THE GROWTH AND TENDENCIES

OF

TSWANA POETRY

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work, both in conception and execution.

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CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY CONCEPTS

Foreword

1.1.1. Studies in poetry have often been undertaken in various languages. Therefore the intention in this chapter is to note a few findings and viewpoints as a background to the present task.

1.1.2. We find it necessary, in order to examine Tswana 'poetry' - modern and traditional - in context, to examine briefly what previous scholars have found about other Bantu languages, and in a small way, non-Bantu languages, since one cannot -

> .... insien hoe 'n mens by die gebruik van voor-kennis kan verbykom nie. (Cloete 1957, p. 62)

1.1.3. Since the composition of modern 'poetry' is of recent birth in Tswana, the unwritten traditional lore dominates. One therefore has not only previous studies in poetry in general to reckon with, but the traditional lore as well. It must be collected from bards who have received it from previous generations and maintained it orally, and it will be found to occupy quite a prominent place in this study.

English Poetry

1.2.1. We learn that English poetry had humble beginnings, composed by humble people of humble calling such as Caedmon -

> .... a rude herdsman to whom in vision was given the power of song. (Hopkins, Ch. 1)

This occurred in the seventh century A.D. We are informed further that much of the poetry of this period -

> .... affords much to the historian, the philologist, the antiquary, ... (Hopkins, Ch. 1)

and that native writing was non-existent.

1.2.2. Much the same sort of situation could be depicted in respect of traditional Tswana 'poetry' : it is largely oral, and its provenance is disputed; much of it is of more value as history than as 'poetry'; its bards come from all walks of life, from herdsmen to noblemen.

1.2.3. Dealing with the origins of English prosody, George Saintsbury (p. 22) informs us that although ancient bards created it (prosody), it was almost or quite unconsciously that they adopted it. This engenders a hope that we may find ancient Tswana bards having created poetry unknowingly. This makes it therefore even more important to take a careful look at unwritten traditional literature first.

Bantu Praise-Poetry

1.3.1. 'Bantu' refers to the Southern Bantu, viz. the Nguni, the Sotho, the Tsonga and the Venda. Studies (Lestrade 1962, p. 292) in their traditional, unwritten literature have revealed that the literature is in prose and verse, which two divisions are not totally distinct. The verse is seen in various genres : didactic verse, verse lore, lyric and dramatic verse, song, and praise-poems. This certainly gives us a ready catalogue of what to look for and what to examine. G.P. Lestrade points out

that the difference between prose and verse in Bantu Literature lies in spirit rather than form. And this seems to agree with the popular view that poetry may be in verse, but need not be.

1.3.2. If we use terms such as 'poetry', 'verse', 'verse-foot' regarding Tswana, there is no intention to claim that these are exact equivalents of their Western European counterparts. These terms must be viewed simply as an essential background without which analysis would perhaps be impossible. These terms have also been used in previous studies, and it would perhaps be helpful to continue in that strain. We mean to seek the poetry in Tswana literature, if any. We are not taking it for granted.

Zulu Poetry

1.4.1. B.W. Vilakazi (p. 107) is quite categorical about the existence of poetry in Zulu, saying:

> The problem to be solved is whether izibongo can be considered poetry. Personally I contend that they are poetry, because in studying the language of their composition one does not fail to discover a deep and genuine imaginative tone, for the composer of izibongo apprehends experience, both in its intensity and its subtlety, and shows undeniable power of revealing unknown modes of being through his creation and association of images.

He finds verse in Zulu and defines it as -

> .... a breath-group of words. (p. 112, line 6)

Like Lestrade, Vilakazi maintains that Zulu poetry relies more on spirit than on form. Vilakazi is not alone in judging poetry by its imaginative tone, its creation and association of images.

Another authority submits:

> It is in what they bring to their association with other words, and what this association imparts to them, that the command and magic of words are to be found. (Beeton, p. 19)

1.4.2. As was the case with Vilakazi, our problem is whether similar claims can be made on behalf of Tswana: is what the Tswana call 'poetry' (mabôkô), indeed poetry? In this connection it will certainly be helpful to record what B.W. Vilakazi considers poetry to be. He finds that poetry should be charged with emotion, and says further that poetry must not persuade the mind by logic, but by appealing to emotion; it must be original, and finally rhythmical. As to the aspect of metre, he finds that -

> Zulu has none of these decorations. (p. 111, line 7 from bottom)

We intend to investigate this matter in Tswana.

1.4.3. As if to contradict himself, yet with the intent of opening an enquiry, Vilakazi starts with the notion that Bantu word-stems are mostly disyllabic, and finds that they are therefore amenable to dactylic metre. Bantu words! This should include Tswana words. An examination of this statement is called for. In this connection he finds that Zulu metre is a matter of distribution of duretic elements over a verse, which verse is usually divided into two balanced parts separated by a caesura. Using the dot (.) to signify short, and the colon (:) to signify lengthened syllables, he scans as follows for instance, using the double strokes to represent the caesura (p. 113, 5th verse of Zulu poem dealt with):

. . : . . : . : . :
Ivimb' el' izinkomo // namathole [it denies entrance to cows and their calves]

This shows that there are two long syllables on either side of the caesura which help to balance the two sides and promote rhythm.

1.4.4. As regards stanza form, Vilakazi says that the stanza in traditional Zulu poetry is determined by the poet's treatment of his subject-matter under separate headings, which govern the prose-writer in determining his paragraphs. Headings! These are discovered by the scholar only. The bard of yore never set out to make them. But he certainly had definite thoughts which are discernible in his poetry. These and other such features suggest themselves as matters for investigation in Tswana.

1.4.5. Finally, Vilakazi specifically disapproves of the term "praises" for Zulu poetry, and by implication for other Southern Bantu languages as well. Tswana scholars, foremost of whom are those of the Tswana Language Committee of the Department of Bantu Education, believe that international terms should be retained in Tswana, with phonological adaptations, e.g. fonoloji, saekholoji for 'phonology' and 'psychology'. A time may come sooner or later when the Greek roots from which "poetry" derives become adapted for Tswana use. "Praise" has had its run and has served a useful purpose. That the praise motive is somewhat of an overriding factor in Bantu poetry, is the truth that enabled the term "praise" to survive.

1.4.6. Vilakazi is not alone in his beliefs regarding the poetic nature of praises. His stand is comparable to that of Trevor Cope who says in recent times (p. 25):

> The Zulu praise-poems cannot be described as simple, however, nor as lacking in linguistic artificiality. Praise composition is consciously an art; there is a conscious striving after literary effect and a conscious effort to attain a richer, a more evocative, a more emotive, and a more memorable use of language. The praise-poems exhibit all the characteristics of poetry.

Something is gradually crystallizing by which we can test Tswana poetry.

Sotho Poetry

1.5.1. Sotho comprises the three Southern Bantu cognate languages spoken mainly in Lesotho, in Botswana and Western and South Western Transvaal and the North Western Cape, and in Northern and Eastern Transvaal, and known as Southern Sotho, Tswana and Northern Sotho respectively.

1.5.2. A scholar, urging the investigation of Bantu poetry generally, yet citing examples from this group, finds -

> .... dat dit nie noodsaaklik is, en dat dit selfs baie onwaarskynlik is, dat die Bantoe-digkuns die prosodiese taalelemente inspan op 'n wyse soortgelyk aan dié van die Europese tale.
> (Endemann, p. 379)

He goes on to admit the free (vryelik) use of a peculiar verse-foot (˘˘˘˘), e.g. in sǎ mmútlǎ (of the hare), which may also be compressed to ša 'mútlǎ, to effect "amfibragiese versmaat". It appears that Th. Endemann views such verse-feet as he (Endemann) cites as signalling tendencies to poetic and metrical amenability in Bantu Language, which

can serve as sufficient reason for a fully-fledged investigation of Bantu poetry. And we agree with him.

1.5.3. The great value of Th. Endemann's contribution lies in his suggestion of a research method : the collection of all kinds and bulk of Bantu poetry -

> .... wat hulle voortbestaan aan die oorlewering en nie aan die skrif te danke het nie... (p. 378),

that is to say, traditional poetry, and proverbs and figures of speech that have been treasured because of linguistic excellence, as well as songs, modern (published) poetry, hymns and other verse lore for comparison with the traditional. An examination of copious examples should be undertaken. He warns seriously (p. 379):

> Die blote toepassing van die beginsels verkry uit die studie van die digkuns van Europese tale op die Bantoe-digkuns kan nie wetenskaplik verantwoord word nie.

1.5.4. In considering a method of investigation one could bring the method suggested above into association with that followed by B.W. Vilakazi, who says in his work quoted in 1.4.1 above (p. 112):

> For the sake of stimulating more scientific study and research work in Bantu poetry I have analysed one poem in detail, and checked my results with another poem of a different type .... I discovered that a unit of poetry or verse in Zulu is a breath-group of words.

We learn again that a verse is a unit of poetry. We must take another view into account too, that -

> The distinction between prose and verse is a true one : poetry need not be in verse, and what is in verse need not be poetry. But generally poetry is in verse, and the prose content in prose form. (Whittock p. 15)

1.5.5. We also learned from Th. Endemann above that the test of poetic or literary excellence is that poetry endures by oral transmission, as if to underline that the acid test for the success of a social creation as a cultural contribution is that it shall be embraced by society as society's own. It appears more probable that much of the enduring unwritten traditional literature is a good cultural contribution, than it is certain that some current written literature, which depends on being written for its endurance, is a success.

Northern Sotho Poetry

1.6.1. Of Northern Sotho and related languages P.S. Groenewald says (p. 17) -

> .... dat die navorsing in verband met die versleer in die Bantoetale van Suid-Afrika nog in die kinderskoene staan en dat die resultate daarvan in menige opsig onvolledig en versteegnies onverantwoord is.

1.6.2. P.S. Groenewald observes in Northern Sotho written poetry, that there are tendencies which are attributable to the influence of Western European poetry. This we intend to examine in respect of Tswana. The question arises whether features such as rhyme, rhythm, metre, figure of speech, which are found in European poetry, do not as well exist in traditional Bantu poetry, in some measure at least. He finds that the Northern Sotho verse is isolated by certain boundaries, e.g. a word or a word-group. Verse there is. We must try and find it and find its delimitations in Tswana. Groenewald finds a range of verse techniques of which the verse is the most important since it

determines the form of the whole poem. Verses are divisible into corresponding verse-segments. Other members of the range of verse techniques are the stanza, the poem, the cycle, in that ascending order of magnitude. He makes an exceedingly important point for testing poetry, that verse-form -

> ..., binne die versreël sy beslag deur die korrespondensie van versreëlsegmente kry ...
> (parr. 20 en 113 en 115)

This is rather important for an investigation of Tswana.

1.6.3. In the following Tswana segment, what units of correspondence are there, for instance?

> kè legapatshunyana kè legorosatshwana
> [I am the looter of the white-faced cow,
> I am the captor of the black cow]

We immediately notice that the first person, singular, copulative formative kè is repeated. It opens a submission each time, therefore there are two submissions. The second kè could have been avoided as follows:

> kè legapatshunyana lé legorosatshwana

Immediately the correspondence of verse-segments would have been lost because the lé (and) differs tonetically too from the kè. In other words these units of correspondence of verse pay regard to form as well as to tone. Then do they really correspond. Sentence construction works differently. In ordinary speech this line could also have been -

> ke legapatshunyana ke mogorosatshwana
>
> or
>
> ke segapatshunyana ke mogorosatshwana

using differing class-prefixes le-/mo- and se-/mo-. Quite

clearly also the diminutive suffix -ana is used as a link between the two segments, and as a boundary for each of the two segments. The penult possesses length in either case, and serves as a rhythm signal. It causes a pause at the end of the diminutive segment. The diminutive suffix is also a rhyme-form, and in this respect also an element of correspondence. It is a study of these corresponding units and boundaries that determines the rhythm, the rhyme, and the balance, and that go to determine verse.

1.6.4. Going back to P.S. Groenewald, he finds that there is no end-rhyme in the Northern Sotho unwritten traditional literature, but plenty of attempts at it in the written literature.

Southern Sotho Poetry

1.7.1. In this language a large number of praises of heroes have been collected (not composed), and published by Z.D. Mangoaela (Lithoko ....). In the introduction he reveals the actual motivation for poetical composition - to record history.

1.7.2. Mangoaela considers his poems a welcome token of the love of the nation for its kings, which love is shown by praising their deeds of heroism and uprightness. This should have a salutary influence on kings in their conduct of affairs and judgements. The intention is therefore not only to praise, but to suggest noble behaviour to the king and the nation, which nation stands to benefit immensely by showing its kings high regard. This tendency to

associate all poetry with history and kings is criticised by Vilakazi, who says (p. 123):

> Primitive poetry, of course, has always been thought of in terms of izibongo; but this view is wrong, for the izibongo are but one Department of a great field of poetry.

Our view is that "praise" is to be viewed as a synecdoche, naming the whole by naming the part. It includes all the poetry, historical and otherwise, therefore. Mangoaela goes on to state that the Basotho have always been a brave nation, often warring successfully against the Nguni, the Griquas, the Whites. Justifiably they are proud of their history and perpetuate it in their kings' praises. As a result of their great gifts of poetry, song, proverb and idiom, they excel in elocution more than in material cultural creations - an important lesson for people who hope to go through this world of science by what they say only. Those who will appreciate his book, he says, are (p. v):

> .... barati ba puo ea Sesotho, ba histori ea Basotho, le bahlalefi ba ratang ho fihlela mantsoe le 'mopo oa Sesotho ....
>
> [.... lovers of the Sesotho language, the history of the Basotho, and the men of learning who want to reach out for the words and the structure of the Sesotho language ..]

1.7.3. Mangoaela states frankly that the poems are not his composition, but collections from people of different standing, including chiefs, so that this is a collection of traditional literature.

1.7.4. Mangoaela knew what he was doing in writing in lines/verses, and not in sentences and paragraphs. We

take a stanza from one of the poems as example (p. 10):

Phosholi Mokhachane
Moen'a Morena Moshoeshoe
Ntoa ea Qethoane le Bakoenehi, le
ea Matelile.

1. Tau ea Mangolo, Mor'a Mokhachane,
2. Ea Mangolo le Mangolonyane,
3. Ea Mangolo tau e eme thoteng,
4. E eme sekoting, Marajaneng,
5. E belaela ka lentsoe la 'mutla.

[Phosholi Mokhachane
Younger brother of king Moshoeshoe
War of Qethoane against Rebels, and
the war of Matelile.

1. Lion of the Mangolo, son of Mokhachane,
2. Of the Mangolo and Mangolonyane,
3. The lion of the Mangolo stands on the veld,
4. It stands in the hollow at Marajaneng,
5. It worries about the word 'mutla (hare).]

1.7.5. By the tests we have learned so far, units of correspondence and forms that are used as boundaries are noticeable in the lines, suggesting that the lines are verses. The spirit is conveyed by the strong metaphor, and this points to a traditional style. Of importance is that there is a technique of composition which we do not propose to go into here. It is not only the rhymes, linkings, variations and balanced parts created by the Bantu poet that constitute the mechanism of his poetry. It is not only his observation of phenomena and fact, but his idealism, and his spirit; these rolled together into one present a real life character in its agitations in few but precise words. Form and spirit constitute poetry, and in terms of this stanza, Southern Sotho 'poetry' too.

You are not told of the king's anger at being called mmutla (a hare), but the 'lion' is presented standing on the veld, grumbling, threatening ....

Tswana Poetry

1.8.1. Tswana has large untapped resources of traditional, unwritten 'poetry'. Our estimate is that at least a sizable book each can be compiled from most of our tribal capital villages, e.g. Serowe, Bethanie, Phokeng, Dinokana, Mochudi, Gaborone, Kanye, Mosetlha, Mafikeng, and so forth. In each of these and smaller villages one usually finds some man or woman renowned for knowledge of praises. It is an honour for such a person to grace a social occasion with his presence and to perform, be the occasion a wedding, an educational pageantry or an eventful political come-together. If the chief is involved, the bard usually adds lines to his composition reminding the chief that having praised him, he expects reward in the form of a cow.

1.8.2. Occasionally one finds a collection recorded by a school teacher for purposes of teaching at school or of publication. Such a collection is treasured and such a teacher may become the community's reference, especially after his informants have either been forgotten or have disappeared through natural causes. We have used no material from this source or from other collectors. We interviewed the bards ourselves, and there are many.

1.8.3. Snatches of Tswana traditional 'poetry' are to be found in various school readers. The biggest volume

is perhaps that of I. Schapera (Praise-poems ....). Schapera regards praise-poems as traditional, handed down by word of mouth, and common to all Bantu. He appears to agree with the view of Casalis, of recitals -

> .... with very dramatic gestures, ... which were not easy of comprehension, and which appeared to be distinguished from the ordinary discourse by the elevation of sentiment, powerful ellipses, daring metaphors, and very accentuated rhythm. (p. 4)

He finds that these praises are -

> .... poetical effusions, inspired by the emotions of war or of the chase. (p. 4)

1.8.4. Schapera makes pronouncements that ought to be recapitulated in order that they be used in judging the material collected. He quotes for instance that (p. 15) -

> There is no question about the abundance of poetry in the language, but in its purely primitive form Setswana poetry has no prosody. There is no question of rhyme or metre about it, nor that of division into stanzas. In fact I do not think that it would savour the name 'poetry' if it had to be written in the form in which we find it in the primitive 'Mabôkô' (Praises, generally of chiefs and heroes).

He attributes this view to P.C. Thema (The Trend of Setswana Poetry - 1939, p. 44*). Schapera attributes the poetic features found in Bantu languages by Lestrade to Tswana as well, namely dynamic stress (metrical rhythm), parallelism, chiasmas and linking (p. 15).

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* The Trend of Setswana Poetry is unobtainable. The author, one time High School Principal, is now Minister of Education in Botswana.

Earlier Tswana writings and criticism

1.9.1. We have in mind D.F. v.d. Merwe's Hurutshe Poems (Bibliography, I) with thirty-one items on animals, including birds, one item on natural phenomena, while items 33-37 inclusively bear on cultural creations, including acquisitions from Western culture such as the bicycle (Baesekele), and a final item on the interracial contact situation. All were handed down orally.

1.9.2. Finally we would like to refer to two articles in the now defunct Tigerkloof magazine (Bibliography, I), which represent an important instalment of research into the subject of Tswana 'poetry'. D.M. Ramoshoana contributes under the title Sechuana Poetry. His criteria for poetry are an enthusiastic spirit to praise, so that one's fame should not suffer through want of good record, and rhythm. In relying on spirit he is one amongst many. He uses the word 'verse' in the colloquial sense for what is also called a stanza. He therefore gives no attention to verse in the technical sense. Of rhyme he says -

> .... in praises of heroes and war-songs sung to celebrate an event, similar to those from which I quoted, rhythm and not rhyme, should be the rule .... (p. 22). I should never advise any writer to rhyme epic poetry (p. 23).

This brings us to the important point that his article deals with epic poetry, praise-poems only. Of these he is quite convinced that -

> Sechuana epic poetry assumed an aspect which can be reasonably called refined poetry.(p.19)

Most of his quotations were already more than a century

old, he claims, so that he comes to the conclusion that when the pioneer missionaries of the Gospel arrived in South Africa the Tswana -

> .... had developed a type of poetry which was not at all despicable..... (p.22)

Ramoshoana credits one Ludorf with successful rhyming in hymns, but feels that Alfred S. Sharp did just as well without rhyme, for instance in the anthem Modimo oa boikanyo, depending only on rhythm.

1.9.3. This leads us to the second contribution under the title Hymns in Secwana by the Rev. A. Sandilands. [Orthographical inconsistencies (Sechuana/Secwana) speak for themselves]. Sandilands defines a hymn as follows (p. 15):

> A hymn is a poem expressing religious feeling, set to music suitable for singing in public worship.

It has stanzas, he says. A further pronouncement is:

> A poem, or prose passage, set to a more elaborate and non-repeated musical setting, is generally called an anthem. (loc. cit.)

Hence our hymns and anthems are viewed as poetry. Discussing the 'Secwana hymns' as translations from English he contends (p. 26):

> In most cases the Secwana verses produced could not by any stretch of imagination be called poetry, of any sort. There is no scansion - no rhythm, no rhyme-scheme (though that is of debatable value), and, far the most serious of all, the natural accentuation of the words is generally at variance with the musical accentuation of the tune they are sung to.

Example -

Spoken accentuation : mōea oā me u cogēle

Musical accentuation : moeā oa mē u cōgelē

The contribution of A. Sandilands is most valuable in proposing a specific test for musical poetry.

1.9.4. Lest we do Ramoshoana injustice, let us conclude with an example from his quotations, to determine the styles of composition of traditional epic poetry found by him in Tswana (p. 20):

1. Ramogaladi eo ngala sebata,
2. Eo o ngadileng tau eaga mogoloe -
3. Eaga Mokgalagadi a Boikanyo -
4. A re, "Nke ke tshoaela, kea ila,
5. Etsoa ke le mosimane oa kgosing".

[1. Ramogaladi who declined a beast of prey,
2. who declined the lion of his elder -
3. (The lion) of Mokgalagadi of Boikanyo -
4. Saying, "I never take shares, it's taboo,
5. Whereas I am a royal son".]

Here we find a systematic thematic development from data to principle, data in the first three lines, ending up with a standpoint: 'This I never do, as a royal son like my elder brother. I would rather go and kill a lion myself than accept shares'. The last two lines, conveying the principle, will invariably be best remembered, and oft declaimed upon meeting Ramogaladi or his descendants to greet or honour them. Our view is that the stages in thematic development consisting of data and generalisation are the basis of stanzaic organisation.

1.9.5. Indeed there is no end-rhyme above, but the data-lines are knit together by linking segments. These units of correspondence of the lines make them 'verses' as we learnt earlier -

.... eo ngala
eo o ngadilenŋ eaga mogoloe
eaga Mokgalaggadi ....

We conclude that tendencies to verse structure are present in this quote of Ramoshoana.

The Purpose of this Investigation

1.10.1. The purpose of this investigation is to assess the value of Tswana 'poetry' - its linguistic merit, its social function, its spirit, and its forms. Whilst much has been done as recorded above, and some scholars claim there is poetry in Tswana, there are those who seem to agree only partially. But even those who claim categorically that there is poetry use far too little material to prove it conclusively, and seem to analyse their material only partially. The example above from the quotations of Ramoshoana, which reveals tendencies to versification - some of which tendencies he does not point out - is only one among many that make this attempt to make a further investigation necessary.

1.10.2. Since Tswana scholars do not associate, they have no schools of thought that classify and systematize their efforts. We therefore intend to attempt to give a lead to opinion by examining the work of Tswana 'poets' and finding what is traditional or modern. We cannot subscribe to the idea that everything published is modern, everything unwritten and handed down orally is conservative. We intend to try and seek what can be learned from either trend. Our task is therefore two-pronged :

to attempt a solution, if only partial, to the problem of whether Tswana traditional maboko are poetry or tend to be, and why, and secondly to attempt to seek the excellences of modern trends in Tswana poetry for further development. We therefore intend a critical appreciation of traditional and modern poetry.

1.10.3 This is a formidable task, at times found to be impossible or well-nigh so. An authority contends -

> The things that are most necessary and most worth having are impossible to define.... in any analysis which aims at 'explaining' the beauty of poetry, we are to some extent trying to explain the inexplicable. (Boulton, p.1)

Therefore one readily associates oneself with the following sentiment -

> As hierdie studie dikwels die verstaan van die gedig probeer benader, so nou en dan probeer om dit „uit te lê", dan word dit steeds gedoen met dié voorbehoud, verontskuldiging en verswëe kwalifikasie : die parafrase kan nooit volledig wees nie, kan nooit die gedig „uitsê" nie. Want as dit só was, was die poësie altyd 'n potensiële stukkie prosa. (du Plessis pp. 13-14)

1.10.4 There is a silver lining. One can always attempt to understand. Once more we note that a distinction is seen between poetry and prose. This difference between poetry and prose that is reasserted here fills one with courage again. There is something to search for. Ramoshoana and others must have heard of it, grasped it, and gone searching for it. We propose to try too.

Method of this project

1.11.1 We intend to collect Tswana 'poetry' which has not been recorded so far as we know, from bards all over the field, which means chiefly from the Eastern Transvaal to the Western Transvaal, North West Cape and Botswana. As far as possible these will be recorded on tape for analysis as to themes, spirit and form.

1.11.2 There is reason not just to accept that Mabôkô are such high literary art or that modern compositions are all that modern. We shall sample both trends. We shall analyse both and find what they reveal. We shall assess the depth of thought and the diversity of forms and techniques. A stimulating view has already been expressed in this regard by A. Sandilands, saying:

> It does seem to the writer that, if Tswana poetry is to master new ground of thought and life, it must develop new forms. The traditional 'lebôkô' is an extremely limited medium, and cannot be impressed very far in such new service. Its course is already run. (Lekgetho, Kitchin & Kitchin, Introduction)

1.11.3 Traditional poetry is recorded in its dialectal forms, that is, it is not standardised orthographically as this might affect poetic construction. We incline to the technical use of the term 'verse' as referring to a line of poetry.

Recapitulation

1.12.1 A quick recapitulation of what we have learned from the criticism of traditional poetry cited, if just to have it handy, seems advisable.

1.12.2 Qualitatively we have learned that Bantu languages, including Tswana, have poetry, even "refined poetry", in virtue of its being charged with emotion, with spirit, with force of words, with specific and penetrating utterance; we have learned that praise-poems have all the qualities of European poetry. We have also come across a thematic division into genres - epic poems (praises), lyric poems (songs), and so forth. We have learned that oral traditional literature has endured from generation to generation through the sheer force of its quality, through its deep and genuine imaginative tone, and through inherent memorability.

1.12.3 On the mechanical side we have heard of and seen stanzas in traditional Tswana praises. We have read claims of the existence of stanza and verse in various Bantu languages. We have noted stanzaic development by the compression of data leading to a philosophy. We have learned of disyllabic words in Zulu (which is also true of Tswana) that give Zulu an amenability to dactylic metre. These tendencies to metre are perhaps present in most languages with large funds of disyllabic words, including Tswana. We have heard that it is

improbable that Bantu languages will make use of European prosodic systems, yet that praise-poetry is consciously an art. We have learned of the utmost importance of rhythm. We have witnessed the general deprecation of tendencies towards end-rhyme or rhyme generally. But, even more drastic is the contention that hymns translated from European languages are no poetry 'of any sort', because of the lack of scansion, and rhyme-scheme. Sometimes the judgements are diametrically contradictory, and so although there is a verdict at this stage that Bantu Language, and that Tswana too, has poetry, we attempt to state the case of Tswana itself once again. We have heard of spoken accentuation as opposed to sung accentuation, a matter calling for further testing. We have had definitions of verse and stanza. We therefore have a considerable volume of views on the form and spirit of Bantu, and Tswana, poetry.

1.12.4 We have deliberately drawn from Nguni and Sotho critics since Sotho and Nguni languages show a common 'spirit', e.g. praise for bravery and upright judgement; and from both Southern Sotho and Northern Sotho, since the Sotho group of Bantu languages has so much more in common historically, culturally, and linguistically.

1.12.5 And this brings us to what we have learned from a cultural point of view. Culturally, Bantu Poetry, and Tswana 'Poetry' too, is an extremely important social institution, with its subtle suggestion of noble behaviour. But what is more, its most important genre, the epic praise, fills the rôle of good historical 'record'.

CHAPTER 2

INDIGENOUS 'POETRY' OTHER THAN HISTORICAL

Premise

2.1.1 The 'poetry' we intend to examine in this and the next chapter is that which, as far as is known, was produced by the Tswana without outside literary influences, as distinct from that which was composed under Western European influences. We refer to the former as indigenous and to the latter as modern.

2.1.2 We attempt to investigate the spirit and forms of this indigenous lore in order to be able to measure their influence on modern compositions, if any. The Tswana refer to this 'poetry' as mabôkô (sing. lebôkô). Normally mabôkô are full of praise for a person or animal or other object. The concept of praise is usually expressed by a word or phrase which is regarded as the praise-word or praise-name. It may be a metaphor as we saw in Southern Sotho in 1.7.4 above, where Phosholi Mokhachane is referred to as Tau ya Mangolo (Lion of the Mangolo); or an expression of heroism as we found in 1.6.3 where a hero refers to himself as legapatshunyana (looter of the white-faced cow), legorosatshwana (captor of the black cow). We treat the poems according to themes.

'Poems' of natural Phenomena

Segokgo sa borwa

2.2.1 Six winters ago I chanced to meet a Tswana octogenarian in the Transvaal Bushveld and to complain to him of the biting cold of the High Veld. With the utmost spontaneity and a glowing countenance, he replied to or rather elaborated my remark thus:

1. Hé segokgo sa borwa, mmantitole
2. ga se ke se ama motho a ragoga
3. se aga se lona malalatlhageng.

[1. It is the spider of the South, mmantitole (author of destruction)

2. it never touches a person who starts off and goes

3. it usually bites those who end lying in the grass]

2.2.2 This theme belongs to all time. It is however, more relevant to the Bantu of quite some generations ago, who was not the possessor of a permanent home and learned to know the elements the bitter way - travelling, sleeping under the sky, dying of cold. The sad experience is handed down with didactic intent, and in artistic language: firstly praise-words, then a further datum, followed by a generalisation.

2.2.3 In Northern Sotho we found that it occurs in publication in a certain form, but persists orally in a slightly different form. The form we collected orally is as follows:

1. Ké segokgo sa borwa, mmantšhêtšhênênê
2. ga se ke se loma motho a phologa
3. se fela se loma madikêlatlhôgô.

[1. It is the spider of the South, mmantšhêtšhe-
nênê (sharp cutter)
2. it never bites a person who escapes
3. it surely bites those whose heads' crowns
sag]

We learned in Chapter 1 that those mabôkô are of merit which endure orally and not by the force of the written word. We reckon those must be of greater merit still which persist orally in spite of a different form of theirs being published. (Lekgothoane p. 212)

Praise-words : balance, imagery

2.3.1 In the Tswana version, like the Northern Sotho one, there are two praise-words, the second being appositional to the first. The first is the copulative 'stem' of the copulative formative ké (it is); the Ké is however not repeated but understood before the appositional praise-word. There are two ideas conveyed, firstly the name, segokgo sa borwa, secondly the character of the spider. The appositional praise-word calls up thoughts of action, of drama : the lightning speed with which certain death is wrought, because it is deideophonic. It derives from the ideophone lito! which means 'strike clean-off'. There is no telling. We are confronted by drama. This technique of

employing ideophones or their derivatives is certainly an effective instrument for concentrated, specific and precise utterance. Mmantitole (lit. mother of destruction) says all that could have been said in a prose paragraph characterising the spider. Since the first praise-word states the habitation of the spider (South), we note a balance of ideas, viz. habitation and characterisation.

2.3.2 The balance of the praise-words is conveyed also by the matching length of penultimate syllables. The Tswana word of more than one syllable usually has one of the syllables made prominent by being longer than the rest. The colon (:) is used hereunder to indicate those longer and therefore more prominent syllables:

segó:kgo bo:rwa mmantito:le

2.3.3 In fast declamation one who is uninitiated would probably only notice the length-bearing syllable that stands second last in a word-group or sentence, but this feature inheres to every second last syllable of every word and is clearly sensed by those who are versed in the language. It is the kind of thing that the present author experienced in trying to learn an Afrikaans poem. The following lines of Eugène Marais sounded like one long word ending with pyn:

ek-dink-aan-haar-as-suster-sonneskyn-want-waar-sy-in-n-siekekamer-kom-verdwyn-selfs-smart-en-pyn.

It was an experience of note when it was eventually revealed, with intent to reveal, that these lines are in fact iambic in their metrical structure. So it is with the Tswana language, being a tone language. Its hightoned syllables are more prominent than the low-toned. Its long syllables are more prominent than the short. Among themselves these "peaks" of tone and length are not always equally prominent, some often being unnoticeable, the second last syllable of a word or word-group or sentence usually exceeding preceding longthened syllables in prominence, e.g.

ke segokgo sa bo:rwa
mmantito:le

Because of fast declamation the penultimate syllable in bo:rwa is of lesser duration and prominence than that in mmantito:le. Nevertheless these two "peaks" balance the two praise-words; and the fact of the first "peak" being lesser than the second, knits the two segments into one verse. We shall refer to this prominence of one syllable in Tswana disyllabic or polysyllabic words as length. It is these length-bearing syllables that determine the rhythmic balance of the word-groups.

2.3.4 We have submitted that some syllables may stand out through the agency of high tone. In the praise-words above, this feature has an important rôle where the high-toned copulative formative ké (it is)

would mean something different if low-toned, that is kè (I am). The grave accent mark here denotes low tone. There is also a measure of high tone on the final syllable of borwa (bo.rwá) occasioned by the fact that the morpheme -rwa is a root morpheme. All these undulations go to make the declamation what it is in meaning and form.

2.3.5 The imagery of the first praise-word is significant. Our subject is a 'spider of the South'. One immediately realises that this cannot be an ordinary spider since spiders are found in the North too, and so on. This is an apt creation - the metaphor that frost, which South of the Equator is found the further one travels South, is a spider. This is indeed giving to airy nothing a local habitation and a name.

2.3.6 Poetry must be original, and here originality seems attributable to indigenous Tswana 'poetry'. In this connection an authority says:

> All imaginative writers with something original to communicate create metaphors of varying degrees of complexity. (Harvey p. 11)

This metaphor (segokgo sa borwa), and the drama (mmantitole), constitute our first data : imaginative, balanced, rhythmic, and bearing the characteristic "peaks" of Tswana duretics and dynamics.

Variation, and yet more imagery

2.4.1 Typically, the next line immediately varies the system, giving the next datum without balanced

parts, as well as in negative terms. Indigenous mabôkô must not be criticised for lack of a persistently uniform system whereas they are intended to display a consistently maniform technique. It is the case of the irregularity which is a regularity. Tswana 'poetry' shows the personal aspect of revealing its bard's resourcefulness in the creation of imaginative, expressive and memorable utterances of inexhaustible variety. That is why it often happens that during a bard's lifetime only he or those who are his adherents may declaim his compositions in public.

2.4.2 While line 2 is negative the third line is a positive statement of fact, a generalisation, again a variation upon the second. These two lines are contrasts. This ever-widening variation is the essence of a passionate display of oratory, excellence in which speedily earns the orator public recognition, and above all the reward of and for laureateship. We have three lines in three distinct forms of expression, and therein lies the excellence of the non-prose diction of Tswana, the three lines being knit together by thought-arrangement into a thought-unit, which we view as the basis of stanzaic form. The metaphoric praise-name segokgo sa borwa, the dramatic appositional name nmantitole, are knit into verse by dynamic and duretic features; the expansion of the characterisation by the negative habitual form, ga se ke (it never does), in contradistinction to the positive habitual, se aga; the predicates, se ama (it touches), and se loma (it bites);

are deliberate variations or word-pictures of the varied actions and attitudes in a drama, and convey the bard's special gifts of oratorical resourcefulness and imaginative power.

Metrical tendency

2.5.1 We have referred to verse above with regard to line 1 in particular. What of lines 2 and 3? What of all the lines in relation to each other? In other words, can we find formal or external evidence of relationship amongst these lines in addition to the internal relationship evinced? We believe it is in this connection that Lestrade (1935, p. 4) submits as follows:

> Each line of verse is made up of a number of groups of syllables, which we shall here 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.

In terms of our finding in 2.3.2 above, we read the above quotation with the word 'length' (mutatis mutandis) wherever Lestrade employs the term 'stress', in our mind.

2.5.2 The 'nodes' then, in our three lines are seen as follows:

1. ke sego:kgo/ sa bo:rwa/ mmantito:le/
2. ga se:ke/ se a:ma/ mo:tho / a rago:ga/
3. se a:ga / se lo:ma/ mala:la/tlhage:ng/

In characteristically speedy declamation the last two 'nodes' of lines 2 and 3 are further compressed into one as follows:

/mothoa rago:ga/ /malalatlhage:ng/

It seems that in this excerpt, not necessarily in every other, there is a largely corresponding number of 'nodes' in the three lines, and that the majority of 'nodes' are trisyllabic. Each 'node' has its length-bearing penult. Therefore there are duretic and quantitative units of correspondence in these lines, not only suggesting that they may constitute verse, but also formally a stanza.

2.5.3 In our view these 'nodes' are the embryo of the 'verse-foot', or are in fact to the Tswana verse what the English verse-foot is to the English verse. We are seeking the tendencies of Tswana 'poetry' and feel that we have forms here which with further chiselling or polishing, can be developed into 'verse-feet' in the popular sense. We said in Chapter 1, that verse is characterised by units of correspondence called verse-segments. These verse-segments constitute a persistent undercarriage of like patterns. The patterns are amenable to further chiselling into near-uniformity by the exclusion of expendable morphemes, or the coalescence of like morphemes, to no detriment of sense and intention. The first line for instance could read perfectly understandably as follows:

segokgo sa borwa, ntitole [spider of the South, destroy me]

'destroy me', ntitole, being its name still, and nti- in ntitole read as one syllable, making three trisyllabic 'feet'.

2.5.4 When then, we refer to metrical tendency we mean the arrangement of a verse in nodes or 'verse-feet' characterised by one long penultimate syllable, which may also be preceded by a short syllable or syllables. For purposes of marking these features of length and shortness we intend to employ the symbols (-) and (˘) respectively above the syllables concerned. Unlike the Western European languages that characterise a verse-foot by an arrangement of a stressed syllable surrounded by unstressed ones, the touchstones in Tswana are length of the penultimate syllable and shortness of other syllables. And whenever we should apply the English term for verse-feet to Tswana 'verse-feet' it will always be with the reservation, already noted earlier, that these 'verse-feet' are merely in the ratio to the Tswana 'verse' of the English verse-foot to the English verse or show a tendency towards that relationship.

2.5.5 We may now proceed to the idiomatic contribution of this excerpt in which we learn that class of idiom called praise-name, where frost will simply be referred to as segokgo sa borwa or ntitole, as the lie of divining bones may be called dimatla or a hare morwa-masekana, respectively 'slow-healing' and 'son of rings and bangles' (who runs rings round dogs).

2.5.6 The significance of the non-expandable words runs deeper since they bear the brunt of form and memorability. In learning by heart they are the cues, and

this excerpt could be memorised more easily by calling out the following thought-bearing and form-bearing words and filling in the rest:

line 1	segokgo	sa borwa	d/litole
2	ga se ke	se ama	ragoga
3	se aga	se loma	tlhageng

While not suggesting that this is how Tswana indigenous 'poetry' originated, the above feature is strong enough to call into association how traditional poetry is said to have been composed by Virgil, and certainly points a direction along which Tswana poetry may have come. Witness what an authority says of Virgil:

> Van Virgilius word deur Donatus ook vertel dat hy vir sy Aeneïs eers 'n prosa-ontwerp in die twaalf boeke ingedeel, opgestel het; daarop het hy aan die poëtiese skepping van enige passasie begin werk waartoe hy geneë voel, terwyl hy waar nodig dele voorlopig onvoltooid laat of tydelike reëls, soos stutte (I underline) invoeg om die vloei van die skeppende vermoë nie te stuit nie. (Viljoen p. 25)

One is impressed by the idea of supports ('stutte'). And besides being 'stutte' for the poetic faculty and for memorisation, the above words are all trisyllabic and point to a trisyllabic metrical underlying form for the composition under review; the above words or 'nodes' or verse-segments or 'verse-feet' bear the duretic pattern short-long-short (˘ – ˘), which may, in written practice, develop in the same relation to Tswana verse, as the amphibrach foot to English verse. That the Tswana bard, consciously or unconsciously, sought key-thoughts in key-words with corresponding basic form,

thus uniting content with form, is hard to doubt.

2.5.7 The subtle praise-words, the apt contrasts, the imaginative figure of speech, the exact balance, and the thumping rhythm, the unity in the diversity or variations of oratory, the brevity - these factors lend a poetic aspect to our excerpt.

Alliteration

2.6.1 The fricative sound represented in writing by the symbol g, occurs no less than six times, independently as in the syllable -go-, in segokgo, as well as in affricative combination in the syllable -kgo. To our mind these g-sounds, phon. [x], are best suited to express the rustling sound of spider feet running on the ground or on the human body. It seems that the composer deliberately selected this sound, for, the last word of line 2 for instance, ragoga, could normally have been tsamaa (to go) or falola (to escape death) and so forth. Clearly, the artist uses this sound, this form, to convey a drama, to create a fusion of form and meaning, thus even attributing this sound to human feet, even attempting by the use of ragoga to bring human movement into alignment with spider movement.

2.6.2 It is striking that this alliteration persists in all 'verses', as if to establish or to portray an overriding echo of the drama, totally outlasting the alveolar explosive sounds (t's) in the appositional praise-word, mmantitole. The sounds of friction are the drama itself. Form is meaning and meaning is form.

Poems on Cultural Subjects

2.7.1 Poems on cultural subjects deal with law and order, delictual liability, dagga smoking, beer, divining bones, and creations of Western European origin such as the train. We cite a few examples hereunder.

Bojalwa (Beer)

2.7.2 We propose to take Bojalwa for our analysis, and excerpts on divining, which show a cyclical tendency.

Bojalwa

1 Ké tshetlhana ya naekele, boragaraga bo selong
2 kgomo khunwana le e botse basadi
3 moswang wa yona o kwa mahuri —
4 re a boka ò meno maruru
5 tshwene tsa gago di a swa di a rula

[1 It is the yellowish brown with clots, coagulant in the thing
2 bay cow, ask the women about it
3 its dung is in the backyards —
4 we praise you, your teeth are cold
5 your baboons die and regain life.]

2.7.3 Again we have a case of data leading to a philosophy. The data are heavily charged with imagery: tshetlhana is not only yellowish-brown colour but a loved female person. Here we have one of those recondite allusions effected by means of a pun. Men are fond of women with a light complexion, and big breasts. This attitude is the object of the satire here, by the implication that they are as fond of liquor (beer) as of women or the other way about. Following the caesura in line 1, is once again an appositional praise-name. The appositional praise-name however, takes the sting out of

the satire, stating specifically that the reference is to the coagulant in the 'what's-the-name' (the thing). Again, in order to remain abstruse, the container is not named. Otherwise it would have been nkgong - [ŋkxhǫ:ŋ] in the clay pot. Line 2 leaps to another metaphor, kgomo khunwana (bay cow). The women take charge of it, and that its dung is already in the backyard, means that the beer has been strained and the chaff saved. Alas! it is ready for consumption. At no stage has any datum been rendered, from line 2 to and including line 3, in literal terms. And at the end of the third line there is a prolonged pause, a moment of suspense sometimes indicating that the bard is composing his concluding verse(s), or inviting reaction by ululation from the women, or simply testing whether in the case of a well-known lebôkô someone in the audience can fill the bill.

2.7.4 The concluding generalisation is also exceedingly figurative. The Tswana associate coolness with health, and heat with illness, same as a high body temperature points to fever. If after a visit from someone a patient gets worse, the visitor's feet are said to be hot; if the patient improves the visitor's feet are cool. We are warned that beer has teeth to bite, but they are cold - healthy. And some more satire recurs : it bites baboons, to death; some regain life. There is certainly a warm spirit towards mankind, for his safety, and may we contend, also penetrating utterance, and a strongly imaginative and didactic tone.

2.7.5 The pattern of composition is closely akin to that we saw earlier in this chapter, even in point of variation. Witness the three different metaphors in the three successive lines (1, 2, 3) - tshetlhana, kgomo khunwana, and moswang : yellowish brown female, bay cow, dung.

2.7.6 Once more the balanced parts of the praise-names (line 1) are marked by the lengthened penult of either praise-name shown phonetically hereunder:

[mae'ké:le]
[selo:ng]

It is apparent that when the technique of balancing parts is employed in Tswana this duretic feature is always to be expected. The final penult of a line or word-group may be preceded by one or more short or half-length syllables, not necessarily evenly distributed on either side of the caesura. It may be preceded by a length-bearing syllable on one or both sides of the caesura. In the above case the distribution of long syllables on the first line would be as follows:

ke tshetlhana ya maeke:le//boragaraga bo selo:ng

2.7.7 Here also there is an undercurrent pattern of 'verse-feet' borne by irreducible words in the respective lines, the 'verse-feet' being trisyllabic, that is, a long penult surrounded by short syllables -

line 1 :	tshetlha:na	.. maeko:le	... selo:ng
2 :	khunwa:na	.. e bo:tse	... basa:di
3 :	moswa:ng	.. wa yo:na	... mahu:ri
4 :	re bo:ka	.. o me:no	... maru:ru
5.:	(di)tshwe:ne	.. tsa ga:go	... di a:swa.di ru:la.

The three-syllable (short-long-short) pattern of 'verse-foot' or node once more persists as undertone, as basis of rhythm and indication of metrical tendency.

2.7.8 In line 5 in the preceding paragraph we have added the plural prefix to the first word to make it trisyllabic. We find that a dissyllabic form may be substituted in the pattern above for a trisyllabic one, or the other way about. Does this suggest that the law of substitution is unconsciously observed in Tswana mabôkô? Substitution is defined as follows:

> According to the theory of substitution, one kind of foot may be substituted for another equivalent foot; an iambic foot may be replaced somewhere in a line by a trochaic or anapaestic foot, a trochaic foot replaced by a dactyl and so on; it must not take place so often that the basic metre is lost (Boulton p. 36)

This raises the question whether tshwe:ne is not the trochaic substitute or equivalent of ditshwe:ne. Another example is where the repetitive form of boraga (logically boraga-boraga) is reduplicated boragaraga, eliding the second class-prefix and thus substituting trochee for or equating trochee with amphibrach, that is, a long-

short with a short-long-short 'verse-foot'. We are trying to point out the importance of a study of the metrical features of the nodes of Tswana 'verse'.

2.7.9 There is no intention to attribute this reasoning to the Tswana bard, but we attempt here to analyse what forms we find. There is no intention either simply to apply English concepts to Tswana. But it is as impossible to avoid some such previous knowledge as to avoid the concepts verse, stanza, poem, spirit, form, and many more. What is more, we are concerned about tendencies to poetic construction, and it does appear that there is a tendency towards the employment - consciously or unconsciously - of the theory of equivalence or substitution.

Divining Bones (Ditaola)

2.8.1 Divining bones are kept by the ngaka, doctor. There is a ngaka who does not keep or use them, ngaka e tshotšwa, literally hornless doctor. A ngaka may be a man or woman. The bones vary in number but are normally not fewer than four. They are made of bones of domestic and/or wild animals. The five principal bones are called:

> moremogolo (big tree), its spouse kgadi (father's sister), jaro (fleet-footed), its spouse kgatsane (father's little sister), and modimo (god). (Leseyane 1963, p. 128)

2.8.2 Upon consultation, be it for illness, strayed livestock, proposed plans such as marriage or travel, seeking employment or the possibility of keeping it,

being consulted by a chief or tribe about the likelihood of rain, for the smelling out of culprits, and so forth, the diviner brings forth his hide bag of the size of a tobacco pouch or a little bigger, and the divining commences with punctilious ceremony. The patient is normally required to sit flat on the ground, and take off one or both shoes, in the superstitious belief that the solution to the problem will, wherever it is, also relax and not travel further out of reach. The divining bones are told what the problem is and are asked to state the cause, thus: 'I am sick, in search of the cause and remedy; you bones of the dead have eyes, I have none; tell us the cause and the cure'. The bones are then scattered on a goat skin turned upside down to allow of tilting. They fall on the skin, and the fall is called lewa, from the verb-stem -wa (to fall), with the class 5 noun-prefix le-. As they lie, they are praised, and it is noted especially how the principal ones lie. We shall therefore speak of the reading of the lie. Father Laydevant (p. 341) calls it the 'position'.

Moraro

2.8.3 Assuming it was the cause of sickness that had to be divined, the lie (lewa) might be the following:

1.

1. Lé moraro wa sedikadike
2. thetologo ke matlhaku —

---

3. Lè a rutla, lè akela malata
4. masetlha a a se nang ditsaona —

5. sepa legolo la moeng, la mong gae pipitlo.

[1. It is the circling of the twining circle
2. the circle is the hedge (of the courtyard).
3. You wrench, and you belie the servants
4. the light-complexioned who have nothing of their own ——
5. strangers' faeces (errors) are exaggerated, those of home people minimised].

The name of the lewa is moraro or in the diminutive, morarwana, meaning circling round and making it difficult to trace. This alludes to the family circle, within the family courtyards surrounded by the same hedge as that of the patient. Within the family circle they blame the servants ('wrench' them out, reveal them as witches), but this is a lie, only because the servants are defenceless paupers and serfs. Proverbially, sepa legolo ke la moeng, la mong gae pipitlwana. (line 5 as translated). It is proverbially easy to blame strangers falsely and condone home people's bigger misdeeds.

2.8.4 It does not appear necessary to labour facts that must now be apparent, e.g. the composition method from data to philosophy nor that the existence of a Southern Sotho parallel to this lie points to its antiquity.

2.8.5 It is important to take special note of the way the bards declaim their 'poems', and to attempt to decide punctuation, verses and stanzas accordingly. For instance lines 1 and 2 sometimes sound like a binate verse, thus -

ké moraro wa sedikadi.ke, thetologo ke matlha:ku

(where the symbol (.) signifies half-length as compared to (:)),

as against:

ké moraro wa sedikadi:ke
thetologo ke matlha:ku.

That is to say, the declamation sometimes gives the impression of a half-length in the penult of sedikadike, followed by full length in that of matlhaku, suggesting a binate verse. Sometimes the penults are of equal length, suggesting two independent verses. To us it seems that the binate verse is the more accurate since thetologo ke matlhaku is not a fresh datum but a deduction from the preceding datum, viz. ke moraro wa sedikadike.

2.8.6 The above considerations are important. In 2.8.3 above we have no punctuation marks after lines 1 and 3, to indicate that there was only an insignificant pause. It could be said that line 1 was run on to line 2, and so was line 3 to line 4. This would lead to a cast in one biaxial, one triaxial and one biaxial verse, thus:

1. ke moraro wa sedikadike//thetologo ke matlhaku,
2. le a rutla//le akela malata//masetlha a a se nang ditsaona ——
3. sepa legolo ke la moeng//la mong gae pipitlo.

We observe here that in Tswana there is a tendency in parallelism to more than two balanced parts.

2.8.7 We may take our observations of actual declamation further. There is a pause of considerable duration after the last word in line 1 above. The reaction of the patient to the deduction that 'the circle

is the hedge of the family courtyard' is carefully watched. If the patient seems or those accompanying the patient appear to assent (e.g. 'hm!') the diviner is encouraged. If they contradict the deduction he may suddenly change the lie. This is a world of magic, fantasy, wit. Hence remarks are concentrated, allusive, recondite - which contributes to a poetic tendency.

2.3.8 In actual declamation which is usually inclined to be fast, a lot of syllables are elided or contracted, thus:

1. ke morar'wa sedikadike, thetologo ke matlhaku,
2. la rutla,la kela malata, masetlhaa se nang ditsaona —
3. sepa legolo ke la moeng, la mong gae pipitlo.

In this way line 2 assumes the distinct metrical quality of the pattern short-long-short, thus:

la ru:tla lake:la mala:ta mase:tlha se na:ng ditsao:na

A sensitive ear senses this metre. But, what is more, a sensitive ear senses a conscious effort to vary techniques. The first verse is biaxial; the second departs completely from this feature : it is not only triaxial but also an amphibraic hexameter; the third line is the proverb, the generalisation based on the data, with characteristic balanced parts, the balanced parts brought into mutual relation by the choice of contrasting words -

la moeng (of the stranger)
la mong gae (of the home citizen)
sepa legolo (big faeces)
pipitlo (small faeces).

This is how parallelism is attained by contrast. We might quote an example of parallelism attained by affirmation -

> Banna ga ba na thwadi, ba bonywe ke Mmamariga*
>
> [Men have no superiority, they were observed by Mmamariga]

We thus attribute to Tswana oral lore a tendency to employ varieties of parallelism, e.g. parallelism by contrast, parallelism by affirmation.

2.8.9 In all the lines of the excerpt there is a conscious striving after word-economy seen from the elisions and contractions already mentioned. But there are deliberate omissions of forms intended to enhance concentration without reducing precision, e.g. 'sepa legolo la moeng' and not 'lesepa le legolo ke la moeng' 'la mong gae pipitlo' and not 'fa la mong gae e le pipitlo'. There are six more syllables in the prose than in the 'poetry'.

2.8.10 There is also a feature we view as apostrophising. We accept the following definition for it relating to literature -

> Die afbreek van 'n betoog om 'n persoon (die regter, of God) dikwels iemand in sy afwesigheid, aan te spreek. In die literatuur gebruik wanneer 'n verhaal op dié wyse liries onderbreek word, soos in die volgende passasie uit Raka:

---

* According to N.O.M. Seboni, Diane le Maele a Setswana, Lovedale, 1962, p. 2, this proverb means that men are liars. Our translation above is based on the biblical use of the word thwadi in Daniel 6 where Daniel was appointed primarius of the three presidents who supervised "an hundred and twenty princes" because, "A nna thwadi mo balaoding le dikgosana...." [he was superior to the presidents and princes]. Evidently men are not necessarily stronger against cold - so says Mmamariga (lit. mother of winter) - therefore not necessarily superior.

> "O skoonheid van die lyf, jy slaat op uit die aarde soos die rooi vonk uit die vuursteen spring....."

Waarna die verhaal hervat word met -

> En eindelik het Kopi aan sy hart gewaar.....
> (Grové 1963)

In our excerpt lines 1 and 2, otherwise the binate line 1, whichever way we read the stanza, are in the third person, starting with kê moraro : it is the circling. Yet the triaxial line -

> le a rutla le akela malata masetlha a a se nang ditsaona

is addressed to the family circle, in their absence. After this lyrical explosion the bard reverts to his divination and concludes with the didactic generalisation already familiar.

2.8.11 This is our first observation of apostrophising. Our experience of Tswana mabôkô is growing wider and deeper. We may now confirm what Lestrade says of praise-poems:

> They are a type of composition intermediate between the pure, mainly narrative, epic, and the pure, mainly apostrophic, ode, being a combination of exclamatory narration and laudatory apostrophising. (Lestrade 1962, p. 295)

If there can be laudatory apostrophising, let us be permitted to find above its opposite, namely admonitory apostrophising, where the family circle is not praised but admonished for incriminating the poor servants. Such are the growth and development which are the subject of this investigation, not only in bulk, but in technique

too. There is no claim that Tswana bards knew or grasped apostrophising, but that they employed this technique, which is not surprising, because -

> That language can, and does function effectively even when its user knows nothing about labelling its various forms is proved by the fluency and precision with which an intelligent child speaks its home language before it even goes to school. If, then, we want to pursue our studies into the function of language as far as we possibly can, we cannot do better than study it in action. (Harvey, p. 1)

2.8.12 We find that the preceding excerpt advances forms and techniques, as well as thought development. Compare Segokgo sa borwa in 2.2.1 and Bojalwa in 2.7.2. We find that metaphor persists to convey the imagery. There seems to be a system appearing. And with this we may now proceed to another lie, lewa, seemingly cyclically related to the preceding one. The cause of the ailment has been determined : the sorcery of the family circle. And now what are the chances of cure?

Dimatla

2.9.1 The divining bones are taken by the patient. He/she breathes into them in the superstitious belief of establishing contact with them as a medical practitioner with his patient by means of the stethoscope. He/she asks them what the chances of restoration of health are, and casting them down, with a bit of luck, the lie (lewa) is:

line 1 Kgomo e matla le namane
2 nku le konyana
3 motho le mothwana -
4 ke dimatla.

[1 The cow plods slowly with the calf
2 the ewe with the lamb
3 the human with the baby -
4 this is slow plodding.]

There is no direct telling, which is an important feature of poetry. The metaphor immediately pervades the diagnosis - a cow and a calf, an ewe and a lamb, a person and a child, plodding slowly. This is quite daring imagery. And what is more, this is a drama we witness with our mind's eye. It takes deep thought to discover that the slow drama means slow restoration of health. The sorcery of the family circle will take time to heal, but it will be healed, the bones say. This is how this excerpt is linked cyclically with the preceding one.

2.9.2 As to form, we are immediately struck by the persistent use of diminutives at the end of lines 1, 2, 3. This is certainly end-rhyme. Those diminutive forms delimit the lines (1, 2, 3), and would have performed this function of delimiting even if the three lines had been written in one straight line : there would have been a pause, there is a pause, after each rhyme-word. And the merit of this rhyming is that, although not rhyming perfectly to the ear and eye (-ane, -ana, -ana), it so rhymes in its diminutive sense, in its faithfulness to the morphology of the language (a rhyme-conscious poet might have changed namane to namana and called this change poetic licence or some other rationalising term), in its devotion to truth, that the artificially congruous would have been a jarring incongruity.

2.9.3 We notice that the form already found earlier persists, namely a succession of data leading to a generalisation or truism - ke dimatla. The pause before this deduction is intentional. The patient is watched for reaction. If he understands and assents, the suspense is shorter. Suspense is one of our techniques. But we also notice that the end-rhyming binds the datum-lines together. Form seems to consolidate the data into a thought-unit, which thought-unit is explicitly expressed in the concluding generalisation - ke dimatla. This form helps to identify the stanza.

2.9.4 May we be permitted a further word on this rhyme, this end-rhyme. It marks the end of segments; it makes segments units of correspondence; it gives the segments symphony; it punctuates the excerpt by suggesting pauses for breath, and effect. As we see the features, a rhyme-word is a point of demarcation; it is a point of punctuation as well; and finally is a point of euphony.

2.9.5 A final thought on this rhyme : the diminutive morphemes rhyme, not necessarily the penultimate and final syllables. In his work quoted in Chapter I, B.W. Vilakazi strongly recommends rhyming with the penultimate and final syllables, and specifically urges the inclusion of the consonant of the penultimate syllable. We are finding above that Tswana employs a given morpheme to effect end-rhyme. This unit of correspondence rhymes in sense, and therefore mainly by the root form (-an-). This is a definite system of end-rhyme.

Poetic licence consists here in allowing an irregularity which is faithful to the morphology of the language (-ane/ana) rather than contriving a regularity which would be inconsistent with this morphology, as well as irritating.

2.9.6 The next problem in the divining cycle is whether and where the cure can be found; whether and how the witchery will be avenged.

Mpherefore

2.10.1 Asked the questions above, either by the patient or ngaka or both in turn, the lie of the bones may be :

line 1. Toboketsa motoboketsi
2. ó epe dikgolo ka dipedi
3. ó epe dikgolo, ó epe dinyane —
- - - - -
4. ntswa re tswa dikomeng
5. dinotsho tsa me, wena mabake o ka di epa —
- - - - -
6. Masenoseno a tla go senogela
7. modimo o kwa ntsweng la Rita
8. ga o a tsala, o foloditse
9. o tsetse seboko se tlhogo khibidu
10. sengwe seswaana, ka mpherefere o' matòkó
- - - - - -
11. Toboketsa motoboketsi, o se nne monyatsi a leeto.

2.10.2 We try to concentrate on features not already treated. We leave the alliteration of lines 1, 6 and 11. We leave the binate form of lines 3 and 8, the parallelism in affirmation in line 11. But first the translation:

1. Travel on traveller
2. dig big ones with both (hands)
3. dig big ones, dig small ones —

4. whereas we graduated in the secrecies
5. my honey, you, sagacity, can dig it ——
6. Revelations will be revealed to you
7. the god is on mount Rita
8. the god has not given birth but has miscarried
9. it has given birth to a red-headed worm
10. and a snow white one, by the tumult at hand ——
11. Travel on, traveller, do not despise the travel].

2.10.3 The flash of imagination is : the ngaka being advised by the god on mount Rita to come there and fill both hands with big and small honey, dinotshe. This calls Samson's riddle of the honey to mind. There will be sweetness after the digging, but there is no telling! "The god has miscarried" means that the witchery has misfired. The god allowed us to see red, the colour of blood, (the red worm), but also snow white. That means the tumult at hand will bring more trouble (of course for the witches), followed by happiness. Therefore, travel on to Rita for the digging, do not despise the effort. The metaphor of the worm is certainly deep searching, based on the belief that the god can be the author of evil, and then good, without explicitly stating it. There is development in the creation of metaphor too from the selfevident to the more recondite. "The god which miscarries" is a strong metaphor. So is the honey which is the health.

2.10.4 The apostrophising persists. In lines 1 - 3 the ngaka addresses himself. That is the diviner's one way of asking the bones whether he may undertake the journey to look for remedies. But in lines 4 and 5, after a moment's suspense, a voice replies to him,

saying, "whereas we, that is, you ngaka and I, god, have graduated in the secrecies, you are sagacity itself, and can dig my honey, my healing herbs." And from here he goes back to speak to himself in lines 6 - 11. We have heard of laudatory apostrophising. We have pointed out admonitory apostrophising. We now come across suggestive apostrophising. There will be no going back on the proposition to find cures. The reward will be sweet. (Suggestion to the patient.)

2.10.5 The word mpherefere, featuring plosivation in the stem -ferefere under the influence of the nasal bilabial of the class 3 prefixal formative mo-, is explained by R.A. Paroz (Bibliography, VIII) as

> position of the divining bones, indicating trouble, disputes.

It is used in Tswana too in this sense.

Thwagadima

2.11.1 And as a final instalment in the cycle, a lie called thwagadima is read -

line 1: Thwagadima a marutla a ga Ratsatsi
2: selakalaka mollo, selakalaka leitlho
3: o se sale nku morago, konyana e tla go thula —
- - - - - -
4: mhenyasilo mmoele, tlakala le maboo mabe
5: ka thwagadima a marutla

[1. The wrenching lightning in broad daylight
2. the flame being fire, the flame an eye
3. never pursue an ewe, its lamb will butt you —
4. if you defeat a fool, forgive him, on the upsurge such fool is dangerous,
5. by the wrenching lightning.]

Because the witches have pursued the patient (ewe), its lamb (the ngaka) will butt or gore them. There will be lightning by day, natural eyes will see it. This lamb (ngaka) is dangerous - by the wrenching lightning it can command.

2.11.2 Line 4 is a proverb featuring parallelism by affirmation. As in Mpherefere where the first line recurred at the end (toboketsa motoboketsi), in Thwagadima the word-group thwagadima a marutla, recurs, as a kind of refrain, a feature more common in song than in 'praises' as such.

2.11.3 We find that the preceding four 'poems' of divining bones constitute a series centred round a patient, a problem. This is our reason for considering them as a cycle. Thus far this is the only cycle we have found in Tswana, but the tendency is noteworthy. We may therefore record tentatively for Tswana that the hierarchy of verse-techniques consists of the verse-node, the verse, the stanza, the poem, and the poem cycle.

Recapitulation

2.12.1 As in the case of Bogokgo sa Borwa, in Bojalwa we once again come across lines (lines 1, 4, 5) with two axes, and others (2 and 3) with a single axis.* We refer to the line with two balanced parts as biaxial, and the one with a single strain as uniaxial. These lines certainly have corresponding units, and the units among

* An axis is one member of the balanced parts of a verse.

themselves correspond to a great extent, thus forming the basis of verse, with a possibility of developing metre.

2.12.2 In the light of the foregoing, a line of a lebôkô has certain features. We must watch below for the recurrence of these features.

(a) As to content -

i. It may be a datum.

ii. The datum may for instance be a praise-name with or without an apposition.

iii. The datum may be a variation upon another in its content.

iv. The variation may so exceed necessity as to appear overdone.

v. It may be a didactic pronouncement, especially at the end.

vi. It may be a recondite or satirical allusion.

vii. It may be suggestive.

viii. It may be the concentrated means of expressing drama, e.g. segokgo sa borwa, mmantitole.

ix. It arouses enthusiasm, e.g. in its praise-naming.

(b) As to form -

i. It is a fairly well-knit entity, delimited by penultimate length which is the basis of rhythm.

ii. It may be uniaxial when it has a single axis.

iii. It may be biaxial when it has two axes.

iv. The two members of a biaxial line are not always equal in number of short syllables and long syllables, but are always separated by a caesura.

v. Whether biaxial or uniaxial, it has units of correspondence based on words that tend to bear the brunt of the rhythm as well as the metrical tendency.

vi. The tendency to trisyllabic rhythm and probably equivalent disyllabic rhythm of the short-long-short and long-short type respectively, is obvious.

vii. It may be polyaxial.

2.12.3 In 2.10.1 we certainly advanced further. We had a slightly bulkier excerpt than the preceding ones. We came across apostrophising, end-rhyme, and refrain. The ending on a proverb is further confirmation of our finding, that there is a style of ending on a generalisation, a philosophy, which is an effective way of apprehending universal truth in its subtlety and intensity. This also indicates praise-worthy thought-arrangement and -development.

2.12.4 We have noted that some of our excerpts are found in cognate languages, which suggests that they may be of long standing. We observed a conscious striving after word-economy. We found a definite system of end-rhyming. We have found that poetic licence is exercised rather to uphold the structure of Tswana than assail it. We have noted the euphonic effect produced by end-rhyming. We saw the operation of the lyrical spirit, in apostrophising for instance.

2.12.5 In the excerpts on the divining bones we have a distinct heading for each. But the heading can be viewed as a subheading of a greater whole. The four excerpts might be used to teach us the basis of a stanza, not just by means of this heading, but, to differentiate it from prose, by means of definite units of correspondence from line to line, suggesting that the lines are <u>verses</u> of a stanza. If the excerpts are

viewed as separate poems, even as each is self-contained (without being altogether an end in itself), and can be used independently of the others, then their persistent relationship suggests that they may constitute a cycle. There is no suggestion that these aspects are completely developed. We merely find tendencies in this direction. There is a measure of truth in B.W. Vilakazi's definition of a stanza, relying on headings such as in the case of the subheadings to paragraphs in prose. But there is more to this.

2.12.6 So far our excerpts have no historical tinge. It is important to note that in Tswana too, the mabôkô are not only 'poems' with an historical tenor. So a more comprehensive term than "praises" and its compounds seems necessary as Vilakasi has felt.

2.12.7 With reference to the rare and subtle technique of apostrophising, we have found three types, viz. laudatory, suggestive, and admonitory. We suggest that in form, apostrophising addressed by the bard to another external party is direct, and by another external party to the bard, inverse. We have seen these two types in our excerpts above.

2.12.8 We have already substantiated, in some small measure, the findings of the experts quoted in Chapter 1 - and have made yet more findings. What remains is to find whether 'poems' of an historical nature, and song, teach us anything more, in order to complete our intended portion of the investigation into indigenous Tswana 'poetry'. All in all, in form and in feeling, we have already experienced growth and development.

CHAPTER 3

INDIGENOUS 'POEMS' WITH AN HISTORICAL TENOR AND INDIGENOUS SONG

Man as the subject of 'Poetry'

3.1.1 By 'poems' of an historical tenor we wish to convey the idea of 'poems' dealing with the vicissitudes of man's life : his aspirations and frustrations, his conquests and discomfitures, his nomadism and territorial acquisitions, his poverty and affluence, his courage and despair, his passions, statemanship, and his cunning, treachery and stupidity.

3.1.2 In the preceding chapter we analysed excerpts dealing with subjects other than man, which indicate that Tswana poetry captures experience other than history. We now enter the field of self-appraisal. We refer to it as appraisal since it is not always self-glorification or self-praise as we shall see below.

3.1.3 In the process of analysing poems about natural phenomena and cultural creations we discovered certain definite poetic tendencies. We now proceed with the specific purpose of assessing the spirit and techniques of those 'poems' that stand closest to man himself. This presupposes a conscious effort to understand man, because -

> .... real appreciation .... depends on the power to grasp the content of the poem and ..... to fuse appreciation of the content with consciousness of the form.....the majority of poems have meaning that can in part be discussed intellectually..... (Boulton, pp. 97-8)

3.1.4 The Tswana themselves have an idea of the unfathomable quality of their spirit, saying in proverb:

> motho ga itsiwe, go itsiwe naga
> [Man cannot be known (understood), the veld can be known]

We suspect that the language by which the Tswanas try to fathom the unfathomable will be difficult to interpret. And understandably so.

Motivation

3.2.1 The most persistent device in 'poems' of an historical nature is conflict. As in English drama there are usually protagonists and antagonists. Before we attempt to seek the operation of this device, we quote hereunder how certain Afrikaans authorities see it:

> Die mens word gevange gehou binne die perke van die werklike lewe. (i) Buitekant hom is daar hoër magte waarmee hy telkens in botsing kom; (ii) binnekant is daar die tweespalt van sy verdeelde wil; (iii) en verder nog die stryd met die wil van ander mense wat hom dwarsboom.(Schonees & Van Bruggen, p. 260)
> (The numbering (i) - (iii) being mine).

3.2.2 Since conflict is a challenge, it is bound to be met with keen feeling. The patriot is bound to be seen against the saboteur, fate against fortune. Ours is now a study in human values and feelings and attitudes.

Colour Consciousness

3.3.1 One Kodisang of the Bakwena (Crocodile totemites) is said to praise himself as follows, according to one Mrs A. Modibane (70 years) of Hebron:

1. A re k'o motshomotsho o motsho wa gabo Mmaphiri
2. a re k'o motsho
3. a re le botsho bo
4. a re kge ts'o bo adima

- - - - - -

5. A re thula sekgotlho-se-mafata sa gabo mogatsa Dikgati a Kopala
6. a re thula o b'o thule gape
7. o b'o thulele Mmaseteane Kgaswana, kgaitsadi a Kodisang le Nkgôgô-e-merêtô.

- - - - - -

8. A re tau e 'tile ya rwala mefitshana
9. ya re mo nolaleng ya apara lepetu
10. A re ka tloga ka gapa kgomo a gabo Morakane
11. ka tlhoma e dusa ya ba re ge ke bona paraga tse
12. ka re ke mabêlê, ka re a kgomo a etsho a botse a go isa metlhaolosa kgosing!

[1. He said I am the pitch black, the black one of the family of Mmaphiri
2. he said I am the black one
3. he said this blackness
4. he said I haven't borrowed it.

- - - - - -

5. He said, butt, colossus of the family of the wife of Dikgati of Kopala, colossus that paws the ground
6. he said, butt, and butt again
7. butt also on behalf of Mmaseteane Kgaswana, sister of Kodisang and Nkgôgô who is striped

- - - - - -

8. He said, a lion once wore copper bangles
9. and around the neck it wore a skin covering
10. he said, then I looted a cow belonging to Morakane's family
11. I thought it was pregnant, on seeing its udder
12. I thought it was full of milk, I thought what a lovely cow of ours whose sweet milk to take to the chief's kraal!]

3.3.2 Kodisang's colour consciousness is not a colour prejudice. Therefore it has nobility. It is not being compared with other colours thought inferior or superior, therefore it has moral justification. It identifies him with his sister, Mmaphiri, which rela-

tionship is a great stimulus to action in an impending conflict. Therefore whether the words be truly Kodi-sang's or are put into his mouth by a bard, on the one hand inferiority is not being accepted because he is black, and on the other, it is accepted that nature has so decreed -

3. a re le botsho bo
4. a re kge ts'o adima

This gives us an insight into the spirit of the time : consciousness of being a black people, having feelings of paternity as men towards womenfolk for whom they are born to be responsible. Self-assessment is evidence of this consciousness, which self-assessment signifies conflicts in one's heart (tweespalt van sy verdeelde wil). Resignation to the inevitable, the unborrowed black colour, points to an awareness of -

"hoër magte waarmee hy telkens in botsing kom".

3.3.3 Colour enthusiasm often runs high, as happened when we asked Jacobina Nthite (born Momogale, ± 75) to recite the 'poems' of her clan, the royal clan of the Mogopa (Kwena) tribe, and she readily responded thus:

1. Ké rna fifi la Mokwena, sethibolle sa ba Modian a Tau
2. bosigo ba phutha-batho-dinao e re bo sa o ba phutholle;
3. motho waabo kwena e ntsho ya Modian a Tau e reng ge tlholla maimana e tswe e eme ka maroo khwiting;
4. motho waabo leswene-le-namela-thaba, namane tsa masalasopong;
5. motho waabo Motsile a Mangana, mmametlhasedi a tlhasela metse a Bapo, a tlhasela metse a boRamphosokwane ka makuku ka mantobontobo, le baratani ba sa ntse ba ntse,

6. ngwetsi a tswa a phuthile makgabe -
7. a re, "O tshabang o ts'o le mogatsa mogale,
   o le mogatsa Sekokometse-tsibogong?"

- - - - - -

8. A le ge go twe kgomo tsa Mogopa di lebelo,
   a di ka sia badisa?
9. Ga e ka re di fitlha fa kgorong ya Nkètèkà
   Letswading a kgadimetsa ka
   molope ka mosasana?

- - - - - -

10. Heelang lona basimantoe, le bolelle borangwane
    Mookebsi a Lèthibà
11. le re ba age mekgoro, le robale moo yona
12. e re o lorang lehuma, a le lore
13. o re o lorang pula, a e lorele Bakwena ba
    Mogopa!
14. Tsatsi le a tlhaba kwa Thotwe
15. le ise marang a masesane kwa Makolokwe
16. mme sedi le legolo a le tsisa mo Betha-a-a-ne!

[1. I am the darkness of the Kwena, the shield of
    the family of Modiane of Tau
2. (I am) the night such as causes people to curb
   their movements until daybreak when they can
   stretch their feet;
3. Man of the family of the black crocodile of
   Modiane of Tau; when it portends evil for
   pregnant women it stands on its paws in
   the valley and out of the water;
4. Man of the family of the baboon-troop-that-
   climbs-the-mountain, descendants of those
   who remain in the ruins;
5. Man of the family of Motsile of the Mangana
   (age-set), the attacker who attacked the
   Bapo villages and the villages of Rampho-
   sokwane and others early in the morning
   while lovers were still resting -
6. so that the daughter-in-law ran out holding
   her fringe of strings (worn to cover pri-
   vate parts) by hand -
7. he said, "what do you flee from, being a
   gallant man's wife, being wife of
   Sekokemetse-tsibogong?' *

*Sekokometse - tsibogong is the praise-name of Motsile I, meaning, "it is seated, waiting on guard in the ford". I believe this is Motsile, chief of the Bakwena ba ga Mogopa who died circ. 1834-6. (See Tribes of Rustenburg and Pilanesberg Districts by P.-L. Breutz, par.228).

8. Even were the cattle of the Mogopa tribe exceedingly fleetfooted, can they outrun the herdboys?

9. When they reach the entrance at Nkètèkà, wouldn't Letswading shout and whistle?

- - - - -

10. Hey! you boys, tell uncle Mooketsi Lethiba and others

11. tell them to build huts and yóú sleep in them

12. who dreams poverty, let them dream it therein

13. who dreams rain (prosperity), let them dream it for the Kwena of Mogopa!

- - - - -

14. The sun rises over the hill called Thotwe

15. it sends weak rays to Makolokwe

16. and brings the main light to Bethany!]

Sovereignty

3.4.1 The forms called praise-names are heavily charged with meaning. We refer to -

A

Line 1. fifi la Mokwena : darkness of the Kwena

" 2. bosigo ba phutha-batho-dinao : night such as causes people to curb their movements that is, gathers peoples feet.

Line 1. sethibelle sa ba Modian a Tau: [shield of the family of Modiane of Tau]

7. Bekokometse-tsibogong : [it is seated in the ford.]

Motsile I was the darkness of the Kwena. This metaphor is followed by an even more powerful one referring to him as the 'night'. At night all people return home for safety. And that is Motsile I. His people return to him for safety. Is this an ode to Motsile or to the black colour or to monarchy? These interpretations are indissoluble and indicate depth of thought.

3.4.2 But Motsilo I was also the shield of his people, belonging to the family or clan of Modiane, a woman. There is no telling that chieftainship leans heavily on female support. This is simply the position as it is. His method of shielding his people was by watching over the fords to keep enemies out. The Tswana refer to a chief as morena and to a king as kgosi. We are dealing here with a character that saw to it that national territory was never entered by enemies. This was done by guarding the fords. Could it mean that the Tswana considered their morena a kgosi when he ensured the sovereignty of the state by guarding all entrances against intruders?

3.4.3 Could it mean that this is the Bantu conception of monarchy - one who ensures sovereignty by guarding the fords? The Zulus say of Tshaka (Cope p. 117) -

> Ingwan' ehamb'ivimbel' eziny' izingwan'
> zmazibukweni
> [Leopard that goes to prevent other leopards at the fords].

Or could it mean that Tswana and Zulu 'poems' were per chance -

> ..... gebore uit 'n in sommige opsigte verwante geestesgesteldheid.....

or did the bards have -

> ....toevallig eenderse visie?

We are not urging that these poems be viewed as connected in any way, but the comparison is certainly -

> ..... 'n verhelderende metode en 'n avontuur om uit die dubbele perspektief van twee digters na dieselfde saak te kyk (Cloete 1963, p. 1)

From this double perspective, guarding the fords seems to ensure sovereignty and sovereignty to consolidate monarchy. This shielding of family and fatherland is the height of patriotism. And in great measure the poems of historical tenor are poems of patriotism. This protection is a response to conflict -

> die stryd met die wil van ander mense wat hom dwarsboom. (vide 3.2.1)

So is the conflict against Ramphosokwane, Ndebele monarch, which results in the recapture of Kwena daughters-in-law. And paternal feelings are once more a strong point (lines 5, 6, 7).

Tribal Aggrandizement

3.5.1 There is no doubt that much of the Tswana 'poetry' with a historical tenor is also intended to 'record' for posterity the triumphs of the respective clans or chiefdoms. The preceding paragraphs have already shown us how conflict is the unbroken lifeline of this literature, and we intend to note how it operates as the basis of tribal aggrandizement.

3.5.2 The laureate of the Bafokeng of Phokeng, near Rustenburg, Thageng Magano, a man who distinguishes clearly between 'poems' he learned from old tribesmen, and those composed by himself, praised the Bafokeng as recorded hereunder, and assured us that this is not his composition, but one handed down by word of mouth:

1. Ke rona Bafokeng ba ga Mmakgongwana a Sekete
2. Bafokeng mmele, sebete teng Ma'ebele
3. ba ga mpšana-phutha-dinala
4. ge e phutholla, tse dingwe e a loma
5. bana ba thari e kwa Kgammakwe
6. polega-batho, polega-yo-mmagwe-a-se-yong
7. yo go twong belega mokgongwana o sitlhotse
8. o sitlhotse ka thari ya namane gonne thari ya tshepe boleta e a boa

- - - - -

9. E nile ke tsena kwa Thekwana ka fitlhela go duduodiwa
10. go twe Kabêdi o a nyala
11. ba re bogadi bo dule, bo tswetse Modisakeng le Petlele kwa Thekwana
12. ngwana a seatla-senkgamomela, le motsing a sa bo tshwarang o nts'a bo nkga fela
13. bana ba gabo Setšhele morwa Mmaledi
14. more o kil' a balla tshukudu
15. more wa tlotlopi ya kgomo tse khunwana
16. tse nne di fula kwa Phalakwe, Setšhele.

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17. Ba re kgomo di ile Bafokeng
18. di tsene ka noka a Marasela
19. di ile go bona kwa go letseng tladitlapana Setšhele.
20. Ke kgomo tse khunwana tsa gabo Ramauba a dibata
21. ke kgomo tso khunwana tsa gabo mmabasimane, mmabatlhanka

- - - - - -

22. Ba re Setšhele boela borwa
23. batho ga se diphologolo, Setšhele.

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1. It's we the Bafokeng of Mmakgongwana of Sekete,
2. Bafokeng in appearance, inside in the liver being Ndebele
3. people of puppy-draw-in-your-claws
4. if it outstretches, it bites the others
5. children of the cradle at Kgammakwe
6. carrier of the people, carrier of those whose mother is no more

7. of whom it is said, carry outsize ones and tie firmly
8. tie firmly the calf hide cradle for the springbuck skin is soft and therefore loosens.

- - - - - -

9. When I arrived at Thekwana I found ululating in progress
10. it was said Kàbêdí was marrying
11. they said the bride price (bogadi) had been paid to Modisakeng and Petlele of Thekwana
12. son of the hand that smells of malt even on occasions when he has not touched it
13. children of Setšhele's family, Setšhele son of Maledi
14. material that once did choke a rhinoceros
15. children of the womb of bay cows
16. those that grazed at Phalakwe, Setšhele.

- - - - - -

17. They say the cattle have vanished, Bafokeng
18. they disappeared down the river of the Aussels
19. they have gone to spy where daylight-thunderbolt, Setšhele, is
20. They are the bay cows of the family of Ramauba of the beasts of prey
21. they are the bay cows of the mother of boys, mother of servants.

- - - - - - -

22. They say, Setšhele return to the South
23. people are not animals, Setšhele.]

3.5.3. The Bafokeng consider themselves a great Tswana tribe, not lacking fierce and much dreaded Ndebele blood. Their patriarchs are named in line 1. Their off-shoot Setšhele, founder of the Bakwena ba ga Setšhele tribe that is reputed to have been the first Tswana tribe to settle in Botswana, is also mentioned, for purposes of lasting record. But that is clearly not the main subject of the 'poetry'. The main subject of the 'poem' is character, the fierceness tempered with the kindness of this tribe, showing that the Tswana knew that viciousness coupled with moderation builds a great nation. Conflict in the royal house

keeps fanning the fire that puts this viciousness and this moderation to the test. The Bafokeng are not only the descendants of Nmakgongwana of Seketo, not only of the much feared Ndebele extraction, but their character is:

line 3 : ba ga mpšana-phutha-dinala : [I interpret this to mean that they never start quarrels; they ever keep their nails drawn in: until.....]

line 4 : ge e phutholla tse dingwe e a loma: [I interpret this to mean that if they are provoked to stretch out their nails they can be vicious, carnivorous;]

line 6 : pelega-batho, pelega-yo-mmaagwe-a-se-yong [This is understood to mean that they in fact would rather always succour people, succour those who have no refuge.] cf. translation on page 64.

3.5.4 This is imagery, characterisation, 'poetry'. Provocation comes when members of the royal family at Thokwana dare to appropriate bride price to themselves. After all, all royal daughters are the chief's sisters and he 'takes' their bride price. These provocative characters must be severely criticised, and therein consists our 'poetry' again -

Line 12 : ngwana a seatla-senkga-momela, le motsing a sa bo tshwarang o nts'a bo nkga fela...

This Kàbêdi stinks, to say the least of him; even as malt, that is liquor, intoxicates, his recalcitrance is a perpetual intoxication; this is no wonder since he is of Setšhele's family, Setšhele who led a splinter group through the mountain pass where the Russels lived and went North; in spite of this Setšhele being of good birth, a man whose mother's bride price (bogadi)

was duly paid with the cattle that grazed at Phalakwe. The bard discharges his duty of chastising the recalcitrants, calling them by their names. This Setšhele is as unpredictable as a daylight-thunderbolt : he can do the unexpected. But this tribe has enough foregiveness to invite him back home because people need not chase one another or flee from one another endlessly -

Line 23: Ba re Setšhele boela Borwa
24: batho ga se dipholomolo, Setšhele.

3.5.5 The greatness of a tribe is not only in battle but in diplomacy too. This can also be seen where the greatheartedness of Motsile I is demonstrated in his gathering his people even as the night silently impels people to gather in families, in clans, in tribes -

2: bosigo ba phutha-batho-dinao e re bo sa
o ba phutholle. (3.3.3)

3.5.6 In regard to form we were guided by the bard's main pauses, leading to division into four stanzas. The verses and the stanzas are unequal in length. We were guided by pauses and resumptions. It appears general practice to begin a verse with fresh gusto as we do a musical bar.

3.5.7 The distribution of uniaxial and biaxial verses is also irregular. A conscious bid to avoid monotony is apparent. A conscious bid to state a complete datum in every verse is evident.

3.5.8 Finally, we find in this poem the device known as the periodic sentence or construction. Line 13 relates that this noisome group of Kabedi are

descendants of Setšhele. Lines 14, 15, 16 are data that could easily be dissociated from Setšhele, but for the last word of line 16 being Setšhele again.

3.3.9 We had occasion to hear Chief Ellence Mokgoko of Mmametlhake, Warmbaths district, also praise his tribe as follows -

1. Dumela setlakala-sewa-temong!
2. O dumediswa ke Mapala-madumetsa
3. kgosi ya atla tse diphatshwa Mapala
4. o a paletseng Matebele, ba Mokopane le ba Llaka;
5. o dumediswa ke motšhikhiri o mahutwana
6. dibolawa-di-ipolaela.

- - - - - -

7. Ke Mapala-madumetsa, kgosi ya atla tse diphatshwa
8. kgosi ya sefa-le-babereki;
9. ke ngwana a Kantobeng-ka-dikapa
10. Madisa-ka-dipodi le tla loba batseta.

- - - - - -

11. Ke ba Mmakau a Modise
12. ke motšhikhiri o mahutwana
13. ke diboba-di-motlhaka -
14. g'o bona ba llana

- - - - - -

15. Ke bana ba thari ya boraro mo bogosing ba Bakgatla
16. mme ba ipela ka setso se ba leng ka sona;
17. ke bana ba Dipêrê, ba Phokungwana-ga-ke-na-lebelo
18. tsa ka di tla ntata di ntse;
19. magopagopa o gogopa metlhape e tlale tlhatlhane ya boRamadi
20. tse ding e be di tlhatlhelwe kwa letamong -
21. Dumelang Digolokwane!

[1. I greet you, untidy one that stumbles ploughing!
2. you are greeted by Mapala-madumetsa
3. chief of the black-and-white hands Mapala
4. who successfully resisted the Ndebele of Mokopane and Laka;
5. you are greeted by the knotted tall grass
6. those who when injured react by also injuring.

\- - - - - -

7. This is Mapala-madumetsa, chief with black-and-white hands
8. chief who gives rations even to labourers;
9. son of Reward-mé-with-sheep
10. those who rear goats can reward my emissaries.

\- - - - - -

11. They are the tribe of Mmakau of Modise
12. the knotted tall grass
13. they are the gadflies of the sedge —
14. as you see them like that.

\- - - - - -

16. They are the children of the third Kgatla royal house
17. they are Dipêrê's descendants, descendants of Phokungwana who is no fast runner
18. his gains come to him without effort on his part;
19. gatherer who collects herds and fills the hedges of Ramadi
20. even kraaling the overflow in the enclosure of the dam —
21. I greet you Digolokwane!]

3.5.10 The brunt of the 'poetry' is borne by the figurative praise-names —

line 2. Mapala < verb stem -pala, to resist; meaning resister;

2. madumetsa < verb stem-dumedisa, to greet; meaning one who habitually honours by greeting;

1. Setlakala-sewa-temong : one who does not mind getting soiled while ploughing, therefore an industrious one; a proud name indeed;

5. Notshikhiri o mahutwana : dark green tall grass used by herdboys in mock-fighting and very painful indeed to be beaten with, sometimes used to thatch;

line 6. diboläwa-di-ipolaela : calls into association lines 3 and 4 in 3.5.2 above where a tribe claims to be vicious only when provoked - a sign of greatness;

9. Rantobeng-ka-dikapa : Reward-me-with-sheep, a name of status;

10. Madisa-ka-dipodi : those who rear goats, a name of lesser status than that of sheep-rearers;

13. diboba-di-motlhaka : gadflies of the sedge;

19. magopagopa < verb stem -gogopa, to gather, meaning gatherer of livestock, wealth.

3.5.11 Above is real imagery in which the names of the patriarchs are used sparingly and instead praise-names are created according to character. The tribe is proud of its dark colour, thus seeing itself as dark green grass; but the tribe can hit painfully and give protection, if necessary, as this type of grass, which some use for thatching to provide protection from the elements and others use for fighting. The knotted feature of this grass refers to its nodes that make it flexible and so much more suitable for thatching as well as fighting. This pliability is the character of the tribe, which can protect or rout, and there is no doubt in our mind that much is compressed into this praise-name to point to greatheartedness that must never be mistaken for effeminacy or cowardice. This is a tribe of gadflies that live in the sedge, not just everywhere. You have to try to cut the sedge to kindle their wrath. Whole essays would be required to set out the characteristics of this tribe as compressed into the praise-words.

3.5.12 The economic requirements of the tribe are not forgotten. The patriarch is Reward-me-with-sheep (Rantobeng-ka-dikapa). It is praiseworthy to rear sheep because you can maintain your chief therewith. It is a poor show to rear goats - your chief spurns them. The satire against goatherds is plain. The royal approval of shepherds speaks for itself - all this in two compounds:

madisa-ka-dipodi
Rantobeng-ka-dikapa.

The tribe are magopagopa, gatherers, of livestock, a conception still being propagated to date, and long regarded by anthropologists as the cattle complex of the Bantu. This tribe has quite an opinion of itself - genealogically, militaristically, and economically. And what is noble, there is no derogation of anybody else. There is simply great and positive self-esteem which is intended either as fact or suggestion or both.

3.5.13 An epic is known to be a poem which recounts a great event in a grand style, a heroic poem. Whereas the style of these 'poems' tends to be 'grand', the historical events are only hinted at. The bard never intends that any other person should have full knowledge, lest he (the bard) loses the authority as composer. And this is what weakens the historical value of our 'poetry'. There is also the favourable bias, the fact that praise instead of balanced evaluation predominates, that weakens the historical value. We find however that these 'poems' are relevant to this aspect of our task inasmuch as they

reveal tendencies towards the epic form. As a foundation on which modern bards can start, having fuller historical records, they bring the composition of true epics within sight.

3.3.14 Tswana royalty has a passion for honour, sometimes degenerating into a demand to be worshipped. Napala need not say that he knows this. The fact that he calls himself madumetsa - one who habitually greets - shows how feverishly he wishes to ingratiate himself with his monarch. But in line 6 he still warns that he hurts when he is hurt.

3.3.15 In this poem also we find the periodic construction (lines 2, 3). Lest line 3 be misconstrued to refer to the paramount who is being greeted, the name Napala recurs. This helps to establish the fact that the conquest over the Ndebele (line 4) was Napala's. The motivation is again conflict.

3.3.16 The character of a tribe is thus often brought into clear relief in pithy excerpts. A.J. Wookey(p.75) says of the Bakgatla of the Kgafela group that they were excellent at war, their totem being the blue monkey or perhaps formerly the fire flame -- both of which (the monkey and the flame) share the name kgábð. They praise themselves thus -

1. Sedibelo-o-mollô, se fša se a tlhaologa
2. sa re se fša metse ya falala
3. ya tshaba maputlela, ya nna makgaoganyana:
4. morula o kgothikgolo Bakgatla
5. bana ba sefatana sa Morulong

6. barwa-mpša-e-jele-mpšana-ya-yona

7. dithata tsa ga Molefe a Masilo tse di jeleng mokgoro di o lala.

[1. The cruse that is fire, if it burns it melts
2. and when it burns villages scatter
3. and flee in splinters and fragments:
4. the morula tree with a thick stem
5. the Bakgatla are children of the concavity* of Moruleng,
6. sons of the-dog-has-devoured-its-own-pup
7. forces of Molefe of Masilo that ate the hut in which they slept.]

3.5.17 The essence of the 'poetry' is captured by the metaphors of the 'fire cruse', the 'morula tree with a thick stem', 'the dog devouring its pup', the 'forces that ate the hut in which they slept'. Once more the character rather than the history of the tribe is uppermost. The two are fused, since historical reference to fatherland (Moruleng) and to patriarchs (Molefe of Masilo) is maintained. As to character, the tribe is a cool oil cruse; yóú dare burn it, yóú dare provoke a conflict, it melts -

sedibelo-o-mollo, se íša se a tlhaologa

The cruse melts : a metonymy meaning that the oil therein melts, and turns your villages into splinters and fragments. The cruse itself remains, since the Bakgatla are a thick morula stem : its 'stem' (kgothikgolo) will remain unimpaired, and if need be, befriend the enemy, rebuild, and eventually overthrow the enemy -

dithata tsa ga Molefe a Masilo tse di jeleng mokgoro di o lala.

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* The Moruleng river forms a valley between two mountains, therefore a concavity.

3.5.18 The idea of 'forces' that will never be removed is the height of love for the fatherland, patriotism, comparable to line 4 in 3.3.3:

... leswene-le-namela-thaba, namane tsa masala-sopeng.

If the defence of the fatherland is at stake the Bakgatla will enlist even children to fight, the dog thus eating its pup - barwa-mpša-e-jele-mpšana-ya-yona.

3.5.19 We have further indications that Bantu literature is one great whole when we recall that the Barolong are also praised as -

Namane tsa thôlê Barolong, di jang mogope di o lala. [Calves of the heifers, Barolong, who consume the hut whereas they sleep in it.]

3.5.20 Throughout, the inclination simply to flee from an enemy and surrender the fatherland is suppressed, and the intention to remain in the fatherland emotively expressed or suggested. This is the spirit in which the indigenous people of South Africa called the Tswana are brought up and when they praise themselves in front of the great powers that govern them, they humbly pray in the terms above for the retention of their fatherland, precisely in the self-same spirit in which Western peoples pray in national anthems.

3.5.21 The linkings in our 'poem' are subtle and meaningful repetitions. In line 6 the dog has devoured its pup -

e jele (mpšana-ya-yona).

In the next line the 'forces' have eaten a hut in which they slept -

di jeleng (mokgoro di o lala)

How are the dog and the 'forces' linked? When this dog gets vicious and consumes its young, the battle is sure to be won and the hut (enemy) consumed.
We see such linking also in lines 1 and 2. The alliterative recurrence of the voiceless alveolar sibilent sound (s) in lines 1 and 2 immediately suggests the sound of burning fat.

3.5.22 It was internecine conflict that provoked the patriotism of the Kgatla chief, Pilane, to school and warn his rival brother Kgotlamaswe in 'poetry' that he (Pilane) was (Schapera p. 55 et seq., lines 1, 3, 5, 40)

Pilane a malosa [Pilane the war-monger]
. . . . . .
selo se mo kopong ka fa Ditlhotlhe, ba
dintlha ba ntse ba se gwaisa

[There's a beast in the cliff in Ditlhotlhe mountain and dwellers at the outposts keep provoking it]

But finally: Pilane ke letlapa la ntswepilwane : [Pilane is the rock of ironstone.] Every effort is made to leave a favourable record of righteous indignation leading to active conflict in order to build a patriotic people. And this embodies the spirit of this 'poetry'

3.5.23 It happens too that a tribe praises another if diplomatic relationships are healthy, or a suggestion in this connection has to be made. The example hereunder, obtained from Thageng Magano of Phokeng, already named in 3.5.2 above, makes use of the themes of the excerpt in 3.5.16 and the style of Mokgoko in 3.5.9, thus:

1. Dumela sedibelo se mollo, morula o kgothikgolo Bakgatla
2. ngwana sefatana sa Moruleng sa fša metse a phalla
3. ba nna makgaoganyana, ba nna maputlaganyana -
4. ke leboko la Kgosi Kgamanyane Pilane kwa Kgafela a Matshego, kwa Phuthadikobo Bakgatla.

- - - - - -

5. Bakgatla ba re ga go kgosi ya Bakgatla Transefala
6. kgosi ke Isang kwa Motshodi Bakgatla
7. Bakgatla ba re selo se mo Ditlhotlhe selo se mo kopoopong, ba dintlha ba ntse ba se gwaisa Bakgatla!

3.5.24 This is Magano's own composition, based on the saga of Pilane referred to in 3.5.16 above. And this is how the spirit of indigenous 'poetry' travels : by original composition followed by composition upon composition. The translation of the above excerpt is as follows -

[1. I greet you, burning cruse, morula tree with thick stem, Bakgatla
2. son of the concave dwelling at Moruleng which burns and disperses villages
3. the villages splinter apart and stay in dribs and drabs -
4. that is the praise of chief Kgamanyane Pilane of the Kgafelas of Matshego at Phuthadikobo, the Bakgatla

- - - - - -

5. The Bakgatla say there is no Kgatla chief in the Transvaal
6. the only chief is Isang of Motshodi, Bakgatla.
7. The Bakgatla say there is a beast in Ditlhotlhe, the beast is in the cliff, the commoners keep prodding it, Bakgatla.]

The spirit of courtesy revealed here can be of great benefit to a chief or his emissaries visiting another and indicates a serious effort to glorify the tribe, and reflects also the diplomatic function of the bard.

3.5.25 Tribal organisation may also be the theme of animal praise, particularly the totem animal, and we take the praise of the wild boar as an instance:

1. Mathintinyane:, mmanakana di ganong
2. ke rile ke le tlou ka bona naka di nkgana
3. ka kgola, ka mela diphôthô
4. ka mela tshweu di ganong —
5. kolobe, molèma-malemê o-sa-a-jaleng.

[1. Mathintninyane, grower of little horns in the mouth
2. while I was an elephant I realised the tusks didn't suit me
3. I shed them, grew strong sharp fangs
4. grew white things in the mouth —
5. the boar, tiller of soils that it does not sow]

How else can a man justify his forming his own chiefdom than that one family has monopolised the 'elephant tusks', the chieftaincy, and his turn has not been forthcoming? It is not always certain how a tribe came to adopt a particular totem, but the wild boar totemites relate that they and the Bafokeng and the Batloung had very close ties. Drought came, and on one occasion a man discovered a fresh footpath in the forest, which he followed up to a pool of water never known to the community. The path had been beaten by troops of wild boars. A section of the community broke away from the main group, pretending to be going in search of water and food, whereas they were going to live within easy reach of the pool of the wild boars, and to establish a new chiefdom of wild boar totemites.

3.5.26 The story is captured in the 'poem'. The praise-word mathinthinyane is deideophonic, pointing to the reaction of a boar to anything startling, viz. thi! thi! followed either by attacking or fleeing. Similarly when the wild boar totemites were still with the elephant totemites, something startled them, ostensibly the drought, but really the failure to get the 'tusks' or powers of chieftaincy -

ka bona nakana di nkgana [lit. I realised that the horns refused me].

The breaking away is recaptured in the personal shedding of the tusks and the growing of large fangs -

ka kgola, ka mela diphôthô.

3.5.27 The boar finds its food by ploughing the soil with its snout and goes to fresh areas to dig more. This habit is used to justify the breaking away. No matter what the group had invested in sweat and/or material value in the area originally owned with the elephant totemites, now they move to fresh territory. While we learned that the Bafokeng invited daylight thunderbolt Setšhele back from the North (3,5.2, lines 22 and 23) in the interests of tribal cohesion, we now witness praise of lack of this cohesion. But in that way too a big and progressive tribe, the Bakolobeng of Lichtenburg District, has come into being, and the praise of the wild boar is now the praise of the royal house, the personal as well as community praise.

Intertribal emulation

3.6.1 The striving after tribal cohesion must at some stage clash with the striving after splintering. And so it is that when the Ndebele attacked the Tswana, who are inclined to splintering, the necessity of tribal cohesion and military solidarity became evident. Asked about the Rolong royal house at Mafeking, Mrs S. Seane (80 years) chose to say the praise of Kebalepile I Montshiwa -

1. O montle ntweng ngwana a kgosi yo masisi go tlhabana
2. leofisiri je le tsetsweng ke onyana leisantwa.

- - - - - -

3. Ke mmonye a kgalemela malokwana fa kgoreng tsoo Ramhokeng
4. thaka ya lekoko ja ga Mothokô oo Rathwane
5. a re, 'tlhabanang ka thata, a ha matsêtsê a hela a ga lo a bone?'

- - - - - -

[1. You are excellent at war, king's son who shuns warring,
2. officer born of the maiden of the age-set maisantwa.

- - - - - -

3. I saw him reprimand the members (of the army) at the hedges of Ramhokeng
4. members of the group of Mothokô of the Rathwane ward,
5. saying, 'fight hard, don't you see that the fleas are being exterminated?']

3.6.2 Once more the tendency to affect to dislike warring, or warring only when provoked, is uppermost -

ngwana a kgosi yo masisi go tlhabana
[king's son who shuns warring]

But the same character is at his best in war -

o montle ntweng [you are excellent at war]

It is also implied in line 2 that he is a born officer, and in line 3 that even outside actual army activity, in the village, he maintains order among men, organising them to fight hard in view of the army's heavy losses. The character of this army is captured in the word 'fleas'. The record or suggestion of gallantry is conveyed in the ideas of excellence at war and being a born officer, and once more, to show the rôle of the woman in Tswana affairs, born of a maiden, leisantwa, plural maisantswa, age-set [lit. wagers of war.]

3.6.3 Of the father of Kobalepile I (the name means 'I am watching them'), namely Montshiwa I, S.M. Molema, brother of Mrs S. Seane, writes as follows:

> There was no black man in South Africa whose name was so much in the mouth of the public and the press in the middle and towards the end of the 19th century as that of Montshiwa (or Montshioa as it has been corrupted). There was certainly no better known African name in South Africa and England in those years commencing in 1880 and ending 1886, and no person was more admired, lionised, petted, courted, and caressed by the one European section, while he was at the same time hated, abused, cursed, vilified and damned by the other section. Such is the person whose life it is intended to sketch in these pages - Montshiwa, chief of the Tshidi branch of the Barolong tribe. (Molema p. 1).

S.M. Molema relates how Montshiwa and his fellow-initiates (the Mantwa - Warriors) assassinated emissaries of Mzilikazi circ. 1832, "and the national bards immediately celebrated the episode in song and verse which form one of Montshiwa's panegyrics". Here follows the panegyric:

1. Ditsela tse di tshelang Segope le Mainelo
2. ga se tsa dioka le gone ga se tsa ditlou;
3. ke ditsela tsa batho, ba ne ba re etetse
   e le dintona tsa ga Moselekatse
4. go romilwe Boya le Patekele go tla go re tlhola
5. mme sejankabo-ke-wena-a-Tawana o ba jele :
6. Ba gago le bone ba tla jewa nkabo fela jalo.
7. Kana ga o setseno sa ntša o setseno sa motho
8. mme le sa ntša tota se a ediwa —
9. Tlhatlusi-o-Sephiri-o-Mokgothu!

- - - - - - -

Translation by S.M. Molema:

[1. The roads that cross by Segope and Ottoshoop
2. are not made by ghoulish giants nor by elephants.
3. They are blazed by men who had visited us.
   Those men were the emissaries of Mzilikazi.
4. He had sent Boya and Bhangele to visit us
5. But thou crafty son of Tawana ate them up :
6. yours will be similarly eaten up craftily —
7. Remember you are not a mad dog, but a man
8. But even a mad dog can be mimicked and imitated:
9. Thou Royal Highness : Thou unrevealed Mystery
   of Mokgothu] (Montshiwa, ibid, p. 20)

3.6.4 It is significant that Montshiwa is referred to in the title of the book as 'patriot'. The Tswana as such would urge patriotism, justice and moderation. They see in the destruction of Mzilikazi's emissaries an immoral and unjust act that will be avenged, when justice takes its course. There can be no moral defence since even a mad dog (tacitly Montshiwa's viciousness is praised) can be bitten in turn. Respect for human dignity is advocated explicitly in line 2 —

ga se tsa dioka le gone ga se tsa ditlou
[.... neither ghoulish giants ...nor elephants]

And immediately the bard, who exercises licence to chastise injustice and immorality, even using proper names, gives the prince-initiate the name of Sejankabo (lit. eater of regret), but the height of this chastising is conveyed in line 9, which savours of bathos. The prince is paradoxically hailed 'Royal Highness, Mystery of Mokgothu', the latter phrase alluding, according to Molema, to Montshiwa's secret descent from the Mokgothu. The prince is hailed 'Royal Highness' and literally in the same breath meanly and publicly denigrated : a 'Mystery'.

3.6.5 The point at issue however is that there was intertribal suspicion simmering between the Rolong and the Nguni. Who says Nzilikazi's intentions were honest? And who says the denigration of Montshiwa by his bard is not intended to forewarn and therefore fore-arm him? That is the rôle of the bard. The bard is a constructive institution. He is a loving critic.

3.6.6 Intertribal emulation occurs among the Tswana themselves too, even as we see in the following praise:

Mokgosi a Pooe

1. Dirobaroba-matlhakola tsa ga Masodi a Mphela.

- - - - - - -

2. Kgodumo e dikgopo, nare yo Sebitso le Nthomang
3. ga e ke e leba motho a tswa motho
4. e nne e lebe ò suleng fela

- - - - - - -

5. Ke tau ya namane, ke bata se se mokokotlo
montsho
6. rraagwe a tlogê ka go tlhoboga
7. mmaagwe a lele e sa le gale.
8. Ke tlou e ntle ya Mapula a kgosi
9. e ntlentle e e mo Matsaakgannye.

- - - - - -

10. Leru la duma fa ga Molatedi
11. la re le duma la thubaganya motho
12. le thubile Mphete wa ga Marwala :
13. "Mphete ga o a ka wa itse go tshaba
14. e rile o tshaba wa etsaetsega o lebagane le
naka la tshukudu".

- - - - - -

15. Tau e tswa lapeng e tlhanyere marumo
16. e tswa lapeng la ga Seriba a Sebitsonyane
a Photi
17. e le thebe e tshumu, morwakgosi.
18. Lerumo la thipa, lerumo la pitso
19. ga le ke le timela e le la kgosi
20. motlhang le timelang le a re beka.

- - - - - -

[1. Crashers of the thornless bush, descendants of
Masodi of Mphela!

- - - - - -

2. Encircler with outstanding ribs, buffalo of
the family of Sebitso and Nthonang
3. it never looks at a person who remains a
living person
4. when it does look at you, you are dead.

- - - - - -

5. It is the calf that is a lion, the beast of
prey with a black ridge-back
6. his father might as well give him up and
retire
7. his mother could also mourn beforehand
8. It is the fine elephant of the Mapula regi-
ment of the chief
9. an extremely beautiful one, itself of the
Matsaakgang regiment

- - - - - -

10. The cloud thundered at Molatedi
11. when it did it crashed a man asunder
12. it crashed Mphete of Marwala :
13. "Mphete, you knew not how to flee
14. when you had to flee you hesitated, being face to face with the rhino's horn".

- - - - - -

15. The lion leaves the court-yard clasping spears
16. out of the court-yard of Seriba of Sebitsonyane of Photi
17. being a white-faced shield, the prince :
18. spear which is a knife, spear which is a gathering
19. it never disappears since it is the chief's
20. when it does disappear it slices us.]

3.6.7 The first 'verse' is a thought-unit or stanza on its own, and is the praise-name of the Malete (Malindi) tribe of Botswana, near Gaberone, some of whose nearest neighbours are the Tlokwa at Gaborone, and the Transvaal Tlokwa at Molatedi (line 10).

3.6.8 This crasher, Mokgosi of Pooe, is also a military tactician - he sucks you or draws you in like a magnet, and having outstanding ribs, can draw in a large number of you. In plain language he is so excellent at war that he easily encircles the enemy by crescent formation. He is a calf that is a lion -

tau ya namane

- meaning that in his youth he is capable of great deeds of bravery, his parents can give him up to the dangers of warfare. He is also the elephant son of a chief of the Mapula age-set, hence the strongest of the sons of the Mapula, and the finest of his own regiment, the Matsaakgang. But coming to our theme of intertribel

emulation, he is the cloud that crashed Mphete asunder at Molatedi. Mphete should have fled and not faced the rhino horn. Teaching Mphete that discretion would have been the better part of valour, he creates a situation wherein Mphete was faced with a rhino, and hesitated to flee -

13. Mphete ga o a ka wa itse go tshaba
14. e rile o tshaba wa etsaetsega o lebagane le naka la tshukudu.

3.6.9 This is being rather fatherly to one's victim, showing that primitive peoples responded to pangs of conscience. And to point to the oneness of Bantu literature we notice once more the sentiment expressed regarding Montshiwa and others, of fighting only when provoked. If Mphete had not been impudent, hesitating instead of fleeing, the 'thunder' would not have 'crashed' him!

3.6.10 We have also seen how Mokgosi a Pooe is referred to as a shield (line 17), as was the case with Motsile; how Mokgosi is called lerumo la pitso (spear that gathers or calls) even as Motsile was called the 'night' that gathered people; how Pilane is the 'fire cruse' which melts only when it is burnt (provoked), even as Montshiwa is 'king's son that shuns warring'. The depth of Tswana poetry is best fathomed by being viewed in the context of the whole.

Interracial Contact

3.7.1 Understandably the test of patriotism is more severe in the interracial contact situation. Even

Christianity has not tamed racial attitudes which are expressed proverbially, and in Tswana also poetically as follows:

> Blood is thicker than water
> Seboba re bata sa mokotla, sa mpa re a mpampetsa.

[lit. We slap the gadfly that bites on the back, the one that bites on the belly we just pat.]

We learned also in the 'lies' of the divining bones in 2.8.3, line 5, that strangers' faeces (errors) are exaggerated, those of home people euphemised -

sepa legolo ke la moeng, la mong gae pipitlo.

These truths are especially alive between races, and more so when one race is pagan (but not irreligious) and another Christian.

3.7.2 Traditional Tswana 'poetry' on the race theme reveals Tswana race attitudes. Intrusion into racial privacy, understandably, will be answered not only by eruptions of war-fare but passionate 'poetry' too, e.g.:

1. Lobitiela yo ò gapa bosigo, e re bo sa a tlhasele
2. a tlhakanye Maburu le Barolong, a ba digele ka bodiba
3. Tlhalatsi yo ó kòtó
4. ó ja morahe, ó sebutlo, o tla digela batho
5. ka e a re a abela Barolong ntwa
6. ntwa e lale e haladitse
7. go bale boRaphetlho le Raleinana
8. e tswa jalo ba se na mamanologo
9. maoto a boile, ba sa tlhole ba siana
10. ba se ke ba tabogela Lotlhakane.

- - - - - -

11. Lethopakgomo, leitsamotho-go-kaya
12. le iditse morwa Jane go kolopa
13. Leburu ja Kolong la kibakiba
14. la latlhegelwa ke mmidi le paka
15. ga sala go bega boRabotsima
16. ga tlhola go jewa dithethamelelo
17. go jewa thata ya bogale ja gago

- - - - - -

18. Mmaselaletso ema o bele
19. e se re ke boka motho a lo tlhabanetse
20. ya ne e kete ke boka setshwakga!

- - - - - -

[1. Butcher who plunders by night, then at dawn attacks
2. mixing Boers and Barolong and driving them into deep waters
3. determined disperser
4. consumes the tribe, is an accurate shot, will lead the people into trouble
5. since when he declares a Barolong war
6. the war routs the same night
7. until the old men Raphetlho and Raleinana also start fighting
8. whereas they have no more strength
9. their feet having become weak, no longer being able to run
10. no longer taking their regular exercise running to Lotlhakane.

- - - - - -

11. Capturer of cattle, who denies his opponent any explanations
12. he denied Jan's son time to shoot
13. the Boer of the Harts river trotted
14. losing his mealies and suit of clothes
15. as was reported by Rabotsima and others
16. that they spent the whole day celebrating with delicacies
17. profiting from your bravery.

- - - - - -

18. Mmaselaletso, do stand and act
19. whereas I praise a man who defended you all
20. let it not seem as if I praise a sluggard!]

3.7.3 We were informed that this is the praise of Seane Tawana, a Rolong chief. The spirit of the tribe is captured by the bard in forceful nouns and archaic verbs. That Seane is a butcher may either be approved or disapproved of according to intonation:

Lobitiela .... bodiba : (1) butcher, (a term savouring of disapproval);

(2) who plunders by night and attacks at dawn (further disapproval of capturing first and then fighting);

(3) driving both Boers and Barolong into deep waters - contrast with Montshiwa who was concerned about the fleas (matsetse) being destroyed.

If a leader who plunders first and then fights is thus chastised, we must submit that as a tribe whose spirit was reflected by these words of its laureate, the Barolong had a high moral sensitivity even towards other races. Lines 3 and 4 confirm this disapproval of indiscriminate massacre further with the non-honorifics:

tlhalatsi yo o kòtó : [determined disperser]
o ja morahe : [he consumes the tribe]
o tla digela batho : [he will lead people into trouble]

because -

o sebutlo : literally, he is a wrist, meaning his wrist balances a gun barrel with accurate effect (an antique usage).

Clearly the bard senses the spirit of the tribe to be opposed to Tawana's military exploits because he will not shoot to frighten off but to kill, until old men who cannot run any more enter battle. With Pilane it was fighting until even youngsters entered battle -

barwa mpšana-e-jele-mpšana-ya-yona.

3.7.4 The bard dare not forget that he is the chief's paid official, and so in the second stanza the praises shower. Cattle were captured without any negotiation -

lethopakgomo, leitsa-motho-go-kaya

Jan's son was taken by surprise and could not even fire a shot -

le iditse morwa Jane go kolopa.

Jan's son fled, leaving his clothing for the looting and his foodstuffs for the feasting, so powerful was Seane Tawana -

14. .... la latlhegelwa ke mmidi le paka

- - - - - -

16. ga tlhola go jewa dithethamolelo
17. go jewa thata ya bogale ja gago.

3.7.5 And finally, it is revealed that the whole conflict is a paternal duty, wherefore Mmaselaletso (and other women) must actively acknowledge the chief's valour and fatherly protection, further evidence of the woman's rôle in Tswana politics.

3.7.6 It is a fact that as the white race spread over the subcontinent of South Africa, the Bantu often fought with the Whites against other Bantu or other Whites. And what has gone on in the hearts of Bantu used against Bantu? Who else could capture their honest attitude but the bard? Who else could sense their true moral fibre? In this regard the Kgatla relate the enlistment of their armies under chief Kgamanyane Pilane, who was related by affinity to King Mošweše of Basutoland, to fight with the Boers against Mošweše. The legendary tale is that Kgamanyane 'wrote a letter' to Mošweše, saying -

1. kè lemawana le ntlha pedi
2. le tlhabelang kobo le moroki tshekedi
3. ke re ke le kwano ke koo
4. ntlha nngwe ké tswele borokgwe, ntlha nngwe lekebi.

[1. I am the awl with two points
2. which pricks the kaross and the mender aslant
3. while I am this end, I am that end
4. one leg wearing a trouser and the other a loin skin.]

The above rendering is not the same in every detail as that recorded earlier than we recorded it by I. Schapera (p. 70, lines 5-14). This shows what can happen to unwritten literature from bard to bard, from generation to generation. The message is the same, that of torn loyalties between the dominant white race and fellow-blacks, the latter relationship once again strengthened by a marriage. Hence the message of Kgamanyane to Mošweše was heavily laden with feeling.

3.7.7 Roy Thomas (p. 49) says,

> .... on the whole .... the great poets' .... vocabulary is thick with common nouns and strong verbs.

The metaphor kè lemawana, the descriptive construction tshekedi, the archaic term lekebi, the verb-stem tlhabelang with its direct sensory stimulus, the divided loyalties captured memorably by the alliterative arrangement of the velar explosive consonants (k's) in line 3 - these few words are thick with meaning, conveying a drama in a man's mind, which many of us have perhaps experienced at one or another time. It conveys drama of actual history, a test of blood loyalty as against legal loyalty, a contradiction of patriotisms, and finally a test of moral sensitivity and diplomacy.

3.7.8 The traditional idiom lore at his disposal gave Kgamanyane the cue : a two-faced person is known as lemao le ntlha pedi, from experience with awls in the kaross-making trade of the Tswana. The word tshekedi we have heard only in this excerpt and many people do not know it. It was apparently a creation for the occasion to make the meaning of the 'letter' more recondite. The nearest to it is tshekamisa, used for climbing a hill aslant, for instance. The awl is used more often aslant than erect. Schapera uses the praise-name of Kgamanyane, Tshesetsi (the fast one) in place of tshekedi, which Kgamanyane is not likely to have used in a seemingly secret code message. The rhythm is left unimpaired and whichever bard has introduced the change,

he has remained a good bard. The costume of a trouser for one leg and a loin skin for another is the work of fruitful imagination, and should be the height of humour on the dramatic stage.

3.7.9 This excerpt, which like many of its kind occurs singly as well as in association with other exerpts, is a thought-unit itself and a lasting philosophy, a display of wit, and therefore in our judgement an instance of true epigrammatic expression. We recall that we are in search of poetic tendencies and growth. Are the Tswana perhaps able to recognise - consciously or unconsciously - their epigrammatic creations and so occasionally memorise them as entities? Or conversely, do Tswana bards compose around such epigrams and in that way contribute to a growth tendency?

Satire

3.8.1 An authority says -

> Satire is one of the more intellectual kinds of writing and most modern satirists have lived quiet intellectual lives. (Orwell, p. 89).

The declamatory tone of Tswana 'poetry' is the natural product of their boisterous life. Small wonder that satire is one of their more sporadic literary creations. We must however seek the tendency, if for future exploitation.

3.8.2 We have seen satirical reference to the doings of Seane Tawana for instance in 3.7.2 above, to those of the family witches in 2.8.3. We have seen this device

develop into undisguised bathos in Montshiwa's praise above (line 9 in 3.6.3). In 3.3.1 we noticed in lines 8 - 12 how a lion wearing copper bangles lost a prolific milker to ordinary Kodisang. We observed in 3.3.3 how the Ndebele slept and made love and were taken by surprise by Motsile I, lines 5, 6 and 7, who released the captured daughters-in-law. The recalcitrance of Kabedi remains unpardoned and he must bear like the mark of Cain the name -

ngwana a seatla-senkga-momela.
(line 12 in 3.5.2).

We noted also Lokgoko's approval of sheep farmers, and spite for goatherds in lines 9 and 10 in 3.5.9, and we cannot but note what happens to those who dare 'burn' the 'fire cruse' as captured in lines 1, 2, 3 in 3.5.16. There seem to be clear signs of satire in Tswana 'poetry', and it remains for us to investigate its growth and development.

3.8.3 We had occasion recently to watch the reaction of a group of teenage school girls in the precarious safety of a passenger bus, about to carry them home after a sports meeting, when accosted through the windows of the bus by a gang of little "wolves" of their own age. The reaction was in music of traditional rhythm and dance in the words below:

Basimane ba rata go jôla
ba tshaba sapôtô
[Boys like jollification
yet they shun supporting].

The singing was repeated loudly, and the louder the music the more the little "wolves" dragged their tails

between their legs, stopped their suggestions, and seemed to wish sincerely the bus would pull off before too many ears heard the satire. The little boys were a sorry sight. The transliterations jôla and sapôtô make the song even more humorous since such is the language of the delinquent, and he literally could not face his own music.

3.8.4 In indigenous 'poetry' we recall a stanza from the praise of Chief Mankuroane of the Batlhaping, which was recited to us in the Taung district of N.W. Cape:

1. Tlhokadipotso a Mmakeakgwile
2. ga a na dipotso, ga a na dinyaelo
3. ga a na le ngwana a re ke a tshameka
4. e bile ga a na le tau e kotame
5. e bile e ntse e bebenya dipounama
6. gano ja yona le le lehibidu
7. digabêrê di re koo lela mabatabata.

- - - - - - -

[1. No-questions, son of Mmakeakgwile
2. allows no questions and no jokes,
3. not even a child is allowed a joke -
4. no matter even if it be a lion on its haunches
5. its lips trembling with anger
6. its mouth cavity blood red
7. guns booming incessantly].

- - - - - - - -

Quite clearly this had to do with a person in a big and powerful position : a lion on its haunches stands much higher than on all fours. It is in a temper, judging by its trembling lips. But this lion has guns - digabêrê - that boom continually. Its mouth cavity is red enough to be of special note. In spite of all this,

the outsize lion dare ask no questions. We could not get a satisfactory explanation of how Nankurwane's 'white' neighbours had annoyed him or he them, but he apparently got the better of them this time and his bard mocked at them. They must have made some stupid error if even their booming guns were of no effect. The name Tlhokadipotso (No-questions) compares well with leitsamotho-go-kaya (3.7.2 line 11) and is sufficient evidence of the chief's having scored on all fronts and everybody appearing hat in the hand or tail between the legs before him. The transliteration digabêrê betrays the language-group of the victims of the satire ('gewere').

3.8.5 A further instance of this nature collected in the same Taung area was as one Boitumelo Ramotho (± 80 years) praised himself saying -

1. Ke mathelesetsa, ke loeto ke etile
2. le maabane ke letse ke gorogile.

- - - - - -

3. Kgomo ya lla ya bitsa moedisi
4. ya lela ya bitsa moetlhabanedi, kotswana
5. ya re nngwêêêê ya lela sello :
6. kgomo tsa ga Mathelesetsa di maswe, di manya
7. di maswe, di mokoduekodue.

- - - - - -

8. O nteile tse kae ka go baka?
9. ka re ke nteile sene le serataro
10. borangwane e bile ba a nkitse
11. go nama go gatšwa, e a e le boRamotho ba tle go batla masori

- - - - - -

[1. I am generosity, I'm a journey, I journey
2. even yesterday I arrived back.

- - - - - -

3. A cow lowed summoning its herdsman
4. it lowed summoning its defender, the grey cow
5. it lowed moooo! it gave a low
6. Mathelesetsa's cattle are in a bad way, they are lean
7. in a very bad way, they are extremely lean.

- - - - - -

8. How many have you earned that I praise you?
9. I say I earned a foursome, a sextet
10. my paternal uncles even know me now
11. easily gifts are taken, now even the Ramothos come to ask for presents.]

- - - - - -

3.8.6 Mathelesetsa means a liberal person who is ready to give food or presents to visitors. First it is used, as we feel it, as a common noun, and then as a proper name. Already the implication is that other people are not nearly so generous. Mathelesetsa's cattle know him and call to him when he arrives as if to acknowledge that he is their tender and their protector. They have his sympathy. By implication, do the audience have any cattle? Do they tend and protect them? Do their cattle know them too? And now the direct challenge to the audience follows:

8. O nteile tse kae ka go baka? [How many have you earned that I praise you?]

As to Mathelesetsa he not only boasts a kraalful, but, what is more stinging satire, his paternal uncles who probably used to ignore him and forgot that as their elder brother's son he was their senior, now know him, now recognise him -

10. borangwane e bile ba a nkitse.

How true this is in Tswana society! His uncles now claim their rights to his generous gifts and actually come to ask for, really demand as of right, presents from him.

3.8.7 Matheletsa's uncles would need no explanation of this 'poem'. They would be in exactly the same position as the boys we referred to in 3.8.3 above. The truth about life is that what is wrong usually triumphs over what is right, to enable what is right to transcend eventually in clearer relief.

3.8.8 We have had satire in two lines, seven lines, and eleven lines above. There is development. There is growth. There is a clear tendency to react critically to undesirable behaviour, and to be voluble and vehement in one's disapproval. We now have in mind a longer 'poem' on a man called Molome, which is also the name of a kind of locust. In the 'poem' we propose to review, the names of various kinds of grasshoppers and locusts come into the drama, These names are borne by human characters, much like the characters of Animal Farm (quoted in 3.8.1), the intention being to satirise the bearers of these locust names by bringing their character into comparison with that of the locusts.

Molome

1. A re ke tatakgopi kge lome ke a raga
2. ke raga ke ikiletsa makanyana a ntomang;
3. a re nna ke nkokone-o-ntlogele a ba Tisane
4. a re le boMoselé ba sale ba kokona ba tlogela
5. a re nna ke difako-di-nkwela-gale le tsa motlha a pula a medupe.

6. A re ba Nothibe ba ratanye
7. a re ba ratantswe ke podi ya leleme;
8. a re ba Nothibe ba fetile ba tseleganye ba
   ile ka kwa kgotleng
9. Rakikillane nna ba setse morago a tlhoma
   ba tlo mo fa sebete
10. a ba a re le g'a tsena a tlhoka le go se botsa.

- - - - - -

11. A re nnaare leteteetee le le ka kwa kgotleng
    lele ke la eng?
12. A re nna ga ke tlhole ke le Molome ke Segongwane
13. Molome ke setláéla ke mmone ba o gola motshegare
    ka kwa kgotleng
14. ka ba nna ka bona a golwa ke le boTaafitenyana
    a Masilo

- - - - - -

15. A re nnaare wena Mmamphêlana, o llelang o ts'o
    ka homola?
16. Mmamphêlana, lla o homole
17. a re nna ga s'a ntoma se nkhupile fela
    wa gabo mokekole

- - - - - -

18. Nnaare nna ke rileng wa gabo Melokwe
19. abe tlhokwa le gola mo masetlaokeng
20. kgogwana di thuthuswa bonkgodi ntse ba le yo
21. bana ba tsalwa phajane ntse di se teng
22. phala di tsala di tshaba matlhalerwa!

- - - - - - -

[1. He says I'm the grasshopper, I don't bite,
    I kick
 2. I kick against the wild dogs that bite me;
 3. he says I am pick-my-bones-and-leave-me of
    the Tisanes
 4. he says Moselé and others have since picked
    my bones and left me so
 5. he says I am hail-that-has-fallen-on-me-
    since, even the hails of incessant rains.

- - - - - -

6. He says the Mothibes have become reconciled
7. he says they have been reconciled by the goat of a tongue;
8. he says the Mothibes lined up past here going to the court
9. Rakikillane followed them hoping they would give him liver
10. but when he got there he could not even ask them for it.

- - - - - -

11. He says what uproar is that at the court?
12. He says I am no longer Molome but Segongwane.*
13. Molome is stupid, I saw them muddle it in broad daylight at the court
14. even such as little David of Masilo muddled him.

- - - - - -

15. He says, as to you Mmamphêlana, why do you weep, why don't you keep quiet?
16. Mmampêlana, weep and shut up.
17. He says it hasn't bitten me, it only held me in the mouth being of the old lady's family.

- - - - - -

18. What is wrong with me of Melokwe's family?
19. After all grass grows while there are ants,
20. chicks are hatched while there are hawks,
21. children are born while there are no nappies,
22. 'rooibokke' bring forth their young while they flee from wild dogs!]

- - - - - - -

3.8.9 Our 'poem' is full of metaphor. Line 1 is where Molome introduces himself as a grasshopper that does not bite but kicks. This means he does not use his mouth to argue; he uses his foot in defence. Line 2 refers to the yelpers that use their mouths as much as the wild dogs that bite - and they are the ones Molome kicks. Molome boasts he is of Tisane's family or its

---

* Name of another kind of grasshopper.

ward; they can pick meat from his bones but will not finish him -

3. .... nkokone-o-ntlogele a ba Tisane

In other words their gossip has no effect on him. Moselé and others tried to pick his bones - gossiped unfavourably - but found he had long learned to stand hails (of gossip), even incessant ones. The people concerned must be shocked to find that Molome knows so much of their tongue-wagging. Lines 1 - 5 constitute a thought-unit, which we view as a stanza, demarcated in declamation by a rather longish pause.

3.8.10 The second thought-unit or stanza tells of the group of Mothibe that has since become reconciled because of the goat that is a tongue.* 'Rumour' is called podi ya tsela (goat of the road) in Tswana. The new creation for gossip is podi ya leleme (goat of the tongue or goat that is a tongue). Greedy Rakikillane misunderstood and thought it was a real goat and he could get a piece of liver, but when he got to the court he found them wagging their tongues, not slaughtering, and so could not ask for liver. How humorous! How satirical!

3.8.11 The third stage in the thought-arrangement is that there is uproar at the court - so much tongue-wagging is going on. One of the Molomes is there and is easily accused, muddled and found guilty : he is so stupid that Molome the 'poet' renounces the family name

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* People gather when a goat is to be slaughtered. Similarly they gathered here when there was tongue-wagging. The tongue attracted a crowd just as would a slaughtered goat. Therefore according to this satire the tongue of a gossip is a slaughtered goat.

and adopts the name of another locust as family name, viz. Segongwane. Line 13 humorously makes Molome a stupid man, and simultaneously a locust that is just gathered into a bag (ba o gola) -

13. Molome (the man) ke setláéla, ke mmone (the man) ba o (the locust) gola ..... [lit. Molome is stupid, I saw him, they collected it.....]

Even little David of Masilo muddled him (man again).

3.8.12 The fourth stanza treats of a sympathiser who is weeping because of the work of the 'wild dogs', the mouth-users or tongue-waggers. This Mmanphêlana, near relation of Molome, must weep and shut up; after all he (Molome, now Segongwane) was not bitten but just held in the mouth by the wild dog - the accusations have not been successful in his case - he of the old lady's (Mamphelana's) family. And finally, he would like to know (stanza 5) what is wrong with him of Melokwe's family that tongue-waggers always pick him out and even take him to court. Other people are not treated like that; but this last idea is not nearly so plainly expressed. To advocate that his errors could be overlooked he submits these subtleties:

line 19 - after all, grass grows in spite of ants:

line 20 - after all chicks are hatched in spite of hawks;

line 21 - after all, children are born in spite of shortage of napkins

lin2 22 - 'rooibokke' bear their young in spite of wild dogs and why should he not be left at peace in spite of his faults?

3.8.13 We have the longest-sustained satire here that we could find. From the first to the last of the twenty-two lines it is one satirical cut after the other, and this highly intellectual type of poem is fairly fully developed here. At no stage does the language or imagery become commonplace. We have heard people actually swear at each other in like circumstances. But here we have purity of language and development of thought, with the last stanza as a kind of climax in the thought-arrangement and -development. This example shows that satire is a genre of Tswana indigenous 'poetry'.

3.8.14 Writing on this genre a researcher finds this quotation applicable:

> Poetry, and, for that matter, any type of literature, is not written in vacuo. It is the living product of a living society, and it must, to some extent, mirror the characteristics of the society in which it is conceived.....
>
> - - - - - -
>
> a definite link exists between literature and society, that society must shape and mould the writer's ideas (I underline) (Melamu, p. 1).

Quite clearly Molome is in the grips of his society and is chased like a buck by wild dogs. This is a characteristically unforgiving society, as we see from his subtle reasoning in the last stanza. This genre in particular requires intimate knowledge and understanding of one's society, but also ability to use intellectually one's metaphors and phrases. These features are manifest.

3.8.15 If satire aims at the exposure of folly and the castigation of vice, if it is invective, humorous and didactic, then our poem above is a sample of Tswana satire. Where Skelton finds, according to Melamu (3.8.14) that -

> Yet is your tongue an adder's tail
> Full like a scorpion stinging,

Molome finds his society's mouths actually wild dogs' mouths, their tongues those of goats, incriminating people just like a locust catcher gathering locusts into a bag by the thousand or dumping them into a pot for cooking alive.

Song

3.9.1 We have referred in 3.8.3 above to the satire in a tune sung by school girls to keep boys' immoral advances at bay. After all, nobody else can check boys' morals more effectively than girls themselves, for proverbially, volenti non fit injuria. And this is often the aim and use of song in Tswana. It pours out feeling, for or against. The Tswana sing Koma, usually sung by men only. Being esoteric, the koma is difficult to obtain and often replaced in entertainment by moepelwane, lit. songlet. Furthermore there are work songs, lullabies, wedding songs, and also rather esoteric initiation songs.

3.9.2 An example of moepelwane is as follows:

1. Kgabo nnyennye, kgabo nnye
2. kgabo sebatanyana
3. kgabo e tla senya ditšhaba di agile merafe.

[1. Monkey tiny-tiny, monkey small
2. monkey, little beast of prey
3. monkey will spoil the organisation of nations.]

One senses the intention to poke fun and create humour, also to satirise, and finally to compliment. There is an epigrammatic touch.

3.9.3 Line 1 captures most of the humour. We have said in 3.5.26 above that the praise of an animal eventually becomes the praise of a person/people, especially with totem animals. The monkey is a totem animal. This songlet is often sung to poke fun at a monkey totemite. It insinuates for instance that the baboon totemite is physically bigger and stronger than the monkey totemite. And that is how the ridicule is effected. Line 2 continues the ridicule saying that the monkey is a little beast of prey, idiomatically a rascal. The climax is reached in line 3 which submits that the rascal may be destructive. If intended as a compliment line 1 may mean that the monkey is so small, and line 2 that it is yet so clever, and line 3 that it can therefore awaken complacent people to their rightful interests and claims and is therefore a welcome acquisition. We have humour, satire, compliment, knit into one, inseparably so.

3.9.4 This is how characterisation is undertaken by the indigenous 'poet', in much the same way as Rudyard Kipling observes is done in the handling of delicate social matters, saying:

> When all the world would keep a matter hid,
> Since truth is seldom friend to any crowd,
> Men write in fable as old Aesop did,
> Jesting at that which none would name aloud.
> (Kipling, p. 545.)

3.9.5 A wedding song usually goes to the accompaniment of dancing and is therefore particularly rhythmical, e.g.

1. Mmangwane mpulele
2. ke newa ke pula (bis)

Refrain:

3. Ke na le dikgomo
4. di pedi di tharo
5. di ka tsaya mosadi

[1. Aunt, open up for me
2. rain is soaking me.
3. I have cattle
4. they are two, maybe three
5. they can take a wife.]

In the singing the initial nasal consonants in mmangwane and mpulele are not syllabic. Hence the entire rhythm of lines 1 - 4 is in trisyllabic 'feet'. Variation comes with the first 'foot' of line 5 which has four syllables, reminding us of Th. Endemann's finding in 1.5.2. that a peculiar verse-foot (˘ ˘ ˏ ˘) is freely used in Bantu. Again this literature is not in vacuo. The tradition is that one marries one's aunt's daughter, hence this plea to have the door opened by one's aunt. There are cattle for the bride price, which is law.

3.9.6 The songs are generally short and have to be repeated emphatically and emotionally. We take a work-song as example :

first part : Tomolang, tomolang ka thata
chorus : sepodisi, ntwa ka diatla

[first part: Pull out, pull out energetically
chorus : burweed, a battle by hand.]

This is repeated with untold fervour and stimulates activity. The work must be done energetically, ka thata, and by hand, ka diatla. The order is to pull out weeds, tomolang. A definite link is forged between this literature and society's work, and indeed the work of society moulds the composer's ideas, and his ideas mould his people's work.

3.9.7 There are also songs of tribal aggrandizement, often that part of the koma which may be rendered in public, e.g.

first part : 1. Tlotlang kgosi e kgolo banna,
2. Banna tlotlang kgosi e kgolo banna.

Refrain : 3. He, tšhaba di gaketse

- - - - - -

[first part : 1. Honour the great chief, men,
2. Men, honour the great chief, men.

Chorus : 3. Hey, nations are serious].

- - - - - -

Variation is introduced in various ways, sometimes the first part singing the chorus words, and the chorus taking the place of the first part. The purpose is to encourage tribal solidarity. This may also be very relevant when there is a recalcitrant headman and he is made to feel which way the sympathies of the tribe lie. There is a strong feeling of earnest happiness. Once more the last line or refrain is the climax - "get serious because nations are serious", and here feeling overflows, and dance steps are intensified, pointing to the power of intertribal emulation.

3.9.8 An example of an initiation song or two should suffice. It will also strike one by its simplicity, its repetitions, its feeling, e.g.

1. A modika, a ó a sesetsa le noka?
2. O batla tlhapi tsa noka?
3. he! modika wee! nnaka
4. a ò a sesetsa le noka?
5. a ò a sesetsa le noka?
6. he! mogwera wee! nnaka
7. a ò a sesetsa le noka?
8. a ò a sesetsa le noka?
9. ò batla tlhapi tsa noka?
10. a ò a sesetsa le noka?

- - - - - -

[1. Overdue initiate,* is he creeping stealthily along the river?
2. Is he looking for the fishes of the river?
3. say! overdue initiate, my younger brother
4. are you creeping stealthily along the river?
5. are you creeping stealthily along the river?
6. say! initiate, say! my younger brother
7. are you creeping stealthily along the river?
8. are you creeping stealthily along the river?
9. are you looking for the fishes of the river?
10. are you stealthily creeping along the river?]

Modika (< verb-stem -dika : to spend a year) is a youth who should have been to the circumcision lodge already and is now overdue. Such a youth goes surreptitiously to the river where girls bathe and watches them unseen, which is an indication of his sexual maturity. His elder brother spots him, understands the behaviour, and finds a way of bringing it to the notice of the fathers

* I. Schapera uses the term 'initiand' in Praise-poems of Tswana Chiefs (op. cit.) p. 3 line 6 for instance

by song. Hence the word nnaka (my younger brother) is repeated, and that with a feeling of sympathy, as an appeal to the fathers to send the modika without undue delay to the lodge. In the first two lines the song refers in the third person (high-toned subjectival concord ó) to the modika to call attention, thereafter in the second person (low-toned ò) to report specifically of someone actually spoken to, and yet to report courteously and humbly : according to decorum.

3.9.9 The metaphor of 'fishing' for courting is known in Western languages too. Repetition of words and phrases facilitates rhythm.

3.9.10 At the circumcision lodge more singing is practised, with various motives. The following is a case in point:

Motlhabeletsi	:	1. Hee! monna ke kgama ya pholo
Banna/magwera	:	2. Hoo! Kgama ya madi tsela
		3. tsela letouto.

- - - - - - -

[Precentor	:	1. Hey, hey! the man is a hartebeest ox.
Men/initiates	:	2. Hoola! the blood hartebeest is the road
		3. the road the repetition.]

This is said to be a satire against men who did not arrange for their sons to join the initiates. They are simply hartebeest oxen. Their children will have no right to procreate, being oxen. The blood hartebeest is the man who repeatedly took the road to the leader of the lodge to enlist his son. This keeping on the

road, this repetition, this perseverance was to give one's son the blood qualification. Hence -

2. Kgama ya madi tsela
3. tsela letouto

The mere distinction of men as kgama ya pholo (hartebeest ox) and kgama ya madi (blood hartebeest) has enough stigma to make men listen to a boy's elder brother singing Modika (3.9.8).

3.9.11 Finally, and by no means to imply that the subject is exhausted, there are lullabies, such as:

1. Letsatsi tla kwano)
2. meriti eya koo) bis
3. le bana ba gago)

- - - - - -

And by way of variation, which is an important device in all indigenous literature:

4. Meriti eya koo)
5. letsatsi tla kwano) bis
6. le bana ba gago)

- - - - - -

[1. Sun, come hither
2. shades, go thither
3. and your children too.

- - - - - -

4. Shades go thither
5. Sun, come hither
6. and your children too]

- - - - - -

Once more there is repetition and there is rhythm. But what is more, the whole composition is again in trisyllabic 'feet' so that a change of the order of the lines causes no metrical irregularity. The word eya (go) is sung as a monosyllable for this purpose.

3.9.12 The above examples show sufficiently that the Tswana song is part of Tswana 'poetry', by its spirit and its rhythm, perhaps by a tendency to greater metrical excellence or regularity, and that the Tswana song is lyrical too.

Form : Verse, stanza

3.10.1 We have seen some form of verse. In 1.9.4, 2.4.2, 2.7.3, 2.9.3, 3.8.9 - 12 we observed clear tendencies to the stanza form. One has to hear the bards themselves, and watch them, to grasp the boundaries of verses and stanzas. One also has to study the punctuation of early collectors of indigenous 'poetry'.

3.10.2 The traditional bard is a dramatist. His recital (voordrag) presents a situation. He feels and represents the purpose of his key-words. The nodding with the head on the words

o motshomotsho o motsho

shows that the bard intends the alliteration. The bard's gesticulations on the word thula and its derivatives show how she emotionally urges to butting (3.3.1, lines 1 - 7).

3.10.3 Further good form is in the syntactical sphere. Appropriate words are not only pleasing to read, worthy of the attention of us learners, but also effective in depicting the characters: 3.3.1 —

8. .... ya rwala mefitshana : it wore copper bangles
9. .... ya apara lepetu : it wore a skin cover

The Tswana rwala (wear) the bangles, sandals, hats.
The Tswana apara (wear) the beads round the neck, the blanket, the shirt.
The bard consciously demonstrates these distinctive forms.

3.10.4 The bard consciously indicates the boundaries of his verses : by fresh emphasis at the beginning of a line and by savouring the end-word of the line; by the use of a re (he says) at the beginning of lines, and also by the use of distinct penultimate length. It is the bard who, of his own accord, recites all words fast, so that the length-bearing syllables of middle nodes are not noticed, and then lengthens the ultimate penult, first because this immediately ushers in the end of a datum, and because this is the end of a verse. The bard himself fuses form and meaning. The length of the penult in a periodic construction is even more pronouced (3.5.2, lines 13 - 16), as if to say, 'lest my audience loses the meaning, this is the person I have been alluding to : Setšhe ..... le!', Similarly a verse which is a stanza as we have in line 1, par. 3.6.6, is declaimed as an entity, that is marked off as a complete thought-unit. It is an idiomatic creation which has remained as the form of greeting of the chiefdom.

3.10.5 We have also found the bards very conscious of their rhythmic creations. They actually move the body in step with nodes, thus performing the metre, e.g.

lěrūmŏ/lă thīpă/lěrūmŏ/lă pītsŏ/ (3.6.6 line 28).

gă ā nă/dĭpōtsŏ/ga ā nă/dĭnyaelŏ/
gă ā nă/lě ngwānă/ă r' kē ă/tshămēkă/ (3.8.4, lines 2, 3).

3.10. 6 The running-on of the axes of a verse is noticeable especially when compared with what one hears from children taught at school. This running-on, aided by ellipses between the axes, knits the axes into verses, e.g.

School children : 1. Ké nna fifi la Mokwena
2. sethibelle sa ba Modian a Tau
3. bosigo ba phutha-batho-dinao
4. e re bo sa o ba phutholle

Bard : Ke nna fifi la Mokwena/ /sethibelle sa ba Modian aTau
bosigo ba phutha-batho-dinao//e re bo sa o ba phutholle.

With the bard the pause pointing to the caesura is less noticeable. There is every indication of running-on. Perhaps children have shorter breath, but we have found them able to emulate the bard if so taught. In ordinary speech each of the lines 1, 2, 3 would begin with ke nna (It is I). To knit the data into a thought-unit there are these ellipses, without which the lines would fall apart into independent sentences. A verse is more than a breath-group of words since a single word can also be a verse. A verse is also a datum-unit; short, long, very long, uniaxial, biaxial, or polyaxial.

3.10. 7 Rhyme is not common in Tswana 'poetry'. There are rhythmic and rhyming repetitions pointing to the possibilities of developing rhyme, such as

selakalaka mollô, selakalaka leithô. (2.11.1, line 2)

The rhyme here, initial and end-rhyme, duly marks off the axes, and knits them into a set form: the flame that is the fire, the flame that is the eye, coming down to expose and destroy the witch. This form is a datum-unit, the datum-unit is a verse. There is also the rhyme of tone and sense which relates lines to each other, as in the proverb -

kgobokgobo o a ikgobokanyetsa//phatlaphatla o a iphatlalaletsa.

Kgobokgobo and phatlaphatla are contrasts and thus related in sense, besides being ideophonic repetitions, identical in duretic and tonetic features.
In other words rhyme leans heavily on the correspondence of duretics, tonetics and dynamics, besides formal correspondence. Rhyme relies also on semantic correspondence as the causative-relative morpheme (-etsa) above does, and as we saw earlier in Chapter 2.

3.10.8 Pararhymes succeed best when tonetic, duretic and semantic features remain unimpaired as with the following lines -

rraagwe a tlogê ka go tlhoboga [3.6.6, lines
mmaagwe a lele e sa le gale 6 and 7]

Although the initial consonants of these lines are not identical, the contrast relates the words; since the

consonants are both continuants and the words tonetically identical, the initial pararhyme succeeds. It appears that relationship in sense, of the pararhymed forms, is important, even as we notice also in Southern Sotho, in K.E. Ntsane's poem on World War II entitled Lemo sa 1939 -

lefatshe kaofela la hwasa, la duma,
matshwafo a batho a phahama, a uba; (Moloi, p. 38)

where duma and uba convey the sense of fierce sound, are duretically and tonetically identical, although not identical in form, and in spite of the latter consideration have the effect on the ear of perfect rhyme. We see this as pararhyme. We hear it as sense-and-tone rhyme. And considering that indigenous 'poetry' is oral, this is to us the more important sensation - the auditory one.

3.10.9 These forms constitute the boundaries of our verses. These forms relate the verses. The relation helps determine the stanza. Witness for instance how the straddling rhyme makes the lines below into an accomplished thought-unit.

Bakgatla ba re selo se mo Ditlhotlhe
selo se mo kopoopong
ba dintlha ba ntse ba se gwaisa Bakgatla
(3.5.23, line 7)

The linking segments, selo se mo, make the first two lines separate verses, united through thought-development, whereas the last word of the third line is intended to indicate that the Bakgatla themselves are being ad-

dressed. It is not just a jingling, but a form of address (second person) whilst the first is third person. But what is more, these words are boundaries of the thought-unit. These linkings and rhymes characterise our verses and stanzas.

3.10.10 It is these linking forms, these rhyme-words, these breaths, these regular rhythms, these enjambments, these savourings of end-words, these parallelisms with caesuras, these datum-units, this conception of such one datum as a single verse, this compression of history into a praise-word or a hate-word, that characterise the line of Tswana 'poetry', and we are inclined to the view that such a line is a Verse, and will desist from using these technical terms in speech commas.

3.10.11 This is how we sensed the renditions of the poetry and were led to cast them in stanzas as above. We therefore find as far as our senses, the reciters emotions, and our small reasoning have led us, that there are verses and stanzas in indigenous Tswana poetry, and the stanzas, inasfar as they belong together in form, sense and intention, constitute poetry. An authority says -

> A stanza is an organisation of metre and rhyme repeated throughout a poem. Where a poet finds the development of his ideas overrestricted by such an organisation, he dispenses with stanzas and adopts a freer medium such as blank verse.
>
> (Thomas, op.cit. p. 39).

A Tswana stanza would appear to be an organisation of a thought-unit in verse-data where variation of verse techniques is a common and admirable feature.

3.10.12 It must be noted that both verses and stanzas are often of irregular length, that no rhyme schemes as such have been found although the tendencies are asserted. We have pointed out the tendency to the short-long-short and long-short verse-feet, as well as the short-short-long-short variety (⏑ – ⏑ and – ⏑, and ⏑ ⏑ – ⏑ respectively), and find that there is enough study in techniques in indigenous poetry to serve as a basis for an enquiry into modern compositions, that is, compositions apparently under the influence of Western European languages.

Conclusion

3.11.1 We have found it entertaining to listen to the 'poetry'. We have also found it informative. But what is more, such renditions are a social institution similar to what T.S. Eliot says of English, that -

> The early forms of epic and saga may have transmitted what was held to be history before surviving for communal entertainment only..... (Eliot, p. 16).

3.11.2 We propose to state the poetic tendencies broadly, and on the basis of content and form, as leaning heavily to the following classes in Tswana indigenous poetry -

Epic Narrative, which can develop into Epic,
Ode,
Satire,
Lyric, represented chiefly in song,
Epigram.

CHAPTER 4

MODERN TSWANA POETRY

Recent Survey

4.1.1 By way of recapitulation, we view as modern, such Tswana poetry as appears to bear marks of Western European influence, as opposed to indigenous poetry, which, whether written or unwritten has been handed down from generation to generation, dressed in indigenous techniques.

4.1.2 In a recent BRIEF SURVEY OF MODERN LITERATURE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN BANTU LANGUAGES (Limi p. 13) conducted by the Department of Bantu Languages of the University of South Africa, six short volumes of Tswana poetry and nine dramas are listed. To these could now be added the following two items of poetry since published:

Schapera, I.: Praise-poems of Tswana Chiefs, Clarendon Press, 1965

Kopane, P.K.: Dipakwana tsa Bana, Via Afrika, 1968, (four primary school volumes - SSA - Std VI).

There are also numerous indigenous and modern poems in various class text- and reading books, and large collections of hymnals of the many religious denominations operating among the Tswana. In this field there are also to be found a fair sprinkling of sacred and secular musical compositions used mostly in schools. It seems

possible that a few sizable anthologies could be compiled with ease. There are also eight original and a few translated dramas.

Transition

4.2.1 We pass the stage of oral to that of written literature, from that of mere declamation to that of serious reading, from that of communal enjoyment to that of study, from poetry of doubtful provenance to that of well authenticated artists, and this is important in the history of the development of a people, of its literature, since -

> .... the great living are even more a part of a nation's glory than the great dead. (Boulton p. 52)

We are reaching a definite stage of development, although in a sense this is not significant development since poetry is meant to be performed. We reach a stage of development of the poet's individuality, and of the individual reader who must learn to read and to discipline himself to read fully. Some time or other a people must overcome illiteracy or emerge from only oral literacy and this is development, especially in respect of abstruse literature (as opposed to the prose language) such as poetry. An authority says of reading fully -

> The time to start it is as soon as the person is old enough to experience a genuine response. With some it may not be too early at four or five, with others it may not be too late at eighty-five. (Harvey p. 14)

We pass from communal to individual composition and view this as development.

4.2.2 Yet another scholar has compared indigenous or traditional with modern Bantu poetry thus:

> Traditional literature differs from modern literature not only in that it is oral but also in that it is essentially the product of communal activity, whereas work of modern literature is the result of individual effort and bears the stamp of its author.
>
> (Cope p. 24)

4.2.3 It is interesting to note that in most cases modern Tswana poetry does not come from outstanding language scholars. As with the traditionalists, it has been mostly a case of trial and error, and further and further practice. The influences of Western poetry that mark Tswana written poetry as modern are therefore the more interesting as gleanings.

Probable lines of development

4.3.1 We think that the writing of poetry probably began with the collection of indigenous poetry, including it in prose works. Foremost of these prose works are school readers such as Micha Kgasi's Thuto ke eng, P.P. Leseyane's Buka ya go buisa series, and various publications of missionary bodies.

4.3.2 Following upon this stage came the inclusion in school readers, of original compositions along with indigenous works. The opportunity of comparing themes, styles and techniques offered itself. We do not claim here that such comparison was in fact intended, but there is no doubt that a lover of indigenous poetry

was most likely inspired by it to attempt composition e.g. N.G. Mokone, Montsamaisabosigo series of school readers, and once again Leseyane, Buka ya go buisa series.

4.3.3 A third stage appears to have been entered when anthologies of indigenous and modern poetry were compiled. In this field Sam. S. Mafoyane, M.O.M. Seboni and the trio Lekgetho, Kitchin and Kitchin made noteworthy contributions.

4.3.4 The final stage appears to be that of volumes of original compositions, which seem to lean heavily to the modern trend, viz. those of Raditladi, and Moroke. G.C. Motlhasedi is probably alone in a subgroup of this group. The school series of P.K. Kopane could be added to this group, while the recent publication of I. Schapera belongs to the first stage above.

4.3.5 Translation of Western European hymns into Tswana adds to the fourth stage above, that of volumes of modern poetry. This adds a distinct genre of poetry, so that translation may be regarded as a fifth line of development and growth.

4.3.6 Fully-fledged drama is not significant in oral lore. The translation of Shakespeare's 'Comedy of Errors' by Sol. Plaatjie in 1930 under the title Diphoshophosho was a first attempt to introduce serious drama in Tswana. Since then translations and original works, whose poetic merits will be summarised below, have added to our literature.

Micha Kgasi

4.4.1 Micha Kgasi (p. 5) includes in a prose work of his, the praise of a man whose spouse a woman would be proud to be, taking it from indigenous lore. It is rich in praise-names, and features linking, daring metaphor, proverb and deals with valorous character in defence of cattle and finally, what is typical of indigenous lore, an incident of intertribal contact where the Tswana hero vanquishes a Ndebele rival. In format there are twenty-five lines in one stanza.

4.4.2 In our tours this poem was rendered to us, and to facilitate comparison we record both the recorded and the oral versions here:

(i) M. Kgasi's Version (published)

1 Lefatlha la bo Mmategi
2 Letšubu-tšubu la mafatlha,
3 Phefo e fatlhile ditlou selemô
4 Selemo ka kgwedi ya Matlhabanaga;
5 'Na Mme ga nkiletse ke bokwa,
6 Wa nkitse ke Legapa tshunyana
7 Ke Legorosa tšhwana,
8 Ke tla le kgwana ya meriti ya mabje
9 Ya meriti ya mabje a bo kgongwane;
10 Radiphatlhane wa ba ga kolonyane
11 Se phje kgomo setšhôtlhô Radiphatlhane
12 Sé se monate sea mediwa Keketsi.
13 Motho kwa Mmamonne tšopane
14 O godile Mokukutlêla
15 Ke modimako wa bo 'Mamoenyana.
16 Ngwana wa dikgomo di rile di bofeletse
17 Ke sa tlhole ke feleka di huneletse

Di bofeletse ka kgôlê ya dikgong
Di bile tsa tsaya basadi tsa loka :
Yare ngwana wa dikgomo ka bula lesaka
Ka gana di tshela noka ya Tolwane
Ka sala ke šoka-šoka Letebele,
Kare: "Nala! Ya gae re laelane
Re laelane ka legata la motho ——
Ka legata la motho wa ga-Sebetiele".

(ii) A. Modibane's version (oral)

Legodi Komane : monna a Morolong

Fátlha la gabo Mmategi
a re nna ke letsubutsubu la mafátlha
a re phefo e fatlhile ditlou selemo
a re e ba fatlhile ka kgwedi ya matlhabathakana
a re nna mme ga nkiletse ke bokwa
a re o a nkitse ke legapatshunyana ke legorosatshwana
ke tla le kgwana a meriti ya gabo Kgongwana.

- - - -

Radipatlana a gabo Kolonyane
a re se pšhe kgomo setšhotlho Radipatlana
a re se se monate se a mediwa Keketsi.

- - - -

Motho o kwa Mmamonne tsopane o godile
a re ke mokukutlela ke modimako a gabo Moenyana
ngwana a dikgomo-e-ka-re-di-bofeletswe-ka-ba-ka-se-tlhwe-ke-feleka
ka re di huneletswe di bofeletswe ka kgole a dikgong tsa ba tsa tsaya basadi tsa loka
ya re nna ngwana a dikgomo ka bula lesaka ka gana di tshela noka a Tolwane
ka tloga ka ba ka sala ntse ke sokasoka Letebele
ka re, nalāāgae re laelane
re laelane ka legatana la motho a kwa Sebetiele.

Translation of Kgasi's version:

[1 Twin of Mmategi's family
2 storm of the twins
3 the wind blinded elephants in summer
4 summer, in the month of piercing the soil (tilling);
5 My mother does not refuse my being praised
6 she knows me, I am the looter of the white-faced cow
7 I am the captor of the black cow
8 I bring the white-backed cow of the shady mountains
9 of the shady mountains of the Kgongwana's;
10 Radipatlana of the Kolonyane clan
11 don't spit the cow as a cud Radipatlana
12 what is sweet is to be swallowed Keketsi.
13 The man at Mmamonne is solid pot clay,
14 he is fully grown, is a giant
15 he is a colossus of Mmamoenyana's clan.
16 Child of the cattle were firmly tied with a thong
17 I no longer struggled since they were united,
18 united by means of a thong used for bundling wood
19 they did even take women, and went straight;
20 being the child versed in cattle, i.e. brought up in the knowledge of cattle, I did open the kraal,
21 and refused them crossing the Tolwane river
22 I remained wrestling with the Ndebele
23 I said: Comfort! of the home, let us part
24 Let us part by the skull of a man ——
25 By the skull of a Zebediela man.]

4.4.3 A few important differences are noticeable, not only showing how unwritten literature undergoes untold changes but also pointing to different interpretations, and even more important, pointing to the inherent power of unwritten literature of merit to go its course, alongside and in spite of varying written versions. Our

reciter, again A. Modibane (3.3.1) names one Legodi Komane as subject of this poem, and this immediately makes the poem the property of a clan (a unit of tribal organisation). Kgasi omits this detail. Kgasi's lapses of spelling must be excused, but may lead to misunderstanding, e.g. ba ga kolonyane (of the Kolonyane's) where a proper name is spelt with a small letter, and so forth. It has certainly been helpful to understanding to hear the recital from an old woman who apparently knew what she was saying. Line 17 of our reciter's version certainly makes sense, while its equivalent (line 23) according to Kgasi does not, possibly owing to punctuation difficulties. The collection of indigenous literature by today's scholar could help to check and guide its course of development into written literature, and promote interpretation.

4.4.4 Whereas Kgasi's version is in lines (verses), as we tried to follow our reciter, we could not come to the same number of lines. Lines 1 to 5 correspond. Our reciter declaimed her line 6 with a distinct enjambment, making Kgasi's lines 6 and 7 into a biaxial line. Kgasi's lines 8 and 9 on the other hand feature linking, ending line 8 and beginning line 9 with ya meriti ya mabje. A proper editing of this poem could very well take proper stock of these deviations, and this editing would be development. Kgasi's lines 8 and 9 are more typically Tswana than Modibane's equivalent line 7, because the former features linking, which is a feature of indigenous poetry.

4.4.5 We further made out three thought-units, leading to our casting our reciter's version in three stanzas. The first thought is the introduction of Legodi in praise-words, intended to characterise him. This twin brother of sister Mmategi, is a storm (letsubutsubu), has blinded elephants (that is greater characters), blinded them, according to Kgasi in summer, during the month of ploughing, (ka kgwedi ya matlhabanaga). This turbulent character is legapatshunyana and legorosa-tshwana, and as if to leave no doubt about the inspiration of women to men, his mother does allow him to be thus praised. The second thought is a directive to him, operating the device of suggestion, and in the process creating a proverbial expression with traditional balanced parts -

line 9 ... se pšhe kgomo setšhotlho ..
10 ... se monate se a mediwa .....

The third thought is a description of his physical features which give him physical prowess. He is a compact colossus; he is a child brought up in the knowledge of cattle, which must be kept together like a bundle of wood. He leaves home comforts and goes for the skull of a Ndebele of Zebediela. Again inter-tribal emulation comes to the fore. Although the verses and stanzas are of irregular proportions it appears they are there all the same.

4.4.6 It has been of great help to hear the poem recited, beginning the lines with a re (he says), which demarcates the verses. The pause at the end of each line helps to demarcate even those lines that do not begin with a re e.g. line 14. The linking words are also helpful units of correspondence, e.g. line 17 and line 18. The main pause at the end of each thought-unit, followed by an energetic resumption as at the beginning of the first stanza : these two features mark off the stanzas fairly safely.

4.4.7 Finally, lines 1 and 2 may help to investigate metrical excellence or a tendency thereto:

Published version:

1. Lefatlha la bo Mmategi
2. letšubu-tšubu la mafatlha ....

Oral version:

1. Fátlha la gabo Mmategi
2. .... letsubutsubu la mafátlha ....

By what may be called a compensatory variation, although the first word of the latter version lacks its prefixal morpheme le-, which is retained in the former version, the possessive concord of the former version also lacks its third (middle) syllable ga, which the latter version retains, with the result that the number of syllables remains eight in both versions. We also find exactly what we found in Chapter 3, that the short-long-short metre alternates with the long-short, as in -

letsubutsubu (˘ – ˘ – ˘)
lefatlha (˘ – ˘)/ fatlha (– ˘).

We also find the characteristic four-syllable Tswana foot (˘ ˘ – ˘):

lă măfātlhă.

These features are not persistent, and therefore system is not claimed. But we seek tendencies. What seems to be a persistent feature, which also helps not only to point to rhythm but to mark the ending of verses, is the long penultimate syllable of every verse when declaimed.

4.4.8 The recording of indigenous poetry is development itself, and is a difficult study. The fact, for instance, that Micha Kgasi has certain pairs of lines punctuated with a comma only after the second member of a pair, thus -

Lefatlha la bo Mmategi
Letšubu-tšubu la mafatlha,

seems to point to the possibility of these pairs being the axes of biaxial verses, thus -

Lefatlha la bo Mmategi, letšubu-tšubu la mafatlha
Phefo e fatlhile ditlou selemo, selemo ka kgwedi ya matlhabanaga.

Witness the complete equality in number of syllables per pair of axes.

Furthermore, the verse-feet or nodes in the axes of the first line match exactly in number, in order of succession and in kind, thus:

lěfātlhă lā bŏ Mmătēgĭ lětšūbŭ-tsūbŭ lă măfātlhă .
1 2 3 1 2 3

The next biaxial line is even more interesting. Again the verse-feet or nodes match exactly in number and in kind, but the second axis has the nodes in strict reverse order of succession, thus:

phēfŏ ĕ fătlhīlĕ dĭtlōŭ sĕlēmŏ
1 2 3 4

sĕlēmŏ kă kgwēdi yă mătlhābănāgă
4 3 2 1

This inversion of the order of the metrical nodes or verse-feet of pairs of axes seems to be a larger scale of the inversion of the order of nodes referred to as a compensatory variation in 4.4.7 above. We suggest that Bantu metre is systematic in its variations, its variations being at times so subtle as to disguise it. Its variations, as exemplified above, do not represent a lapse in form. They represent a rearrangement of the same basic form.

4.4.9 What can be the reason for the difference between line 4 of Micha Kgasi and line 4 of our reciter? This problem will always confront any collector of indigenous poetry. Is the departure from Kgasi's version by a contemporary bard a reasoned act? More broadly speaking, do contemporary bards or bards from generation to generation have reasons for their changes of versions of indigenous

literature? To our mind our contemporary bard is developing a style of her own. She speaks of ditlou (elephants) in line 3, and refers to these elephants in line 4 by the class 2 subjectival concord ba. This is subtle interpretation of the satire, revealing that the discomfited elephants are men. This bard is a promising satirist. In the satire, Molome, in 3.8.8, she refers to molome, the locust, as stupid (line 13) and continues -

I saw him they gathering it -

if we may now translate word for word. She uses the class 1 and the class 9 objectival concords for the same character, and seems to do so persistently in satire. In the case in point the construction is -

Molome .... ke mmone ba o gola ....

This style has the effect of making the audience first feel that the language is wrong, thus ensuring the active and critical participation of the audience. The audience soon discovers its error. The style is subtle, to say the least, and points to the peculiar flexibility of Tswana.

P.P. Leseyane

4.5.1 P.P. Leseyane samples a number of items of indigenous poetry. He stands out as one of the early collectors who attempted to contemplate poetry as a Tswana literary genre, even to define it, saying of the mabôkô:

> Ke "poetry" ya Batswana. Ka sebôkô go galalediwa motho yo o itlhagisitseng mo bathong ba bangwe ka tiro nngwe ya bonatla, monna a tlhabanye mo ntweng ka bogale, gongwe a lole le dibatana tse di tshwanang le ditau le dinkwe, gongwe ge a bolaile seoka sengwe, tshukudu kgotsa nare. (Buka ya go buisa V & VI p. 59)
>
> [It is Tswana poetry. With poetry a man who has distinguished himself amongst others by some act of valour, a man who has fought a war bravely, or fought beasts of prey like lions or tigers, or who has killed some large beast such as a rhino or buffalo, is glorified.]

This is followed by a number of poems about chiefs. But to test whether traditional poetic tendencies persist throughout, we take the poem Pula (Leseyane 1938, p. 101) on a natural phenomenon, rain. Rain is personified. The figurative feature of the language of Tswana poetry is evident. The 'person' who is rain, is immediately captured in metaphor, thus:

1 Mmakgomari a Mosima,
2 Podi e tsetse motshegare,
3 Potsane ya tloga ya fula;
4 Ngope tsa noka tsa šibila,
5 Ba ga Mosima ba falala.

[1 Mmakgomari of Mosima,
2 The goat gave birth by day,
3 The kid soon grazed;
4 The riverbeds soon reddened,
5 The Mosimas dispersed.]

Line 1 is the name of a woman (lit. mother of Kgomari, daughter of Mosima - a matriarch of the Tlokwas).

Suddenly this is a goat. Rain mothers the tribe. It falls and fills valleys and rivers to overflowing. The Tswana say, when the sea appears empty, that is, when the water has left its normal course, that the water has gone to graze - metsi a ile go fula. The grazing of the kid, so soon after the rain has fallen, points to the waters' leaving their normal course and overflowing the riverbanks, with the result that the Mosimas dwelling on the riverbanks flee, which fleeing they welcome and teach future generations to anticipate.

4.5.2 To us this poem reads in uniaxial and biaxial lines, and in stanzas as follows:

1 Mmakgomari a Mosima ——
2 podi e tsetse motshegare, potsane ya tloga ya fula
3 ngope tsa noka tsa šibila, ba ga Mosima ba falala.

\- - - -

4 Ba ga Rankelele-re-lapile
5 le motlha a sa tsweng letsholo, o ntse a re re lapile
6 wa ga raseubu-se-tlhogong, se bonwa ke mooledi
7 morunanta o a apesa
8 ke tlhagoletse mookana, ya re o gola wa ntlhaba.

\- - - -

9 Baloi ba lala ba bina mmitlweng,
10 ke leru la Rakgoro motlhakeng, la Rangwako a Madisa
11 ngwako o disitse le bjale ——
12 ge a bonwa a se molemo kokwe o tlhobja a sepela.

[Lines 1, 2, 3 already translated - 4.5.1

4 Those of Rankelele-we-are-tired
5 even when he is not from the chase he continues saying we-are-tired

6 he of the gush-in-the-head, seen by the cleaner (nurse-girl);

7 the louse-killer covers it

8 I tilled for the growth of the mimosa, when it grew its thorns pricked me.

\- - - -

9 Witches spend the night dancing in the thorns,

10 it is the cloud of Rakgoro in the sedge, of Rangwako of Madisa

11 the one doctored against evil did tend also the girl initiates ——

12 when he is found not good the beetle is deprived of his wings while alive]

Briefly the second stanza is a warning to Rankelele's clan which always pleads tired even when not from the chase. The elders of the tribe know Rankelele through and through, know even the crown of his head, since they nursed him as a baby. But now he has friends (catchers of his lice), that is, people who share his dirty tricks, and they cover his faults. The last stanza warns that there is a cloud (a gang) of witches of Rakgoro's clique. This Rakgoro belongs to the group of Madisa who is such a ngaka (doctor) that he tended girl initiates in his hey-day. Now comes the generalisation : if such a one (man) is found not good, the 'beetle' is deprived of its wings while alive, that is, he is simply skinned alive. These wizards will be skinned alive so that it rains everywhere and not in the sedge only, these that are always tired when rain is to be praised or made.

4.5.3 The praise of rain consists in the first stanza only. Is this a case where the satire against Rankelele has been added to the poem on rain? Note that the man is a beetle, yet the relevant concords are personal. Is this Tswana satirical diction?

4.5.4 Once more we find that the four axes of lines 2 and 3 have each nine syllables, each three nodes. The nodes of the first axes of each pair correspond exactly. Those of the second axes correspond almost 100%:

/pōdǐ/ ě tsētsě/ mŏtshĕgārĕ// pŏtsānĕ/yă tlōgă/yă fūlă/

/ngōpĕ/tsă nōkă/tsă šĭbīlă // bā gă/mŏsīmă/bă fălālă/

As though the last node of the last axis above makes up for what is lost by the first node of the same axis, this last node has a supernumerary syllable while the first one is a syllable short of three. The last structure could be corrected thus:

bă gābŏ/Mŏsīmă/bă fāllă

But absolute uniformity may not have been intended; its avoidance may have been positively calculated. The second axis of the first line above may be the variation upon the rest, showing that the basic metrical form is a long-short, short-long-short, short-short-long-short trimeter, or, it may show that the underlying metre is short-long-short, with variations, or, it may go to show that the tendency to irregularity persists, or, the last axis may show that a catalectic foot is compensated by an hypermetric foot in a verse.

4.5.5 This inversion or transposition of nodes, in a verse, persists in line 12 -

12. gě ă bōnwă ā sě mŏlēmŏ
1 2 3

kōkwě ŏ tlhōbjă ă sěpēlă
2 3 1

This multiformity of the nodes of a single verse persists in line 11 -

/ngwākŏ/ ŏ dĭsītsě/ lě bjālě/

This regular irregularity works by ellipses as in line 10 -

10. /kě lērŭ/ lă Răkgōrŏ/ mŏtlhăkɛnǧ//

/ke leru/ lă Răngwākŏ/ ă Mădīsă/.

4.5.6 We come to the conclusion that indigenous poetry as exemplified by our two early writers tends to have a recognisable structure, featuring verses with corresponding metrical nodes, varying them, inverting their order. There are verses and there are stanzas, respectively datum-units and thought-units. The verses are uniaxial and polyaxial. We find that these features persist irrespective of the subject of the poetry - man or natural phenomenon alike. The stanzas may be irregular in length.

We conclude that this first stage in the growth and development of written poetry is quite a study in the

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○ ellipse

poetic styles of indigenous poetry and was a worth-while beginning. We find that the poetry recorded was of the best in spirit and in form.

N.G. Mokone and P.P. Leseyane

4.6.1 A younger man than M. Kgasi and P. Leseyane could now perhaps be credited with a composition of his own, based on a traditional theme, and also included in a school prose reader, along with traditional excerpts. We refer to N.G. Mokone (p. 22), who introduces the second stage:

Ka re tha

1 Ka re tha, ka re tha, ntha ka re tha.
2 Ke fitlhetse bana, ka re tha
3 Ba ntse maborwaborwana,
4 Ka ba botsa gore go ilwe kae,
5 Ba re go ilwe go lomegwa tlou.
6 A selo se tlou e tle e lwale?
7 E lwala bolwetse jwa tlhogo.
8 Ga se jwa tlhogo, ke jwa molala.
9 Ka re Tshipa mphe kobo.
10 Kobo tsa bogopane
11 Matshabela gotlhe.
12 Ka re tha, thanthatha*, ka re tha,
13 thanthatha*, ka re tha.

(*Correction of misprint thanthantha in reader)

[1 I hopped, I hopped, hopped I hopped.
2 I found the children, I hopped.
3 They sat in clusters,
4 I asked them where everybody had gone,
5 They said they had gone to bleed an elephant.
6 Does an elephant ever get sick?
7 It suffers from a head disease.
8 Not a head disease but a neck disease.
9 I asked Tshipa to give me a blanket.

10-11 Coarse blankets in which everything hides.
12 I hopped, hop-hopped, I hopped
13 hop-hopped, I hopped]

4.6.2 The above poem is in two separate but united parts. The first is in the nature of a refrain, viz. lines 1, 12 and 13 which convey form. The second conveys the spirit - satire, humorous idiom, and eloquent pun. The form-giving lines feature onomatopoeia, to give a marching step to the travel represented here, to convey the story dramatically. The form-bearing refrain reminds us that in the gloom the gold gathers the light against it.

4.6.3 First of all the form. The ideophone tha (hopping like a flea) from which we derive the verb stem thanya (to hop), in combination with other monosyllabics, lends itself readily to reflect steps. The travel is not related but created, thus:

kă rĕ thā

This metre is varied in the seventh word by the short-long alternant, thus:

ňthā

The tendency is revealed here to alternate short-short-long (˘˘–) with short-long (˘–), just as we saw earlier how short-long-short alternates with long-short. The metre of line 2 is typical because it features verse-feet already found and varied in their kind, being:
ke fitlhetse (˘˘–˘) bana (– ˘) ka re tha (˘˘–).

4.6.4 Most interesting of all is the form or metre of lines 12 and 13. The first and last nodes of line 12 have already been treated above and their metre (˘˘_) noted. The middle node is a diametrically opposed foot-arrangement, being long-short-short:

thaāthăthă

This word appears again at the beginning of the last line, as if to deliberately juxtapose the metrical opposite numbers long-short-short and short-short-long, effecting the kind of inversion of nodes already noted:

thāāthăthă / kă rĕ thā

4.6.5 The fusion of theme (travelling) and form is abundantly evident. The anapaestic type of metre (short-short-long) with its two variants, first the iamb type (short-long), which anapaest is inverted into the dactyl type (long-short-short), show exactly how akin to real life poetry can be, how carefree and chance travel, hopping about without a particular purpose, can be represented in words as a veritable drama. We have said above that our bards are not particularly erudite scholars of language. The child of nature probably unwittingly juxtaposed the anapaest with its inversion, dactyl. He pictured the drama exactly, and we find the lines gripping to hear or read. The author thus achieves something similar in effect, to -

˘ ´ ˘ ´´´ ˘ ´

viooltjies blou en rooi

in which C.L. Leipoldt juxtaposes an amphibrach foot with its inversion, the amphimacer* in the poem "Oktober-maand".

4.6.6 We suggest that N.G. Mokone, P.P. Leseyane and Micha Kgasi represent an older generation of literate Tswana bards from whom the younger generation could rightly be expected to learn. We also suggest that they bridge the gap between indigenous and modern poetry, representing as they do, both trends. We suggest that a critical examination of poetry contained in school readers as a special assignment might teach us how the older generation felt that indigenous poetry should be cast and punctuated, to what extent metre is possible and to what extent necessary, as also with what intent it is employed. The metre above gives the true, humorous and lighthearted tone of the drama. It is not a decoration. It is the crystallization of an experience. It is an exploration of expression.

4.6.7 As to the spirit of this poem, it is far from simple. It is sublime. Children were found deserted, huddled in clusters as if to warm or console one another. The adults had gone to bleed an elephant. The Tswana make incisions on the legs or cheeks of people or at the ankles to draw out bad blood that

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* This term (alternant 'Cretic') is used by Marjorie Boulton in The Anatomy of Verse (op. cit.) p. 24, line 10 from bottom.

causes dizziness and other diseases. This cannot be done to a wild animal such as an elephant. The idiom go lomega tlou (to bleed an elephant) means to obtain liquor. This must be just as problematic as to obtain elephant blood. The elephant has a head disease - dizziness. The elephant here refers to a man of the elephant totem who is dizzy from drinking. Hence he suffers not from a head disease but a neck disease. And this is where a pun comes in. The word molala (neck) also means a commoner, a person of low estate. This dizziness from drunkenness is at once a neck disease and a disease of persons of low estate. Didactic satire is shown here, rather obscurely. The traveller asked the child Tshipa for a blanket, any coarse blanket, as coarse as burr-weed seeds. This is further satire against people who leave their homes to children and have their visitors thus poorly received. But the blanket is matshabela gotlhe - everything hides in it : the children, the visitors, dirt which makes it coarse, and possibly vermin. The spirit here is violently admonitory. Elephant totemites, nay all of us, are teased out of travelling for intoxicants. The metre conveys exactly the humor of the poem, which pervades the otherwise rather serious atmosphere. We suggest that this represents a development in style.

4.6.8 P.P. Leseyane is the author who defines poetry, and has recorded the indigenous. His own composition is Boammarure (truth) (Leseyane 1943, p. 32). This is didactic poetry in four stanzas. The first stanza has seven, and the others eight lines each. The poet was at pains to employ end-rhyme. In the first stanza the first four lines are successfully end-rhymed aabb. The fifth line is odd, perhaps having lost its partner in printing. The last two lines are pararhymed. The second stanza is also successfully end-rhymed in the first six lines, viz. aabbcc. The last two lines are not rhymed. The third stanza succeeds in the first four lines, and pararhymes the other four cdcd, making therefore aabbcdcd. The last stanza end-rhymes the first five lines aabcb and leaves the last three lines unrhymed. Perhaps on a second attempt the rhyme-scheme would work out at aabbcdcd. We do not know. But the tendency is there. There is no doubt in our mind that the lines rhymed are successfully rhymed and that Tswana has the capacity for and a tendency towards morpheme-rhyme.

4.6.9 We find here that P.P. Leseyane moves away from indigenous techniques. Firstly the persistent rhyming is a complete departure. The fact that some lines do not rhyme is viewed as failure rather than excused as variation. Variations of indigenous

poetry, even that recorded by this author, are systematic. We contended earlier that they are not lapses but rearrangement of forms. In the poem under review we sense lapses. The other departure from indigenous techniques is in forming stanzas of equal length. In indigenous poetry irregularity seems regular.

4.6.10 And now, by what reasoning do we consider Leseyane's lines verses? Each is a solid datum-unit and the datum-units a solid thought-unit. In other words we judge first by internal content, subsequently by external forms. The first stanza, for instance, goes (we translate):

[1 This is truth greater than all things,
2 That in the whole world there is no might,
3 That can protect a person in life,
4 Except to keep for ever in his heart,
5 An oath and a determination saying,
6 In all difficulties and earthly trials,
7 I shall cling to justice and to truth.]

The poem is strongly didactic as in the third stanza, first two rhymed lines -

Tiro nngwe le nngwe e e emisitsweng godimo ga kako,
Ga e kitla e ema, e phela ka boleele ba nako

[Any undertaking based on lying
Shall never stand, continue for the length of time]

and in the last two unrhymed lines of the last stanza:

Noka di tla tswa melapo e e omileng, dipoa di tswa dingope,
Mme boammarure, boammarure bo tla nna ka bosakhutleng

[Rivers will turn into dry streams, veld into dongas,
But truth, truth will remain for ever]

The last two verses are not rhymed but as effective as the first two above, which are rhymed.

4.6.11 We must recognise the biaxial and polyaxial verses -

Ga go motho // kapo lelata
Yo o tla bonang // mongwe a mo lata
Mme a re // kgosi ya me // kapo lata la me
ke tla go tlotla // ke go utlwa // botshelong
botlhe ba me

[There is no man // or servant
who will see // someone come to him
and say // my master // or my servant
I shall honour you // and obey you // all my life]

In the midst of his straining to compose the modern way, even the romantic way, P.P. Leseyane retains the above forms, known to inhere in indigenous literature. We are constrained to contemplate whether it is wise or necessary or possible to compose modern poetry with complete disregard for indigenous techniques.

4.6.12 There is no metaphor in the above composition. The truth however, is stated in quotable lines showing that the poet was indeed stirred in his feelings and led to pour forth an original creation. This departure is noteworthy. There is no arguing with the reader. The truth is seen before the eyes of the poet even as he dramatically points at it in his first line. The poet is not seen defending himself or pleading his cause. The truth just rolls out in its naked form. We do not miss the figure of speech. The creation of the picture

is powerful enough imagery. P.P. Leseyane is a traditionalist and modernist at the same time.

4.6.13 Kgasi and Leseyane are our first stage, Mokone and Leseyane our second in written poetry.

Indigenous-modern Publications of Poetry

4.7.1 The above stages lead us to publications of poetry in which indigenous poetry is recorded and modern compositions added in fully-fledged anthologies. We have in mind the volumes of Sam. S. Mafoyane, M.O.M. Seboni, and Lekgetho, Kitchin and Kitchin. Their sources and themes are legion. They praise natural phenomena, animals, birds, insects, youth, cultural institutions and goods, historical characters, and so forth. Sam. S. Mafoyane actually arranges his anthology according to themes, thus -

Nature,
School and Education,
History and Heroes - Chiefs,
Miscellaneous,
Animals, Cultural goods.

4.7.2 We propose to compare two poems of Mafoyane, one being an indigenous and the other a modern composition. Both are poems of a historical nature. No doubt Mafoyane was trying a transfer of experience. From recording the historical poem on Samoêlê, a former chief of his tribe, he composes another based on Old Testament history, viz. Moutlwiwa wa Modimo (Elkanah).

Sam. S. Mafoyane

4.8.1 Firstly the poem Pako ya ga Samoêle (Mafoyane p. 37) - Praise of Samuel - is cast in verses, in like manner to the modern composition, Moutlwiwa wa Modimo (Mafoyane p. 27). But whereas the latter is in ten stanzas of four lines each, the former is cast in one seventeen-line stanza. Pako ya ga Samoêlê is recorded by M.O.M. Seboni too in Maboko, Maloba le Maabane (Via Afrika, 1958, p. 13), in verses, and one stanza of seventeen lines. The differences of punctuation, spelling, vocabulary, repetitions, between Mafoyane's and Seboni's writings point to the serious problems of recording, and emphasise that recording itself by an individual for purposes of reading, is development in the direction of modern poetry.

4.8.2 The history of Elkanah is recorded in stanzas which are clearly thought-units, as summed up hereunder:

[1. Old couple, Elkanah and Hannah .
2. Prayer for a child. Their promise.
3. Birth of Samuel. Thanksgiving.
4. According to promise, Samuel given to prophet
5. Prophet Eli brings him up perfectly.
6. Of an evening Samuel awakes from a deep sleep.
7. A voice calls. He thinks it is Eli's.
8. Eli says he must answer, 'Speak Lord, thy servant listeneth'.
9. In his sleep the voice rouses him again.
10. Let us be awaiting the call like Samuel.]

The awareness of this history in thought-units, however, was not transferred to the handling of the indigenous

poem. In this respect the revision of published indigenous poetry might be further developed by being organised in thought-units, since it has them. Pako ya ga Samoêlê divides into three thought-units, thus:

1. Rhinoceros from Matsiloje; sharp-horned.
2. He is greeted. He is either a lion or tiger, if he could jump over the heads of Matsiloje's people and return home without their being able to stop or even see him. (Matsiloje is a Barolong settlement in Botswana, and like the Bafokeng begging Setšhele to return from Botswana to the Transvaal parent tribe, Samoele is acclaimed for returning to the Thaba Nchu parent tribe in the Free State.)
3. Didactics : if a lion, don't bite; if a tiger draw in your claws, else they will trim them.

4.8.3 The last poem mentions Samoêlê nowhere by name: It is charged with metaphor. Yet this is not evident in the composition of Moutlwiwa wa Modimo. The latter is simply a story, and might as well have been left in the Old Testament, since composition means creating a picture other than that of the source itself. Even placed side by side, Mafoyane's indigenous and modern compositions apparently do not influence each other, showing once more that mutual influence must not be taken for granted.

4.8.4 In Moutlwiwa wa Modimo end-rhyme is attempted. The attempt is however inferior, e.g.

1. Go ne go na le monna
   A bidiwa Elekane;
   Khumagadi e le Hana;
   Ba godile ba tšofetse

We take it that the final -e of Elekane and tšofetse is intended to rhyme, even as the final -na of monna and Hana do. Similarly the final -a of Rara and ruta in the second stanza, as well as the final -ne of Mosimane and -nê of Enê. The assonance is not always successful as where Samoêlê rhymes with itumetse in stanza 3, and the vowels ê and e (low mid-front and semi-closed front) do not rhyme. This applies to mosimane and Enê where the end-syllables -ne and -nê do not rhyme, and we are therefore not able to find syllable or morpheme rhyme. We must view this attempt at rhyming against our finding of morpheme rhyme earlier on. It means that the forms that appear to rhyme here, are in fact not units of correspondence, and therefore do not help to make Mafoyane's lines into verses, a further reason why this poem is not a successful creation.

4.8.5 On the contrary Pako ya ga Samoêlê is charged with alliterative forms, repetition of words and phrases. These creations bear testimony of original composition. Their combination of the metaphorical and the didactic makes the creation quotable.

Alliteration:

Tshukudu ya malatsane o laditse
o tlhokoditse lonaka lo ntse lohibidu
o lo tlhokoditse fa o tswa Matsiloje

[Rhino that misses a turn you have missed
you sharpened the horn it is red
you sharpened it when you came from
Matsiloje]

The number of voiceless alveolar affricates (ts) speaks for itself, whilst conveying among other things, the praise-word malatsane (one who skips a turn, i.e. one who omitted to come home when expected, but did eventually come).

Repetition:

[The same who skipped his turn to come home
did so to advantage: he sharpened his horn:]

o tlhokoditse lonaka ....
o lo tlhokoditse ....

This repetition, with further alliteration, is not a mere decoration, but the creation of a spectacle. Imagine the sharp, red horn of a 'rhino', ready to gore any that attempted to take over the parent tribe or stop the return of Samoêlê.

The jump from Matsiloje in Botswana to Thaba Nchu was supernatural, witch-like imagery:

le go mmona ga ba ka ba mmona

[not even to see did they see him]

The repetition of mmona (see him) emphasizes the wonder, without description.

Didactics

We note that Mafoyane's modern composition ends didactically, as does the indigenous poem. Is this now coincidence or development? We learned earlier

that indigenous poetry features data leading to a generalisation, and this is true of both poems. There is however deeper searching in the indigenous didactics - which being metaphorical, continue to create - than in the modern didactics where we are given a straight-forward telling what to do. All in all, no effort is needed to understand our modern poem. The opposite is true of the indigenous one.

4.8.6 It seems fair to suggest that while juxtaposing indigenous and modern poetry, Mafoyane neither learned the spirit and form of Tswana traditional poetry nor himself originally conceived it, or else he did so poorly. The recording of enough material, however, to fill 83 pages in book form, is development in the practice of poetry.

4.8.7 The above tendency is true of the whole of Mafoyane's work. His Pula (p.7) can bear no comparison in point of imagery and structure with the indigenous item discussed above in 4.5.2 et seq. It is merely telling that the sun rose in a clear African sky, much praised (this sky) by strangers; during the day clouds gathered, houses were closed, it showered, and so forth. He starts the poem Maru (clouds) metaphorically in the first line (p.2) -

Kobo ntlê ya godimo
[fine blanket of the heavens]

but immediately stops creating, starts and continues to tell about clouds. Mafoyane is a story-teller. His Khunwana (p. 79) is also a report on the first Barolong village known to him : wealth, herdboys, the Ndebele interference referred to in the incident we cited in 3.6.3, and so forth. One is inclined to feel that Mafoyane is not a thinker. His Sekgatla Merafe (Afrika - p. 70) is simply like Khunwana, a land loved by many even from overseas. It has minerals and scenery and later trains. His Mogale le legatlapa (Brave hero and Coward), p. 65, relates of a fire on a farm being extinguished by a woman, and boys being punished for failure to extinguish it, the woman being thanked for extinguishing the fire. We just learn stories. Poetry is in the traditional items in Mafoyane's volume.

M.O.M. Seboni

4.9.1 Seboni's volume, Maboko, maloba le maabane (1949), is also an anthology of indigenous poetry, along with his own compositions. In our view this is an excellent arrangement, provided the compiler intends that what is best in the indigenous 'poems' be used in the modern ones, especially where like themes are treated. In such cases any decline of standard in modern composition is rightly viewed as a serious lapse, and any effort to raise the level of penetrating thought, and form, at least to that of the traditional, is appreciated.

4.9.2 We attempt an appreciation of two poems with the themes of natural phenomena, one being indigenous and the other a modern composition. The poem Letsatsi (Seboni p. 39) is indigenous, and we find:-

(a) At no stage is the sun mentioned by its name.

(b) By way of imagery the sun is personified as Ngwako, one thoroughly doctored against evils.

(c) From the behaviour of Ngwako we deduce that the subject is the sun -

holding a bundle of spears,
broadcasting the spears,
some spears inflicting pain,
others giving pleasure,
some bringing wealth, others destitution ——
that is how Ngwako distributes his gifts;
feared by young and old.
Yóú come face to face with him!
Eyes water if people do so
Since that means looking into the very eye of God.

Here is some deep thought. Here is some solid imagery. Without figures of speech imagery suffers, without imagery thought becomes shallow; without deep thought, there is no spirit.

4.9.3 Compare the above with the 'modern' composition. Mola wa godimo (p. 54). There is a call to children to look at beauty against the belly of the heavens - Mpeng ya magodimo. Immediately the solution to the problem is offered, unfortunately -

Nna ga ke bone sepe
Fa e se mebalabala,
Mebala e yotlhelele
Mo motsheng wa badimo

[I see nothing but lots of colours,
all the colours, on the rainbow].

If we must learn from Eliot's objection that

> Shakespeare baffles and liberates, Milton is perspicuous and constricts (Eliot p. 150)

here is no baffling thought. There is no imagery, no depth of thought.

4.9.4 Reference is made to the rainbow as one of the wonders of the Creator of life. This certainly opens a contemplation of the Almighty, although not requiring any thought effort, being a sheer relating of fact -

> Nngwe ya dikgakgamatso
> tsa Motlhodi wa Botshelo.
>
> [One of the wonders of the Creator of life]

4.9.5 To the very end the indigenous poem is metaphorical, as when it ends with eyes watering because of looking into the very eye of God. We are made to search for who Ngwako is in the sky, and there we do find a phenomenon comparable to the carrying of a bundle of spears, distributing them, and so forth. To the Tswana the sun is the eye of God. To the end the modern composition lacks creation and invites no thought, while offering no entertainment. Poetry is specialised communication and our bard misses his boat here. An authority says:

> .... Sometimes art is bad because communication is defective, the vehicle inoperative; sometimes because the experience communicated is worthless; sometimes for both reasons. (Richards 1962, p. 199)

Poetic experience of the rainbow should be as fascinating as that of the sun: the difference is in the communication here.

4.9.6 Let us test whether Seboni gains in inspiration and his poetry in spirit in his works of a historical nature. Again we propose to compare an indigenous with a modern number, viz. Setšhele I with Barutwana ba ga Jabavu (pp. 10 and 26 respectively):

Leboko la ga Setšhele wa ntlha

[1. Ke motšhatšha mogakatsa mala,
2. yo go tweng noga e kgolo ya noka tse dikgolo,
3. E go tweng e kile ya tsosetsa bangwe kgwanyape,
4. Ya re Bakgatla ya ba tsosetsa phefo,
5. Ngwana wa Lekone a tshaba a sutlha,
6. A tshaba ka tlhako di le letsogong.
7. Ngwale boela yoo o mmokile,
8. O boka o sa itse ina ja gagwe
9. Ina ja gagwe ke matsodimatsoke.

[1. He is the purgative that stimulates the stomach,
2. the big snake of the big rivers,
3. of which is said it once raised a tornado against
4. causing the Bakgatla only a wind, people
5. so much so that the Nguni child fled and emigrated,
6. running with his sandals in his hand.
7. Virgin, let alone that one, you have praised him.
8. You praise but do not know his name.
9. His name is abstruseness.]

4.9.7 Once more there is no mention of Setšhele by name. As a result the poem belongs to all time and to all characters of a frightening nature. One could even submit that this poem knows no tribal borders. It is universal thought and experience.

4.9.8 The metaphor, ke motšhatšha [he is the strong purgative] is an excellent creation. This is a purgative that makes bowels work. In Tswana slang the idiom exists that one's bowels work when one is frightened or given a beating : o tla tšhwega - you will purge - means you will get a beating. The poet of yore knew the oral lore of his people and had sufficient creative power to polish his slang into socially acceptable idiom -

motšhatšha mogokatsa mala

[purgative which stimulates the bowels].

Typical of the indigenous poet, he shows his resourcefulness by varying his metaphors, and so the second line refers to this motšhatšha - purgative - as:

noga e kgolo ya noka tse dikgolo

[big snake of the big rivers].

This suggests that the subject may be a crocodile totemite, since the crocodile is a big reptile that lives in big waters. There is a connection between the two metaphors since the sight of a big snake is so frightening as to make the bowels work. This is good imagery, certainly different from and better than simply relating that a snake is frightening to see. This big snake discriminates between peoples, causing some a tornado, certain others only a wind. The character evidently purges its environs of everybody except the Bakgatla, who are however under its influence - phefo [wind]. The Nguni had to emigrate. The allusion is apparently to the Ndebele who trekked North to Rhodesia and the

Kgatla who remained in Botswana with the Kwena of Setšhele. There is however no telling : this is poetry, and not history.

4.9.9 Finally, as with all the indigenous poems in this volume, the bard ends by apostrophising. He addresses a virgin who is nowhere, saying -

Ngwale boela .....
..... matsodimatsoke (lines 7, 8, 9).

In 2.8.10 above we quoted a definition of apostrophising. We saw that it may have as its purpose such social attributes as praise (laudatory), admonition (admonitory), suggestion (suggestive). And we now find here that it has as purpose the expression of modesty, also a necessary social attribute. The bard does not claim to exhaust the praises which set forth the character of Setšhele. Character is reconditely referred to here as a name -leina, abbreviated ina, hence:

9. Ina ja gagwe ke matsodimatsoke

[his name is perfect abstruseness]

should mean that his character is too complicated to explain. We observed direct apostrophising, when the bard addresses some outside personality, and inverse apostrophising when an outside personality addressed the bard as when the gods answered his divining questions. We judge the apostrophising in the poem under review as direct apostrophising with the purpose of expressing and teaching modesty. The

spirit of the short poem is grand and we may now proceed to assess Seboni's own parallel composition.

4.9.10 The title Barutwana ba ga Jabavu straight away reveals its subject, as would be expected in essay writing, and this represents a complete departure from the indigenous style which is so recondite. There are seven stanzas, pages 26-27, translated as follows:

1. There were three of us, Kgware, Seboni, Moloto and Mongala's daughter
2. Before us stood a colossus with horns growing in all directions, a Latin teacher, a Bantu language teacher.
3. There were three ethnic groups or language groups, taught law by Jabavu, arguing with him at Rammutla (Fort Hare) College.
4. Those were good days, youngsters remaining at home, laws being obeyed, in the lovely Canaan, the schools.
5. We thank the giants of Rammutla College who gave us high positions. Mongala's daughter did well and married one Habedi.
6. All four of us (including Habedi) led schools. Boys and girls grew to qualify as medical doctors.
7. Oh, that I could become a child again and learn with my friends of those days! Fellow-workers are dangerous. Even as they laugh they have a spear hidden under their clothes.

4.9.11 Out of a total of twenty-nine lines, only seven, that is a quarter, rise above the level of relating in plain and straightforward language, what actually happened. We refer to the first two lines of the second stanza -

Fa pele ga rona go eme segokga,
Go eme petleke wa malemela gotlhe ....

[Before us stood a giant, one with horns
spreading out in all directions]

and to the closing stanza -

Ntla nka bowa ka nna monnye
Ka rutwa le ditsala tsa me tsa jale!
Tsala jwa mo tirong bo a bolaya,
Motho a tshega rumo a le fitlhile,
A le fitlhile rure ka fa kobong!

[Oh! that I could become a child again and learn with my friends of those days! Friends in service are deadly. As they laugh they conceal a spear under their clothes]

These examples present some depth of thought. The versatility of the lecturer is not told, but presented in the form of a character whose horns grow out in all directions. The faithful friendship of youth is not related but implied. Unfaithful comradeship in service is ably pictured : a laughing comrade with a spear under cover. This is creation. This is poetry.

4.9.12 Seboni is therefore not at all void of tendencies to achieve spirit in his compositions. But, like Mafoyane, he cannot be credited with having juxtaposed indigenous and modern compositions with a view to taking the best out of either into the other. We admit that this need not always be done. After all we learned earlier (Chapter 1) that an important quality of poetry is originality. The originality however, could rightly be expected not to be inferior to what has been, especially when presented in juxta-position. We suggest that the type of anthology of

Seboni, Mafoyane and Lekgetho, Kitchin and Kitchin, is in fact an important and necessary contribution towards the growth and development of Tswana poetry.

4.9.13 In 4.9.8 above we observed that the bard does well who takes cognisance of the oral lore of his language. It is therefore fair to expect that both Seboni and Mafoyane could have shown knowledge of distilled expressions for certain of the concepts they handled, in order to maintain depth of thought. Both include the poem on the rainbow - Mola wa godimo - but neither employs the riddle for the rainbow, or creates one, e.g.:

Ngwale a tlhoma ditlhako, ngwako a iphimola keledi, mabala tlaang le bone.

[The virgin stood on her feet, the one doctored against evil, that is, the sun, as stated in 4.9.2, wiped off a tear, the colours, come and see]

4.9.14 The Tswana believe that the rainbow stops rain and enables the sun to shine. This is presented with the creation that Ngwako wiped off his tears. The beauty of the rainbow is not related but presented as a beautiful virgin, ngwale. The colours : just come and see!

4.9.15 The employment of Tswana oral lore lends itself to vast exploitation. Supposing instead of describing Koloi, the wagon, page 51 et seq., as:

ramaotwana ramatsatsarapana

[the wheeled one, the one with high and slender wheels],

Seboni (p. 51) had employed the riddle below, would he not have achieved deeper thought?

Nkutona ke foufetse, ba-na-le-matlho ntshwareng.

[I am a blind wether, you who are sighted, lead me]

Seboni shows a strong leaning to TELLING. He does not mirror. He does not create. He does not appear to contemplate the traditional material in hand. Witness again the metrical excellence of the riddle above. Most traditional poetic material is indeed in some recognisable poetic form or tends to be. Our riddle features two nodes in either axis, one node containing three and the other five syllables. The order of the nodes is inverted, 3, 5 // 5, 3, thus:

nkŭtōnă kĕ fŏŭfētsĕ
3 5

bănălĕmātlhŏ ntshwărēnĕ.
5 3

N.G. Mokone (4.6.1) might have been influenced by this device of indigenous poetry in his modern composition where he inverted and juxtaposed nodes.

Lekgetho, Kitchin and Kitchin:
Boswa jwa Puo (enlarged edition, 1961)

4.10.1 By a tripartite effort, a bulkier volume was produced than any of the two treated above, viz. Boswa jwa Puo - The Heritage of Language. The title immediately whets one's appetite. There are twenty-eight poems of chiefs collected by J.M. Lekgetho in Part one; thirty-one poems collected/composed by Moabi S. Kitchin, covering

historical personalities, e.g. David Livingstone, natural phenomena, chiefs, animals including birds, religion, in Part two; and forty poems collected/ composed by Neo H. Kitchin, covering chiefs, historical figures such as General J.C. Smuts, social relations, as well as metaphysical items such as Ditshoswane : barwa seoposengwe Ants : sons of unity , which teaches unity as King Solomon taught industry, saying:

> Ea kwa choshwanen, wèna mmoduhadi; u akanyè mekgwa ya eona, me u tlhalehe
>
> (Diane 6 : 6 - Moffat Bible)
>
> [Go to the ant thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise .....
>
> Prov. 6 : 6]

4.10.2 In the Introduction to this volume, the Rev. A. Sandilands captures the spirit of the volume by saying:

> From West African music and rhythm, slowly combining, over bitter years of slavery, with European forms of scale and harmony, came the slave songs and hymns, the 'Negro Spirituals'. Something akin is emerging here in Africa, and this book represents a stage, an aspect, of that process.
>
> (p. iii)

There has been a process of development, there have been stages and aspects, and now something 'akin' to the 'combining' of 'European forms' and African forms 'is emerging here'. This is valuable testimony of growth and development. Occasionally the compilers state the sources of their collections, which is helpful historically. However we evaluate the poems as

such, we leave historical background to historians. We believe with others that -

.. die oordrewe aandag aan biografie

sometimes is

die fase van lykbesorging. (Venter pp. 142-3)

This stand is even more important for Tswana indigenous poetry where claims of authorship are generally doubtful.

4.10.3 We find longer poems here than in either of the two volumes attributed to M.O.M. Seboni and Sam. S. Mafoyane, The first poem, Bareki (a chief bearing that name), has 162 lines. The imagery of Bareki is outstanding and sustained to the end, showing that it is intended, it is part of the composition, it is the composition itself. This imagery is conveyed in the metaphorical praise-names that seem to constitute the thought content, e.g.

stanza 2:

Tshukudu ya Matima-kgabo kgalema
U kgalemele Baamotlharo ba eme.
Re utlwa go twe Janki o a golegwa,
Re tle re tsene mo gwafeng ja gago. (p. 3)

[Rhino of the Matima-kgabo - flame extinguishers - age-set, roar,
Roar that the Tlharo people arise.
We learn Janki is being taken captive,
We would like to fight under your direction]

4.10.4 If the name tshukudu - rhino - does not necessarily recall brave deeds accomplished, it suggests them, which is the great value of the praise. But the next stanza clearly points to past deeds where Bareki conquered the Bakgothu and is praised -

Legata-kgomo le gatile gorataro,
Le gatile Bakgothu re a robala .... (p. 4)

[Trampler of the cow trampled six times,
trampled the Bakgothu and now we sleep/are at ease.]

4.10.5 Bareki's character is clearly portrayed in practically every stanza. The stanzas feature praise-names which are elaborated in the stanzas. Bareki is a statesman of great stature, not an exterminator but a converter of peoples -

Phetudi-a-dichaba! U fetotse Bakgothu
Ga re tlhole re tlhokalana mafoko (p. 4)

He has influenced the Bakgothu and they are now on speaking terms with the Batlharo. But this does not end here, he is not a disperser of his victims but a gatherer, a nation-builder:

Makgobokanye o' phutha dichaba
U phuthile Maboko re mokawana

[Gatherer who assembles nations
You have collected the Maboko and we are now a group]

Bareki is fiercer as a warrior. He is personally a fierce fighter likened unto lightning -

Logadima lwa ga Mantreke (p. 6)

[Lightning of Mantreke]

4.10.6 Again the hero is associated above rather with his mother than his father, showing how much the Tswana believed that behind their heroes were strong women. Mantreke means Hendrik's mother. But he is not a lightning that simply destroys. Rather, he is one that frightens recalcitrants into submission. Even the closing stanza highlights Bareki's statesmanship:

> Setlhare se medile mono Tsoe,
> Moruti wa sone o kwaiwa Kudumane.
> Bakgothu ke nyena lo tlholang lo se palame,
> A e tlaa re lo se pagologa a lo tlaa fofa? (p. 9)
>
> [A tree has grown at Tsoe; its shade is seen from Kuruman; You, Bakgothu, who ever climb into it, when you climb down, will you fly?]

Bareki is a tree safer to sit under than climb into. He is at peace with those who place themselves under his reign. The metaphor is gripping. Bareki dare not be fought because the spear he personally wields -

> Le tlhabile Bakgothu ba le bararo,
> Wa bone ja mo fatola mokotla. (p. 5)
>
> [it stabbed three Bakgothu and gashed the fourth one's back].

Gaetsietse is vainly planning an attack on Bareki. He hesitates and postpones it to July (Phukwi), then to April (Moranang). He resorts to divination -

> Ba tshela bola jwa mathe baa-aka!
> Yo' Bareki ga' ka a umakediwa tlhabano. (p. 7)
>
> [They pretend to be divining, they lie!
> That one, Bareki, is never to be threatened with war,]

Bareki is the statesman that befriended the Whites. He is a Motswana who used his charms too:

O tshubile pheko ngogola, Bareki ——
Modisa wa Maburu le Makgowa. (p. 8)

Bareki was to his neighbours an icy South wind. The Bushmen and Bokgothu took refuge underground in holes when they heard of his approach. This can be pure imagination, with a grain of history, it can be fact (at least partially) or suggestion, but it makes poetry, it positively builds a national spirit, it entertains as it satirises the weaker or cowardly tribal groups.

4.10.7 Against the background of the poem just reviewed we briefly examine General Smuts. Smuts is also referred to by praise-names in the same manner as Bareki, thus -

Pudumo ya dikgwa tsa Tshwane le Gauteng! (p. 93)

[Blue wildebeest of the forests of Pretoria and Johannesburg]

Ka u le Talela-lorole, u le Tshukudu e tona .... (p. 93)

[Since you are a watchman of dust, since you are the great rhino ....]

Once more Talela-lorole is a creation based on idiom. O lorole - you cause dust - means you are in the habit of starting troubles. Smuts is pictured, not described, as a harmless wildebeest lying peacefully until somebody else starts up dust, whereupon he will show himself as a big rhino. He was born in peace times (stanza 3) and will keep his peace until ....

U sa le u tsalwa lefatshe le iketla,
Podi e tona e tsamaya e thwantsha mesifa;
Dikamela tsa ba tsa khutlela go belega
Pelesa ya ntshiwa mogala ya kgaolwa
segaba-mpa (p. 94)

[You were born when the world was at peace
The he-goat grew until its ankles crackled when it walked;
Camels stopped serving as beasts of burden
Pack-oxen got discharged and their girths were snapped.]

The Kaiser could testify if he were not secretive, that -

"Tlhare seo Senkgane, senkgela batho,
Se tlhomilwe jalo go nkgela ditseno" (p. 94)

[That tree has a repellent scent, it repels people, it has been planted to repel madcaps]

4.10.8 Here is a metaphor of a tree. We had another in the last stanza of Bareki. Probably in the present volume we enter a stage of development where the compilers transfer their understanding of the techniques of indigenous poetry to the modern compositions. This confirms the Rev. Sandilands' submission in 4.10.2 above that 'this book represents a stage', a further stage of development in fact than that represented by Mafoyane and Seboni.

4.10.9 History is only alluded to as in indigenous poetry, and not related as by a historian, e.g.

Mogakabe, wa palama lotlharapa phakela,
Wa tlharapa ka bogosi o sa tsaya chaka; ... (p. 94)

[Black and white crow, you ascended the dry branch
of a tree early,
you branched off with the government without a
sword;]

This alludes to Gen. Smuts's victory in taking over the leadership of government in September 1939 from Gen. Hertzog over the 1939 war issue. The black and white crow is the picture of the general in parliamentary attire, while the dry branch is the premier's rostrum. We conclude that this poem clearly suggests a trend, namely, the composition of modern poetry in the spirit, conceptions, and techniques of indigenous poetry.

4.10.10 Original compositions on cultural creations are featured and combine indigenous and modern techniques too. We have in mind Koloi ya Molelo, the train, for instance, also referred to by praise-names, metaphorical as well as descriptive. In reading this poetry all senses are exercised. One sees the milliped that glides along the steel road, the carrier-by-night that carts for poor and rich. In the previous paragraph J.C. Smuts's character was observed by the olfactory sense -

senkgane senkgela-batho.

General Smuts was a gatherer of people, Bareki also was, and now the train is

phutha-dichaba o beile batho mokawana (p. 83)

[gatherer of nations has placed them in a group].

There is no doubt in our mind that the poets here have learned from indigenous poetry and we recall our closing

remark in 4.6.11 that it might not be wise or necessary or even possible to compose Tswana poetry successfully in disregard of indigenous techniques.

4.10.11 The subjects of this poetry are widely varied. The wailing of the donkey is a strong appeal to the S.P.C.A. and to christian sentiment, ending:

> Beng ba me, a ko lo mpeele dipelo
> Barena ba me, nngotlelang dititeo.
> Nkile ka nna pitse ya Morena,
> A fologa ka nna Jerusalema (p. 70)

The donkey is referred to as 'long-eared one' - Tsebeditelele. The reader has to deduce from the picture and the allusions that the subject is a donkey. We have noted earlier that this is how indigenous composition works. Our modern composer employs this technique, which Mafoyane and Seboni did not do. We translate the above quotation before proceeding to analyse form:

> [My masters, be patient with me,
> My lords, reduce my chastisement.
> Once I was the Lord's horse,
> He went down on me to Jerusalem]

The uniaxial feature of the third and fourth lines, the biaxial form of the first and second lines : these speak for themselves. Like indigenous poetry this poem varies the form of the verses. There is no rigidity of form. An attempt at a rhyme-scheme is evident, which in the above stanza succeeds only as a pararhyme. Quite evidently, with further chiselling, Moabi Kitchin could

do with all the stanzas what he did with the second and the fourth. These last feature an accomplished aabb scheme, thus:

Diphologolo di sirelleditswe,
Kafa go nna molao o repisitswe;
Ba me barena ba ntira go rata ——
Go sita kang le one malata tota. (p. 70)

[Animals are protected
With regard to me the law is lax;
My lords do with me as they like -
What if even servants do!]

4.10.12 The morpheme-rhyme above is accomplished. What is more, in point of tonetic and duretic elements the rhyme is perfect. Two forms that rhyme correspond in meaning, and the other two do not, in the lines above. We find both styles in the anthology under consideration, as we find in Kgwedi ya Phatwe (the month of August), page 75, fourth stanza as against the rest for instance. There are unmistakable signs of both the indigenous and the modern trends in this anthology. Neo Kitchin also rhymes successfully, expressing the sheep's appreciation of protection from the fox by the dog -

Ke thusiwa fela ke ntša,
Ka Monkgwe oa e tshaba,
O na a tlaa re nyeletsa,
Ka ke monna wa go tlhaba. (p. 103)

[I am helped only by the dog
since the fox fears it,
he would exterminate us
since he is a man who slaughters]

4.10.13 This last poem is very simple. But it is not just telling either. We are confronted with a sheep counting its blessings - in the simple way of a simple and tame animal. This is creation. In like manner, according to Moabi Kitchin, the fox counts its misfortunes, such as -

Ga ke bewe sebete, Monkgwe wa dipholoogolo!
Le fa go dutsweng gone, go dutswe fela ka nna ——
Monkgwe wa dibatana! Ke ntshitswe duso-logolo
Ga twe le ke le bathong, mokgwa ke gana ka one.
(p. 52)

[I am hated, Fox of the animals!
Even where they are seated, they talk about me ——
Fox of the beasts of prey! I am ever revealed
It is said even were I among people, my manner I keep]

The poet is straining to employ end-rhyme, while faithful to the technique of parallelism. The pararhyme n-na/one may be attributable to a misprint or a deliberate variation. But the effort to rhyme is evident.

4.10.14 People are also urged in poetry, to emulate the ant in unity. The drama of ant life is simply presented -

Di raletswe ke noga e sa itse,
E itlhoma e ka di pitlelela
Tsa e fatalalela jaaka pitse
Di se na sepe le e betlelela. (p. 107)

[A snake cut across them not knowing
Thinking it could crash them,
They pulled like horses
Not bothered even if it made a wry face.]

In perfect abab rhyme, which is sustained right through this poem of Neo Kitchin, in a logical sequence of events, this drama is seen and contemplated intellectually. The snake thought. Its face got wry. How many snakes are there not in life that 'thought' likewise, were attacked likewise, and likewise turned wry! The meaningful title of the poem is Ditshoswane - barwa seoposengwe: (p. 106) [Ants, sons of unity].

4.10.15 We have referred to the Kitchin brothers and not to the other co-author, J.M. Lekgetho. Lekgetho contributed part one, indigenous poetry, e.g. Bareki, already discussed. It is he who organised Bareki and other poems in stanzas and verses, features which he learned from Western European poetry, without sacrificing indigenous form and spirit. All told, the trio towers in the category of poets who record indigenous poetry and place it alongside their own compositions. On the whole these poets bring us nearest to modern trends, while retaining indigenous techniques. So far these authors have had the greatest success in filling old bottles with fresh wine. They not only recorded indigenous poetry, but understood its spirit and form.

More on Form

4.11.1 The inherent boundary of a verse is sense. Sensible phrasing is the basis of verse structure. On this basis we contended that line 23 in 4.4.2(i) makes no sense, since nala (comfort) is separated from its

qualificative ya gae (of the home). On this basis we accepted line 17 of 4.4.2(ii) as conveying full sense. Similarly, lines 13 and 14 of 4.4.2(i) can bear comparison with the corresponding lines 11 and 12 of 4.4.2 (ii). Let us cast these lines here:

13 Motho kwa Mmamonne tsopane
14 O godile mokukutlêla
15 Ke modimako wa bo Mamoenyana.

Firstly, certain phrases must remain intact as follows:

Subject	: motho kwa Mmamonne	: the man at Mmamonne
Predicate:	(ke) tsopane	: (he) is solid pot clay
	o godile	: (he) is full-grown
	(ke) mokukutlêla	: (he) is a giant
	(ke) modimako	: (he) is a colossus
Qualificative:	wa bo Mmamoenyana	: of Mmamoenyana's clan.

4.11.2 It is understandable that phrases will not be of the same length, but of irregular lengths. Hence, internally a verse has its inequalities, especially where only sense and not necessarily metre is a conscious determinant. The grouping of the phrases into verses differs from performer to performer, even as in the field we came across a reciter whose lines differed from those above (4.4.2(ii)). The fact is that all the phrases remain intact in both renderings. Our rule should therefore be that any reading of poetry which violates natural speech is likely to be faulty. Therefore an effort has to be made, to understand Tswana phrasing. Then, whether you read as under (a)

or (b) or (c) or (d) hereunder you still have a legitimate verse each time -

(a) Motho kwa Mmamonne / tsopane /
(b) Motho kwa Mmamonne / tsopane / o godile /
(c) Motho kwa Mmamonne / tsopane / o godile / moku-kutlêla
(d) Motho kwa Mmamonne / tsopane / o godile / mokukutlêla / modimako wa bo 'Mamoenyana /.

While keeping phrases and nodes intact, recorders may find different verses, but not capriciously. These phrases constitute a study. There are predicative ones among them. Some of these have their predicative formatives, others not, e.g.

tsopane for ke tsopane

as against

o godile, which cannot be sensibly rendered without the predicative concord o. It is not correct Tswana to start a datum with a form whose predicative formative is lacking. For instance we could not start any verse with -

tsopane, meaning 'he is pot clay'.

The internal ellipses knit the axes together in this manner.

4.11.3 What we have said above goes for modern poetry too, and as already stated, accounts for the irregularity of verses. An instance from our poem culled from Sam. S. Mafoyane's volume reviewed in 4.8.2 above should suffice -

Moutlwiwa wa Modimo (p. 27)

Stanza 1

/Go ne go na le monna/
/A bidiwa Elekane;/
/Khumagadi e le Hana,/
/Ba godile / ba tsofetse/

[There was a man
he was called Elkanah;
The wife was Hannah
They were grown up, they were aged.]

Correct phrasing is maintained. But there would be no harm in rendering the first two lines as one -

/Go ne go na le monna / a bidiwa Elekane/,

or the last line as two different verses, for purposes of emphasis, ceremony or solemnity:

Ba godile
Ba tsofetse

as long as the phrasing is maintained intact.

4.11.4 On the other hand, we are not inclined to accept the mould of the seventh and eighth stanzas:

Stanza 7

lines 3 A ithaya o bidiwa
and 4 Ke Eli, Mo-mo-godise.

[He thought he was called
By Eli, his guardian]

The descriptive ke Eli belongs with the verb o bidiwa. Even if it meant having only three lines in this stanza, lines 3 and 4 above might with profit have been one line only -

A ithaya / o bidiwa / ke Eli / Momogodisi/.

If it means something to the eye to have an equal number of lines, such lines should yet bring the truth out correctly. It might have helped here if line 4 had not started with a capital letter. This is a difficult task and it is to the credit of the author that there is no punctuation mark at the end of line 3, which suggests that he sensed that lines 3 and 4 belonged together. By similar reasoning one finds that the last word of line 3 of the eighth stanza belongs together with the first word of line 4, thus:

Bua Morena .....

[Speak Lord .....]

This phrase is a whole, and splitting it runs the risk of being misunderstood, for instance to mean 'speak and say, 'Lord''.

4.11.5 The above are not the only forced forms in this poem. The rhyme of the seventh stanza is an assault on the intention. The last substantive, mo-mo-godise, is agentive, and yet the agentive suffix -i is not used, just to attempt an imperfect pararhyme with the final -ê of the last word of line 2, Samoêlê, and with that, meaning collapses, for the stem -godise is predicative and subjunctive, rather than nominal and agentive.

From the above we find that a Tswana verse is more than just a breath-group of words. This stands to reason

because performers' breaths differ. A Tswana verse is in addition a unit of datum, a sense-unit building on to the complete stanza. It is not necessarily a sentence.

CHAPTER 5

MODERN TSWANA POETRY (Contd)

Final stage

5.1.1 We pass the stages of recording indigenous compositions, juxtaposing indigenous and modern compositions in school readers, compiling volumes of indigenous and modern compositions, and proceed to the final stage in the development of Tswana poetry, as we see it, namely, the publication of volumes of modern poetry.

5.1.2 We might introduce this stage with the words of certain figures threatening to dominate the scene. First we quote N.H. Kitchin, one of the trio that compiled Boswa jwa Puo (4.10.1 above):

> Mo bošeng go lemosega sentle fa re ile ra palama setlhare kwa godimo ra naya bagodi tlotla go ba kwalela mebako mme ra lebala go baya motheo o o nonofileng ka go kwalela bana ba rona ka dilo tse dipotlana. Go latolesega gore ga re ka ke ra nna bakwadi ba ba ikanyegang ka ga re a ka ra ikanyega mo go tse dinnye pele. Re itlhaganetse jalo ka gobo re fitlhetse go se na sepe se se kwadilweng, mme ka go ngomoga pelo, ra ipona e bile re ile go khabuela kwa tenteng bobe. Ke sa ntse ke tla lo atswa ka sengwenyana sekai mme le lona babadi lo tla bona fa ke le kgakala thata le go reta setšheše.

[Of late it is clear that we climbed the tree from the top. We honoured our elders and wrote their praises, forgetting to lay a solid foundation by writing our children praises on small matters. It is debatable that we can turn out to be faithful writers since we have not been faithful in small things first. We hurried to praise elders only because there was no literature, and because of pity, we plunged very deep. I shall entertain you with a small example from which the readers will realise that I am still far from competent to poetise on a flower.]

And then follows the poem intended for children:

1. Ditšhešenyana dintle,
2. Di kgabisitse naga
3. Ka mebala e mentle,
4. Ke mejo ya dithaga.

\- - -

5. Di bitsa dintsinyana
6. Go ya go tsaya matshe,
7. Ee, le matutenyana
8. A go dira dinotshe.

\- - -

9. Ditšhešenyana dintle,
10. Di kgatlha le badimo
11. Mme ba opela sentle,
12. Lobopo lwa Modimo.

\- - -

13. Ee, le bana ba batho
14. Ba di šeile maina
15. A supang lorato,
16. Ba di ntshetsa dipina.

[1. Lovely little flowers,
2. adorning the veld
3. in beautiful colours,
4. are the food of weaver-birds.

\- - -

5. They invite little flies
6. to fetch sweetness,
7. yes, little juices too
8. to make honey.
- - -
9. Lovely little flowers,
10. please the gods too
11. and they sing so well,
12. the creations of God.
- - -
13. Even people's children,
14. have given them names
15. that show love,
16. and composed songs on them]

(Wamba p. 13)

5.1.3 The great significance of the above quotation is that N.H. Kitchin leads a movement among contemporary bards, a movement of constructive dissatisfaction, not with somebody else, but with oneself. There is a matured abab rhyme scheme, refuting current belief that Tswana cannot be rhymed. Whereas we noted the failure to rhyme successfully in the works of some authors of the preceding stage, we now enter an era when the bard apparently knows the theory of rhyme and with his first attempt at junior poetry, succeeds with fully-fledged feminine rhyme. This is children's poetry and the spirit remains within reach of children, while making them more observant of, more respectful to natural creation, more reverential to the Creator. The spirit of the third stanza however is somewhat regrettable, savouring of the conflicting religious practices of the twentieth century, when Christian people are known to believe in God and yet to offer sacrifices to the gods

too. Line 9 and its appositional axis, line 12, are elevating:

Ditšhešenyana dintle
- - -
Lobopo lwa Modimo

[Lovely little flowers
- - -
Creations of God]

But that this should please even the gods - le badimo - raises pleasing the gods almost to the level of synonymity with pleasing God, and to a discerning spirit this represents bathos : to acknowledge God as Creator and in the same breath place Him in the same bracket as gods. Such errors must be expected. Probably they are rather the products of a confused religious environment than the deliberate makings of the spirit of our author.

5.1.4 We might note the views of another figure, this time one to whom we attributed drama, viz. J.M. Ntsime. In the same issue of Wamba, and on the same page, showing that the Editor of the magazine intended to give the views of Kitchin and Ntsime on poetry a prominent place, J.M. Ntsime divides his article under four subheadings: Language lives. What is poetry? Who is the poet? The aim of poetry. He notes that Tswana poetry must change as does that of other living languages and concludes -

> Ka moo maboko a gompieno a tshwanetse go farologana le a segologolo. Fa a sa farologane puo ya Setswana e tla bo e sa tshele. (p. 14)
>
> [Therefore today's poetry must differ from that of olden times. If it does not differ, then the Tswana language is not alive].

5.1.5 Ntsime also sees poetry of olden times as poetry of honour, honour accorded some hero. Themes and motives have since changed and -

> Gompieno re lemoga fa leboko e le itshenolo ya maikutlo a a tebileng kwa botennye, maikutlo a a kgoberilweng ke kakanyo e e phunyeletsang jaaka mmitlwa ya moselesele.
>
> [Nowadays we realise that poetry is the self-realisation of deep feeling stirred by contemplation as penetrating as the thorns of a mosêlêsêlê tree]

He goes on to testify that when you see a flower it reveals its Creator. So does the setting of the sun reveal the Creator of everlasting colourfulness. The poet is someone with certain rare gifts of understanding, gifts of fascinating expression, pure utterance, and penetration of what life really is. Like Shakespeare's saying that, "the lunatic, the lover, and the poet are all of imagination compact", Ntsime attributes so much feeling to the poet, such miracles as the poet's feelings taking shape spontaneously, that it appears as though the poet is presumed not even to think. He must be as good as lunatic. Ntsime says,

... ka mmoki ... e bile a sa nagane .... (p. 16)

[.. since the poet does not even think ..]

words and colour spontaneously combine with his mixed feelings.

5.1.6 Although one is not an artist, one cannot readily accept that art can be produced without some fore- and after-thought. N.H. Kitchin must have given a great deal of thought to the selection of his rhyme-words, before or after finalising them. And indeed his rhyme-words, listed according to the numbering of the verses, are an excellent study -

1. . . . . dintle [din:tɬɛ]
2. . . . . mentle [men:tɬɛ]
3. . . . . naga [na:xa]
4. . . . . dithaga [ditha:xa]

The rhyme is successful in form, intonation, and duretics. We enter a phase where bards contemplate poetry and engage in criticism themselves.

L.D. Raditladi

5.2.1 Raditladi's volume, Sefalana sa Menate, (The Granary of Niceties), contains thirty-five modern compositions covering a diversity of themes: patriotism, history, material culture, landscape, love, animal life and natural phenomena.

5.2.2 As we found in the preceding chapter that conflict was a much used device or subject in indigenous poetry, so do we find it persistently featured in Raditladi's poetry. The World Conflict of 1939-1945

is narrated in nine six-verse stanzas with a fresh aspect of the conflict in each stanza. A thundering arose, a thundering of spears and canon when -

3. Bana ba Yoropa ba ipetsa dihuba,
4. Komanô ya bônê ya utlwala le kwano;
5. Ba re, lefatshe lêno opê gaaa le sema,
6. Banna ba Yoropa bôtlhê baa le lema. (p. 31)

[3. Children of Europe drummed their breasts
4. Their quarrel was heard here too;
5. They said, nobody has created this land,
6. All men of Europe must plough it]

Nothing pictures the egotism and self-confidence of the men of Europe better than their drumming their breasts so hard that Africa heard too. No reasoning is more powerful than that nobody has created this land, all must plough it. This message is still beyond the reach, in practice, of many a Christian nation. Lines 5 and 6 have consequently become a popular quotation among pupils of the subject, Tswana. Raditladi is quotable.

5.2.3 The imagery develops when -

7. Majeremane ba tšwa modutla wa kgetse,
8. Ba itshema maruarua ba kometsa batho,
9. Le Mapolane ba ba meletsa metse .... (p. 32)

[7. The Germans turned into a leaky bag, (never satisfied)
8. Turned into whales and swallowed people,
9. They swallowed the villages of the Poles too ...]

The metaphor of a whale that is a leaky bag is indeed powerful imagery. The Germans were not going to be content with swallowing one nation. Their territorial

greed was insatiable. And with the imagery the conflict intensifies, now no longer generally but specifically against Poland.

5.2.4 And at this stage, with a rainbow-coloured shield, the children of the red soil thundered, and America and Africa heard. And so the conflict spread. Thereupon follows the conflict at Dunkirk as a result of which people lived in tunnels like snakes, while -

23. .... nonyane tsa baba di kala marung,
24. Di latlha mae a tsônê bogorogorong.

[23. .... birds of the enemy soared in the sky,
24. They shed their eggs in space].

Raditladi's patriotism is not to be awaited in vain for as the French slip and fall to the enemy -

26. Rona Maafrika mme ra ema matseba,
27. Kgodumo tsa lesêlêsêlê go lowa. (p. 32)

[26. We Africans then stood alert,
27. Encirclers of the mosêlêsêlê thorn tree, in the fight].

Kgodumo is a legendary animal able to draw you into its jaws as one sucks liquids, and that is what Raditladi makes of his own people in the conflict that continues to intensify.

5.2.5 And in the midst of the conflict there is humour too. There is absolute sincerity in the admission of African ignorance of European warfare, yet implicit willingness to learn. After all, it is already submitted that Africans are Kgodumo only in the thornbush country, and now -

31. Ditlhôbôlô ra di rwala mo magetleng,
32. Le bo "Quick march" ra ba gata re sa ba itse,
33. "Present Arms", tlhôbôlô ra e baa mo diphatleng,
34. "Attention" ra êma sekgomo 'a letsêtse; (p. 32)

[31. We bore our guns on the shoulders
32. We took the "Quick march" not knowing it,
33. At "Present arms" placed the guns before foreheads,
34. At "Attention" stood like cows in milk.]

5.2.6 Following upon the fall of Italy, the climax, there is counter-talking the first time, the anticlimax. The Germans threaten. Suddenly the Germans shiver -

43. Hitlara re kile ra utlwa a ipòlêla,
44. A re ke tladi e kileng ya tshosa ditšhaba,
45. Le basadi ya ba tlholela go lela.
46. Rona ra re phênyô ka matlhô o tla e leba,
47. Ka diatla yônê gônê gaa na go e tšhwara;
48. Majeremane ba roroma diphara! (p. 33)

[43. We heard Hitler boast
44. that he is the lightning that frightened nations
45. and forboded mourning for women.
46. We said he would only see victory
47. but never handle it.
48. The Germans' buttocks shivered!]

The African spear combined Mussolini and Japan, vanquishing them -

51. La etsa dinare la robakanya batho,
52. Hitlara la mo gadika jaaka phane, ...
53. Ka jêno ntwa ga eyô, go ituletswe fêla;
54. Bairakgang ga bayô, ba iphile lefêla. (p. 33)

[51. The spear broke up people like the buffalo
52. And fried Hitler like a worm.
53. Today war is no more, there is ease;
54. Contestants are no more, they have sacrificed themselves profitlessly].

The compound word of the last line, Bairakgang, seems to crown Raditladi's deliberate exploitation of the device of conflict : the end of the conflict is the end of the contestants. By this device our poet is brought, in point of spirit, into comparison with indigenous bards. His imagery is also in the class of the traditional.

5.2.7 Raditladi gives the impression that his World War II was virtually the sole responsibility of Africans, and perhaps in his heart of hearts the Tswana. He might have genuinely intended to portray or to make the share of his people prominent : but so, probably, would many a national poet act.

5.2.8 Like Ntsime and Kitchin, L.D. Raditladi contemplates, and expresses himself on the styles of poetic composition. A case in point is his poem -

Baboki ba Dikgosi (Raditladi 19-, p. 35)

[Praisers of Kings]

in which the flaws of fellow-bards are chastised in poetry, thus:

1. Babôki ba dikgosi basenyi,
2. Babôki ba rona balotlhanyi,
3. Ba šotla ka dikgosi ba tshêga,
4. Ba re kgomo thokwana ea raga
5. Thokwana e ragile le bagami
6. Banyana ba tsoga ba bopame. (p. 35)

[1. Praisers of our kings are at fault,
2. Our praisers are sowers of dissension,
3. they mock at kings while they laugh
4. they say the brown cow kicks
5. brown cow kicked even the milkmen
6. so that next day children starved.]

Raditladi comments here on a metaphor that he alleges is applied in indigenous poetry, and therefore himself becomes a critic of poetry. We refer here to the metaphor of the kicking cow, of which metaphor he disapproves. His poem under review is therefore in the nature of a poem upon a poem, in the nature of literary criticism in poetic form.

5.2.9 He disapproves of reference to kings as whales, against which he retorts sharply:

9. Ba re, kgosi tsa rona maruarua.
10. Kgosi tsa rona nnaa ga di a re rua?
11. A di iretswe go kometsa batho
12. Kana pusô ya kagiso le batho? (p. 36)

[9. They say our kings are whales.
10. Do not our kings rear us?
11. Are they there to swallow people,
12. or for peaceful government and for people?]

He satirically warns the bards to go on laughing while their compatriots watch -

15. Mosong go tla bo go le bosigo
16. O tla tswa setilong seo sa gago ... (p. 36)

[15. In the morrow it will be night for you,
16. You will lose that position of yours ...]

He warns that to be a whale is not to be a king. It does not even frighten the governed. Instead it hardens their hearts -

Ditshêkô di se fele tsa batho (p. 36)

[Then there is no end to people's litigations]

5.2.10 On the positive side he has something to teach:

31. Babôki a ko ba ithutê go bôka,
32. A mafoko ba a tšwêsê dipaka,
33. Dikgosi ba di tshasê menate, (p. 36)

[31. Bards should please learn to praise,
32. they should dress their words in suits,
33. And paint the kings sweet].

And finally he appeals against the cunning of bards, comparable to that of the "snake":

46. Babôki tlhe a re se intsheng dinôga,
47. A re bokeng kgosi go tšhwanêtse,
48. Ga re ba malôba, re tswêlêtse. (p. 37)

[46. Bards, please, let us not turn into snakes
47. let us praise kings appropriately,
48. We are not as in days of yore, we have progressed.]

His imagery is respectably high, such as dressing praises in suits (dipaka : pakke klere), and covering the kings with praise. At times the chastising is severe, such as against turning themselves into snakes. The allusion here to the wily serpent of Eve's day is apparent, and also points to Raditladi's employment of the device of association of ideas. The allusiveness of his poetry will become more apparent as we proceed. We recall the drama of the snake recorded in 4.10.14 above.

5.2.11 Having examined Raditladi's attitude to kings and their praises, we refer hereunder to two of his own compositions. His praise on Isang a Lentšwe is a case in point. Isang is simply a hard nut to crack for all Botswana. He has taught people to sink boreholes for drinking water and they love him, and consequently chiefs' conferences are held in Isang's capital, Mochudi. He has led in Kgatla education and is worthy of emulation. And -

24. Ke lentšwêtshipi la go nêwa moagi nêô. (p. 41)

[24. He is the ironstone that is worthy of being presented to a builder]

Isang's exile to Mosomane is regretted by the poet, while reconditely as well as metaphorically couched -

25. Nnaa kgomo ya Bakgatla ba e digetse kae?
26. Selelo sa yônê se utlwala Mošomane;
27. Maši a yônê a tla tlhôka go gamêlwa gae,
28. Go kgorisa basadi le basimane. (p. 41)

[25. Where have they thrown the cow of the Bakgatla?
26. Its lowing is heard from Mosomane.
27. It will be impossible to milk it at home,
28. to feed women and boys]

He uses the metaphor of a cow for a chief too, but not that of the brown cow that kicks the milkman. His cow's milk is food for boys and women, as though the exile was because of being such a good milker and therefore unjustified. And here the onesidedness of our bard comes out. Although Raditladi refers to fellow-bards as sowers of dissension, he himself makes this error when referring to a man who brought an exile upon himself as the big forehead that beat even hot water -

33. Phatlakgolo palêla le mêtse aa fisang. (p. 41)

This can only invite the wrath of opponents or the law.

5.2.12 The poem Isang a Lentswe is a sustained allusion to the praise of Pilane (Schapera p. 55) -

line 40. Pilane ketlapa lantswêpilwane,
41. ketlapa le lebotšhêlêdi, Pilane,
42. baletshwari botlatloga menwana;

[40. Pilane is a rock of ironstone,
41. he is a slippery rock, Pilane;
42. those who touch it will lose their fingers.]

Isang, being a great-grandson of Pilane, has a hereditary right to the praise. Once more Raditladi distinguishes himself as the poet upon the poetry of yore, saying of Isang:

1. Lentswe legolo le namile Botswana,
2. Bafudi ba lônê ba fêla dinala.
3. Baleki ba lônê ba latlha menwana,
4. Ba robega masufu ba sa ikaêlêla. (p. 40)

[1. Large rock spreading over Botswana,
2. its shooters lose their nails;
3. those who attempt it lose their fingers;
4. their upper arms break without being intended to.]

As already seen earlier, Raditladi exploits the device of conflict fully to plot his poetry, in the same manner as we observed in indigenous poetry. In the process he does not succeed to conceal a challenge to rivals, thus fanning the fire of dissension which he disapproves of. Literature must be true to life. It must be life itself, and it seems that conflicts must be seen for what they are and faithfully reported.

5.2.13 Even in his composition on Kgama, the Christian, conflict rings right through, and is the golden thread of causality from start to finish. Kgama was born when the Ndebele threatened the Tswana, but grew into a rock, a bigger rock than an outsize pack-ox, and settled at rest in his country. War broke out. Guns zoomed and horse-hoofs clattered, but Kgama did not stir, waiting for those who cared to shoot to do so:

13. Kgosi Kgama ênê a sala fêla a ba êmêtse
14. Gore ba ba lalang ba fula ba fulê.
(Kgosi Kgama, p. 37)

[13. King Kgama remained still, waiting for them,
14. That those who would shoot should shoot]

Humorously the flight of the Ndebele is dramatised as they sensed trouble and said:

16. "A hê jaana Kgosi Kgama ga ka mpone!
17. A ruri Kilamolelô ga ka mpone! (p. 37)

[16. "This way King Kgama will surely see me!
17. And indeed Kilamolelo* will see me!"]

The exclamation points to fright and resultant flight.

5.2.14 But this was not the end of conflict, for jealous rivals with spiked tongues incensed Kgama's father, Sekgoma, causing a quarrel between him and his son, Kgama. The result was a split between the two. Upon Kgama's death in 1923 ("Naintin twenti terii") it is Raditladi who judges Kgama perfectly innocent, saying -

Ga o na le mmala, ngwana wa ga Sekgoma;
Sebôla se fa kae, morêna wa setšhaba? (p. 38)

---

* Kilamolelo, lit. fire-hater

[You have no stain, son of Sekgoma;
Where is the blemish, chief of the nation?]

To him Kgama is a statesman of Mošweše's proportions. They crack rocks when they combine, they guard the fords. The allusion, once more, to the conflict over the ford which was the theme of the praises of Tshaka and Motsile I, already treated, recurs. He says:

47. Kgosi, wena le Mošwêšwê le a lekana,
48. Lo tlêrêbêtsa mantšwe fa lo kopana,
49. Lo lela lo rakanêla letsibôgô. (p. 38)

[47. King, you and Mošweše are equal,
48. You crack rocks when you combine,
49. When you weep and join hands for the ford]

This is not all that illustrates Raditladi's persistent association of ideas. We refer to the history of Mošweše. But, like Kitchin in his attributing to the jackal a wish that the heavens were near so that he could report his complaints against man, Raditladi wishes the heavens were near that he could build Kgama a hut there. We refer to the lines -

50. Legodimo le koo ruri le le gaufi
51. Ke ka bo ke agela kgosi Kgama ntlwana* (p. 38)

[Were the heaven near I would build King Kgama a hut .....]

5.2.15 Although Raditladi makes the errors that he criticises, he must be credited with conscious contemplation of poetic themes and styles. This contemplation,

* Cf. M.S. Kitchin's Mahumapelo a ga Phokoje, lines 1-4 of the first stánza, translated thus:

[Indeed were there a telephone connection with heaven I would report to the Creator, that He hear, and help, and warn man; we are perishing because of man and his dog.]

in Boswa jwa puo (op. cit.)

appears to be a necessary concomitant of the inspiration that possesses a poet and leads to composition. Some forethought or afterthought is at least necessary for a poet. Raditladi comes nearest to the excellence of spirit and imagery of indigenous poetry.

5.2.16 Raditladi gives regularity of form to his poetry. Kgosi Kgama is in nine stanzas of seven lines each, in the rhyme scheme abbcdde. Isang a Lentšwe is in six stanzas of six lines each, in the rhyme scheme ababcc. He rhymes full words (kae/kae, mang/mang), morphemes (Isang/fisang, Mošomane/basimane), and syllables (Bakgatla/batla, mmôka/tsêtsêlêka). His rhythm is often so exact as to suggest balancing of parts, e.g.:

2. Bafudi ba lônê ba fêla dinala (12 syllables)
3. Baleki ba lônê ba latlha menwana. (12 syllables)
(5.2.12 above)

He operates linking with synonyms, thus attaining variation of form while repeating and elaborating an idea, e.g.

Ga o na mmala, ngwana wa ga Sekgoma
Sebôla se fa kae, morêna wa setšhaba? (5.2.14)

Mmala and sebôla are synonyms, and are linking words. The balancing of parts is self-evident in the above lines, e.g.:

Ga o na mmala// ngwana wa ga Sekgoma, etc.

5.2.17 We have repeatedly referred to Raditladi's loyalty to the indigenous spirit and form while showing unmistakable tendencies to European technique, such as rhyme. This does not detract from his originality, which is revealed even when he composes a poem upon a poem. Raditladi is an artist, conscious of a calling to prophesy, to chastise, and yet to maintain an aesthetic level worthy of comparison with what is good in great literatures. While careful to make no extravagant claims for Raditladi, we would be doing our investigation, and the study of Tswana literature, a disservice if we did not place him above his group, namely the composers of original modern verse. It is not weakness on the part of Raditladi, it is in fact a strong point, that he consciously copied from indigenous poetry and from Western European poetry. He is conservative-progressive. And this is the crux of Raditladi's modernity. He reminds one of the Afrikaans poets of the forties, that is, of the fifth decade of this century, of whom is said:

> Hierdie digters sluit veral in hul vroegste werk aan by die Dertigers, maar tree weldra (I underline) duideliker op die voorgrond as oorspronklike en afsonderlike persoonlikhede. (Van der Walt p. 74)

5.2.18 Beyond balanced parts the lines below are interesting in the study of their nodes -

/Lěn̄tswě / lěgō̲lǒ / lě nămī̲lě / Bǒtswān̄ă/
/Bă fūdǐ/bă lō̲nă / bă fēlă / dinālă/
/Bălēkǐ/ bă lō̲nĕ / bă lātlhă/ mĕnwānă/
/Bă rŏbēgă/ măsūfŭ / bā̲ să / ǐkă̆êlē̲lă/

(5.2.12 above)

There are four nodes in each line. The short-long-short verse-foot predominates. The nodes are usually complete words or phrases or word-groups as above. An examination of his Pula (Rain, p. 24) also reveals that Raditladi's lines of poetry are usually inclined to be matched in number of nodes. This appears to be a tendency towards exact metre. What remains is to chisel the nodes into proper verse-feet. Comparing the metaphor of Raditladi's Pula with the perspicuity of Mafoyane's Pula (4.8.7), on the one hand, and Leseyane's Pula (4.5.2, indigenous), on the other, quite clearly Raditladi is the one modernist who has learned from indigenous composition. And with this we may now proceed to two other modernists, S.A. Moroke and G.C. Motlhasedi.

S.A. Moroke

5.3.1 S.A. Moroke has two reasons to write poetry. Firstly, he is a practising minister of religion of the Methodist Church of South Africa, and his literary efforts span a much wider congregation than his church. Secondly, he is conscious of coming from a family of bards, as he states in his preface to Matšhotlho, Digests, his volume of modern poetry. Had he but

collected some of the poetry of his family and learned from it what awaits to be learned! It is not enough that he regrets that his forbears left nothing written. He ought to have investigated further. He lost what Raditladi gained.

5.3.2 Moroke's poetry features a diversity of themes : natural phenomena, religion, animal life, history, the culture of present generations such as the inauguration of a school; he writes on the abstract values, such as pleasure, love, nostalgia. But perhaps, in fairness to him, one should place first his conscious urge to prophesy to his readers. And in this connection we refer to his poem -

Barutegi ba Afrika (p. 32)

[The educated Africans]

Immediately in the steps of the Great Prophet he says:

1. Lo lesedi la lefatshe,
2. Matlhasedi a letsatsi
3. Re inoleng mo lefifing,
4. Lo re iseng kwa leseding!
5. Re je maungo a thuto
6. Boitumelo le lorato! (p. 32)

[1. You are the light of the earth,
2. rays of the sun,
3. lift us from darkness
4. and take us to the light,
5. that we enjoy the fruits of learning,
6. namely contentment and love]

5.3.3 Enlightened people evidently have a political duty. And here he dramatises -

7. Foko le re: "Iketleng tlhe.
8. Nako ga e ise e fitlhe,
9. Lo seka lwa ithusa,
10. Lo seka lwa ipusa!
11. Pitsa ga di ise di butswe;
12. Ga se kgale lo tsetswe!" (p. 32)

[7. Word says: "Do be steady.
8. Time has not yet arrived,
9. Do not as yet help yourselves,
10. Do not govern yourselves!
11. The pots are not yet done;
12. It's not long since you were born!"]

In this respect Moroke is nationalistic and not individualistic. He is his people's mouthpiece against popular political platitudes that have proved absurd, such as the last line above, which gives the reason for line 10. The metonymy of line 11 raises the standard of his diction, but otherwise the stanza is devoid of imagery, plain and transparent, as well as lacking in aesthetic utterance.

5.3.4 Moroke falls into the error of trying to reason his reader into an attitude or even simply ordering him into it, instead of capturing an experience which can in turn be captured by the reader. He immediately supplies the answer to the persuasion in lines 7 to 12 above, saying:

13. Tsatsi kgale le tlhabile,
14. Ma-Afrika lo rutegile!
15. Pitsa kgale di kgakgatha
16. Di goteditswe ka thata. (p. 33)

[13. The sun is long up,
14. Africans you are enlightened!
15. Pots have long been simmering,
16. being thoroughly heated]

There is no difficulty for the reader to experience. It must be deduced that the poet experienced nothing either. He had but a story to tell. The conflict which is the theme of Raditladi's poetry, is conspicuous by its absence or weakness.

5.3.5 In the fifth stanza the enlightened people are required to make bridges for the less fortunate to cross the dark river of Africa, and not to bow before hardships. But no river ever confronted anybody, nor did any difficulty ever arise. In the sixth stanza enlightened people are said to have scaled heights - mountains - and to have crossed rivers along the way to progress. These are the metaphors that should have built up the poem to give the narrative some semblance of reality. And, as if the rays of the sun are not stronger than lamps, the further persuasion comes -

35. Banna tsholetsang dipone,
36. Tšhaba di tle di di bone! (p. 33)

[35. Men, raise the lamps
36. that the nations see them]

5.3.6 Moroke attempts end-rhyme fairly well, trying the scheme aabbcc in this poem. He also uses morpheme rhyme correctly -

13. Tsatsi kgale le tlhabile,
14. Ma-Afrika lo rutegile! (5.3.4 above)

Occasionally he rhymes the unaspirated with the aspirated consonant -

25. Lo amogetse dithuto,
26. Agelang batho meratho. (p. 33)

5.3.7 All in all, Moroke must reconsider his thought-structure and imagery. He has not created. He has not exercised his reader's mind. He has not entertained. Even where for instance his title is a proverb with poetic features, he errs in the direction of diluting the poetic features and failing to capture universal experience. We refer to -

Moleta-ngwedi o leta lefifi (p. 29)

[Procrastination is the thief of time]

Firstly, the proverb is: moletangwedi ke moletalefifi. This is a poetic version. The fixity of proverbs must be retained as far as possible, especially in poetry. The poet is expected to be more sensitive to form than ordinary people. His expression should reveal this. It is therefore his duty to record the version that excels. Our bard goes on to persuade that this proverb is a word of advice (kgakololo), of truth (boammaarure), spoken by a hero (senatla). The statement is wealth (letlotlo). Once more there is no confrontation. There is no conflict between procrastination and promptitude, no conflict between light and darkness.

The entire 'poem' persuades to a certain attitude. There is no creation. Besides attempting to rhyme, there is no other formal device in the verse-structure.

5.3.8 The poem Moleta-ngwedi o leta lefifi is in nine stanzas of four lines each. Each stanza is a thought-unit. There is better thought-arrangement in this poem than in Barutegi ba Afrika. The device of linking or its opposite, straddling rhyme, is conspicuous by its total absence. And these are some of the things Moroke lost by neglecting to investigate indigenous poetry and Raditladi gained by keeping it in view while yet emulating European styles.

5.3.9 Moroke's telling makes him forget the form of his verse. He simply writes as he would tell, e.g.:

O na a sa tlhole a bonwa kwa kerekeng,
O na a tlhola a rapame mo diphateng,
A gateletswe thata ke bolwetse,
Lobaka lwa malatsi a le mantsi.

(Ga a swa Mothupi - p. 31)

[He was no more to be seen at church
He lay all day in bed
Being very ill
For many days]

There are no ellipses. The above reads as two sentences, the first line being one, and the rest the other. The word-order remains as in ordinary speech. There is more spirit at the arrival of Sephaphathi in Sephaphathi o boela gae, p. 30, where the youth is seen as -

Mosimane wa se-ema-ka-maoto
Thakadu ya sefala-ka-dinala
Kgotsa a ke bona moswi-a-rula.

[Boy who stands on his legs
Antbear that digs with its claws
Or do I see one risen from the dead?]

The poet now captures a picture. The praise-names are creations. They show some imagery. Otherwise Moroke tells. Moroke pleads. Moroke persuades. There is no experience of the beauty of the river Tite for instance. The poet simply wants to be believed that it is beautiful:

E gone Noka ya Tite,
Noka e ntle ka nnete. (p. 16)

[There is a river Tite,
a beautiful river indeed].

Moroke lacks intensity, fire, penetration. He leaves his reader ice-cold.

G.C. Motlhasedi

5.4.1 We have grouped Motlhasedi with Raditladi and Moroke as modern poets, composing their poetry under Western European influences. We have noted that within this group Raditladi combines the indigenous Tswana with the Western European tradition, thus towering in originality, in spirit and technique above others of the group. We have observed that Moroke is a rhymist scarcely getting beyond doggerels. We now find Motlhasedi attempting something different and new, the narrative poem. This is a difficult genre because of its sustained epic tenor, dramatic pulse, subtle plot and relevant detail.

5.4.2 From another angle, whereas Raditladi's and Moroke's poetry is lyrical, Motlhasedi's is objective. The narrative in such poetry is usually easy to grasp, easier than the abstruse metaphor of lyrics.

5.4.3 In view of the foregoing we shall refer only incidentally to the narrative. We shall not set ourselves first and foremost the task of tracing the source or course of the epic, Moepatshipi ga a bone (The iron digger does not see). In any case the author does not lead us into the secret of his sources for the story of King Kobe and his ministers of the christian religion, and hospitals. Hence our task seems to lie in the direction -

> .... om die boeiendheid van die verhaal juis te gaan soek, afgesien van die epiese feitlikhede, in die wyse waarop dié gegewe, poësie geword het, deur die besondere bou en verwoording van die verhaal ..... (Van der Walt, preface)

Has this datum made poetry or is it a poetic experience? Is this form poetic? Is its diction concentrated, aesthetic, artistic, penetrating, and therefore poetry?

5.4.4 The outstanding feature of this poet's style is his fastidious employment of parallelism -

1. Ke sa gopola sentlenyāna // ka tiragalo ya malōba (p. 5)

[I still remember clearly that incident of yore]

An attempt has been made to dress each verse with two axes. To anybody who knows that the Tswana traditional bard rather errs in the direction of too much variation

of style, it is at once clear that Motlhasedi errs at the diametrically opposite énd. Occasionally a triaxial verse occurs, such as line 4, page 5 -

Tsatsi legolo // lemogang // e ne e le ja Morena.

[Do understand, the great day was the Lord's day]

One could also quote the 27th line on page 56 -

Polokakgolo // fa ba bua // ga e thuse e a roba

[Perfect safety, so they say, does not help but injures]

which could also be read in four axes -

polokakgolo // fa ba bua // ga e thuse // e a roba

and the sixth last line on page 59 -

Nka ikana // mogaetsho // le jaana ba sa tshela.

[I can swear, compatriot, even now they still live]

What is the purpose of this form : to display form or to convey the spirit of the poem?

5.4.5 To attempt an answer to the above question we look into our poem itself. Chapter 7 (p. 40) opens with a letter from the girl Keneilwe to the young man Othusitse, saying, in prose, which we cast hereunder in the author's style of parallelism:

1. Morategi Othusitse // ga ke kwale a mantsi,
2. ke kopa selo se le sengwe // gore o tle go mpona.
3. A o ka re o nthata // wa ntima le motsotso // motsotsonyana o le mongwe?
4. Mphoentle ga a kitla a go kgoreletsa // o mo file ngwaga otlhe.
5. Le nna mpha letsatsi // kgwedi e fela ka Matlhatso.
6. Ke tla bo ke le Gaborone // ke jone borakanelo // mme ke bone o goroga.

7. Re ka adima ntlonyana // ntlo nngwe ya hotela
8. ka madi a mabotlana // re ka kgona go duela.
9. Tsatsi jeo ja Matlhatso // o lebelele nna koo,
10. ke tla itlisa nna ka sebele // fa o sa ka ke wa goroga.
11. Ke fetsa ka a le kalo // ke go atla mo phefong
12. Bakwadi ga ba babedi // ke nna fela // Keneilwe.

[1. Loved one Othusitse, I do not write much,
2. I ask for one thing : that you come and see me.
3. Can you if you love me, deny me a minute, only one little minute?
4. Mphoentle will never hinder you, you gave her a whole year.
5. Give me also a day, the month ends on Saturday.
6. I shall be at Gaborone, that is the rendezvous, and let me see you arrive.
7. We can borrow a hut, one of the hotel
8. with a small amount, we can manage to pay.
9. That Saturday, you expect me there,
10. I shall come personally, if you don't arrive.
11. That's all there is to say, I kiss you by air.
12. There are no two writers, but I alone, Keneilwe.]

5.4.6 What the writer casts in prose, can be recast unaltered as above, in biaxial and polyaxial lines. Is it probable that what he moulds in biaxial and polyaxial lines, can as well be cast unaltered in prose. We try lines 1 - 7, p. 5, casting in prose:

> Ke sa gopola sentlenyana ka tirogalo ya maloba. Re ne re le matshutitshuti, tsadikgolo le nnakgolo, tshimanyana le tshetsana, ntsho di gatana melala. Tsatsi legolo, lemogang, e ne e le ja Morena. Kgosi Kobe jaaka gale, tsatsi jeo je legolo, a dirile ka diatla, a e laditse fa fatshe, Tshetlhana-phohu e molema, naka lo tlhabile mmu.

As we see the position, there is nothing to add or re-arrange, to read the lines above in prose. The fact that only the capitals at the beginning of some of the poet's lines need be changed to small letters is far too little a difference between the verse and prose casts to be of any significance.

5.4.7 Can this be done with Raditladi's poetry for instance. We take lines from Mariga, p. 29 of Sefalana sa Menate:

1. Phefotsididi e tšwa Borwa,
2. Phefotsididi e tla fisa Masarwa,
3. E tsile go tshuba naga,
4. Sethunya, mmôgô le nôga.

[1. The cold wind comes from the South,
2. The cold wind will scorch the Bushmen,
3. It will scorch the veld,
4. The flower, as well as the snake.]

In prose this would be:

Phefotsididi e tswa Borwa. E tsile go fisa Masarwa,, le go tshuba naga le sethunya, mmogo le noga.

Immediately the repetition of phefotsididi in line 2 becomes unnecessary in prose. The repetition of the auxiliaries of scorch - e tla fisa (it will scorch : line 2), e tsile go tshuba (it will burn : line 3) - becomes unnecessary too. And as to line 4 it is a verse following and ending on a corresponding rhyme-word. We refer to naga and noga. This last line consists of two word-groups, both being the object of a predicate in line 3. Line 4 is not a sentence but a verse, with certain units

of correspondence with line 3. And may we add that the two lines are in perfect symmetry with each other -

Ĕ tsīlĕ / gŏ tshūbă / nāgă

sĕthūnyă / mmōgŏ / lĕ nōgă

We do not intend any extravagant claims of perfection for Raditladi's poetry at all, but it certainly shows tendencies from which to learn. His verses are not sentences, while Motlhasedi's generally are inclined to be.

5.4.8 We return to lines 1 to 7 of Motlhasedi once more. In our opinion they seem far too wordy, which is the feature that makes them prosaic. If we contend that there is no word-economy, at the same time no aesthetic repetition; that there is no concentrated expression, nothing recondite; that there is too much telling, even a warning to understand, which drowns any capturing of an experience; can we not deduce from these contentions that the poetic experience was not only extremely faint, but an unsuccessful effort is being made to make believe that it is being relived in writing? The opening line betrays this persuasion of the reader to be believed that this was in fact a true experience -

1. Ke sa gopola sentlenyana tiragalo ya maloba (p. 5)
1. [I clearly remember the incident of yore]

Is this clear remembering intended to justify relating an incident of long ago, maloba? Does it not turn

out to be an admission that the experience is not fresh, is not recaptured as on the day of occurrence? This is reproduction and not creation. And poetry is opposed to reproduction if creation is possible, even as an authority says -

> Die kunstenaar wil nie reproduseer nie; hy wil skep, en alle kunsskepping impliseer 'n aktiewe werksaamheid. (Grovè 1962, p. 1)

and further

> .... sonder die vorm geen inhoud, sonder inhoud geen vorm. (Grovè 1962, p. 4)

5.4.9 The form of this long poem - ten chapters, the chapters not divided into stanzas to point to stages of development in the narrative, most lines being biaxial, even where a single word might have been a more effective alternative verse, e.g.:

tshadikgolo	[old women
nnakgolo	old men
tshimanyana	little boys
tshetsanyana	little girls] -

seems exaggerated decoration. And that is what has led to the lack of concentrated utterance, and aesthetic effect.

5.4.10 Being very conscious that he is relating an incident of yore, maloba, the poet's active participation, and therefore his word's impact, remains low. His attributing proverbs to the Tswana, instead of directly applying them whenever applicable, confirms further that the narrative inclines to hearsay, to prose, and a

poetic experience is not captured. We instance in this regard, firstly, lines 24 and 25 -

24. Ka dipuo tsa bagolo ditswerere mo pineng,
25. Ga di rate go rakana, go ka nkga go sa bola

[24. According to adult sayings, adept singers in open competition
25. never want to meet, it will smell although nothing is rotten]

What if the smell without any rot had been pictured, as well as hot rivalry in actual open competition? The experience is taken out of our poem. We are left with the story, not the poetry. Secondly, we instance line 4 of chapter 10, page 55:

Batswana ba na le seane, tsie e fofa ka moswang.

[The Tswana have a proverb : the best work is done on a full stomach]

The poet loses impact for he is not himself saying so. He is relating that others say so. There is a sharper sting when Keneilwe arrives home from Durban (Thekwini), and her mother rushes to greet her while her father hesitates, and the poet captures the experience proverbially saying:

Mmangwana o tshwara thipa, o e tshwara ka bogale,
Le noga o a e tshwara .....

(p. 58, lines 23, 24)

[A mother grabs the knife, grabs it by the blade
Even a snake she grabs .....]

There is even more didactic effect when the poet's originality is shown by his capturing universal truth

aptly, saying for instance -

Kana lorato ke molemo, lo alafa baratani (p. 59)

[Love is medicine, it cures lovers]

5.4.11 A poet must show originality as when our poet here, refers to children as bo-ntsha-letsele-re-anye - [give-me-the-breast-to-feed]; and when he describes an elegant and diligent girl as -

Tlharapa ja moswaoeme, le-apaya-pitsa-e-butswe,
Le-e-apaya-le-sa-e-je ..... (p. 6)

[Twig that dies standing, cook-of-a-pot-that-does-get-done,
Cook-of-it-who-does-not-eat-it .....]

This is a tall girl who will remain sleek and elegant to death, who will not bow to anything lesser in her lifetime. When she tackles a task she sees it finished. She does not work for her own selfish ends. The imagery is rousing here, and it is the direct analysis of the bard. The creation of metonymical expression counts in the bard's favour. We have in mind -

line 13 dipitsana di ne di tšhatšhama ....
[the pots were frying]

line 16 .... dipitsana di sa butswa
[the pots were still cooking]

However, an important matter of poor tone arises here, that is, as to the poet's attitude to his audience. He seems to calculate that his reader will not understand his metonymy and goes to explain it, saying (p. 5):

line 17 Ija, pitsana ga di butswe, ke raya go butswa dinama

[Oh! pots don't cook, I mean the meat cooks].

This adds to the wordiness of the poem.

5.4.12 There is plenty of play with sounds and words, such as we find on page 40 -

Ga tsoga matsuetsue, matsubutsubu a tsubutla,
Makubukubu a kubuga .....

[Whirlwinds arose, storms upon storms raged,
Waves upon waves swelled .....]

We quoted a letter written by Keneilwe to Othusitse in 5.4.5 above. And now, what captures better the storms of conflicting loyalties to two girls, Mphoentle and Keneilwe, in the heart of Othusitse, than the rising whirlwinds, raging storms and swelling tides in the lover's heart?

5.4.13 The device of linking is richly distributed, e.g.

Mphoentle sesetlhana, ngwana o tlhapa ka lobese;
Ngwana o tlhapiswa ke phefo ..... (p. 13)

[Mphoentle is light-complexioned, the child washes with milk;
The child is lightened by air ....]

Linking is thus not merely a repetition of a segment, but the segment may undergo mutation to develop the idea as above. We refer to tlhapa linking with tlhapiswa. We find this also when a pun is effected where -

in line 13 ..... dikhurumelo di tshutshuma,
..... morakeng Tshutshumane (p. 5)

The name of the cattlepost is derived from the verb-stem -tshutshuma (to seethe with oil), viz. Tshutshumane, an original creation.

5.4.14 Rhyming is subtly operated e.g.

Fa o bona, morwarra, dilo dingwe di a lojwa.
Ga di buiwe felafela, di ntshiwa go le thata.
Gapegape, morwarra, fa o lebile mariga,
A latela letlhafula, ga go direge felafela
Ga go direge bontshong, go na le mongwe molao
(p. 22)

[As you see, brother, some things are concealed.
They are not just told, they are said when things are hard.
Again, brother, as you see winter,
it follows autumn, this doesn't just happen
it does not simply happen, there is some law.]

The repetition of morwarra, felafela, is intentional. The repetition of the class-prefix and concord di- in the first two lines, is intended to stress the significance of this sound which is indicative of multiplicity. It conveys meaning. Such repetitions rise to heights of excellence when linking is intended to effect a chiasmus at the same time -

..... lo itebe lo ipone
lo ipone lo itebe ..... (p. 6, lines 1, 2).

5.4.15 All told, the fascination ('boeiendheid') of the narrative poem is lost in the mist of its wordiness, and in the tendency to relate the story instead of trying to capture the experience. This datum ('dié gegewe')

would have been good poetry, were the form in which it is cast varied according to the varied emotions, according to development of thought, and were the wording more concentrated and therefore more effective. Modernists must indeed not make the mistakes which indigenous compositions avoid. Finally, this poet is placed with modernists since he attempts a Western European genre, the epic narrative.

Church hymns

5.5.1 And on this latter note, let us transfer our attention to modern church hymns. most of which are translations from and adaptations to Western European scale and harmony. The church as such is concerned with evangelisation and the hymns are in execution of divine injunction as found in Ephesians 5 : 18-30. It would seem impertinent to pretend that one can add any more to what is said of the spirit or intention of any acknowledged sacred hymn. And if spirit is such an important ingredient of poetry as we have found all the way to here, there should be every reason to include hymns in poetry.

5.5.2 Various religious denominations operate among the Tswana, e.g. the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika, the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the Lutheran Church. There are certainly many others.

5.5.3 The N.G. Kerk published its first volume of Tswana hymns, compiled by Rev. Emil Beyer of Mochudi, Botswana, and Rev. Henri Gonin of Moruleng, Transvaal, in 1889, and had it revised, enlarged and published again in 1907 under the title "Lifela tsa Sione tsa Tirelo ea Modimo mo Kereken le mo Sekolen". A further revision published in 1946 followed. Recently the Church in the different language groups combined efforts and produced a large volume containing 450 tunes sung in Southern Sotho, Northern Sotho, Tswana, Zulu and Xhosa, and different language-groups can recite psalms and hymns and spiritual songs simultaneously in five known indigenous tongues of South Africa, singing and making melody to the Lord. As a Bantu, I do acknowledge this contribution of 450 x 5, that is, 2250 poems in five volumes, to the Bantu languages of South Africa. And may we classify them amongst didactic poetry - also bearing in mind Rev. A. Sandilands' definition of a hymn (1.9.3) - as poems of prophecy? The spirit, the motive, namely to pray, to worship, and even as -

> .... they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna ....
>
> (St. Mark 11 : 9)-

to lead, and to follow, in song, and incidentally in poetry, is always evident.

5.5.4 Both the Hosanna and Dihèla tsa Tihèló Modimo feature an ode to Judgment day -

1. Tsatsi la dikgakgamatso
2. Tsatsi le le boitshegang
3. Fatshe lotlhe le tla tsoga
4. Ka le utlwa yo o tlang
5. Go sekisa go sekisa,
6. baswi le ba ba tshelang

(Hosanna 91(2))
(Dihela 377)

[1. Day of wonders,
2. Frightful day,
3. The whole world will awaken
4. Hearing one coming
5. to call to account, to call to account,
6. the dead as well as the living]

The ode has five stanzas, although the Hosanna has only one, the other four being found in the 1946 Tswana version. A popular rhyme-morpheme in the hymns is the nasal velar [ŋ] seen here in lines 2, 4, 6. Also featured here is the pararhyme dikgakgamatso/tsoga where the unvoiced alveolar affricate ts occurs in lines 1 and 3. Furthermore, line 5 is in the form of a refrain. Quite typically, sincerity is placed above accuracy in rhyming, spontaneity comes before scholarship in these poems. It is also possible to view lines 1 and 2, lines 3 and 4, as biaxial, line 5 also as biaxial, and to divide the contrasts in line 6 - baswi : the dead; le ba ba tsheleng : and the living - into two axes. According to Dihela tsa Tihèlō ea Modimo this hymn is the equivalent of hymn No. 607 from the Congregational Hymnal. No doubt the entire hymn in its five stanzas is a poem of prophecy.

5.5.5 Odes are very popular, e.g. the ode to Love, No. 198 in Hosanna, and the ode to the Bible in Sione yo o ôpêlang (No. 241). The Ode to Love - Lerato le le gaisang (Hosanna 198): Transcendent Love - is in the rhyme scheme abab, provided we concede again, as to stanzas 2 and 3, that slight deviations are permissible in the name of faithfulness to fact, that is sincerity. A stanza from the Ode to the Bible may be of interest.

1. Beibêl, kwalô lwa Modimo
2. ke lo re lo kwaletsweng
3. ke Modimo wa godimo
4. moya o' itshepileng.
5. Khumo yotlhe e go lôna,
6. kitso yotlhe e mo teng
7. go re etleeletsa jôna
8. phelo jo bo sa khutleng

(Hymn 241)

[1. The Bible, God's book,
2. it is written for us
3. by God on high
4. the Holy Spirit.
5. All wealth is in it,
6. all knowledge is therein,
7. to prepare us for it
8. for everlasting life]

In our judgment lines 1 and 2, 3 and 4, and 5 and 6 are rhythmically related, which can be expected since this is music. Furthermore we have a perfect rhyme-scheme in this stanza. Again the popular rhyme-morpheme, -ng, is richly featured, but this time the entire formation is a perfect ababcbcb, the b representing the -ng sound. It is the most prominent. Where we have a perfect rhythm-

pattern and rhyme-scheme, we may claim perfect symmetry of form. And this is the contribution of the church, that bards can fruitfully emulate. We doubt strongly that it is correct to contend that Tswana structure is not amenable to rhyming. We have seen it in indigenous works, in modern works, and now it attains its highest aspect.

5.5.6 Buka ya Merapêlô features a verse-essay in No. 38, and this genre is also quite popular. The story of the Wise men of the East is told in verse, two stanzas, and the wise men are praised as heroes -

1. Lepang ba botlhabatsatsi
2. Ba' latetseng naledi;
3. E' ba lereng go rapêla
4. Morêna wa barêna;
5. Ba mo ntshetsa dikabêlô,
6. Le fa e sa le ngwana;
7. Ke dinatla tsa tumêlô
8. Ba mmatla ka tlhoafalô.

[1. Watch out for the Eastern men,
2. Those following the star
3. Which brings them to worship
4. the King of Kings;
5. They bring him offerings,
6. although He is only a child;
7. They are heroes of faith
8. they seek him earnestly.]

5.5.7 The pairs of verses 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, are in perfect rhythmic equality. The pararhymes of lines 1-2, 3-4 are enough units of correspondence, and so are the morpheme-rhymes of lines 5, 7, 8, to lead us to find that these lines are fairly well attempted verses, duly

demarcated by rhyme-words, and knit into a stanza by thematic arrangement and thought-development. The theme is the Eastern men right through. The second pair of lines tells us which star they followed; the third pair tells us why they followed the star; and the fourth pair concludes that therefore they are heroes of faith.

5.5.8 We close this aspect with a brief reference to the Bible text as such as inspiration of composition. We have in mind a number that is an improvement on current Bible translation and therefore an important literary contribution, and this is number 288 in Hosanna and No. 7 in Dihela tsa tihèlõ ea Modimo. Psalm 46 : 10 says in Tswana:

Nnañ hela, me lo itse ha ke le Modimo (Bibela)

[Just stay, and know that I am God]

It is always doubtful that the God who orders people to live by the sweat of their brow can be expected to countenance their just staying. The Moffat translation says Lesang - 'let alone'. The English Bible on the other hand says, "Be still ....", which is different from letting alone, ignoring. Our hymn is certainly more in line with the spirit of diligence in the Bible as a whole, saying -

1. Didimalang le itse
2. Ke Modimo mo fatsheng;
3. Didimalang le reetseng
4. Foko le le kwadilweng

Prose says lesang (let alone), poetry says didimalang (be still). There must be a reason why poetry differed from the prose source. Poetry must be more precise. According to Dihela tsa Tihelo ea Modimo this stanza is perfectly rhymed abab, the last word in the third line being retse and not reetseng. Perhaps the compilers of the Hosanna, as also the reviewers of the 1946 Kopêlô, slipped up here and created a rhyme scheme in this stanza which is not a credit to the entire rhyme scheme. The intention and spirit however remain unimpaired.

5.5.9 Obviously the allusiveness of our hymns would constitute quite a study itself in order to fathom the meaning of the poetry. The words may therefore seem simple, but on closer examination constitute a part of a greater literature which has its reconditeness and depth, an important feature of poetry. The hymns are simple yet sublime.

Drama

5.6.1 To test whether there is poetry in Tswana dramas, we examine aspects of the works of L.D. Raditladi and J.M. Ntsime. These two dramatists stand out: Raditladi as a pioneer and persistent practitioner in this field; and Ntsime once more, as an investigator of a genre before practising it. Ntsime's preface to Pelo e ja serati, on the nature of drama, is concrete evidence. To date Raditladi has three original dramas

and a translation to his credit, while Ntsime has two compositions.

5.6.2 Raditladi's (1954, p. 1) Motšwasele II opens with a meeting of tired men, speaking in prose, but when Moruakgomo reminds Molotlhanyi that he found him talking of something, the latter sparkles with indignation and replies thus -

Ke ne ke re Legwalê jaanong o mo phupung,
Legwalê o mo lebitleng gaa na go boa,
Jaaka letsatsi gaa na go tlhaba gapê;
Ó tla busa le ba ba mo mmung;
Gapê batho ga ba na go tlhola ba bua
Ba re legwalê ke kgosi ya bônê.

[I was saying Legwalê is in the grave
Legwalê is now in the tomb, he cannot return,
Like the day he cannot break again;
He will rule with those in the ground;
Further, people will no longer speak
Saying Legwalê is a chief of theirs.]

The last words of the lines above carry the ultimate intention of these lines, with the result that the penults are pronouncedly long and emphatic, making it essential that the end of the word be followed by a distinct pause. These last words have a demarcating effect, making each line a distinct unit. These last words are rhyme-words too, the rhyme-scheme being abcabc, a further unit of correspondence between the lines that makes them verses. Each line refers to Legwale, which common theme knits them into a stanza.

5.6.3 The verses are linked together by a subtle linking : in the first line Legwale o mo phupung is linked with Legwalê o mo lebitleng of the second line, using the synonyms phupung and lebitleng; the idea that he will not return, in the second line - gaa na go boa - is elevated in imagery in the following line by means of the image of a day which breaks once and is never to return again; this is amplified in the next line with further imagery - he will reign with those in the ground, the people will forget him and never call him their chief again. None of these lines can be left out. They represent an excellent thought-arrangement and -development. The imagery is pungent and a single unity. In ordinary speech this one sentence would suffice : 'Legwalê is dead'. Indeed this is a compact stanza. Much like the Western European stanza, it is an organisation of rhythm and rhyme throughout. It is a knitting together of the data of a single idea : it is a corporate thought. It is a creation. It is poetry.

5.6.4 One immediately brings into comparison an excerpt from Ntsime (1965, p. 3)

Batšhipile: Se ntikolose jaaka pholo ya tona molekane,
Se njese mmamadikwadikwane selo sa bana,
Boboko jwa me bo ja moreteledianе
Bo tšelemela fa godimo ga puo ya gago
Bo tlhoka maitsetsepelo a kutlwisiso
Go bona maikaelelo a gago.

[Don't wheel me round and round like a pack-ox, mate
Don't play rings, children's game, with me,
My brain is playing the top
It glides over your remarks
It lacks foothold for understanding
To fathom your intention].

Surely Ntsime employs the negative formative, se, at the beginning of the first two lines for purposes of initial rhyming, which form best FUSES with outright objection; and with the same lines end-rhyming with -ane/ -ana, the lines are duly demarcated at either end, as verses. With the units of correspondence mentioned, we have two clear-cut data in verse. Then follows a play with the segment bo at the beginning of the next three lines, first as class-prefix, then as subject concord. There is conscious initial rhyming of these lines, yet each develops the theme, is a further datum leading to the conclusion - failure to understand the speaker's intention. The imagery is lofty. One could not normally say so much instead of simply, 'I beg your pardon', unless one wanted to poetise. This long idiom is a Ntsimeism. It is no reproduction, but a creation. This is imagery of a high order.

5.6.5 Witness a further excerpt of Raditladi's (p. 5) -

Sejo: 1. Puo ya me e kgaogane le eo kgakala,
2. Kgakala, kala, jaaka kala tsa mokala.
3. E rile ke re tsaa tsia, ke a rapêla,

4. Ya bo e se : A batho ba bolawê, Mokwena.
5. Batho ga se diphôlôgôlô, Morêna.
6. Moja-motho ga se motho, sebatana.
7. Nama ya motho e botlhoko ke a dumêla
8. Mogang o šwang O bona a balabala,
9. O bône a fala legodimo ka dinala.
10. Batho ditau ba gana go êtwa pele,
11. O bône, hêê, ba menamena matšwele,
12. Ntwa ya bônê e ajwa Setebele.

There is in fact no need to select excerpts. This drama is in poetry throughout. The conflict in indigenous poetry, which Raditladi employs to sustain the spirit of his modern poetry too, winds up the spirit of rebellion and leads to tragedy. Translation -

[Sejô: 1. My remarks are far removed from those,
2. Far, partner, as far as branches of a camelthorn tree.
3. When I said take care "please",
4. Many said: Have the people killed, Mokwena.
5. People are not animals, Chief,
6. A man-eater is no person but a beast of prey.
7. Human flesh is very bitter, I believe,
8. The day he (the murderer) dies he babbles
9. He scratches the heavens with his nails.
10. People are lions, they refuse to be obstructed,
11. If you try they get ready their fists,
12. Their fight is organised the Ndebele way.]

The rhyme-scheme, aaabbbaaaccc, speaks for itself. But surely the alliteration with the velar explosive consonant, k, in the second line, is meant to display art, is a creation of a poet, and is intended to attain aesthetic effect, and it does. Raditladi is an unqualified success in rhyming. The idea expressed in the seventh line is a rather penetrating warning. The word 'botlhoko' is a pun, conveying as it does the

bitterness of taste and the bitterness felt when at death one is confronted by the sin of murdering another and starts babbling and kicking and scratching as if tasting and feeling a bitter and painful ordeal. All this is wrapped up in the word botlhoko.

5.6.6 We have no intention of evaluating Raditladi's and Ntsime's dramas as dramas, but just to support the submission that they are written in poetry or largely so - in verse and stanza. If we quote more excerpts we shall come to the same conclusion. We mention only that both seem to have been influenced in their themes and forms by European literature. Raditladi's tragedies ever remind one of Shakespeare's. He employs end-rhyme successfully, and there is therefore no doubt that his is modern poetry, even in his drama.

5.6.7 One more word about Ntsime is justified, as to his second drama Kobo e ntsho - 'The black blanket' - a title as elusive as it is allusive. The 'black blanket' is a Shakespearian metaphor referring to the dark night. This allusion to the 'black blanket' first occurs in Ntsime's Pelo e ja serati, page 5, where in a mental conflict with the primitive laws of his parents, lasting through the day, Dithole gets ecstatic at sunset, saying to Batšhipile, referring to the setting sun -

p. 5 line 5:

5. Le wela ka leokoriba la bophirima ka bohutsana,
6. Lefifi la bohutsana le tlhaga le suma ka mabetwaepelo,
7. Le apesa lefatshe la bohutsana kobo e ntsho,
8. Le hupetsa maikutlo a me, le ntshofatsa pelo ya me.
9. Ke tla dirang molekane?

[5. It goes down the Western precipice in a sad state,
6. Sad darkness comes hissing angrily,
7. It covers the whole sad earth with a black blanket
8. It stifles my feelings, it saddens my heart,
9. What shall I do, mate?]

(Witness again the play with the form, le, initially, in lines 5 - 8). What really stifles Dithole's feelings and saddens his heart is the conflict of loyalties to his parents' heathen laws on the one hand, as he thinks, and his modern outlook on the other. In the drama Kobo e ntsho this idea gets elaborated. The chief characters are the first Christians of Mabeleapodi, just emerging from the 'black blanket' of heathendom, witchdoctors and superstitious villagers. Whereas Ntsime renders the Shakespearian idea in original idiom, to the extent that few will realise that the metaphor is borrowed, in his translation of Shakespeare's Macbeth, Raditladi employs the rather literal translation, kobong ya lefifi (Raditladi 1968, p. 11, line 2 from bottom) - "through the blanket of the dark" (Shakespeare, Act 1, Sc. V, line 54).

Ntsime's idiom stands to live longer. Raditladi's rather unfree rendering is yet a very faithful translation. The poetic description of the setting sun needs no belabouring. The allusiveness of Ntsime's literature is of great significance in the search for the influence of current upon emerging Tswana literature inasmuch as his works illuminate one another. But his allusiveness is more striking still in the search for the influences of Western European literature on Tswana literature.

Resumé

5.7.0 The foregoing evidence points to fair attempts at poetry in Tswana, after what we have called the modern style. The influence of Western European styles at times blankets the indigenous techniques, but the best of the game is when these two traditions are fused in fair ratio which is done best by L.D. Raditladi in both poetry and drama. The development of poetry from the mere recording of indigenous compositions, has been phenomenal, not so much in the quantitative though, as the qualitative sense. The Tswana language is amenable to the techniques of end-rhyming and initial rhyming, as well as internal rhyming. Tswana, like all languages, has its mere rhymists, but its budding poets too. The nodes of Tswana poetry, traditional and modern, are the embryo of its metre, based on a long syllable surrounded by short ones.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

Mabôkô

6.1.1 We refer to parr. 1.10.1-2 where we stated what the purpose of this investigation is. The Tswana have maboko (lit. praises) handed down from generation to generation and composed in a distinct indigenous style. The Tswana's own opinion, as we learned from D.M. Ramoshoana and P.P.Leseyane is that mabôkô are poetry in the Western European sense.

6.1.2 Our findings are that mabôkô convey the spirit and attitudes of the Tswana as a people, in powerful imagery, in artistic, precise and enthusiastic expression. It is in accordance with human nature that a people should have its own spirit and attitudes in life, and be enthusiastic about them. The expression of such spirit and attitudes in metaphor, and in concentrated forms of diction is viewed as creation. We consider therefore that the mabôkô are poetry. In the main the spirit and attitudes of the Tswana are exemplified in 3.2.1 to 3.8.15. The most important and constructive aspect of this spirit is where it conveys what the Tswana think of themselves or their heroes. Small wonder that socalled wars on nerves are aimed at destroying a people's self-esteem. Anybody who promotes the self-esteem of a people is its friend.

Anybody who browbeats it performs an act of undoing it. And foremost in promoting this self-esteem in respect of the Tswana is their poet.

6.1.3 The themes of Tswana poetry present a chequered picture. Their intention is not only historical record but the apprehension of the human spirit in its response to experience of life as a whole, be this experience sensory, intellectual or spiritual. Hence the attitude expressed in the poetry is not just one of approval, but of appraisal; it is not just one of appreciation but of deprecation too. We therefore subscribe readily to the view that Tswana indigenous poetry is not simply 'praises' but poetry. The divining bones are not praised, but the lewa or 'lie' of the bones interpreted in highly figurative and recondite style. The work party is not praised all the way, but urged to higher productivity, which is an expression of an economic attitude. The initiates are not always praised : often an earnest plea is made for service to them and the plea may be an accomplished satire as exemplified in 3.9.10. When there is praise, it may be mixed with criticism as Montshiwa was praised as excellent at war (3.6.1) and criticised as sejankabo, literally eater of regret (3.6.3 line 5).

6.1.4 There is a great store of indigenous oral poetry. It requires a team or teams of recorders in order to collect it in all or most of its versions, to hear it recited in as many styles as possible, to cover

all possible interpretations of the abstruse vocabulary and historical allusions. Even when this has been done, recorders will find themselves bound to "read fully", read over and over again, in order to gain a reasonable measure of understanding. It is in this way, we think, that the various genres sampled in this work can be fully assembled and annotated.

6.1.5 Tswana indigenous poetry has peculiar forms. There is always an idea the bard wishes to state, but he reaches it by first supplying data that lead to it. We refer to these datum-units as verses and reflect them in writing as lines of poetry. Verses are divisible into nodes and the nodes are viewed as possible metrical word-groups. The verses have an interrelation which may be formal. The interrelationship may also lie in the development of ideas leading up to the desired conclusion. This makes certain datum-units or verses into a single thought-unit which we view as a stanza. Similarly stanzas belong together as parts of one greater subject and constitute the poem, and a number of interrelated poems may constitute a cycle. We conclude that a study of this poetry should involve an analysis of verse-nodes, verses, stanzas, poems, and where applicable cycles.

6.1.6 It must be remembered that this poetry is still largely unwritten. Its forms have to be heard. The forms referred to in the preceding paragraph do not

always readily meet the ear. We should actually speak in terms of tendencies to such forms. But these tendencies are clear and virile.

6.1.7 There are tendencies to metre, which are not readily noticeable in fast declamation. The metre is to be sought in the metrical word-groups or nodes referred to above. Such a node normally has a long penultimate syllable surrounded by short ones. Based on this arrangement of one long, and short syllables, the nodes reveal patterns comparable to English verse-feet, thus:

˘ – ˘ : English amphibrach
– ˘ : " trochee
˘ ˘ – : " dactyl
˘ – : " iamb
– ˘ ˘ : " anapaest.

The first-named foot is the commonest and may be varied by the addition of an extra short syllable making it:

˘ ˘ – ˘

which we have referred to as hyperamphibrach. We come to the conclusion that while Tswana indigenous poetry does not show a clear-cut system, it has enough prosody, or tendency to prosody, which can be developed into a system.

6.1.8 We also found the much-denied end-rhyme featured. Admittedly it is rare, and there are no rhyme-schemes to mention. The end-rhyme takes the form

of end-morpheme-rhyme, sometimes end-syllable rhyme. There is also a variation of end-rhyme where one rhyme-word is featured internally at the end of the first half of a verse in parallelism. Therefore there is internal morpheme-rhyme. Morpheme-rhyme is inclined to be disyllabic, that is feminine, while end-syllable rhyme is inclined to be monosyllabic, that is masculine. There is a great deal of para-rhyming. Rhyme does not operate to the prejudice of meaning. Therefore poetic licence operates in the direction of rhyming formal unlikes as long as they rhyme in meaning,

e.g. uba tsena
duma tsela

6.1.9 We also found the inversion of initial linking which we called straddling rhyme. In the lines below the words mosimane exemplify initial linking, while the words monna show straddling rhyme:

Monna o se nang molato mosimane
straddling linking
initial rhyme
mosimane o se nang molato monna

The features of a chiasmus then, are a combination of initial linking and straddling rhyme.
Tswana indigenous poetry has a variety of repetitions, like any other poetry, and we found one of these repetitions to be rhyme.

6.1.10 History is not the object of what we called poems of a historical nature. The historical element consists in the milieu against the background of which or in view of which or because of which a certain passion to praise or to blame, to suggest to or to assess a given character or phenomenon or incident arises. It is to the credit of Tswana bards, it is a sign of their genius, that they only allude to history, since their object is to create poetry and not to relate history, much as the latter is relevant since it is the milieu. We submit that it is one of the excellences of Tswana indigenous poetry, that it was not conceived, not composed in vacuo.

6.1.11 In view of the lack of rhyme and metre systems, in view of people being used to highly developed systems in these forms elsewhere, Tswana poetry is the more conspicuous by the irregularity of its forms. Often the lines of a stanza differ in number of nodes; some may be uniaxial, others biaxial or even polyaxial; some axes may be rhymed internally, others finally, others initially, others not at all. Some stanzas may be short, others long, and so forth. Some nodes may show distinct metrical tendency, others none. The Tswana bard appears inclined to draw as many forms and styles of expression as possible into his every effort. Even in its internal content this poetry varies from one metaphor to the next, from verse to verse. This

shows how heavily charged with thought the poetry can be, since each metaphor could, with effort, be developed into a stanza. There is great growth and development potentiality. Because of his great resourcefulness, the Tswana bard's poetry shows an exceedingly irregular style. One would say there is no style. The style consists in a lack of style. The irregularity of form is in fact the regular feature. It may often happen that modern writers lose style completely, thinking there is none in Tswana poetry, or become doctrinaire and monotonous in an endeavour to force it. It will take a great deal of analysis to apply the many styles of form and imagery found in Tswana indigenous poetry with discretion, avoiding dogmatism and monotony on the one hand, and excessive variation and therefore shallow analysis on the other.

Modern Tswana Poetry

6.2.1 Just as indigenous poetry is not all oral, some being published, so modern poetry is not all published, some being oral. We found that some poetry of the early recorders and much poetry of contemporary poets show influences of Western European styles. We would call P. Leseyane's Boammarure (4.6.8-12) modern, but his Pula (4.5.1) indigenous. Tswana poetry influenced by Western European styles, that is modern Tswana poetry, abounds. We would say that, broadly speaking, all Tswana poetry is in two families or genres, indigenous and modern.

6.2.2 The development to this modern stage, as we see it, was in four phases: firstly, the recording of indigenous poetry by such forerunners in authorship as Micha Kgasi and P.P.Leseyane; secondly, the publication of indigenous and modern compositions alongside of each other. These two stages dovetail. They consist of pioneer work. Or, shall we say the poetry of these two stages is a by-product in the industry of producing prose readers for primary schools? Be it as it may, the publications led to the publication of volumes of indigenous poetry along with modern compositions. In this phase the trio Lekgetho, Kitchin and Kitchin excelled by learning from indigenous poetry the indigenous styles of form and imagery. They have imaginative metaphor and 'praise-words', which 'praise-words' could even at times be called 'hate-words'. In the process they also leaned to the Western European forms of end-rhyme in particular. They gave no particular attention to metre, and the nodes of their verses are not always equal to those of indigenous verse in metrical propensity. However they lead in a tendency to combine indigenous with modern styles, with the result that Neo Kitchin's 'General Smuts' (p. 93) reads like lebôkô while boasting an end-rhyme scheme; Moabi Kitchin's Dikgakologo (Spring - p. 76) is also rhymed but features one metaphor after the other, the word dikgakologo appearing once only, and in the very last verse. We observed earlier that indigenous poetry works so much in metaphor that a whole poem may never refer to its subject by name.

6.2.3 A knowledge of the oral lore, idioms, proverbs, riddles, helps modern composition. Modernists who combine this knowledge with a relatively full understanding of indigenous techniques, such as L.D. Raditladi, produce the best of modern poetry. An example of a forced style, which leads to monotony, is G.C. Motlhasedi's, whose long epic narrative is difficult to classify. A whole book employing the one technique of parallelism in all or most verses is extremely monotonous. In any case if it has no irregularity it is at variance with indigenous Tswana; if it is monotonous it has gone to the opposite extreme, opposite to over-irregular. An authority says -

> The balanced sentence, i.e. one in which phrases or clauses which are similar in thought are made similar in form, is pleasing to the ear because of its rhythm, but tends to produce monotony, if used too freely. (Jackson p. 318).

6.2.4 Modern poetry in Tswana is in stanzas and verses, and is largely rhymed. Some poets succeed with end-morpheme-rhyme and attempt a rhyme scheme. There is much pararhyming. This poetry in general lacks the imagery of indigenous poetry, except in a few cases, such as the poetry and drama of L.D. Raditladi. The extent to which Raditladi has steeped himself previously in indigenous poetry, accounting for the transcendence of his poetry in spirit and form, is seen in his compositions based on indigenous numbers, such as his Isang a Lentswe, which alludes to I. Schapera's Pilane (5.2.12).

6.2.5 An important genre of modern poetry is church hymns, which we regard as poems of prophecy. They are not only a study in faithful yet free translation, but they reach a high level of symmetry. The spirit of prophecy, the allusiveness of this genre, make it a great part of the great literature of the Christian religion, in Tswana.

Growth and future Trends

6.3.1 Tswana poetry has grown from oral to written literature and that in a compartively short time since the first Tswana school was established in 1825. (Moloto parr. 1.5.1-7). What has been written down of the oral poetry is a very small fraction of what we estimate can still be collected. There are oral volumes in the field.

6.3.2 Tswana poetry continues to play an important rôle in social entertainment. Its allusiveness to history continues to appeal to audiences. As a result it is recited at gatherings, and where the traditional is not available much that is new is composed often on the spur of the moment. Many contemporary bards will be having quantities of their own compositions at their homes composed for specific occasions. This tendency is being encouraged by occasional literary competitions which have at times resulted in publications such as Raditladi's Sefalana sa Menate.

6.3.3 The tendency to collect indigenous poetry needs encouragement. Perhaps a criticism of this poetry as we have undertaken, might focus attention on it in schools and elsewhere and result in efforts to collect more. The work of all recorders has been a great service and should continue. This, coupled with more modern compositions, should add considerably to the bulk of Tswana poetry.

6.3.4 The tendency of modern poets to lack imagination and their poetry to lack imagery is to be deplored. A criticism such as we have tried might bring the stronger poets under focus and lead others to deeper insight.

6.3.5 Form and techniques have already been shown to influence each other. Lest many poets miss this point, we have highlighted the poets who have succeeded in fusing the indigenous and the modern trends. This fusion is our most promising trend in Tswana poetry.

SUMMARY

1. From findings of previous researchers two broad fields of study emerge - the Bantu poetry without any Western European influence, and that which has signs of such influence. We referred to the former as indigenous and to the latter as modern poetry.

2. Thirty to forty years ago researchers claimed that the indigenous 'praises' of the Zulu and the Tswana were poetry in the Western European sense, even 'refined poetry', because of their spirit and language. Down the years Tswana critics such as P.P. Leseyane, A. Sandilands, N. Kitchin and J. Ntsime expressed themselves on Tswana poetry in retrospect and in prospect. Therehave been conscious growth and development, and we are of the opinion that the height of this development was the fusion of indigenous and modern techniques in the indigenous-modern work of Lekgetho, Kitchin and Kitchin (Boswa jwa Puo) and in the modern volume of L.D. Raditladi (Sefalana sa Menate).

3. Indigenous Tswana poetry divides into two broad prongs, that which alludes to history, whose subject is the vicissitudes of man's life, on the one hand, and that which deals with natural phenomena and cultural creations, on the other. We have therefore dealt with this aspect in two chapters entitled, Indigenous 'Poetry' other than historical, and, Indigenous 'Poems' with an Historical tenor and Indigenous Song. Indigenous poetry

is highly metaphorical. Often a whole poem at no stage refers by name to its subject, but by one metaphor after another, showing a high level of sustained imagery. It can also be fairly highly intellectual as found in the satires. In both respects indigenous poetry by far excels modern poetry generally. Indigenous poetry also shows distinct tendencies to verse form, the verses sometimes revealing equality in number of nodes, revealing also a likeness of nodes, suggesting a clear inclination to metre based on length of syllables. There is a latent idea of a stanza when the relationship between verse-data leading to a certain generalisation render the verse-data and generalisation into a thought-unit. Such thought-units at times float independently and get viewed as separate poems. To us this proves some consciousness of the concept of a stanza form. Stanzas deal with aspects of a subject, and when the discourse is exhausted or stopped we have a poem. Poems may also be related by being aspects of a greater whole. We view this latter trend as a cycle. We found only one such cycle in Tswana. We believe there are more. The forms of Tswana poetry therefore, as we saw them, seem to be the metrical word-group or verse-node, the verse, the stanza, the poem and the cycle.

4. Generally modern poetry is still far less penetrating and imaginative. It is full of jingles and doggerels. With a few exceptions its verse-form inclines to the sentence form. There is a strong inclination to

rhyme (end-rhyme), but this is more often than not unsuccessful. Exceptions are bards that appear to have tried to learn from indigenous poetry as well as from Western European poetry. The stanza form, as a thought-unit, seems to be consciously adhered to. It must still be developed as a unit of form, otherwise it is simply a paragraph.

5. Tswana has large stores of unwritten POETRY awaiting field-workers. This recording has started and is growing. The strong points of indigenous poetry are its spirit, its imagery, its idealism, and its originality. The future of modern poetry, as we see it, hinges on the one hand on a penetration of the spirit and form of indigenous poetry, and a fair grasp of Western European poetry on the other. This tendency shows clearly and the possibilities of its growth are rather strong. The discovery of certain authors as leading poets is an indication of a tendency in the direction of this growth.

6. The translation of church hymns from European languages to Tswana has added the spirit of prophecy, in fairly good rhyme, in perfect rhythm, and in symmetry to Tswana poetry. This contribution has given the growth of Tswana poetry a great impetus.

7. A more detailed study of the forms of Tswana poetry - metrical word-group, verse, stanza, poem, cycle - and the content, and types of the Tswana epic, epigram, lyric, satire, ode, song and hymn, as well as mechanical

devices such as apostrophising,variation,inversion,ellipse, is certainly called for, and if this thesis helps focus attention on this task it will be considered a contribution.

8. We cannot subscribe wholly to the view that the employment of rhyme, metre, stanza-form, verse-form, is entirely attributable to Western European influences since these are present in some measure in traditional poetry. We admit this influence especially on the work of the modernists, but the possibility is that that is not the sole source of what we have called the modern tendency. See the case of N.G. Mokone (4.6.1-7) for instance.

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