi mina.
Eku hlamuseleni ka mina, swona,
Eku kombeni ka mina ku hambana na swona,
Ndza karhi ndza tihlamusela.
Handle ka swona, swa tsandza.*

*(I look at the water, clouds,
I look at the month and seasons of the year
I explain that they are themselves, not myself.
In my explanation
To show their differences,
I am explaining myself.
Without them, it is impossible (to explain myself).*

In the poem, the first line balances with the second one in the use of the first two members, i.e. *Ndzi* and *languta*. The first line also balances with the second and the third line in respect of the syntactical position of the subject concord *ndzi*. We can also show that syntactically *eku* in the fourth line balances with *eku* in the fifth. Both *eku's* in line 4 and

5 of the above stanza are followed by *hlamuseleni* (explaining) and *kombeni* (showing) respectively and the possessive concord *ka*, which is also followed by the absolute pronoun *mina*. This clearly demonstrates parallelism in Nkondo's poetry. Nkondo's tendency in *Mbita ya vulombe* (1969) is to employ parallelism by frequently repeating the first word in each line of the stanza. In *Phapha ra huwa* (1969:13) the third stanza demonstrates this pattern:

(31) Ndzi ve ndzi dyi kondzelela,
Ndzi rhiya tihlo ndzi ku nhwii!
Ndzi pfala nomo ndzi ku thuthununu!
Ndzi vona xivon'wa

(I tolerated him,
 I looked at him steadfastly!
 I closed my mouth and kept quiet!
 I sat down comfortably!
 I saw visions.)

The other important feature here is the relationship or the balance that is shown by the use of the first *ndzi* and the second *ndzi* in each line of the stanza.

3.10 REFRAIN IN NDHAMI'S POETRY

3.10.1 In paragraph 2.3.39 above, it is stated that a refrain is a line, or several lines, repeated at regular intervals throughout the poem.

3.10.2 Ndhambi's poems are conspicuous by their lack of refrains. In his *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949), Ndhambi employed refrains in only three poems. These are *Xini?* (p.7), *Swa yila* (p.9) and *Xifufunhunu* (p.26). It is perhaps coincidental that we find the same number of poems in his *Switlhokovetseto swa vana* (1966) which have refrains. Two of these are entitled *Ndlela* (p.10) and *Munhu* (p.11). The third one is *Mafenya* which is found on page 13 in this publication. In the examples quoted below, refrains are indicated by means of underlining.

- 3.10.3 In paragraph 2.3.42 above, we quoted the poem *Xifufunhunu* to illustrate Ndhambi's use of refrains. What is of particular interest in his use of refrains in this poem is that the first line and last lines of each stanza are repeated. Owing to the fact that each stanza contains two refrains, we could simply refer to this phenomenon as double refrains.
- 3.10.4 These refrains help to reiterate the wonder the poet feels as he looks at what the beetle is doing. The beetle is pushing a cylindrical object made of cowdung, which is much bigger in size than the beetle itself, but surprisingly, it is reluctant to leave it behind. Ndhambi creates variations by alternating the verbs used in the refrains. The following poem: *Xini?* from *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949:1) serves as an appropriate example of these variations. The variations are indicated by the underlining as follows:

(32) *Tswuu! xini? Dyambu ri perili,
Tsayi! xini? I tinyeleti,
Paa! a henhla xini? I nhweti,
Dzwuu! xini? Hi byo vurhonga,
A hi ku saseka ka swona.*

*Kufu! xini-ke? I masana,
Viri! xini? I ximun 'wana,
Girr! i tilo ra dzindza,
Thoto-thotho-thotho i mfula,
A hi ku tsakisa ka swona.*

*Sii, sii, tswu! xini? Xinyanyana,
Vala-vala xini? Swiluva,
Kuvanga! i dyambu ku hisa.
N'ini nyoxi bombe ku nyala!
A hi ku tsakela ka swona.*

*Kukuku dzwi! matluka mirin',
Lala-petsa! rihunga moyen',
Gobyogobyogobyo! i mati nambyen',
We-we! huwa vuyan' xikolwen',
A hi vunandzi bya vutomi.*

*(Tswuu! what is it? The sun has set,
Tsayi! what is it? It is the stars,
Paa! what is it above? It is the moon,
Dzwuu! what is it? It is dawn,
It is beautiful indeed.*

Warm! what is it? It is the warm ray of sun,
Hot! what is it? It is the spring,
Girr! It is thundering,
Thoto-thoto-thoto it is the rain,
It is delightful indeed.

Sii, sii, tsw! what is it? A bird,
Shining! what is it? Flowers,
Shining! It is the heat of the sun.
Buzzing bees pride themselves of the sweet honey!
It is joyous indeed.

It is dark in the trees,
 Thin and folded! dense tall vegetation,
 Slosh noisily! It is the water in the river,
We-we! Noise, come back to school,
 Life is really interesting.)

3.11 REFRAIN IN NKONDO'S POETRY

- 3.11.1 Nkondo does not make frequent use of refrains. He employed them in only three poems in his *Mbita ya vulombe*. In the following examples all the underlined sentences are refrains:

SWI HERILE (Nkondo, 1969:3)

(33) *Wena Gavaza a wu ri ni nkoka*
A hi vumbene tani hi kala ra ndzilo
Hi voninga na ku hangunuxa makorho ya swidziva
swa rihanyu.
Nchumu a ku ri hava wa ku hi yimisa.
Swi herile.

U nga ha ndzi nyiki na voko ra wena
Na vuswin'we, ndzhombho wa rirhandzu.
Ndzi pfumeleri ntsena, ku lata nhloti
egandzelweni,
U nga tshuki u heta nkarhi
U ambexa hi miehleketo, leswi hundzeke.
Swi herile.

(Gavaza, you were precious to me
We were united like the ember of fire
We illuminated and searched deep pools of life.
There was nothing to stop us.
It is all over.

You should no longer give me your mouth and your
hand
And togetherness, the essence of our love.
Allow me only, to lay my tears onto the place of
worship.

*You should never waste time
To think of the past.
It is all over.)*

The phrase *Swi herile* at the end of each of the two stanzas of the poem, emphasises the strained relationship of the people who were great lovers, and the fact that there is no more love between them. The indentation of the refrain underlines the irrevocable loss of love.

- 3.11.2 In *Vuxaka ni ntumbuluko* (1969:6), Nkondo repeats the first line of each of this poem.

For example:

(34) *Ndzi vonile munhu
A titshemba ngopfu,
A tshika ku nwa swakunwa
A babarhuka milomo.*

*Ndzi vonile munhu
A nga rimi masimu,
A nga rhandzi swakudya
A phoveka marhama a kwaxuka.*

*Ndzi vonile munhu
A nga rhandzi swa mavoko,
A tshika na k'ambala
A tshwa hi mumu - a oma hi xirhami.*

*(I saw a person
He trusted himself very much,
He neglected drinking refreshments
His mouth became dry.*

*I saw a person
He did not plough the fields,
He did not like food
His cheeks were sunken.*

*I saw a person
He hated manual work,
He even neglected wearing clothes
The sun scorched him - he froze.)*

The refrain here is intended to emphasize the poet's vision of a man who thought he could succeed in life without doing what

others were doing. Every time the refrain *Ndzi vonile munhu* is mentioned the vision is confirmed. Nkondo, being a philosophical poet, in *Ku tihlamusela* (p.5), tries to define himself in terms of natural objects such as stars, sun, animals, bush and clouds. For example:

(35) *Hi ku languta tinyeleti,
Ndzi ti nyika nhlamuselo,
Ndzi kuma leswaku a ndzi tona.*

*Hi ku languta dyambu,
Ndzi ri hlamusela,
Ndzi kuma leswaku a ndzi rona.*

*Hi ku xiya-xiya swihari,
Ndzi vona mahanyelo na hinkwaswo swa swona,
Ndzi kuma leswaku a ndzi swona.*

*Hi ku languta nhova,
Ndzi ringa nhlamuselo,
Ndzi kuma leswaku a ndzi yona.*

*(By looking at the stars,
I tried to explain myself,
I realized I am not what they are.*

*By looking at the sun,
To explain it,
I realized I am not what it is.*

*By looking at the animals,
To see their ways of life,
I realised I am not what they are.*

*By looking at the bush,
I tried to get an explanation,
I realized I am not what it is.)*

When he looks at all these objects mentioned, he discovers with disappointment that he is different from them, hence the refrain: *Ndzi kuma leswaku a ndzi tona* (I realized I am not what they are). The last word in the four refrains varies in all instances. This variation is brought about by the fact that the first element of the absolute pronoun corresponds with the nouns it refers to, hence *rona* (dyambu), *swona* (swihari) and *yona* (nhova), must have their form in accordance with the prefixes of their noun classes.

3.12 STANZAS IN NDHAMI'S POETRY

- 3.12.1 Our theoretical discussion on the stanza in paragraph 2.3.47 above, indicated that a stanza is a group of lines in a poem dealing with a single idea.
- 3.12.2 Ndhambi in *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949) and *Switlhokovetsetlo swa vana* (1966), believes in the traditional division of the poem into stanzas of equal numbers of lines. In his first volume of poetry: *Swiphato swa Xitsonga*, he tends to use five line groups to form stanzas. Of the sixty poems which he wrote, half consist of five line stanzas. The remaining thirty use four to six line stanzas. Their composition is as follows: thirteen are stanzas of four lines whereas nine are of six line stanzas. The remaining eight poems are short poems with single stanzas of eight to twelve lines. This grouping is changed in his later anthology *Switlhokovetsetlo swa vana* (1966), where he predominantly makes use of four line stanzas. Of the sixty poems which he wrote in this volume, fifty use four line stanzas.
- 3.12.3 The poem *Misava* (Ndhambi, 1949:49) is quoted below to illustrate five line stanzas:

(36) *Mina misava n'wana wa dyambu,
Hosi ya n'weti na tinyeleti,
Mavanga-nhlekanhi na vusiku,
Mavanga-ximumu na xirhami,
Muyarendzo ra vuhumadyambu.*

*Ka ha ri mina khale ka mina,
Ndzi nga si nyunyetiwa gwembe,
Ndza ha ri ntumbuluku wuntshwa,
Misava yanga yi ri vulombe,
Mpfula ni n'wema swa ha ndzi rhandza.*

*(I the earth, daughter of the sun,
The elder sister to the moon and stars,
The cause of day and night,
The cause of summer and winter.
The one that travels to the east.*

*When I was still myself in the olden days,
 Before I was spoiled by mange,
 When I was still the new creation,
 My soil was still honey,
 When rain still loved me.)*

3.12.4 Ndhambi's *Ndlela* in *Switlhokovetsetlo swa vana* (1966:10) is an example of a poem with four line stanzas.

(37) *Ndlela, xikapeka-maganga muya-kule,
 Famba hi ku rhula we maphendla-swihlahla,
 Xincila, xinhloko, u hava hakunene,
 Xiphaka-marhavi tavalala ra misava.*

*Ndlela xirhelela-nkova xipotso-ribye,
 Lalama matikwen' we ndzhati wa misava!
 Aka vuxaka evanhwini lavanene,
 Khoma, khomisa matiko ya misava.*

*Ndlela, xivemba-ntshava xirhwala-mikondzo,
 U ni ku averiwa, xikarhi ka tiko,
 Famban', famban' n'we swa mikondzo ni masondzo,
 Hlanganani n'wina hinkwenu vamatiko.*

*Ndlela, xipela-nambu xifamba-matikwen',
 Famba, kundzumula byanyi u ya masin'win',
 Famba, rhelela tintshava u ya swihlobyen'.
 Famba, famba hinkwako-kwako laha tikwen'.*

*Ha! tindlela ta tiko rerhu ku saseka!
 Evupela-dyambu hi ya eXilungwini,
 Le vuxeni etikwen' ra vucema ha ya,
 Ha! ndlela u pakatse mikondzo yingani?*

*(The pathway, the carrier of hills, the one that
 goes far,
 Go in peace you who penetrates the bushes,
 The back and front, you really do not have,
 You develop branches like a network on earth.*

*The pathway that descends downwards and goes around
 a stone,
 Long live on earth, you the marker of the earth!
 Build the relationships in good people,
 Hold, unite countries of the world.*

*The pathway, you who go around the mountain, the
 carrier of feet,
 You are gifted on earth,
 Go, go, you are of feet and hooves,
 Unite, you all foreigners.*

*The pathway, you who crosses the river, you who
travels on earth,
Go, erode the grass and get to the fields,
Go, go all over into this country.*

*Ha, our country's pathways are beautiful,
The west leads us to civilization,
The east to the country of 'vucema' drink, we go,
Ha, the pathway, how many feet do you carry?)*

3.13 STANZAS IN NKONDO'S POETRY

3.13.1 The stanzas of Nkondo's poetry differ greatly from those of Ndhambi, for Nkondo does not maintain an equal number of lines in each stanza. For him, the thought involved determines the number of lines in a stanza.

3.13.2 The structure of some of his poems, such as *Nambu wa vutomi* (p.3), *A ndzi hungukanga* (p.4), *Swa phyama* (p.5), *Hi kona ku hanya* (p.7), *Xirilo xa lontsongo* (p.7), *Vumbhoni* (p.13) and *Gumba* (p.14), resembles that of sonnets, but the structure of these poems does not perfectly match the sonnet form. This could be a deliberate diversion from the prescribed form, or could be the result of insufficient knowledge of the requirements of the structure.

The correct number of lines of a sonnet, which is fourteen, is found in *Swi ta ku pfuna* (p.6), but its structure differs considerably from the Italian sonnet, which is made up of an octave (a unit of eight lines) and a sestet (a unit of six lines). The form of *Swi ta ku pfuna* could be likened to the English sonnet (also called the Shakespearean sonnet) because it is made up of a unit of twelve lines and a concluding couplet. The only difference is found with respect to rhyming. Most of Nkondo's poems do not have rhyme. Absence of rhyme was a characteristic of Nkondo's poetry mentioned in paragraph 3.5.1):

- (38) *Eka wena mufumi*
Ndzi ri u nga titsoni ku tsunxeka
Hi ku tivonela bodlheleni ra vutifumi.
Na wena mudyondzi
Ndzi ri eka wena, u nga titsoni ku tshunxeka
Hi ku tihoxa bodlheleni ra dyondzo.
Wena wa timali na wena
U nga tshuki u titsona "tshunxeko"
Hi ku tipfalela bodlheleni ra timali.
Na n'wina van'wana na van'wana,
Mi nga titsoni "tshunxeko",
Hi ku tipeta bodlheleni ra swin'wana ni swin'wana.
Pfula mahlo u vona leswinyingi
Swi ta ku pfuna.

(To you the rich man
I say do not deprive yourself of freedom
By looking at yourself through a bottle of the rich.
And you the learner
I say to you, do not deprive yourself of freedom
By putting yourself into the bottle of education.
You with the money also
Do not deprive yourself of freedom
By locking yourself into the bottle of money.
And you the rank and file,
Do not deprive yourself of freedom,
By immersing yourself in the bottle of this and that
Open your eyes to see many things
It will help you.)

Nkondo avoids writing stanzas of equal number of lines. Unlike Ndhambi in his *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949) and *Switlhokovetselo swa vana* (1966), he writes poems with stanzas which have an unequal number of lines which also do not have the same length. The form of the lines appears to represent his free flow of ideas, which results in what we call free verse style, of which Ntuli (1984:233) says:

... free verse is not just a haphazard putting together of irregular lines.

Ntuli (op.cit.:239) further indicates that:

Free verse is not completely uncontrolled. It has its rhythm although this need not be rigid and regular. A poet can use rhyme when this comes naturally. It need not form a regular pattern right through the poem.

3.13.3 Although Nkondo does not have the same number of lines in each stanza, for example in the poem *Fambelo ra ntumbuluko* (1969:10), we are able to follow the logic through the succession of his stanzas. For instance, the first stanza consists of 10 lines; the second 5; the third and fourth 4 lines each; the fifth one 12; the sixth 10; the seventh 4 and the last one 7. The number of lines differs in each stanza, but they remain logical, because what the children do in the first stanza up to the last one occurs progressively until they are engulfed by the natural course of events in the last stanza. An unequal number of lines in the stanzas is found in almost all Nkondo's (1969) poems. The poem *Ndzi tshike ndzi vona* (p.15) has, for example, 4 lines in the first stanza and 8 lines in the second stanza, which is also the last stanza of this poem. *Ku tihlamusela* (p.5) has 3 lines in each of the first four stanzas and the last stanza has 7 lines. This poem appears as follows:

- (39) *Hi ku languta tinyeleti*
Ndzi ti nyika nhlamuselo,
Ndzi kuma leswaku a ndzi tona. } THREE LINES IN
 A STANZA
- Hi ku languta dyambu,*
Ndzi ri hlamusela,
Ndzi kuma leswaku a ndzi rona. } THREE LINES IN A STANZA
- Hi ku xiya-xiya swihari,*
Ndzi vona mahanyelo na hinkwaswo swa swona,
Ndzi kuma leswaku a ndzi swona. } THREE
 LINES IN
 A STANZA
- Hi ku languta nhova,*
Ndzi ringa nhlamuselo,
Ndzi kuma leswaku mina a ndzi yona. } THREE LINES
 IN A STANZA
- Ndzi languta mati, mapapa,*
Ndzi languta na nhweti na tinguva ta lembe
Ndzi hlamusela leswaku hi swona; a hi mina.
Ekus hlamuseleni ka mina swona,
Ekus kombeni ka mina ku hambana na swona,
Ndzi karhi ndza tihlamusela.
Handle ka swona, swa tsandza. } SEVEN LINES
 IN A STANZA

3.13.4 The form of Nkondo's stanzas as exemplified by the poems quoted above, is a clear example of his use of unequal numbers of lines in each stanza. The division of the poem into stanzas of

dissimilar number of lines is not consciously devised, but the message to be put across dictates the form which each stanza takes. In a stanza where much has to be said, the poet adds lines as he pleases.

3.14 TONE IN NDHAMI'S POETRY

3.14.1 In paragraph 2.3.60 above, we referred to tone as a manner of speaking or writing that shows a certain attitude on the part of the speaker or writer. This attitude is expressed in the writer or speaker's choice of words and phrasing. It was also indicated that tone can either be pessimistic, cynical, ironic, optimistic, objective, satiric, comic or tragic.

3.14.2 In order to comprehend tone in Ndhambi's poetry, we should first show the position from which he addresses his subject. Ndhambi tends to stand at a distance from the subject which he is writing about. He, therefore, completely dissociates himself from the subject and praises it whilst at a position relatively far from it. However, he does not seem merely to be presenting the physical nature, but creates an emotional environment as well. Ndhambi says:

(40) *Vangama makhurisini,
Tsakama hansi tintshaven'
N'we tintshava n'wi chaveni,
N'we Vavhenda rhurhumelan',
Vonan' swikwembu bakwini.*

*Fundudzi, u ni swikwembu,
Swikwembu leswa tinyoka.
Mi nga chaveni n'we vanhu!
Tanani mi ta hlalela
Leswi sasekeke ngopfu.*

*(Shine alongside your banks,
Be moist deep inside the mountains,
You mountains, fear her,
You Vendas, tremble,
See the gods inside the caves.*

*Fundudzi has gods,
The gods of snakes,
You people, do not be afraid!
Come and see
The most beautiful things.*

The lake is addressed by the poet from a physical distance where he is able to see well, and observe all the lake's features. His emotional stance and attitude is that of wondering at the miraculous nature of the lake.

When we think of the Vendas who tremble when they look at the lake, the snakes which turned into gods, and the natural beauty of the surroundings, we, as readers, are able to detect a tone of fear in the speaker. The fact that this lake seems to have a current of water cutting across it; snakes that have turned into gods, and its geographical position between the mountains and gigantic stones, create a tone of fear in this poem. The gods that are found in hideous caves in the lake intensify the fear.

- 3.14.3 In *Khongoloti* (1949:18) the speaker is a personified millipede. The intentions of this millipede are understood through its address to the audience. The poet thus creates for us a 'millipedian' reality. The following stanzas from *Khongoloti* illustrate this point perfectly:

(41) *Hi mina khongoloti vito ra mina,
Mufambi ni muaki tikwen' ra mpfula.
Ndzi tshama emisaven' hansa ka mirhi.
Loko ndzi etelele ndzi fana ni hari.*

*Ndzi sakamela laha ku tsakamaka,
Ndzi xitimela kambe musa ndzi hava
Na milenge ya mina a yi na ntsengo,
Hi me kombeleni ni dyambu ra tilo.*

*(I am millipede by name
The traveller and the inhabitant of the country of
rain.*

*I stay on the ground under the tree.
When asleep, I am like a halo (i.e. something that
protects the head when carrying heavy things).*

*I move in moist places,
I am a train but I have no smoke
My legs are innumerable,
I am the one who is asked by the sun in the sky.)*

3.15 TONE IN NKONDO'S POETRY

- 3.15.1 The tone of Nkondo's poetry in *Mbita ya vulombe* (1969), is unique and differs considerably from that of Ndhambi. Nkondo, as a modern poet, does not praise, but speaks his mind. The mood created by the words he employs in his poetry is that of a man seriously concerned with the vicissitudes of life. In contrast to Ndhambi, Nkondo studies the problems of being human, such as love, hatred, vengeance, worry, sorrow, to mention but a few, and exposes them to the reader. For example, in *Gaza* (1969:4) Nkondo speaks subtly about the inefficiency of some members of Gaza, which is an abbreviation for Gazankulu, in making this national state what it should be, i.e. a rapidly developing homeland:

(42) *Wena, Gaza,
Ntshewevele ya tinhlolo ta Vatsonga,
Wena Xikwembu xa rihanyu na rifu ra hina
Voneka emitirhweni ya vana vaku.*

*Ku hanya ka hina
I ku yembula sirha raku,
Hi yembula sirha hi chela vutomi.*

*Ku hanya ka hina i ka wena.
Vutlhari ni vukulukumba bya wena hi byi tamele,
Hi byi pimanisa ni tinguva ta misava.*

*(You, Gaza,
The medicine pouch of the heads of Vatsonga,
You God of our life and death
Be noticed by the deeds of your children.*

*Our living
Is in the exhumation of your grave,
We exhume the grave to pour life into it.*

*Our life is yours.
Your intelligence and the greatness we have,
We compare them with the seasons of the earth.)*

Those who are incapable of contributing towards the progress of Gaza, are referred to as dead people. Gaza achieves nothing without the dedication of her people. The first line of the third stanza *Ku hanya ka hina i ka wena* (our life is yours),

indicates that Gaza progresses through the industriousness of its people. The tone of this poem is optimistic.

- 3.15.2 The voice of a man concerned with the welfare of his countrymen is heard when we read the poem *Mpfula* (1969:9). Here, Nkondo feels that his beloved should not run away from rain, no matter how hard it falls, because rain symbolizes the justice of God, the Almighty. God brings rain that falls on earth equally on all people. Nkondo wants to reveal to us that God has no favouritism and is fair to all mankind. God's actions are different from those of a secular minister of religion, who as a human being, is prone to partiality. He says:

(43) *We murhandziwa,
Yima, u tsutsumela yini?
Nkhensa mpfula leyi.
Ku tsakama ka mina na wena i nkateko.*

*Mufundhisi a a nga ta⁴swi kota,
Mina na wena a ta hi tsakamisa ku hambana;
A chela wena, a ta chela mina
Kasi mpfula yin'we ya hi nela
Yi cheleta kan'we ximilani xa rirhandzu ra hina.*

*(My darling
Wait, why are you running?
Welcome this rain.
Our getting wet is a blessing.*

*The pastor would fail,
He would pour water on us differently,
He would first pour on you, thereafter come to me
But rain falls on us simultaneously
It waters the plant of our love at the same time.)*

The tone of a man who believes that God loves all human beings equally prevails in this poem. The speaker reveals that he has no faith in ministers of religion, who in most cases, act partially.

- 3.15.3 Nkondo acknowledges the fact that no matter how we occupy ourselves in life, old age will inevitably catch up with us. For example, in *FambeTo ra ntumbuluko* (1969:10), he says:

- (44) *He te ha ha tlanga hi mamisana tintiho,
Dyambu hi leriya!!
Ri kongoma vupeladyambu -
Vupeladyambu bya nkova wa timbyatsu.*

*(As we were playing, suckling one another's fingers,
The sun was moving!!
Leaving to the west -
The west of the valley of wrinkles.)*

In this poem, Nkondo creates an analogy of children playing on top of a hillside, but as they play, a valley caused by erosion through the years, i.e. old age, waits for them at the foot of the mountain. As the children play, they do not take cognisance of the imminence of old age. They become aware of this fact when it is already too late. It is then no longer possible to beat a hasty retreat. Nkondo says:

- (45) *He te hi swi vonisa ku tano -
Hi vona vusuhi bya kona,
Hi pembela-pembela
Hi tela hi miehleketo yo tshentsha.*

*Matimba yo tshentsha yo hi to!
Nomo wa nkova wa timpfi - hangaa!!
Dyambu - makomba ndlela hi leriya!!
Ri pfula ndlela yo ya nkoveni wa timbyatsu.
Ku hundzuluka a swi nga endleki,
A hi fanela ntsena ku famba -
Hi famba hi fambelo ra ntumbuluko.*

*(As we observed it that way -
We realized how near it (old age) was,
We started jumping up and down
The idea of retreating came.*

*The strength to retreat was not there!
The entrance to the valley of grey hair was wide
open.*

*The sun - that shows the way was moving!
It was not possible to turn back,
The only thing to do was to proceed -
And go in accordance with nature.)*

- 3.15.4 The analysis of tone requires great caution, because it depends largely on the reader's ability to make inferences from the poem under review. When evaluating Ndhambi's tone in *Fundudzi*, it became very clear that he revered all that is found in this

lake. Nkondo's attitude towards old age and death is apparent in *Fambelo ra ntumbuluko*, in which the inevitability of both old age and death are clearly expressed. Nkondo does not only reveal this attitude towards old age and death in *Fambelo ra ntumbuluko* (1969:10), but also in poems such as *Xirilo* (1969:1) and *Rifu* (op. cit.:1).

3.16 IMAGERY IN NDHAMI'S POETRY

- 3.16.1 In paragraph 2.3.64 above, a definition of imagery was given. It was said, amongst other things, that imagery is a process of creating images or pictures in the mind through the help of mental association.
- 3.16.2 We have already indicated in par. 3.14.2 above that Ndhambi, as a praise poet, prefers to distance himself from the subject he addresses and as result, the images in his poetry do not indicate his subjective involvement.
- 3.16.3 In the poem *Mpimavayeni* (Ndhambi, 1949:17), the period which precedes dusk is praised in terms appropriate to this particular time of day. In the second line of the stanza, *Tshwukeleni muhlovo wa nsuku*, Ndhambi refers to the golden colour that characterizes this period. This colour comes as a result of the reflection of the sun on the earth. When one looks at the western horizon, one sees the natural beauty of the setting of the sun:

(46) *Saseka wena mpimavayeni
Tshwukeleni muhlovo wa nsuku.
Vonakala etinhlohlorini,
Saseka evupeladyambu.*

*(Be beautiful, you time when visitors come
Red the golden colour.
Be seen at the horizon,
Be beautiful in the west.)*

- 3.16.4 It is during this time of the day that we see the activity of people streaming back from their place of employment. For

instance, herdboys and shepherds are seen herding their livestock to their kraals. This is a clear sign that the day's work is done. It is not only the herdboys and other workers that down their tools in preparation for their supper and night of rest, but the fowls also take their places in the trees and fowl-runs. The children who have been playing end their day and go to sleep. The fourth and the fifth stanzas illustrate that *Mpimavayeni* is not only good for human beings, but also for trees and animals:

(47) *Tibombise we mpimavayeni!
Hangalasa mitirho ya wena
Etikweni ra vanhu ni mirhi,
Nhenha etlela muguzalala.*

*Swihari ni swikhovha pfukani,
Mpimavayeni u pfule ndlela.*

*(Make yourself nice mpimavayeni
Spread your work
To the land of man and trees,
Hero, have a restful sleep.*

*Animals and owls get up,
Mpimavayeni has opened the way.)*

In this poem, we are exposed to all the activities that take place during the period before sunset and immediately thereafter. It is a vivid description of the time prior to dusk. Animals and owls are seen coming out from their hiding places, to start gambolling and roaming around, when their enemies (people) have gone to sleep. The idea of the rotation of the earth is brought out clearly by the fact that when the sun sets in one region, e.g. South Africa, it automatically rises in another, viz. America. This idea is contained in the last two lines of this poem:

(48) *Hundzuka vurhonga etikweni
Leri nge kule ra Vamerika.*

*(Turn into dawn in the country
Which is far away in America.)*

With this assertion, Ndhambi is trying to fulfil a moral obligation, i.e. to teach or enlighten the community about unknown phenomena. For example, in this stanza, he wanted his audience to be aware of the geographical phenomenon that the earth rotates on its axis while it revolves around the sun to cause day and night.

The impact of this poem depends heavily on personification. The poem personifies the setting sun. To show that this is a very important period to man, animals and trees, Ndhambi says: *Tibombise we mpimavayeni* (Pride yourself *mpimavayeni*), which enriches the idea that this time is fundamental to the life of all on earth. The sentence *Hangalasa mitirho ya wena* (Spread your work) creates the image of a responsible person who allocates work to all living and non-living organisms. Ndhambi succeeds in putting this idea across because of his use of personification. The following lines:

(49) *Swihari ni swikhovha pfukani
Mpimavayeni u pfule ndlela.*

*(Animals and owls get up,
Mpimavayeni has opened the way.)*

further evoke in the mind that period of the day which activates the machinery of nocturnal life. The line *Mpimavayeni u pfule ndlela* creates the vivid picture of a man who removes stumbling blocks out of the way, so that people can move easily to their respective destinations. The use of the subjective concord u intensifies the picture of this man.

3.17 IMAGERY IN NKONDO'S POETRY

- 3.17.1 The first poem in Nkondo's *Mbita ya vulombe* (1969), *Xirilo*, is a display of his special skill in the use of imagery.

(50) *Wena rirhandzu ra mina,
Wena rirhangu ra mina,
Wena rivoningo ranga,
Wena mupfuni wanga,
Wena makomba-ndlela,
U ndzi siyela ku yini?*

*U xihlovo xa ngati ni vutomi bya mina.
U ndzi siyerile magandlati ni makhukhuri ya misava,
Hakunene, wena Xikwembu xanga
U ndzi tsemetile masungulo.
Ndzi famba ntsena
Kambe a ndzi na vuyo.
A wu ri nhonga ni rixongotelo ra mina
Sweswi ndza languta ntsena
Ndzi vona vugima-musi.*

*(You my love,
You my protecting wall,
You my light,
You who show me the way,
Why did you leave me?*

*You are the fountain of blood and my life.
You left me the waves and debris of the soil,
Really, you my god,
You nipped me in the bud.
I walk aimlessly
But I have no destination.
You were my staff and supporter
Now I only look and
See the horizon.)*

3.17.2 Before we examine Nkondo's special skill in the use of imagery in the poem *Xirilo* (1969:1), it is essential that we first focus on the subject of this poem. The poet creates in our mind a picture of a man who, whilst his wife is still alive, is well protected and knows how to live his life. His wife is everything to him. But as soon as death parts them, the life of this man changes abruptly.

3.17.3 Nkondo conveys his message by his manner of expression. His brevity of expression, i.e. the short and crisp lines such as:

(51) *Wena rirhandzu ra mina,
Wena rirhangu ra mina,
Wena rivoningo ranga,
Wena mupfuni wanga,
Wena makomba-ndlela ...*

(You my love,
 You my light,
 You my protective wall
 You my helper,
 You my path indicator ...)

evokes various images. The images used engage the reader in intellectual exercise, for they make him 'see' the importance of the speaker's loved one. The idea is enriched by the images. Nkondo draws his images from various natural objects. The speaker refers to his dead wife as his *rirhangu*, i.e. a wall made of stones, which implies that with his wife there was nothing to fear, for this protective wall shielded him. The term *rirhangu* also suggests that his life was secure when she was still alive. In the third line of the poem *Wena rivonigo ranga* (You my light), the speaker indicates that his life was not only secure, but was also illuminated by his beloved. The word *rivonigo* (light), is an image which conjures in us a picture of a woman who brightens somebody's life. As a result, this man did not grope in the dark. His way was always clear. The wife is also associated with *makomba-ndlela* (path indicator). *Rivonigo* (light) and *makomba-ndlela* (path indicator) are word pictures which evoke in our minds the vital role that the deceased played in the speaker's life. Her death is, indeed, an irrevocable loss.

- 3.17.4 In the second stanza, the speaker emphasises his wife's worth by using a catalogue of images that leaves us with a clear understanding of his present state. The first line of the second stanza *U xihlovo xa ngati ni vutomi bya mina* (You are a fountain of blood and my life) shows the important role that this woman played in the life of the speaker. *Xihlovo* (fountain) is a source of pure cold water that quenches those who are thirsty. The water in the fountain is associated with the blood in the body of the speaker. Without blood circulating in our bodies, there can be no life at all. Therefore, now that the woman is gone, the speaker is left lifeless because his 'blood' is gone, although he is physically still alive. His lifelessness is expressed in the second line

of this stanza, viz. *U ndzi siyerile magandlati ni makhukhuri ya misava* (You left me waves and debris of the earth). The words *magandlati* (waves) and *makhukhuri* (debris) are images of a distressing situation, where the speaker feels the vacuum created by the loss he suffered. The speaker further feels that there is no hope in his life. He says:

(52) *U ndzi tsemetile masungulo.
A ndza ha ri na ndzhombo.*

*(You nipped me in the bud.
I no longer have a sting, i.e. I no longer have the
energy to do anything).*

The word *ndzhombo* (sting) signifies stinging objects, such as the sting of a bee, which cause pain to the body. It may also signify a head of an abscess or carbuncle, whose relief to the sufferer only comes when the abscess is squeezed and pus is drained. Therefore, *ndzhombo* in this context conveys an impression of induced pain. The speaker's hopelessness is also shown in the following lines from the second stanza:

(53) *Ndzi famba ntsena
Kambe a ndzi na vuyo.*

*(I travel aimlessly
I have no destination.)*

These lines evoke images of a person who wanders aimlessly without a purpose. He wanders because of lack of proper direction, for the wife who used to lead him is no more. The following lines give us a vivid indication of how important his deceased wife was:

(54) *A wu ri nhonga ni rixongotelo ra mina
Sweswi ndza languta ntsena
Ndzi vona vugima-musi.*

*(You were my staff and supporter
Now, I look only and
See the horizon.)*

The aged who are no longer able to walk, support their slow movements by the *nhonga* (stick) and *rixongotelo* (walking staff). The word *nhonga* evokes a picture of a person who is leaning heavily on a walking staff, and who, without it, cannot make any progress. This person tries hard to gaze around, but there is virtually nothing to see. The word *vugima-musi* (horizon) signifies futility, for the horizon keeps on moving away from the observer's eye. The speaker has no prospects because his wife has succumbed to her mortality. The last stanza:

(55) *Ndzi ni xitshembo n'wina mihandzukulobye*
N'wina hi lowaka swin'we,
Na n'wina vasiyiwa vambe
Leswaku xirhapa lexi
Xi ta humesa mihandzu yintshwa.

(I have hope, you fellow-men
You who together we bewitch,
And you my distant relatives who mourn with me,
That this garden, i.e. grave
Will produce new fruit, i.e. new way of life.)

shows a feeling of hope in the speaker. He feels that this death ought not to be a *cul de sac* in the struggle for survival without the wife that meant everything to him. The use of the words *mihandzukulobye* (fellow fruits, i.e. fellowmen) and *mihandzu yintshwa* (new fruits) brings the idea of kinship into this discourse. This is emphasized by the use of *-kulobye* which shows their relatedness. The relationship is also observed in the use of *n'wina hi lowaka swin'we* (You with whom I bewitch). The word *swin'we* (together) also expresses this belonging together.

- 3.17.5 From the above discussion, it is clear that Nkondo uses word pictures which evoke striking images. Imagery is a valuable asset to a poet, for if a sensory experience is brought clearly to his readers' mind, they can be involved more readily in the poem and thus experience some of the pleasure they expect from poetry.

3.18 SYMBOLISM IN NDHAMI'S POETRY

- 3.18.1 In paragraphs 2.3.75 and 2.3.76 above, we indicated that a symbol is anything which stands for, or represents, or suggests something else.

Here we are concerned with Ndhambi's use of symbols in his poetry. We will examine his use of symbols by analysing the following poems from his works, viz. *Vusiku* (1949:19), *Donki* (op. cit.:25) and *Vana va tatana* (op. cit.:33).

- 3.18.2 In his poem *Vusiku*, Ndhambi makes use of the word *inki* (ink) to represent the darkness that covers the earth at night. In the second stanza, the poet says:

(56) *Tilo ri tele mavoningo*
La' nga mpfhukeni henhla ka nhloko.
'Tidaiman' makun'wini ya mpfhuka
Eku voningela misava ...

(The sky is full of lights
In space over our heads.
The diamonds at the end of space
To illuminate the earth ...)

The word *mavoningo* (lights) represents all heavenly bodies, like the stars and the moon, which illuminate the earth at night. The word *tidaimani* (diamonds) stands for the glittering of stars in the sky.

- 3.18.3 The title of the poem *Donki* is symbolic, for it represents all the suffering endured by the donkey. The mere mention of the word *donki* signifies ill-treatment by some person who has authority over another person, hence the expression *a ndzi donki ya wena* (I am not your donkey, i.e. a person to be ill-treated like that).

- 3.18.4 In the fourth and fifth stanzas of the poem *Vana va tatana*, Ndhambi expresses the fact that children will grow and be useful members of the community. These two stanzas appear as follows:

(57) *Vana vanga bombelani vuntshwa,
Byi bombeleni masakwin' yenu,
Vuhlangi bya n'wina bya nandziha,
A byi nandzihe hambu mundzuku,
Mundlwani a a fane ni namuntlha.*

*Kunene mi sasekile vana,
Mikarhi ya n'wina i rihlaza,
Masiku ya n'wina i masana,
Marhama ya n'wina i marhanga.
Na mahlo ya n'wina ya tsayima.*

*(My children enjoy your youthful state
Appear nice in your days,
Your childhood is pleasant,
Let it be pleasant even tomorrow,
The day after tomorrow should be like today.*

*Truly you are beautiful children,
Your time is green,
Your days are the sun to bask in,
Your cheeks are like squash,
And your eyes are glittering.)*

Ndhambi uses such words as *mundzuku* (tomorrow), *mundlwani* (day after tomorrow) and *namuntlha* (today) to carry his message across. The potential of the children is symbolically expressed by words such as *rihlaza* (green), *masana* (ray of sunlight) and *marhanga* (squash). *Rihlaza* (green) represents the potential of these children. A green colour always represents youth, whilst *masana* (ray of sunlight) stands for happiness and joy. The word *marhanga* (squash) represents faces that are still smooth and round. Wrinkles have not yet formed on the faces of these children. As a result, their potential for developing into useful members of the community is anticipated.

3.19 SYMBOLISM IN NKONDO'S POETRY

3.19.1 Nkondo also employs symbolism in his poetry. We shall illustrate the extent to which he uses symbols by analyzing two of his poems, i.e. *Rifu* (1969:1) and *Vutomi* (op. cit.:3).

3.19.2 In *Rifu*, Nkondo (1969:1) says:

- (58) *Ndzi n'wi vonile mina!*
A kongomile vupela-dyambu
Ku sele ntsena vugima-musi byin'we,
Byin'we ntsena; a pela naro!

(I saw him !
Heading for the west
There was only a single horizon left,
A single one only and for him to set with it (the
sun)!

The words underlined in this poem are symbolic. They create an idea of a person who is approaching death. He has reached a point of no return. His destination is the west (*vupela-dyambu*), which is the only horizon he must reach to set with the sun. The west and the setting of the sun symbolize the death the man is to encounter. The word *vugima-musi*, in our everyday use, refers to the place where the sky touches the earth, i.e. the horizon. In the olden days, people were of the opinion that this horizon was really the end of the country and that behind it there was no life at all. Therefore, *vugima-musi* (horizon) is employed by the poet to symbolize the end of life. The verb *pela*, i.e. to set, is also used to symbolize the manner in which one passes away. As we read the following lines of this poem, we are again struck by many symbols:

- (59) *Xikandza xona a xi ri ntima*
Xinyama xa ndzhope: vukarhi bya rifu.

(The face was black
the darkness of mud: the fury of death).

In daily life, the bereaved wear black clothes. This is a sign that they are mourning and thus invite sympathy from their fellowmen. Therefore, the words *ntima* (black) and *xinyama* (darkness) symbolize death. The poet deliberately uses these words to show how evil death is.

- 3.19.3 Another poem which is heavily laden with symbols is *Nambu wa vutomi* by Nkondo (1969:3). The title (The river of life) symbolizes life as experienced by all men on earth. Life is

symbolized as a river in flood, which carries various kinds of debris on its way to the sea. An examination of the poem will reveal the symbols:

- (60) *Languta, nambu wa vutomi wu hobomulana.*
Hlangula malanga
U vona makhukhuri ya vutomi.
Basisa mahlo ya wena
U vona ndzhope ya vutomi.
Hundzuluxa mahlo nakambe
U vona ku tenga ka mati ya vutomi.
Ina - I vutomi bya mani na mani.
Makhukhuri; ndzhope; ku tenga,
Swi endla vukulu bya vutomi.

(See the river of life in flood.
Wipe off the pulse from your eyes
To see the debris of life.
Cleanse your eyes
To see the mud of life.
Turn your eyes again
To see the purity of water of life.
Yes - it is everyone's life.
Debris; mud; purity,
All make the greatness of life.)

The verb *hobomulana* indicates the manner in which the river flows when in flood. It flows very strongly, making a roaring sound. This word indicates how tumultuous life can be at times. The poet warns the reader to be aware. His warning is highly symbolic because he says:

- (61) *Hlangula malanga.*
(Wipe the pulse on your eyes away)

The noun *malanga* (pulse) symbolizes many things, it might be objects, ignorance, unawareness etc., which cause one not to be aware of what is taking place around one. Nkondo uses this kind of symbolic language in order to give a vivid and forceful description of the situation.

- 3.19.4 Furthermore, when we read *Nambu wa vutomi*, (op. cit.:3) we discover that symbols are used in almost every line of the poem. For instance, *makhukhuri* (debris) and *ndzhope* (mud),

symbolize the difficulties and sufferings that one experiences whilst still alive on earth. *Basisa mahlo* (cleanse eyes) has the same basic meaning as *hlangula malanga* (wipe pulse), referred to above. *Hundzuluxa mahlo* (turn eyes) also expresses the idea of looking all around in order to be aware of what is happening around one. In *U vona ku tenga ka mati ya vutomi* (you see the purity of the water of life), *ku tenga ka mati*, symbolizes all the good aspects of life. This also represents an optimistic view of life. In the last line of this poem, Nkondo uses *vukulu bya vutomi* (the greatness of life), to show how important life is, hence his persuasion to all people that they take care of everything they do.

- 3.19.5 To recapitulate, we would like to indicate that in everyday life we might say that a final pay cheque symbolizes the termination of a job, just as falling leaves symbolize the beginning of winter. In literature, a rose, for example, symbolizes love, and sleep symbolizes death. But in most instances, what is often called a symbol is really a mode of expression, not of thought, and the term metaphor is adequate to describe the usage. Therefore, some of the examples of symbolism above might sound metaphoric rather than symbolic.

3.20 PERSONIFICATION IN NDHAMI'S POETRY

- 3.20.1 In paragraphs 2.3.78, 2.3.79 and 2.3.80 above, personification was defined. It was indicated that personification is the comparison of an abstraction or a non-human thing to a human by attributing human qualities to it. Personification is a type of metaphor.
- 3.20.2 In *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949) Ndhambi proves to be a master of personification. It is in this particular poetic device that Ndhambi, in contrast to Nkondo, excels. The poem: *Nhlekanhi* (p.16), illustrates Ndhambi's use of personification:

(62) *Nhlekanhi dyambyin' ra ximumu,
Hosi leyikulu ya siku.
We dyambu yima exikarhi,
Kombisa matimba vanhwini,
Oxa swimilani hinkwaswo.
Twela vusiwana mimphovo.*

*Yiman' varimi ni varisi,
Fambisan' mitlhambi ndzhutini.
N'we vadzumberi kotsokani
Langutisani n'wanhlekanhi,
Yingiselani swindzerere
Swi twakala la ni le kule.*

*Haha ndzongo emisaveni!
Kokwana Ntumben' susa jasi,
Muchayeri wisa hi nhlana,
Tuvucha hansi ka magova!
Virimela n'wanhlekanhi,
Vavela switsongwa-tsongwani.*

*Tirha mahisa-swa-misava!
Kelela mati ya swidziva.
Pfanan' mi vuya n'we mapapa,
Nghwetlisan' vuyan' mimoya
Hlanganani mpfhuken' wa tiko,
Vuyan' manthosi mutototo.*

*(Midday in hot summer sun,
The big chief of the day.
You, sun stand in the middle,
Show power to the people,
Roast all the plants,
Pity the unripe maize.*

*You farmers and herdboys, stop,
Drive your stock in the shade.
You night watchmen stop working
See the midday,
Listen to the cicadas
They are heard near and far.*

*Moisture, evaporate in the soil!
Granny Ntumbeni, remove your overcoat,
Driver, rest on your back,
Burn in the valleys!
Be hot midday,
Scorch all the germs.*

*Work, you the burner of all that belongs to the
earth!
Draw the water from the big pools of rivers.
In the meantime, come back you clouds,
Hurry, come back you winds
Meet in the sky,
Come, you drops of water.)*

Ndhambi depicts midday as something with human attributes. Verbs such as *oxa* (roast), *twela vusiwana* (pity), *vavela* (scorch), *tirha* (work) and *kelela* (draw water) are actions specifically performed by human beings. In *Mpimavayeni*, personification is also realized:

- (63) *Saseka wena mpimavayeni*
Tshwukeleni muhlovo wa nsuku.
Vonakala etinhlorini,
Saseka evupeladyambu.

(Be beautiful you sunset time
You of red - the golden colour
Be seen at the horizon
Be beautiful in the west.)

Mpimavayeni, which is a period immediately after sunset, and soon before dusk, is given the human features of being able to communicate with people. The absolute pronoun *wena* is used to refer to this period. *Wena* can only be applied to a person. The personification seems to be spontaneous rather than contrived. He urges *mpimavayeni* (sunset) to be pleasant to all people.

- 3.20.3 We find two types of personification in Ndhambi's poetry. In the first type, Ndhambi distances himself from the subject that he praises, and a relatively objective description of the subject is presented to the reader. For example, in *Fundudzi*, Ndhambi uses the absolute pronoun *wena* (you) and the subjective concord *u* to address the lake as a person:

- (64) *Fundudzi tiva ra Venda!*
Hi wena ximita mati
Wena khwiri ra misava.
We' mati u ma yisa kwi
Xikarhini ka tintshava?

(Fundudzi the lake of Venda!
You are the one that swallows the water
You the stomach of the earth.
Where do you take water to
In the centre of the mountains?)

- 3.20.4 In the second type of personification the poet assumes the role of the object which then addresses its audience. In poems like *Khongoloti* (1949:18), *Vhiki* (op. cit.:23), *Donki* (op. cit.:25), *Misava* (op. cit.:51), *Poto* (op. cit.:54) and *Mati* (op. cit.:55), Ndhambi pretends to be the object which talks. This results in an intimate and emotional identification with the object. In his praise poetic style, his ideas flow to give the description of the subject under consideration. In the poem *Poto* (p.54), for instance, he describes the pot in the words of the pot itself:

(65) *Hi mina poto mbhuri-xa-ntima nkence!
Nsimbhi ya Mulungu minharhu tserere!
Magingirikele vayeni ndlala nkwe!
Ndza humelela timbita ti hlangane
Wansati wanuna u ndzi khoma nkence!
Vuswa ni nyama swa ndzi rhandza swinene.*

*(I am a pot, the black beauty that jingles!
The iron of the European with three legs!
I work hard to remove hunger of the visitors
quickly!
I always win amongst clay pots.
When a woman or a man touches me, there is a jingle!
Porridge and meat love me very much.)*

3.21 PERSONIFICATION IN NKONDO'S POETRY

- 3.21.1 Nkondo's poetry relates to his personal experience of his environment and as result, he is highly subjective. He expresses his relationship with and personal opinion about everything around him. He allows his thinking to be evaluated by the listeners by confronting his audience with his point of view. In the poem *Ku saseka ka mfenhe* (1969:21) the audience's attention is drawn to the natural beauty of the monkey as seen by the poet. He is sure that they will also observe how beautiful this animal is. He says:

(66) *U nga yi languti hi swiphemu-phemu,
U titsonisa swo tala.
Tshunela wena makwerhu
Ndzi ku komba yona hinkwayo.*

*(Do not look at it in parts,
You deprive yourself of so many things.
Come nearer, brother
That I show all of it to you.)*

It is owing to this subjective approach that Nkondo does not use personification extensively in his poetry. Nevertheless, in poems such as *Gaza* (1969:4), *U ta vuyeriwa Gaza* (op. cit.:12) and *Gumba* (op. cit.:14), Nkondo does employ personification. Note the following example:

(67) *Gumba, u ni nyiko
Nyiko ya ku tivona ni ntumbuluko,
U hundzuluka na wona.*

*(White stork, you have a wonderful gift
The gift of identifying yourself with nature,
You adapt to it.)*

Gumba is a type of migratory bird which is seen around South Africa in summer. Nkondo makes use of the absolute pronoun u (you, 2nd person) in the stanza quoted above. The fact that he addresses the white stork in this manner, obviously shows that he acknowledges it as having human traits, and thus this is an example of his use of personification.

3.22 SUMMARY

We have observed that Tsonga does not make use of stressed and unstressed syllables to produce rhythm. Instead, meaningful pauses, and slight emphasis at the penultimate syllables of words create a measure of length which can be manipulated to produce rhythm. We also found that the rhyme as employed by Ndhambi in his *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949) and *Switlhokove-tselo swa vana* (1966) is contrived. Ndhambi (op. cit.) deliberately and skilfully arranged the final vowels at the end of lines to create rhyme, which appears to be more decorative than significant as far as meaning is concerned. Nkondo (1969) does not make use of the terminative vowels at the end of lines to create rhyme.

As far as stanzas are concerned, it is interesting to note that Ndhambi is more conscious of equal stanzaic length. He seems to have been influenced by the form of the stanzas of European literature, such as English. In contrast, Nkondo is freer in his division of poems into stanzas, for he does not attempt to write stanzas of equal length.

Finally, imagery, as an important poetic technique, was highlighted. We noticed that it is a term which includes metaphor, simile, symbolism and personification. In order for imagery to be effective, the association must be with things that are common to many people, not only things suggested to a few individuals.

CHAPTER 4

SATIRE IN NDHAMBI'S AND NKONDO'S POETRY

4.1 Definitions

- 4.1.1 The term 'satire' is derived from the Latin word *satura* which means 'a mixture of different things'. Several literary critics have attempted a definition of satire, but only three definitions will be cited here:

Cohen (1973:195) defines satire as:

The criticism of a person, human nature, events, movements, or institutions by the use of exaggeration, ridicule, sarcasm, irony, and humour in order to reduce the subject to absurdity.

Little, et al., (1973:1888) state that satire is

... the employment in speaking or writing, of sarcasm, irony, ridicule, etc; in denouncing, exposing, or deriding vice, folly, abuses or evils of any kind.

This definition implies that satire is an attack by ridicule in any medium, not necessarily in literature, but also in everyday conversation or speech. The attack can be oral (radio entertainers/announcers), or visual (television, or cartoons) as well as literary. Bob Connolly of the *Rand Daily Mail* used to be very popular with his daily cartoons in that morning newspaper. His cartoons were intended to ridicule some of the discriminatory policies of the Republic of South Africa.

Sparks in Paulson (1971:360) says that:

Satire is a kind of poetry, without a series of action, invented for purging of our minds, in which human vices, ignorance and errors, and all things besides, which are produced from them in every man, are severely reprehended.

This definition suggests that satire is meant to stimulate our minds into observing errors in an individual and to help in providing the target with an acceptable normative pattern of behaviour. This is possible to achieve, especially in a homogenous society with a common perception of moral values, where the satirist and the audience agree as to how 'normal' people are expected to behave (Paulson, 1971:204). Sutherland (1958:6) expresses this fact by saying that the satirist

... comes round knocking us up from a comfortable sleep to face hard and uncomfortable facts.

4.1.2 All the definitions cited so far have a common focus, i.e they all emphasize that satire is a type of statement (whether a work of art or not) in which an unfavourable comment is made, whereby censure is expressed and as a result, someone or something is blamed. These definitions make it very clear that satire embodies scorn, reproof, and some form of verbal attack, though the intensity of the attack ranges from the mildest scolding to a remarkably violent verbal assault. It is also clear that satire involves a measure of aggression, usually oblique or indirect.

4.1.3 It is also apparent from the definitions quoted above that in satire we find various tones and forms of attacking vice or folly, including sarcasm, irony, hyperbole, ridicule and humour.

4.2 FUNCTIONS OF SATIRE

4.2.1 The functions of satire are also implied in the definitions quoted above. The main purpose of satire is to correct wrong or evil behaviour in a subtle and amusing manner. The laughter of satire is a weapon against the world. This implies that satire is not a weapon but a medicine that heals human behaviour.

- 4.2.2 It is the duty of the satirist to correct the vices and follies of his time, and to give the rules of a happy and virtuous life. His attack is normally directed at what is believed to be bad or untrue. Satire seeks to produce shame.
- 4.2.3 It must be emphasised that not all satire succeeds in reforming and amending the behavioural patterns of individuals, because of personal differences among people. Some are susceptible to rebuke and scorn, and some are stubborn and adamant, although the intent is generally to reform and amend.
- 4.2.4 The other very important factor in this discussion of satire is the term 'attack'. Satire is an attack because it always treats an object or person in a derogatory manner.
- 4.2.5 It is clear that satire 'exposes' evils or infirmities that are unrecognized by its audience; it may also establish blame, employing any of the countless intellectual or emotional strategies, for individuals, groups, institutions, or ideas; it may also urge its audience to future action, in some measure hostile, against the object under attack. These rhetorical modes may be combined in various proportions to achieve various persuasive ends.
- 4.2.6 The characteristic effect of satire is inevitably persuasive. Indirect didactical satire is mainly persuasive in nature. Its moral implications should not be unnoticed.
- 4.2.7 Satire presents a world in which virtue always triumphs and vice is always punished. It also presents a world in which evil, whether it triumphs or not, is made to appear so abhorrent that the reader will in future always wish to avoid it.

4.3 THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF SATIRE

- 4.3.1 Nichols (1971:16) differentiates between *direct*, *indirect* and *mixed satire*.

Direct satire

- 4.3.2 In direct satire the satirist intentionally makes a frontal attack upon his target by means of verbal aggression to coerce the target to reform or correct his foolish or vicious attitudes. The satirist succeeds in this respect because he focuses his aggression on what is blameworthy. Blame derives from clear evidence that the target is obviously behaving aberrantly.

4.4 DIRECT SATIRE IN NDHAMI'S POETRY

- 4.4.1 Direct satire is found in Ndhambi's poetry. The two poems *Tingana* (p.11) and *Xikoxa* (p.57) in his *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* illustrate this. In *Tingana*, Ndhambi satirises stupidity and waywardness.

(68) *Yahe! langutani n'watingana,
Hi ye yima-yima mahlo vanga!
Swo-wo-swo swo-swo-swo meno cina!
Xo n'wayi-n'wayi fenya ku hava.*

*La' mandleve pari-pari wanga!
Mi to inani kasi ku hava.
Nomu tshunye-tshunye timhaka do,
Ahe! tanani mi vona donono.*

*Tanani mi ta xi vona gomo,
Wonge i ntshava ya Lomondzo,
Dzinge ku dyondza mbuyangwani to!
Le xikolweni hi ye mahlo hono!*

*Le' milomu wonge i tihlelo,
Vonan' khwiri wonge i xitendza,
Xi yoweteleni hinkwenu yoo!
Yowe! yowe! xikhodo xa kona!*

*Lo'ku kona wonge i xigono,
Rhonge ro phatsu thimila ntsena.
Mi ri yowe yena a swi kona,
Ku sandza ka hina i mafura.*

*Nghonavalayi va hlaya yena,
Oho! n'wana o tsemile mubya.
Manana thula mbilu ya wena,
Moya do marhambu ya tsandzeka.*

*(Oh, look at the shy person,
He lingers with eyes twinkling!
Looking down grinningly!
In a smiling manner with no joke to share.*

*Ears greatly sticking out!
You could perhaps say there is something where
nothing is expected.
The mouth moves but with nothing to say,
Oh, come and see a stupid.*

*Come and see his protruding forehead,
It is like the mountain of Lomondzo,
He is not even making an attempt to learn!
At school he opens his eyes widely!*

*The lips are like winnowing baskets,
See the stomach is like a grain storage made of
grass,
Shout derogatory remarks at him and say "yoo!"
"Yowe! yowe!" what a stupid!*

*This is like a cripple,
The nose is like dancing ankle rattle of seed.
Even when you pass derogatory remarks at him,
he does not care.
Our criticism to him is something acceptable.*

*They refer to him as the disobedient,
Oh, the child has cut the straps of the baby-sling.
Mother, have peace in your heart,
The will is not there, the child is wayward.)*

This poem combines ridicule and verbal attack. The reader's response is one of amusement and rejection of the human traits being satirised - namely, stupidity, indifference, and waywardness or delinquency.

- 4.4.2 In the poem *Xikoxa* (p.57) Ndhambi pities an old lady who does not wish to settle down. This old lady wanders about irrespective of the weather conditions. The poet adopts a critical attitude to his subject, and the speaker criticises her for not being in her rightful place - her home, surrounded by her grandchildren.

- (69) *Takaswi gi! takaswi gi! mbuyangwani.
Xewani, u ya kwihi we xidyuhati?
Tshama u wisa ndzhutin' hansi ka murhi,
Malembe ya wena a ndzi ma pimisi
We kokwana meno u lombile mani?*

*(Takaswi gi! takaswi gi! poor you!
Greetings to you, where are you going, granny?
Stay home and relax in the shade under a tree,
Your years are innumerable
You granny, to whom did you lend your teeth?)*

The old lady is so old that the speaker condemns her actions. He is horrified that she wanders around aimlessly when she should be with her grandchildren at home. He exposes her folly to make her aware of her age and the necessity of self-indulgence at her stage of life. The following stanzas from the same poem *Xikoxa* (p.57) make her age explicit:

- (70) *Ka voyi, voyi, matimba ya herile!
Tinyama ta ku marhambu ti chavile,
Misisi i vuvera lebyi baseke,
Ntamu wo vona mahlo ya helelwe,
Tindlela ta tiko ti hundzuke timbe.*

*Ka khinu, khinu! matsolo ya omelwa,
Mikondzo ya wena yi venga misava,
Marito ya wena ma khoma marhama,
Swihlambanyiso swa wena wa hi tsona,
Kokwana chava vuhlangi bya nonon'hwa.*

*Ka khigi, khigi! marhambu i tinono,
Yo'milenge a ya ha ri na matsambo,
Tinguvu ta wa ti hava xiseketo,
Mbilu yi hlayisiwa hi nchongotelo,
Kokwana u tiva hinkwaswo swa tiko.*

*(She bends and bends all the way, she no longer
has energy!
Your muscles have divorced the bones,
The hair has turned white and fluffy,
The eyes have no longer power to see,
The streets of the country have become foreign.*

*Hobbling, hobbling all the way, the knees are dry,
Your feet hate the ground,
Your words hold your cheeks
You deprive us of your advice,
Granny avoid the young stage for it is very hard to
fulfil.*

*Walking in uneven manner, the bones are hard,
The legs are no longer with speed,
The clothes fall down for they have no support,
The heart is kept by the walking stick.
Granny you know everything about the world.)*

Ndhambi uses ideophones in the beginning of the stanza to describe how the woman walks. She is no longer capable of walking properly, because of her age, but limps and hobbles. In the first stanza the poet uses *Takaswi gi, takaswi gi!* (of walking unevenly on the ground) to show how the old lady struggles to walk properly.

The ideophonic phrase *Ka voyi, voyi!* (of swaying sideways) in the second stanza indicates how the old lady sways from side to side as she walks, emphasising her age. It is very difficult for the old lady to see the streets through which she has to move, as she has become tired and very weary. The remaining two ideophones *Ka khinu, khinu!* (of hobbling) and *Ka khigi, khigi!* (of stopping suddenly) in the third and fourth stanzas, emphasize the problems that the old lady experiences. Old age is usually associated with wisdom, as it is from old people that we can be assured of proper advice and guidance. In the case of this old lady, this is no longer the case, for she is so old that communication is hindered at all levels. The poet emphasizes that

(71) *Swihlambanyiso swa wena wa hi tsona.*

(You deprive us of your advice.)

In the fourth stanza, Ndhambi humorously exposes the clumsiness of the old lady's clothes on her body by saying that

(72) *Tinguvu ta wa ti hava xiseketo*

(The clothes fall down because of lack of support).

The 'xiseketo' (support) which Ndhambi refers to are the buttocks on which her traditional skirt hangs. She is so

emaciated that they have now become almost non-existent.

- 4.4.3 Ndhambi is able to satirize in this manner because of his sense of humour. In several instances, Ndhambi moralises and as a result his satire is more obvious than Nkondo's. Kernan in Paulson (1971:264) has the following to say on the effectiveness of the attack of satire:

... the character who delivers it must appear the moral apposite of the world he condemns, he must be horrified at what he sees, and he must be able to distinguish between vice and virtue without any philosophical shillyshallying about "what is right and what is wrong?" The traditional character of the satirist enables him to perform each of these acts.

This is truly so in respect of Ndhambi's satire in the cited poem. He condemns the behaviour of the old lady, because he feels morally bound to expose her folly to the readers in order to elicit a reaction. Nichols (1971:30) says:

The satirist must be a moralist whose function is to pillory the foolish and vicious with the grand object of making them reform.

The line such as *Tinguvu ta wa ti hava xiseketo* (Your clothes fall because they have no support) is uttered spontaneously, because of the state of mind which was prompted by the actions of the old lady. The line: *Kokwana chava vuhlangi bya nonon'hwa* (Granny avoid youth for it is very hard to fulfil), serves as a strong warning to the old lady that she should not wish for the youthful stage, for the years gone by have had tremendous effect on her life. The agility of the old lady and that of a young person can never be the same. The young will always move briskly whilst the old will move like a tortoise for they no longer have the strength and reflexes to react quickly.

4.5 DIRECT SATIRE IN NKONDO'S POETRY

- 4.5.1 In the poem *U ta vuyeriwa Gaza*, Nkondo (1969:12) directly

attacks the literary critic, whose task is to screen manuscripts. Literary critics tend to do more rejecting than accepting, and can be prone to a type of elitism which discourages the efforts of those trying to add to the body of literature in the Tsonga language, for example. The authors are often frustrated by the subjective criticism that is levelled against them. Nkondo, in defending these writers, says:

(73) *Wena mutsari wa ka Gaza,
Na wena mupeperhi wa mutsari
A mi se karhala xana?
Ku yimbelela -
Mi yimbelela hi swona.*

*(You the author of Gaza,
And you the one who reviews the work of that author
Are you not tired yet?
To sing -
To sing about them.*

- 4.5.2 The third line of this poem: *A mi se karhala xana?* (Are you not tired yet?) is satiric, for it sarcastically suggests that the censorship in question has been taking place for a long time and should now come to a halt. This should cease, for many prospective writers have been discouraged by the negative attitude of these reviewers. Although Nkondo (op. cit.:12) aggressively attacks these critics, whose censorship he considers to be strict, at the end of the poem he says:

(74) *A hi valangeni mimoya ya misava,
Hi yingisela lomu yi belaka kona,
Hi langa;
Hi kheta;
Hi swi tirhisa hi vutlharhi.
Hakunene u ta vuyeriwa Gaza.*

*(Let's watch the direction in which the winds of the
earth blow,
Let's listen to hear the direction in which they
blow.
To select;
To choose;
And use them intelligently.
Gaza will really benefit.)*

The last lines of the poem are an assurance from the poet that

the critic should not completely abandon his responsibility of maintaining standards in literature, but should use his expertise to select the best that will be of value to Gaza as a whole.

- 4.5.3 Nkondo's aggressive verbal attack is also found in the poem: *Swi ta ku pfuna* (Nkondo, 1969:6) when he says:

(75) *Eka wena mupfuni*
Ndzi ri u nga titsoni ku tshunxeka
Hi ku tivonela bodhleleni ra vufumi.
Na wena mudyondzi
Ndzi ri eka wena, u nga titsoni ku tshunxeka
Hi ku tihoxa bodhleleni ra dyondzo
Wena wa timali ta wena
U nga tshuki u titsona "ntshunxeko"
Hi ku tipfalela bodhleleni ra timali.
Na n'wina van'wana na van'wana,
Mi nga titsoni "ntshunxeko",
Hi ku tipeta bodhleleni ra swin'wana ni swin'wana.
Pfula mahlo u vona leswinyingi.
Swi ta ku pfuna.

(To you the rich man
I say do not deprive yourself of freedom
By looking yourself through a bottle of the rich.
And you the learner
I say to you, do not deprive yourself of freedom
By placing yourself into the bottle of education.
You with the money also
Do not deprive yourself of freedom
By locking yourself into the bottle of money.
And you the rank and file,
Do not deprive yourself of freedom,
By immersing yourself into the bottle of this and
that.
Open your eyes to see many things.
It will benefit you.)

- 4.5.4 In this satiric poem, Nkondo acts in uncompromising manner to indicate that the rich should never pride themselves on their wealth and look down upon their fellow men because of their poverty. The third line of the poem: *Hi ku tivonela bodhleleni ra vufumi* (By looking at yourself through the bottle of the rich), i.e. to despise and look down upon the have-nots, implies that the rich should not show off. The poet goes on to attack the educated and all other people who have human follies, who

should not deprive themselves of the freedom that they could enjoy if they were leading normal lives. Nkondo (op. cit.:16) uses "ntshunxeko" in inverted commas to indicate that the freedom that they deprive themselves of, is indeed of a special nature. It is the freedom which all human beings ought to enjoy if they want their lives to be meaningful on earth. The last two lines of the poem:

(76) *Pfula mahlo u vona leswinyingi*
Swi ta ku pfuna.

(Open your eyes to see many things
It will help you.)

indicate the benefit that one will gain if one reforms.

4.6 INDIRECT SATIRE

4.6.1 Indirect satire refers to carefully selected implications of adverse criticism made by the satirist; no direct comment is made. This type of satire is so light, so gentle, that no aggressive verbal attack is realized in its utterance. In this instance, the satirist makes use of a moral lesson or a type of sermon to persuade his target to change. This type of satire is more didactic in nature than direct satire. In this respect, Bloom and Bloom (1979:16) state the following:

... satire is often personal, vindictive, opportunistic. But we also understand that it is frequently idealistic in more than assertion, that it can be unabashedly didactic and seriously committed to a hope in its own power to effect change. (Emphasis added)

It is mainly direct satire which is characterized by aggressive overstatement. Bloom and Bloom (op. cit.:16) imply that in indirect satire some elements of direct satire are sometimes observed. The terms *vindictive* and *opportunistic* explicitly show how aggressive the attack can be, but at the same time, *didactic* and *hope* give us an indication that the satirist hopes that the individual will change of his own free will.

- 4.6.2 The fact that we find two extremes, i.e direct and indirect satire, presupposes that there is also an intermediate area of partly direct and partly indirect satire which we can, for convenience' sake, call 'mixed' satire. It is not easy to make a clear-cut demarcation between direct and indirect satire because satirists can employ both kinds of satire in one poem.

4.7 INDIRECT SATIRE IN NDHAMI'S POETRY

- 4.7.1 Ndhambi (1966:42) in the poem *Tea* reveals in a satiric manner the difficult conditions under which the urban dwellers live. They are accustomed to drinking tea and can only afford to have a well-balanced formal meal once a day. This can only be enjoyed in the evening after everyone has come back from work. Ndhambi illustrates this aspect of urban life in an indirect satiric manner:

(77) - *We nakulorhi me ndzi vambe khwiri hi tea.*
 - *Nkhensa ku nwa tea swakudya i kan'we sikwin'*
Va doroba va hanya hi ku tikeriwa.
Kunene ndyangu hinkwawo wu tshama ntirhwen'.

(Friend, my stomach is full of tea
Be thankful to get tea, food is once per day
Town dwellers live under difficult conditions.
Really, the whole family stay at work.)

Besides the fact that urban dwellers cannot afford to buy food for a cooked meal more than once a day, they are all out at work and nobody is at home to prepare the meal. These people are accustomed to this lifestyle and over weekends, when they are relieved of their duties, they still resort to drinking tea right through the day and having a proper dinner in the evening. This is a normative pattern of behaviour that they have internalized.

- 4.7.2 In the poem *Manyunyuyu*, Ndhambi (1966:28) reveals that every individual is in some way or another boastful at times. This pride, expressed in the form of boasting, is very important as

it distinguishes each individual from his fellow men. The following stanzas explicitly illustrate this pride:

(78) *I man' la nga hava manyunyu misaven'?*
I man' la nga tianakanyiki mbilwin'?
I man' la nga tikombisiki vanghanen'?
Hinkwavo va torile manyunyu mirin'.

Ku loloha emitirhwen' i manyunyu,
Na nkwikwirimba wa mona i manyunyu,
Ku fularhela swileriso i manyunyu,
Na ku tivona xiyimo i manyunyu.

Manyunyu i xitshungulo xa tingana,
Ku tiendla mutivi swa vevukisa,
Swihoxo swi landza la tiambexaka,
Wo tlhariha u nyuma ku tlakusiwa.

Manyunyu ya kutsa munhu a va pemba,
Mati a ma dziki ka lexo vambeka,
Manyunyu i pongo vutivi ku hava.
Manyunyu i vuntlunya lebyo chavisa.

(Who has no pride on earth?
Who does not think of himself?
Who is not showy to his friends?
All are smeared with pride on the body.

When lazy at work is pride,
When cheeky and surly is pride,
To be disobedient is pride,
To consider yourself of being of a high status is
pride.

Pride is a disguise for shyness,
To consider yourself as a knowledgeable person
reduces your social status,
Mistakes follow those who pretend to be better,
The wise blushes when elevated to some position.

Pride erodes the personality of an individual,
Water cannot be absorbed by a stretched material,
Pride is an empty vessel without knowledge,
Pride is the greatest of all foolishness.)

The second and the third stanzas of this poem establish that pride is a vice, a characteristic of unacceptable behavioural patterns in society. The fourth stanza provides us with a moral lesson that the wise and the respectable always shun pride and live like ordinary 'down-to-earth' human beings. The second last line of this poem could be freely translated

with an English proverb: 'An empty vessel makes the loudest noise.' Pride and vanity are regarded as a sin, and those who want good human relationships with their fellowmen, should avoid it.

4.8 INDIRECT SATIRE IN NKONDO'S POETRY

4.8.1 Nkondo (1969:8) in the poem *Xikamukamu*, refers to a girl who moves from one place to the next in search of 'boyfriends' (men). Her main objective is to lure men who are in need of women. Unfortunately, the men she attempts to lure do not notice her intentions. Nkondo satirizes this situation when he says:

(79) *Khadoo! Tshama hansi u wisa
Rirhandzu a ri dyeli, a hi tinhlampfi.*

*(Girly, sit down and have a rest
Love is not a fish that can be caught by bait.)*

This is too mild to offend the girl to whom the lines are directed, but it is a moral which she should take note of in order to gain wisdom. This is a good lesson for all girls with similar poor morals, who think that all men that they meet should respond to their intentions. To show that this girl is always moving about looking for men, the poet asks:

(80) *I "xikamu-kamu" xa mani lexiya
Xi pembelaka na ndlela?*

*(Whose "girl" is she that one
Running around the streets?)*

The words *xi pembelaka na ndlela*, (running around the streets) show that this girl never stays in one place. She is always found moving about with the aim of meeting somebody who will accost her.

4.9.1 Another illustration of Nkondo's indirect satire is found in his poem *Sevengwani* (p.23), in which the poet draws the

attention of the audience to the young boastful lady who does not seem to notice the presence of all the people around her. We perceive this fact as we read the last stanza of this poem:

(81) *Hi lexiya!*
A xi voni na munhu
Vukhegulu i ngulumelo hase ka lwandle,
A hi ntiyiso;
Xa rivala leswaku hi xona
Laha tshangava ra timbyatsu
Ri nga etlela kona.

(There she is!
She does not see anybody
To her, she is the only one;
Old age is an echo over the sea,
It is not true;
She forgets that she is
where the valley of wrinkles is found.)

What we clearly observe here is indirect satire, because Nkondo does not use aggressive verbal attack on the young lady, yet we realize that he is ridiculing the boastful behaviour of Sevengwani. This young lady is totally ignorant of the fact that her youth will pass. We are able to deduce from the language that the poet uses that he scorns the manner in which Sevengwani walks, as well as the way she looks at other people. Her hair-style is also indicative of her vanity. The size of her legs is compared with *tintlhongwe tinene*, i.e ordinary sticks. This indicates how mean this young lady is.

4.9 SUMMARY

Both Ndhambi and Nkondo use direct and indirect satire. The poems that we quoted above are a clear indication of this fact. From the definitions of satire and the comments made on these definitions as they appear in paragraphs 4.1.1 to 4.2.7, it is apparent that satire is an effective instrument of social reform and progress in the well-being of all people. Through direct satire the object or person attacked responds to what is being said and, one hopes, conforms accordingly. In indirect satire

no direct attack is made, because the satirist makes use of a moral lesson or a type of a persuasion to influence his target to change. It is also evident that Ndhambi, as a humorist and a moralist, appears to be a more capable satirist than Nkondo.

CHAPTER 5

THE POETIC STYLE OF NDHAMI'S AND NKONDO'S POETRY

5.1 Introduction

As stated in chapter 1 of this study, this enquiry aims at giving a critical evaluation of the poetry of Ndhambi and Nkondo. Therefore, in this chapter we intend examining the poetic style of these two poets, i.e. their stylistic devices and the manner in which they use language to put across their message. The following stylistic devices will be examined and compared: personification, use of compound nouns, imperative verbs, ideophones and the elision of the terminative vowel -i in their poetry.

5.2 Love, et al., (1969:165) point out that the primary aim of studying style must be

... to investigate the 'strictly literary effects of language' and to examine the expressiveness and suggestive devices which have been intended in order to enhance the power and impact of speech and written works.

It is, therefore, essential that we study the poetic style of Ndhambi and Nkondo, in order to reveal the special way in which they use language to communicate their message to the reader. In this regard, Pierce, et al., (1973:10) have the following to say:

What constitutes poetry is not form, meter, rhyme, or special kind of language. Instead it is a special way of using language. (Emphasis added).

The phrase *special way of using language* implies *style*.

5.3 Irmscher (1975:67) indicates that:

A writer's passion for language is often his incentive for writing. Words crystallize his thoughts, realize his emotions, and bring the images of his mind to the life of literature. The vitality, the imaginativeness, the beauty of his creation depend on words.

Irmscher (op. cit.:67) goes on to say that

... (the writer) needs to have an adequate stock of words to begin with. He has to be concerned with their meanings, both the accuracy of their literal use and their extended implications.

It is on the understanding that words crystallize *thoughts, realize emotions, and bring the images of the mind to the life of literature*, that we feel we have to evaluate the poetic style of Ndhambi and Nkondo. This will enhance enjoyment and provide a new view as well as a new kind of understanding. The intention is not to be destructive, i.e. to emphasize only the weaknesses of the poems, for that will actually destroy possible enjoyment. Rather, we will express a personal opinion on the manner in which the two poets present their message to their audience.

5.4 PERSONIFICATION IN NDHAMBI'S POETRY

- 5.4.1 The main technique which Ndhambi uses in his praise poems is personification. In the poem *Rirhova* (Ndhambi, 1949:31) and *Rirhandzu* (Ndhambi, 1966:18), Ndhambi personifies whilst distancing himself from the subject he praises.

(82) *Rirhova wena n'wana Ritave,
N'wana Vembe ntukulu wa lwandle.
Saseka tikweni ra Vatsonga,
Handzula matiko hi ku rhula,
Makhumbi ya kombisa vukhale
Bya ku khuluka ka ku Ritave.*

Sava ra ku ri tsandza Tinghitsi
 Na Mateo Mageza vaaki.
 Matlhelwen' u ni nhlanga wa nambu
 Wu khanaka masanin' ya dyambu.
 Maribyi ya wena ma rhetela,
 Tinyanyana ti dzunisa wena.

Hobomula wena basambilu
 N'warixaladza marhwala nhundzu;
 Hunguta nhundzu matlhelwen' ya ku,
 Nhlata makwembe le ka rikwerhu,
 Nhundzu a yi ye ka kokwa wa ku,
 Timpfula a ti ku nyike ntamu.

Oho! Rirhova xikala-ngwenya
 Makala sele nambu wa vana.
 Vona swifuwu matlhelweni ya ku;
 Xidziva xa ku xi hava baku.
 Hlamban' vafana ni vanhwanyana,
 Khoman' tinhlampfi nambyin' wa n'wina.

Hlamalani n'wina vahlaleri
 Ku leha ka xinambyana lexi.
 Nkhensan' n'wina hinkwenu vatshili
 Ku hlayiseriwa sava leri,
 Cina wena lwandle ra vuxeni
 Ku nyikiwa leswi nga heriki.

Khuluka na swo wena Rirhova,
 Tirha hi laha ku nga heriki,
 Chava vanghana dyambu na moya
 Va nga ta ku hahisela mati,
 Khuluka hi le hansi ka sava
 Enkarhin' wa masiku ya dyandza.

*(Rirhova you daughter of Ritave
 Daughter of Vembe, the grandchild to the ocean.
 Be beautiful in the country of Vatsonga,
 Cross the countries in peace,
 Your walls show your age
 Of your flowing Ritave.*

*Your sand is much that builders like
 Tinghitsi and Mathew Mageza could not finish.
 At your banks you have reeds
 That dance in the warm rays of sunlight.
 Your pebbles are round and smooth,
 The birds praise you.*

*Roar as you flow in flood, you with a white heart.
 You who cares to carry the load;
 Lessen your load on your banks
 Vomit the pumpkins at the place of your relatives.
 Take the load to your grand parents,
 Let rain give you strength.*

*Oh, Rirhova the river without crocodiles
 The river without malice, liked by children
 See domestic animals at your banks;
 Your deep pool has no cave.
 Swim you boys and girls,
 Catch fish in your river.*

*Wonder you spectators
 The length of this rivulet
 Be thankful all you artists
 To have sand kept for you,
 Dance you ocean of the east.
 To be given everlasting things.*

*Flow with them you Rirhova,
 Work endlessly,
 Fear these friends, viz. sun and wind
 That they might cause your water to evaporate,
 Flow underneath the sand
 In the days of drought.*

Ndhambi focuses his attention on the river that flows through his countryside. He praises this river and gives it human attributes, i.e. he addresses it as a person with a sense of hearing. The first two lines of the poem indicate the line of descent of this river. The nouns: *n'wana* (daughter) and *ntukulu* (grand child) indicate the relationship that exists between the river *Rirhova* and the bigger river *Ritave* and the ocean.

Ndhambi addresses the river *Rirhova* as if he is dealing with a person. The imperative verbs *-saseka* (be beautiful) and *-handzula* (tear) in the first stanza suggest that he is instructing the river to do what a human being is capable of. In the third stanza Ndhambi continues to praise *Rirhova*, using personification as his poetic style. Imperative verbs are employed to command the river to follow his instructions. In this stanza he uses *-hobomula* (roar as river in flood), *-hunguta* (reduce) and *-hlanta* (vomit) as imperative verbs. The imperative verb *-hlanta* (vomit), for instance, is indicative of the quantity of pumpkins that are deposited along the banks of the river when it is in flood. Only animate beings can vomit, therefore, used in this context, the verb implies a personification of the river.

Ndhambi also uses the relative verb *-khanaka* (dancing for joy) to refer to the joy that we notice in this river. This word gives us a vivid picture of the movement of the reeds along the banks of the river. The 'dancing' of these reeds is so majestic that a sense of rhythm coupled with the flowing of the river, creates in our minds the order and discipline of a traditional regiment performing its war-dance.

The nouns *basambilu* (the one with a white heart) and *n'warixaladza* (the one who exercises extreme care in executing a job) are mostly used when referring to a person, but Ndhambi employs them in this poem to illustrate the sound qualities of the river. *Rirhova* is addressed as a generous person who leaves behind pumpkins when in flood. The noun *n'warixaladza* is indicative of a person who is extremely careful in performing a task and Ndhambi perceives this river as having the qualities of such a person.

RIRHANDZU

- 5.7.2 The title of this poem *Rirhandzu* (Love) clearly indicates that it is about love. The poet praises love, as can be seen in the following stanza:

(83) *We rirhandzu u ni ricindza ra ku hanya endzen',
Hi wena u fumbeke timbyana ku tshama vanhwin',
U khome vanhu swonge i tinyanyana vurimben',
Vanhu va misava hinkwenu hanyan' rirhandzwin'.*

*(You love, you have a string that lives inside,
It is you who held dogs to stay with the people,
You held people like birds in lime,
All people of the earth live in love.)*

In this stanza, Ndhambi personifies love. He uses the pronouns *we* (you, second person singular) and the subject concord *u* (you) which are normally employed when referring to a human being. The poet in this stanza enumerates several things that love does to people. For instance, the line *rirhandzu u ni*

ricindza ra ku hanya (love you have the string of life) evokes in our minds someone who is instrumental in bringing happiness in life. The verb *-fumbeke* which is the past tense of *-fumba* (hold something in closed hands), refers to the actions done by human beings. In this context, we find that love causes dogs to stay with people. Dogs bond with their owners because of mutual affection.

- 5.4.3 The following are examples of poems in which Ndhambi pretends to be the subject which reveals its qualities by telling the listeners about itself. Personification is again employed. These poems are *Misava* (Ndhambi, 1949:49) and *Poto* (op. cit.:54).

(84) *Mina misava n'wana wa dyambu,
Hosi ya n'hweti na tinyeleti,
Mavanga-nhlekanhi na vusiku,
Mavanga-ximumu na xirhami,
Muyarendzo ra vuhumadyambu.*

*Ka ha ri mina khale ka mina,
Ndzi nga si nyunyetiwa gwembe,
Ndza ha ri ntumbuluku wuntshwa,
Misava ya nga yi ri vulombe,
Mpfula ni n'wema swa ha ndzi rhandza.*

*A ndzi ri xihlamariso mina.
Mabyanyi a ma lehile ku twa,
Mirhi a yi kulerile henhla,
Mati swange i nyuku wa mina,
Milambu yi nga tivi ku wisa.*

*Kambe, kambe, namuntlha ndza nkhwakhwa
Ndzi omeriwe hi xihlakahla,
Matsolo a ma koti ku yima,
Mirhi ya tiarisa ku kula,
Byanyi nkwe! ku sele mpandlha ntsena.*

*N'we swihari mi ta tumbela kwi?
N'wina vanhu mi ta hanyela kwi?
Tinyanyana mi ta phatsama kwi?
N'we swiharinyana mi ta ya kwi?
Yo! hi ni swirilo hi ta ya kwi?*

*Misava ya hela ya munyiwa!
Milambu ya oma mati ma phya.
Ntshuri tuvi! maribye ya huma.
Byanyi kwaxu! swihari swa sika.
Mirhi vunu! nyanyana ya rhurha.*

*Khombo leri ri kwihi-ke?
Maka! maka! swifuwu swi tele.
Rihlaza ri ta hluka rini-ke?
Kwalala! i tindlela ti tele.
I maphokola ya sungurile.*

*Mina misava khale ka mina!
Ndza ha rileriwa hi nhlalala,
Ndza ha phameriwa hi timpfula,
A ndzi phamela vana va mina
Ndzi va nyika swakudya swa misava.*

*Sweswi ndza famba n'we vana va nga,
Ndzi lweleni loko mi ndzi rhandza,
Hatlisan', hatlisan' vavanuna.
Salani, salani ha hambana.
Ndzi landzeni sirheni ra mina.*

*(I, the earth, daughter of the sun,
The elder sister to moon and stars,
The cause of day and night
The cause of summer and winter.
The one that travels to the east.*

*When I was still myself in the olden days,
Before I was spoiled by mange,
When I was still the new creation,
My soil was still honey,
When rain and light showers still loved me.*

*I was a thing of wonder,
Grass was extremely tall,
Trees had grown upwards,
Water was like my sweat,
Rivers did not know rest.*

*But today I am growing lean,
My stomach is dry,
My knees are no longer able to stand,
Grass has disappeared, only baldness remains.*

*You animals where shall you hide?
You people where shall you get your living?
Birds where shall you perch yourselves?
You small animals where shall you go?
We are crying, where shall we go?*

*The soil is getting finished, it is being
destroyed by ants!
Rivers are getting dry, water is evaporating,
The dust is billowing, the stones are being
exposed on the surface.
The grass is dry, animals are starving.
Trees are withering, the birds are migrating.*

*Where does this disaster come from?
The livestock is moving about all over.
When shall green grass sprout?
The paths are many.
The potholes have started.*

*I, the soil, in my olden days!
When honeyguides used to sing for me,
When rains used to feed me,
I was able to feed my children.
And gave them food from the soil.*

*Now I am going my children,
Fight for me if you love me,
Hurry, hurry men!
Goodbye, goodbye, we are parting.
Follow me in my grave.*

In this praise poem, we realize that Ndhambi's approach is that of imagining himself as the *misava* (soil). He spontaneously relates his tribulations to the people and cries for their help. He says:

(85) *Ndzi lweleni loko mi ndzi rhandza.*

(Fight for me if you love me.)

Soil, as an aspect of nature, is related to the sun, moon and stars. It functions properly when the other aspects of nature function normally. The first stanza of this poem clearly illustrates the close ecological relationship which exists between the sand and the celestial bodies.

- 5.4.5 Ndhambi (op. cit.:54) continues in his praise poem style to show the qualities of *Poto* (The three-legged cast iron pot). These qualities are broadcast in the poem:

(86) *Hi mina poto mbhuri-xa-ntima nkence!
Nsimbhi ya mulungu minharhu tserere!
Magingirikela vayeni ndlala nkwe!
Ndza humelela timbita ti hlangene.
Wansati wanuna u ndzi khoma nkence,
Vuswa ni nyama swa ndzi rhandza swinene.*

*Ndzi rhandzekile mina makala mona!
Xisweka-swoso nyama ya vavanuna.
Murhenci wa golonyi u rhandza mina,
Lavo sweka va rhandza ku hala mina,
Kwale Khimbini ndzi yile ndzi ya hoka,
Kunene ndzi xiswekelo xo tshembeka.*

*Ndzi ni vamakwerhu lava ndzi pfunaka,
Galaza, alivasi na xinjhinana,
Hi khamiwile karharhu hi swifungha,
Hi ni vundzen' ni tinhamu to saseka,
Hi mapemba kambe hi ntsopfu wo tiya,
Me poto mbhuri-bomban' ndzi ni maxaka.*

*Hangalaka vito ra mina evanhwin',
Hangalasa mitirho ya ku matikwen',
Gingirika emakaya ni le nhoven',
Hatlisela vatihri le masin'win',
Hatlisela vasiki ndzen' makhwirin',
Hinkwavo va nyike ku hanya enyamen'.*

*(I am a three-legged cast iron pot, the black beauty
that jingles!*

*The iron of a white man which stands on three legs!
Quickly, I am able to prepare food for visitors!
I come out first amongst clayey pots.
When a man or a woman touches me, I jingle,
Porridge and meat love me very much.*

*I am favoured for I am not surly!
I cook men's meat properly.
The wagon-driver loves me,
Those who cook like scratching me,
In Kimberley I went to experience how life is,
I am a really trusted utensil.*

*I have brothers who help me,
Large pot, medium size pot and small pot,
We have three girdles around our bodies!
We have considerable capacity and our necks are
beautiful,
We are light but we are made of strong cast iron,
I, the three-legged cast iron,
I am a beauty and have relatives.*

The poem is a seemingly factual account about a three-legged cast iron pot, which is aware of its good qualities. This pot is black in colour and has three legs on which it stands. It is very useful to many people. It boils quickly to be able to cook for hungry visitors. Food is easily cooked in this pot by men outside the courtyard. Men who have travelled long distances to places like Kimberley on mining expeditions, are

fond of carrying this type of pot. It is handy and cooks fast and easily. Ndhambi lists the prominent uses and features of the pot to emphasise its usefulness. The pot relates all its qualities to us. The pot is obviously an inanimate object, but the poet has skilfully employed personification to give us an impression that the pot has human attributes. Indeed, the pot itself is conscious of its human features. These features are exposed through the use of the absolute pronoun *mina* (I), the subject concord *u* (you) and *ndzi* (I) as well as verbs such as *-humelela* (succeed), *-gingirika* (be active) and *-hatlisela* (hurry for something). The use of the quantitative pronoun *vamakwerhu* (brothers and sisters) implies that this pot lives like a human being with relatives.

5.5 PERSONIFICATION IN NKONDO'S POETRY

- 5.5.1 Unlike Ndhambi, Nkondo does not make extensive use of personification as a poetic style to convey his intentions to the readers. It is owing to his subjective approach that he does not make extensive use of personification as a method of expression. This technique is found in only three poems, viz. in the poems *Gaza* (Nkondo, 1969:4), *U ta vuyeriwa Gaza* (op. cit.:12) and *Gumba* (op. cit.:14). In all three poems, he employs the absolute pronoun *u* (you, second person singular) to show personification. In the poems *Gaza* and *U ta vuyeriwa Gaza*, the noun *Gaza* refers to the country, but it is used in a special way to imply the Tsonga people of the country - Gaza. This means that the country has been personified.

For example in the poem *U ta vuyeriwa Gaza*, Nkondo (1969:12) says:

*Wena mutsari wa ka Gaza,
Na wena mupeperhi wa mutsari
A mi se karhala xana?
Ku yimbelela -
Mi yimbelela hi swona.*

(You the author of Gaza,
 And you the one who reviews the work of that author
 Are you not tired yet?
 To sing -
 To sing about them.)

5.6 COMPOUND NOUNS AS A SPECIAL WAY OF USING LANGUAGE IN NDHAMI'S POETRY

- 5.6.1 Besides personification as a poetic style of conveying his message to the readers, Ndhambi uses compound nouns as means of expressing his emotions and ideas. Ndhambi employs both compound nouns which are hyphenated and un-hyphenated compound nouns. Sometimes we find that the whole sentence is expressed in a compound form. We do not intend to enumerate all the compound words which appear in Ndhambi's two volumes of poetry, but it could be indicated that in *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949), which has a total of sixty poems, seventeen contain at least one or more compound words, while in *Switlhokovetsele swa vana* (1966) which also contains sixty poems, twenty three have compound words. In the poem *Ndlela*, Ndhambi (1966:10) opens the first, second, third and fourth stanzas with lines containing compound nouns. These lines appear in these stanzas respectively as *Ndlela, xikapeka-maganga muya-kule* (The path, the carrier of long ridges, the one that goes far), *Ndlela, xirhelela-nkova xipotsa-ribye* (The path, the descender of valley, the one that goes quickly around the stone), *Ndlela, xivemba-ntshava xirhwala-mikondzo* (The path, the one that makes a detour around the mountain, the carrier of soles of feet) and *Ndlela, xipela-nambu xifamba-matikweni* (The path, the one that crosses the river, the one that travels in the countries). The structure of these compound words consists mainly of a noun and a verb, which are joined by means of a hyphen. The prefix *xi-* (class 7) characterizes these compound nouns. This prefix signifies that the action is done expertly or perfectly, e.g.: *xikapeka-maganga, xirhelela-nkova, xipotsa-ribye, xivemba-ntshava, xirhwala-mikondo, xipela-nambu* and *Xifamba-matikweni*. In some instances hyphens are not used. For instance, in the fifth stanza of the poem *Mufana*, Ndhambi (1949:47) uses

compound nouns without hyphens:

- (87) *Ndzi ri suka ka mina we mangoda
Mahaye musaleri wa swikoko,
Tangha ya vanhwana mudyi wa mongo.*

These sentences could easily be read with hyphens as follows:

- (88) *Ndzi ri suka ka mina we mangoda-
Mahaye-musaleri-wa-swikoko,
Tangha-ya-vanhwana mudyi-wa-mongo.*

In the first stanza of the poem *Misava* (Ndhambi, 1949:49), the prefix *ma-* (class 6) is used instead of *xi-* (class 7); it refers to normal ordinary action, e.g.:

- (89) *Mina misava n'wana wa dyambu
Hosi ya nhweti na tinyeleti
Mavanga-nhlekanhi na vusiku,
Mavanga-ximumu na xirhami,
Muyarendzo ra vuhumadyambu.*

When read with the hyphens, this stanza appears as follows:

- (90) *Mina misava n'wana-wa-dyambu
Hosi-ya-nhweti-na-tinyeleti
Mavanaga-nhlekanhi-na-vusiku,
Mavanga-ximumu-na-xirhami,
Muya-rendzo-ra-vuhuma-dyambu.*

5.7 COMPOUND NOUNS AS A SPECIAL WAY OF USING LANGUAGE IN NKONDO'S POETRY

- 5.7.1 Nkondo does not make copious use of compound nouns in his poetry. We find compound nouns only in three poems, namely *Xirilo* (p.1), *Rifu* (p.1) and *Swinyenyani* (p.24). In the poem *Xirilo*, Nkondo has employed three compound nouns: *makomba-ndlela* (path indicator), *mihandzukulobye* (fellow fruits i.e. relatives) and *vasiyiwa vambe* (foreign mourners). In *mihandzukulobye* and *vayisiwa vambe*, Nkondo does not use the hyphen, but this omission does not make a significant

difference to the meaning of the compound nouns. In the poem *Rifu*, two compound nouns are used: *vupela-dyambu* (the western horizon where the sun sets) and *vugima-musi* (horizon). These compound nouns have a special effect in this poem. They help in focusing our attention on the direction in which man is heading as he lives on earth. The speaker is destined to die just as the sun sets in the west. This natural phenomenon follows a fixed pattern, which cannot be altered. In the poem *Swinyenyani* (p.24) only one compound noun is used. In the second line of the first stanza of this poem, we find *swihlola-mpfula* (swallows) which succeeds *timbewulani* in the same line. *Timbewulani* is a synonym of *swihlola-mpfula*. It seems that the poet wants to emphasize the type of birds that he is referring to. These birds are always seen flying in a flock.

5.8 THE USE OF IMPERATIVE VERBS IN NDHAMI'S POETRY

5.8.1 Ndhambi uses imperative verbs as a special way of using language to effect personification in thirty three out of sixty poems in *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* and forty one out of sixty poems in *Switlhokovetsetlo swa vana*. This is a clear indication that Ndhambi finds it difficult to praise without using imperative verbs. To illustrate the extent to which Ndhambi employs imperative verbs, we would like to quote *Nkhuvu wa vukati* from *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949:42). In this poem, all the imperative verbs have been underlined:

(91) Tanani, lalani tiko rintshwa.
Tanan', pfulan' nyangwa ya vukati.
Bombisani, tsakelan' vuntshwa.
 Gi! ximatsi xinene fambani.
 Bana wena nsinbhi ya vukati!

O! sasekan' vana va tatana.
Hetisani nawu wa Xikwembu
 Yena muendli wa ku tekana.
Catan' ku vonakalen' ka dyambu.
 Hinkwenu tsakani hi tinsimu

Langutan' muendli wa vukati.
Hlanganan', rhandzanan', khomanani,
Tsakan' n'wina vana va tatana,
Chayani n'wina timhahamhala!
 Tata wenu wa mi katekisa.

Kombisan' risuma ra vukati.
Giyani, cinan' n'wina swidyuhati,
Dyanan' cinan' n'we vanakulobye,
Vamatiko hlalelan' mi ku tse!
Chayan' timbila n'we tinxangwane!

Vatekani nghenani tikweni,
 Tiko ra nhlomulo ni tinyimpi,
 Tiko le'ra vudyohi ni rifu,
 Tiko ra ku tsaka ni maxangu.
Khongelan', rhandzanan' hi masiku.

Come, be in peace, the new country.
Come, open the door of marriage.
Appear nice, be happy for your youth.
Hit hard, left, right, move!
Ring the bell of marriage !

Oh! be beautiful you children of my father.
Accomplish the wish of God
 The one who designed marriage.
Marry in broad day-light.
Rejoice all in singing!

Look at the 'designer' of marriage
Meet, love one another, co-operate,
Rejoice you children of my father,
Blow your trumpets!
 Your father is blessing you.

Show the value of marriage
Dance, you elderly people
Feast, dance you friends,
 Foreigners witness ponderingly!
Play xylophones you best men and bridesmaids!

The bride and groom, enter the country
 The country of sorrow and fights,
 The country of sin and death,
 The country of joy and tribulations.
Pray, love one another everyday.)

Ndhambi uses imperative verbs to show us what the two lovers should do. In the second stanza we find six of these imperative verbs, namely, *-tanani* (come ye!), *-lalani* (be quiet ye! / be cool ye!), *-pfulani* (open ye!), *bombisani* (make to

appear smart) and *-tsakelani* (be happy ye! for). The use of the imperatives continues throughout the whole poem. It appears that the speaker is trying to advise the two lovers on what to do for he, as an experienced man, knows what marriage entails. The speaker instructs them to march forward when he says: *Gi! ximatsi xinene fambani* (Gi! left right go ye!). He uses the imperative verb *-fambani* (go ye!) to indicate that the two lovers should take a giant step and proceed with their day to day activities. Extensive use of imperatives is also found in the third, fourth and fifth stanzas. In almost all instances where these imperative verbs occur, they are found in the beginning of the line. Ndhambi concludes by exhorting the two lovers to pray and love each other. He says: *Khongelani* (pray ye!), *rhandzanani* (love ye! each other). The speaker seems to be aware of the fact that if they pray to God, their love will grow from strength to strength.

5.9 THE USE OF IMPERATIVE VERBS IN NKONDO'S POETRY

- 5.9.1 Nkondo's use of the imperative verbs in his poetry is only noticeable in three poems, namely, *Nambu wa vutomi* (p.3), *Vona* (p.15) and *Ku saseka ka mfemhe* (p.21). In the poem *Nambu wa vutomi*, we find four imperative verbs: *-languta* (look ye!), *-hlangula* (wipe ye!), *-basisa* (cleanse ye!) and *-hundzuluxa* (turn ye!). All these imperative verbs are instrumental in drawing the attention of the addressee to the river of life. Life is likened to a flowing river which carries debris and mud as it flows. The debris and mud (*makhukhuri* and *ndzhope*) symbolize the difficulties that one meets in life. Therefore, these imperative verbs are intentionally employed by the speaker to remind the addressee of the dangers in life. In the poem *Vona* (p.15) the poet uses two imperative verbs, i.e *-vona* (see ye!) and *-twana* (hear ye!). These verbs are essential in one's perception. If one sees and hears, one will be safe in life. In *Ku saseka ka mfemhe* (p.21) the poet again uses only two imperative verbs, namely *-tshunela* (come nearer ye!) and *-vona* (see ye!). However, the use of the imperative here is not associated with personification.

The poet uses these verbs with the aim of exhorting the addressee to regard the beauty of the baboon. These imperative verbs are operative in linking the baboon with the listener.

5.10 THE USE OF THE IDEOPHONES IN NDHAMI'S POETRY

5.10.1 Ideophones are a communicative device which Ndhambi employs in *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949) and *Switlhokovetsele swa vana* (1966). In the first volume, Ndhambi uses ideophones in twenty two out of sixty poems. In the latter volume he uses ideophones in twenty out of sixty poems. For illustrative purposes we will use the poem *Xikoxa* (p.57). In this poem, Ndhambi employs ideophones in the opening lines of the first, second, third and the fourth stanzas. In each line the poet seems to be trying to reveal the behaviour of the old through the vivid descriptions created by the use of ideophones. In the first stanza, Ndhambi uses *Takaswi gi, takaswi gi!* (of limping) to describe how the old lady limps as she walks through the streets on a hot sunny day. The poet pities this old lady. He says: *Tshama u wisa ndzhutin'* (Sit down and rest in the shade). The old lady continues on her mission and the poet says: *Ka voyi, voyi!* (of swaying sideways) to indicate that she no longer has the energy to walk straight. The ideophones: *Ka khinu, khinu!* (of hobbling) and *Ka khigi, khigi!* (of stopping up suddenly against an obstacle) give us the idea of the difficulty that the old lady experiences in walking. She is too old to be found wandering around the streets.

5.11 THE USE OF IDEOPHONES IN NKONDO'S POETRY

5.11.1 In *Mbita ya vulombe* Nkondo also makes use of ideophones to convey his intended message to the readers. In *Ku saseka ka mfenhe* (p.21) he uses *kelu-kelu!* (of looking sideways), *damarhele!* (of sticking to some object) and *swulu!* (of walking lightly so as not to be heard) as ideophones to describe the actions of the baboon. In the poem *Swinyenyani* (p.24) he uses

dewuu! (of dangling on something), *ndziwi!* (of swinging) and *tshavatshava puruu!* (of flapping wings and flying off) to depict the manner in which these birds fly. Nevertheless, Ndhambi tends to use more ideophones in his poetry than does Nkondo, who employed them only in *Ku saseka ka mfenhe* and *Swinyenyani*.

5.12 THE ELISION OF THE TERMINATIVE VOWEL -i IN NDHAMBI'S POETRY

5.12.1 Ndhambi tends to elide the terminative vowel -i, especially when it occurs at the end of the line. This is seen in poems such as *Nkhuvu wa vukati* (Ndhambi, 1949:42), *Rirhandzu* (Ndhambi, 1966:18), *Khisimusi* (1949:29), *Donki* (op. cit.:25), *Fundudzi* (op. cit.:21) and *N'wa-makolo* (op. cit.:14). All the underlined consonants in the last syllables of the lines of the following two stanzas of *Khisimusi* illustrate elision in Ndhambi's poetry:

(92) *Ku twala yini kwala misaven'*?
I mhaka leyi humaka tilwen',
Ku fuma ku ntshwa ku nghena vanhwin',
Misava yi nghena masungulwen',
Hinkwaswo swi le ku vonakalen'.

Matlheweni ya mune bombelan'
Vito ra Davida exivongwen',
Tintsumi ri byelen' matlhelwen',
N'we vamatiko ri amukelen'
Ri rhwele ku fuma ka le tilwen'.

(What is world news?
It is the news from heaven,
The new kingdom is with the people,
The earth is taking a new beginning,
Everything is in the light.

In all four cardinal points be smart ye!
The name of David in the lineage,
The angels spread the word in all directions,
You foreigners (non-believers) receive it,
It tells us of the kingdom of heaven.)

5.13 THE ELISION OF THE TERMINATIVE VOWEL -i IN NKONDO'S POETRY

5.13.1 Nkondo does not elide the vowel -i to the same extent that Ndhambi does in his poetry. The only place where we observe the elision of the vowel -i is found in the twelfth line of the poem *Ku saseka ka mfenhe* (1969:21): *Ahaa! u sw'vonil'* (Ahaa! did you see!), where the vowel -i of the concord *swi* and the ending -e of the verb *vonile* (seen) have been omitted.

5.14 SUMMARY

5.14.1 In this chapter it has become clear that Ndhambi's poetry is of a praise poem style. In his praising he also makes use of personification, which is a feature prevalent in traditional poetry. Nkondo is subjective and philosophical in approach. He looks at a subject and reveals his emotions and ideas on it. He does not address the subject as such to explain its characteristics as Ndhambi does. He expresses his personal opinion, which clearly indicates his insight into the subject. This approach is characteristic of most modern poets in Tsonga. We also observed that compound nouns are a prominent feature of Ndhambi's poetry, while Nkondo does not make extensive use of compound nouns in his poetry.

CHAPTER 6

THEMATIC EVALUATION OF NDHAMBI'S AND NKONDO'S POETRY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 The style that a poet employs in his poetry contributes greatly towards the theme which emerges from the reader's grasp of the whole poem. This is evident in the previous chapter where the different poetic styles of Ndhambi and Nkondo were discussed. We should, therefore, have a closer look at the themes on which these poets focused. Our approach will be to compare the manner in which the themes emerge in Ndhambi's and Nkondo's poetry.

6.2 DEFINITION OF THE TERM 'THEME'

6.2.1 Several scholars of repute have attempted to define the term 'theme'. For instance, Cohen (1973:198) defines theme as:

The essential meaning or concept in a literary work.

Roberts (1982:8) defines theme as:

... a central idea or point.

Marivate (1984:17) also defines the concept 'theme' as:

... the central idea or the general topic which the particular story (poem) is illustrating. (The word in brackets is added to align the definition for our purposes).

The central characteristic mentioned in all these definitions is that the theme is the main underlying idea or focal point

that the poet aims at putting across to his readers. Smith (1985:46) indicates that we should not think that theme is the poet's starting point, but rather:

... a perception which emerges from the poem as a whole.

Smith (op. cit.:46) further asserts that:

As we read a poem, certain words or word clusters seem to draw attention or lodge in the mind as reference points. Gradually, a pattern of relationships emerges and defines a shape of meaning. When this can be formulated it is called the theme.

Marivate (1984:47) regards the theme of a poem as a picture hung on the wall. It is, therefore, the duty of the reader to get this overall picture which is the theme of the poem. Roberts (1982:8) further indicates what theme should be like:

... theme ... should be a short, accurate, and forceful presentation of ideas or descriptions, well contrived as a totality or unity. A theme should not ramble in any way, but should be clearly united around a dominating central thought. A theme is a brief "mind's full" on any particular subject. (Emphasis added).

Roberts (op. cit.:8) implies that theme should be presented in terms of a statement, i.e. a sentence such as, for example, a proverb.

6.2.2 In an attempt to differentiate between theme and subject-matter, Lenake (1984:15) says:

The term subject-matter relates to 'what' is being said in the poem, while theme refers to the underlying idea of the poem. (Emphasis added)

Lenake (op. cit.:15) asserts further that:

The two concepts appear to be inseparable for literary analysis. (Emphasis added)

Lenake (op. cit.:15) argues while quoting Burton (1958:3) that there are two main aspects of the critic's function. Firstly the matter of a poem, and the poet's attitude to it should be made clear to the reader. Secondly, Lenake (op. cit.:15) says that Burton is of the opinion that the critic should give the reader a clear and unequivocal opinion of the value of the theme and of how the poet treats it. Lenake (op. cit.:15) concludes that:

Theme could therefore be compared to concepts such as intention, message, purpose, aim and meaning. (Emphasis added)

This means that the critic has the important role of indicating very clearly what the message of the poet seems to be in the poem being assessed.

Ntuli (1984:59) is also not in favour of separating theme and subject-matter when discussing poems. He says:

We use 'theme' in a wide sense to include the subject matter and the underlying idea in the poem. (Emphasis added)

- 6.2.3 We shall, therefore, in this chapter discuss the subject-matter of the poems and at the end of the discussion of each poem, express in a statement the theme that emerges after reading the poem. Whilst doing this, we shall bear in mind that the expression of the theme of a particular poem will differ from individual to individual, depending on the reader's response to the facts of the poem, as well as on the poet's emphasis and intention. Therefore, themes that will be expressed here are not regarded as the ultimate statement. It should be remembered that although we intend evaluating the themes of Ndhambi's and Nkondo's poetry, our aim is not to discuss these themes *per se*, but to give a general critical assessment of the

poems in order to discover what the poets write about. By doing so we will be adhering to the subject of this dissertation.

- 6.2.4 Smith (1985:47) is of the opinion that the main areas of human concern to which themes seem to relate are the following:

The effects of time - growth, change, ageing, death, transience, renewal, birth.
Human relationships - love, friendship, parting, loss, constancy, unfaithfulness.
Human consciousness - hope, fear, happiness, despair, self-esteem, self-rejection.
Human circumstances - freedom, restriction, abundance, deprivation, communion, isolation.

Our main objection to these broad categories of thematic grouping is that too many kinds of poems are included together. For our purpose, we feel we should only discuss poems on *nature*, *love* and *death*, because Ndhambi and Nkondo seem to focus on these. In each instance, we will quote two poems from each poet to illustrate their thematic tendencies. Obviously, their poetry does not deal only with these three subjects. Therefore, our grouping here is only for the purpose of this investigation.

6.3 NDHAMI'S POEMS ON NATURE

- 6.3.1 Most of the poems that Ndhambi wrote in *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* and *Switlhokovetsetlo swa vana* clearly indicate that he is more inclined to poems on nature than on love or death. In the presentation of this theme, personification is used as one of the important poetic devices. The following poems from his *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949) serve as examples: *Tinyenyana* (p.13), *Mahlambandlopfu* (p.15), *Nhlekanhi* (p.16), *Mpimavayeni* (p.17), *Khongolotii* (p.18) *Vusiku* (p.19), *Fundudzi* (p.21), *Xifufununu* (p.26). *Ribolla* (p.35), *Nhlalala* (p.65), *Misava* (p.49) and *Rirhova* (p.31). There are many more poems which deal with nature that are not included in the above list.

Rirhova and *Nhlekanhi* will now be discussed:

- 6.3.2 In the poem *Rirhova*, Ndhambi (1949:31) draws our attention to a river that is of great help to the inhabitants of the areas through which it flows. He uses personification to show how good it is to the people. As a tributary of the bigger river, Ritave, and the ocean, the river is depicted as their daughter and the grandchild, respectively. The poet attributes many good qualities to this river. Its banks are deep because of the erosion caused through the years of its flowing. Many builders in the area have also erected beautiful dwellings with its sand. The luxuriant growth along this river gives the impression of a state of peace. The theme which emerges after reading the poem is that *THE INHABITANTS OF THE AREAS THROUGH WHICH RIRHOVA FLOWS BENEFIT SUBSTANTIALLY FROM THIS RIVER*. It is a pity that most of the particulars we get from his praising of this river are mere enumeration of its good qualities. Brooks, et al., (1963:92) in this regard remark that:

A mere listing of qualities gives a rather flat description; it may be accurate but it does not stir the imagination.

With this statement Brooks and Warren (op. cit.:92) seem to be of the opinion that when the poet lists qualities of the object that he praises, it should be done with the aim of giving insight into that object. The qualities so listed should help in provoking reactions to the object.

- 6.3.3 The second poem on nature by Ndhambi (1949:16) is *Nhlekanhi*. In this poem we are shown the effects of time. Ndhambi (op. cit.:16) outlines the significance of midday to nature and man. Midday (*Nhlekanhi*) is that period of the day when the sun is at its hottest point. During this time of the day, the sun is referred to as the chief of the day: *Hosi leyikulu ya siku* (The great chief of the day), which signifies that it is in command of everything on earth. The effects of time are portrayed in every stanza of the poem. All the plants are

scorched by the heat of the sun. The poet uses the verb *-oxa* (roast) in the fifth line of the first stanza to indicate that it is not an ordinary burning which is taking place here, but an intentional action of the sun. Cultivators and herdboys are forced to drive their cattle to the shade to minimize the heat from the midday sun. The workers are forced to stop working and listen to the sound of the cicadas which accompany the excruciating heat of the sun. When the sun is at this point of the day, evaporation from the soil takes place very fast and elderly people, like Ntumbeni, are forced to remove their overcoats to get cooler air from the atmosphere. It is so hot that even small germs found in nature cannot survive. There is no living organism which can resist the harshness and the burning effect of the rays of the sun. The evaporation which takes place during this time of the day is described by means of a hyperbole: *Kelela mati ya swidziva* (Draw water from the pools), which indicates that great quantities of water are taken from these pools. It has become so hot that people think of winter.

After reading this poem the central idea emerges: *THE MIDDAY SUN HAS A POWER THAT BURNS ALL LIVING THINGS ON EARTH*. This is the controlling idea of the poem.

6.4 NKONDO'S POEMS ON NATURE

- 6.4.1 In *Mbita ya vulombe* (1969) Nkondo does not have many poems on nature, because he does not attach much importance to natural phenomena in his philosophizing. He wrote on *Ku saseka ka mfenhe* (p.21), *Swinyenyani* (p.24), *Gumba* (p.14), *Mpfula* (p.9), *Nambu wa vutomi* (p.3) and *Phapha ra huwa* (p.13). In *Ku saseka ka mfenhe* and *Swinyenyani* we observed an element of praising but not to the extent evident in Ndhambi's poetry. For our purpose, we would like to indicate the subject-matter and the themes of *Phapha ra huwa* (13) and *Gumba* (p.1).

6.4.2 In the poem *Phapha ra huwa* (op. cit.:13) our attention is focused on a natural phenomenon of a period just before heavy rain falls. We see big clouds moving very fast in the sky. They are roaring and thundering, as if rain will soon follow. After a while, this frightening situation dissipates and no rain ever falls. The poet wants to convey the message to us that *AN EMPTY VESSEL MAKES THE LOUDEST NOISE*. It is from such a theme that one is able to conclude that most people who talk too much of what they can do, can in fact, do absolutely nothing. This convinces us of the validity of the motto: *DEEDS SPEAK*.

6.4.3 The second poem on natural phenomenon by Nkondo (1969:14) is *Gumba*. Nkondo in this poem reveals his observation of the behavioural patterns of the bird *gumba* (white stork). The white stork migrates to warmer regions of the world when winter comes. This bird behaves in this fashion because nature has designed it to be so.

Nkondo (op. cit.:14) repeats the word *nyiko* (gift) at the end of the first line and at the beginning of the second line to emphasize the white stork's natural endowment. The word *hundzulu* (change) in the third line indicates the relationship that exists between the white stork and nature. This word is repeated three times in this poem, but this does not imply that the white stork also changes its identity.

As they change, the seasons contribute to the bird's experience. The understanding that the white stork gains from experience, facilitates its life. From this poem, one underlying fact stands out prominently, i.e. *WHATEVER CHANGE ONE UNDERGOES IN LIFE, IT MUST NOT BE A CHANGE IN ONE'S IDENTITY*. Due to natural forces, the white stork is compelled to move from region to another, but in the process, it still remains a white stork. Nkondo (op. cit.:10), like Ndhambi (1966:12) in *Swiluva* and *Nhlekanhi* (Ndhambi, 1949:16) has used a natural object, i.e. the white stork, to show the effects of time.

- 6.4.4 In Ndhambi's poems quoted as examples of his poems on nature, i.e. *Rirhova* and *Nhlekanhi*, we observed that he tends to distance himself from these objects and praise them whilst maintaining a certain degree of objectivity. This is slightly different from Nkondo's approach in *Mbita ya vulombe* (1969), which is more subjective.

Nkondo deliberately draws our attention to an individual whom we must observe in terms of certain familiar natural objects. By examining these objects we ultimately become conscious that a human being is quite different from them, i.e. the stars, clouds and the forest. In *Phapha ra huwa*, Nkondo (op. cit.:13) focuses on the sky where one sees the moving and thundering clouds which fail to bring rain. This could be likened to the behaviour of a talkative person who ultimately achieves nothing.

6.5 NDHAMBI'S POEMS ON LOVE

- 6.5.1 Ndhambi was so preoccupied with poems on nature that in his two volumes of poetry, he wrote only two poems on love. These two poems are *Nkhuvu wa vukati* from *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949:42) and *Rirhandzu* from *Switlhokovetsetelo swa vana* (1966:18).

- 6.5.2 In the poem *Nkhuvu wa vukati* Ndhambi invites the inhabitants of the Mission Station to come in great numbers to be witnesses as two lovers celebrate their wedding feast. He calls on all of them to come and admire the beauty of those who are getting married. When the people have gathered to see all the connubial activities, the speaker starts giving advice to the couple. He tells them of the good and the bad aspects of marriage. He concludes by assuring them that the step that they have taken is approved of by the Almighty God and as a result he encourages them to pray to succeed in their marriage despite difficulties. It is after reading the whole poem that the following theme emerges: *MARRIAGE IS DESIGNED BY GOD AND PEOPLE SHOULD COMMIT THEMSELVES TO IT IN ORDER TO FULFIL HIS WILL.*

- 6.5.3 The other poem on love by Ndhambi is *Rirhandzu*. This tends to be a mere catalogue of all the qualities of love and what love does to a person. Ndhambi has just listed qualities of the subject that he praises. Cowl (1970:108) gives a warning about such descriptions when he says:

Descriptive poetry has been ranked as among the lowest branches of art, and description is a mere ornament ...

This is a clear indication that there is not much depth and insight in such praises except that the poet praises love as he knows it from a biblical point of view. The last line of the poem: *Rhandzeka munhu, rhandza, Xikwembu xi ku rhandzile* (Be lovable you person, love, as God has also loved you) can be taken as the theme of the poem.

6.6 NKONDO'S POEMS ON LOVE

- 6.6.1 Phythian (1970:122) quotes Wordsworth as saying that:

Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.

Therefore, poetry as an expression of the emotions of an individual, has much to do with the expression of love. Poets through the ages have tried to express this emotional feeling in their poetry. Nkondo has extensively explored the field of love in his poetry. Poems such as *Xirilo* (p.1), *Swi herile* (p.3), *Xiluva* (p.7), *Rirhandzu* (p.9), *Mpfula* (p.9), *Xikamu-kamu* (p.8) and *Xisaka xa munwi* (p.14) are examples of love poems. We do not intend treating all of them here. The poems *Xirilo* and *Xiluva* will be evaluated.

XIRILO

- 6.6.2 The title of this poem does not in any way give an indication that it has anything to do with love. *Xirilo* (Mourning) is an

account of somebody who mourns the loss of his loved one through death. In his mourning, we are able to observe how deep his love was for his dear wife. The poet uses emotional expressions to illustrate the strong ties that existed between the two lovers. The language that Nkondo uses in this poem, clearly indicates the speaker's attitude towards his beloved. This attitude is of a serious nature, for he is 'crying' for the loss that he has suffered through this untimely death. The underlying idea of this poem is that *NO MATTER HOW MUCH MAN LOVES, HE IS TOTALLY POWERLESS BEFORE DEATH*. As soon as one's lover passes away, one realizes the predicament that one will have to face alone.

- 6.6.3 The second poem with a love theme is *Xiluva* (p.7). This poem is very short. It is composed of only eight lines which all express the deep feelings of love.

The composition of the flower, i.e. the calyxes and the corollas, is of vital importance to the whole flower. The green calyxes symbolize the man, whilst the corollas with their different bright colours stand for the woman. In any flower this composition is basic.

The central idea in this poet is *LOVE CANNOT BE LOVE UNLESS TWO PEOPLE, i.e. A MAN AND A WOMAN, ARE INVOLVED TO CONSTITUTE IT*. Unity and togetherness are formed by the bonds of love.

- 6.6.4 Ndhambi, in his two volumes of poetry: *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949) and *Switlhokovetsetlo swa vana* (1966), has only two poems about love. Eulogistic descriptions of what love does to a human being and the connubial felicities that result from love are highlighted. Ndhambi's approach in presenting love differs from that of Nkondo, who expresses the emotional experience of love. It is through love that the man whose wife passed away in the poem *Xirilo* realizes that death has brought great sorrow and misery to him. If this man did not have deep sentiments of love, he would not lament the loss that he suffered by the

passing away of his beloved. In a metaphorical style, Nkondo portrays, in the poem *Xiluva*, the flower as a symbol of the two lovers who are inseparable. The physical structure, i.e. the calyxes and the corollas, represents the man and the woman in love. The structure of the flower forms a 'unity' which can only be labelled as love.

6.7 NDHAMI'S POEMS ON DEATH AND/OR TRIBULATIONS

6.7.1 Ndhambi did not write any poems on death. Nevertheless, we shall evaluate two poems that show some inclinations to tribulations in life. The analysis of such poems will be made, because our main aim is not so much to indicate the thematic tendencies of Ndhambi and Nkondo *per se*, but to give a general assessment of their poetry. These poems are *NdlaIa* (Ndhambi, 1966:19) and *Nyimpi* (op. cit.:27). In the poem *NdlaIa*, Ndhambi depicts the great famine experienced by the whole country because of a drought. The entire country no longer has any sign of life. The fountains are dry and the trees have withered and died. The people are depicted as miserable, lean and gaunt. They no longer have power, and as a result, when death comes, they will not be able to bury one another. Those who accumulated wealth through lobola paid to their daughters when getting married, are now bankrupt. The poet calls on Almighty God to rescue them because they have all 'sinned'. The situation has become so critical that people have resorted to eating bull frogs in order to survive. The essence that Ndhambi expresses in this poem is that *PEOPLE EXPERIENCE GREAT MISERY DURING PERIODS OF DROUGHT*.

6.7.2 In most of Ndhambi's poems the tone of a person who advocates peace and progress is revealed. This tone is observed in the poem *Nyimpi* (Ndhambi, 1966:27). In this poem, Ndhambi seems to aim at evoking the state of uneasiness brought by war. Ndhambi invites all peace-loving citizens of the country to unite so that there can be co-operation and co-existence between Blacks and Whites. If this co-operation fails to materialize the

country will be immersed in chaos and bloodshed. The poet depicts a full-scale war. War-planes and the navy are used to fight the enemy, and fierce fighting on the battle-field is also portrayed. The guns of those being killed are seen falling and rolling on the ground. A scene of misery and suffering is depicted in the poem. But all those who exert extreme power to fight for something, persist unwaveringly until they conquer. People defeat the enemy through a spirit of patriotism, which reminds them to hold on and fight for the country of their grandparents and their children. The poet indicates furthermore that the great and toughest war the people should engage themselves in is *ku lwa na dyondzo* (to fight for education), for here they endeavour to improve their intellectual capabilities. This is done with the aim of living a better quality of life. In all these wars, Ndhambi warns his audience to fear the war that comes as a result of provocation, for it culminates in the loss of life and property. In this poem Ndhambi succeeds, through the use of figurative language, in expressing the idea that *EDUCATION IS THE TOUGHEST WAR THAT PEOPLE SHOULD FIGHT IN ORDER TO HAVE A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE.*

6.8 NKONDO'S POEMS ON DEATH

6.8.1 There is a great uncertainty about death amongst people. Many people, especially non-Christians, are not very sure of what will actually happen after death. This uncertainty creates fear and doubt. Consequently, many poets have written poems on death to speculate on its reality. Death, to a staunch Christian, only implies a passage to heaven. It is the only means through which he can get to the Father who is in heaven. Death does not in any way instil fear in the person who believes that there is life after death.

6.8.2 Nkondo's *Mbita ya vulombe* contains three poems on death. These are *Xirilo* (p.1), *Rifu* (p.1) and *Fambelo ra ntumbuluko* (p.10). We have already discussed *Xirilo*, which is an account of somebody who mourns the loss of his beloved one through death

under love poems (cf. paragraph 6.6.2 above). Therefore, we shall now evaluate *Rifu* and *Fambelo ra ntumbuluko*.

RIFU

- 6.8.3 In the poem *Rifu*, Nkondo (1969:1) explicitly expresses the theme that *ALL HUMAN BEINGS ARE JUST SOJOURNERS ON EARTH, FOR ONE DAY THEY WILL ALL DIE*. This implies that we are all bound towards a certain destination, which is obviously death. We are all on board the ship of death. This ship symbolizes life that moves gradually through time. The fact that we are passengers on the ship of death, implies that death can come at any time in our lives. There is no specific time set aside for death.

FAMBELO RA NTUMBULUKO

- 6.8.4 The length of this poem reminds us of the long life of an individual on earth. It is long because he has to live from birth until death takes him away. When a man is still young, he is quite unaware that he will one day become old. Nkondo (1969:10) highlights this blissful state by using the verb *-tlanga* (play). The word gives an atmosphere of happiness. But as time goes by, all the people who were happy and playing on the top of the hillock, realize that they are gradually descending to the valley of old age, which is unavoidable. Everyone has to conform to the dictates of nature. This poem gives us an impression that *A HUMAN BEING LIVES FROM A STATE OF YOUTHFUL BLISS TO A STATE OF DISTRESSING OLD AGE, WHICH CULMINATES IN DEATH*.

6.9 SUMMARY

In the discussion above, we observed that all scholars of poetry who attempted a definition of the term *theme*, agree that the theme is the essential meaning or the central idea that emerges after reading the whole poem. We also discovered that

Ndhambi's poetry is mainly objective and panegyric, i.e. it is of a praise nature, in contrast with Nkondo's which is subjective and philosophical. Ndhambi praises the river *Rirhova*, for instance, for all that it does for the residents of the areas through which it flows. The main poetic style which he employs here is personification. In Nkondo's poems on nature our attention is drawn to what he considers to be of significance in his subjects. Nkondo uses a persuasive technique, whereby he compels his audience to focus their attention on *Ku saseka ka mfenhe* (The beauty of the baboon) and *Swinyenyani* (Birds). It is interesting to note that when the poet has succeeded in drawing the attention of the audience, he then starts giving all the positive attributes of his subject. He specifically mentions those qualities which were obscured to the reader. His point of reference acts as an eye-opener to them. Another point of great interest to us is the fact that most of Ndhambi's poems pertain to nature rather than to love and death. This became evident as we evaluated his poems on love. In the two volumes of his poetry, i.e. *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949) and *Switlhokovetsele swa vana* (1966) each has only one poem on love. This is in contrast to Nkondo who has written about seven poems on love. The examples quoted in paragraph 5.8.1 above illustrate the field of love that he covered. We also noted that Ndhambi differs from Nkondo in that his two volumes do not have a single poem on death. Nkondo, on the other hand, has written three poems on the subject of death. These are: *Xirilo* (1969:1), *Rifu* (op. cit.:1) and *Fambelo ra ntumbuluko* (op. cit.:10). From these poems we are able to understand the pain, agony and the devastating effects of death on the bereaved. The attitude of someone who is 'crying' for the loss that he has suffered through the unexpected passing away of his dear spouse is noticed in *Xirilo* (op. cit.:1). Nkondo's style in this poem is such that the reader is bound to sympathize with the speaker for the loss.

CHAPTER 7

GENERAL CONCLUSION

- 7.1 In this investigation, we discovered that it is not easy to define poetry absolutely. Literary critics who attempt to define poetry agree that poetry is an expression of emotions through the use of figurative language. The poet uses language in a way that concisely expresses an intended idea. This implies that economy of words is characteristic of this genre.
- 7.2 The poetry of Ndhambi and Nkondo makes use of the general poetic devices outlined in chapter 3. It is clear that Tsonga poetry does not use stressed and unstressed syllables to produce rhythm. Instead, meaningful pauses and slight emphases at the penultimate syllables of words create a measure of length which can be manipulated to produce rhythm. It was found that the rhyme employed by Ndhambi in *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949) and *Switlhokovetsetelo swa vana* (1966) is contrived.

As the first Tsonga poet, Ndhambi probably thought that writing good poetry necessitated an emulation of all the poetic techniques characteristic of Western poetry. His skilful arrangement of the final vowels at the end of lines to create rhyme, seems to be more decorative than significant as far as meaning is concerned. Nkondo, on the other hand, does not make use of such devices to produce rhyme. Although Ndhambi employs rhyme in his poetry, it is used sparingly because Tsonga has very few vowels at the end of words. As a result, it is recommended that more extensive research be conducted on how rhythm and rhyme are achieved in Tsonga poetry.

- 7.3 One other noticeable feature is that Ndhambi is more conscious of equal stanzaic length, which seems also to be a result of the influence of European poetry. Nkondo is freer in his division of

poems into stanzas. The length of his stanzas is determined by the ideas that he wants to convey to his readers.

- 7.4 Imagery, which is an important poetic technique, includes metaphor, simile, symbolism and personification. Ndhambi's and Nkondo's poetry were revealed as containing all these devices.
- 7.5 Ndhambi's and Nkondo's poetry abounds with both direct and indirect satire. Satire is an effective instrument of social reform and progress in the well-being of all people. Through direct satire the person attacked responds spontaneously to what is being said and, it is hoped, reforms accordingly. The effects of indirect satire are such that the target is tacitly and didactically enlightened about what is beneficial to all members of society.
- 7.6 Ndhambi's poetry uses praise poem style. In his praising he makes use of personification, which is a feature prevalent in traditional poetry. Ndhambi praises his subjects in two distinct ways. Firstly, he distances himself from the subject and praises it with the aim of focusing the audience's attention on it. Secondly, he pretends to be the subject itself and reveals its qualities as if it were a person telling the onlookers about its way of life. Nkondo differs from Ndhambi in this regard, because he does not praise. He is subjective and philosophical in approach. He looks at a subject and explicates his emotions and ideas in response to it. He does not address the subject as such to explain its characteristics, as Ndhambi does. Rather, he expresses his personal opinion, which clearly indicates his insight into the subject. This approach is characteristic of most modern poets in Tsonga. We also observed that compound nouns are a prominent feature of Ndhambi's poetry, while Nkondo does not make extensive use of compound nouns in his poetry.
- 7.7 This investigation also reveals that most of Ndhambi's poems deal with natural phenomena. He praises natural objects such as rivers, mountains, lakes and soil. We have observed that Ndhambi praises these natural phenomena objectively. He presents his

impression of them with no pre-conceived ideas. Nkondo, on the other hand, does not praise, but draws the attention of the reader to what he considers to be of significance in his subjects. He endeavours to reveal those qualities which seem to be obscured to the reader. His point of reference provides his audience with new perspectives on the subject.

- 7.8 Ndhambi did not write a single poem on death. He spent most of his lifetime in the mountainous region of Ribolla and Mashamba where he taught for many years. The natural beauty of these areas influenced him tremendously and this is perhaps why his poetry focuses predominantly on nature. Nkondo, on the other hand, wrote three poems on death. In these poems he depicts death as a phenomenon which inevitably befalls all human beings. Another conspicuous phenomenon in Ndhambi's poetry is that he did not write many poems on love. In *Swiphato swa Xitsonga* (1949) and *Switlhokovetsele swa vana* (1966), Ndhambi has one poem on love in each. This is in contrast to Nkondo, who has written seven poems on love.
- 7.9 It is a pity that Ndhambi died before he could write more poetry. He would perhaps have adopted the style of the modern poets, in which emotional feelings are expressed subjectively. It could also be speculated that Nkondo, who is still alive, will continue to make dynamic contributions to Tsonga literature. We are hopeful that his later contributions (when and if they come) will be better than *Mbita ya vulombe*.
- 7.10 Our evaluation of the poetry of Ndhambi and Nkondo reveals that Ndhambi is a traditional praise poet, whilst Nkondo represents modern Tsonga poetry. We were prompted to select Ndhambi for this study, because he is the first Tsonga poet who wrote in traditional praise poem style. Nkondo's style is peculiar to modern Tsonga poetry. The fact that Nkondo ranks amongst the first poets to deviate from praising, contributed to our decision to pair him with Ndhambi, who is a praise poet. The philosophical ideas that Nkondo's poems reveal, the irregularity that is observed in the

number of lines in each stanza of his poems, the rhymelessness and the irregular rhythmic patterns, were a great incentive to compare him with Ndhambi, who imitated Western style in writing poetry.



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