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THE CONCEPT 'DEFAMILIARISATION' (OSTRANENIE) AND  
HOW IT INFLUENCED THE POETIC WORKS OF MILUBI N.  
A. IN:

**'MUIMAWOGA'**

BY

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**SUPERVISOR : PROFESSOR R. S. CHAPHOLE.**

**JOINT-SUPERVISOR : Dr. MAFELA M. J.**

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## DECLARATION

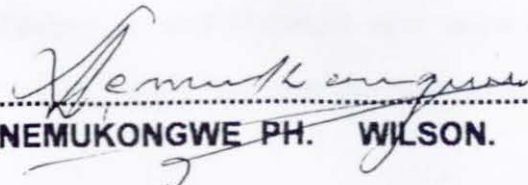
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I declare that;

THE CONCEPT 'DEFAMILIARISATION' (OSTRANENIE) AND HOW IT  
INFLUENCED THE POETIC WORKS OF MILUBI N. A. IN ;  
MUIMAWOGA



Is my own work, that all the sources, or quoted, have been indicated  
by means of complete references, and that this dissertation was not  
previously submitted by me for a degree at another University.

  
NEMUKONGWE PH. WILSON.



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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 AIM OF RESEARCH STUDY

This research study will present a critical analysis of the concept 'defamiliarisation' (Ostranenie) from the point of view of Milubi's poetry 'MUIMAWOGA'. The purpose of the study is to give a detailed account of the devices of poetry which are responsible for the transformation of 'practical' language into the language of poetry.

The study will be an attempt to make an evaluation of the aspects of 'Ostranenie' as employed by the poet, and this will reveal how successful the poet has been in the realization of this concept.

### 1.2 MOTIVATION

The reason why this research study is being conducted is that to our knowledge, this topic on 'defamiliarisation' has never been treated in Tshivenda art forms before. It is therefore our strongest hope and believe that this research study will open up new trends and avenues to some scholars and critics of literature who may decide to pursue this literary theory 'Russian Formalism' in future.

It would also be appropriate to state that this is but just a preliminary study of Milubi's poetry under this approach of 'Ostranenie' and it only acts as a direction to which students could follow and study more thoroughly. Studies in the theory of



literature, especially from the Russian Formalism point of view, is very scarce. It is for this reason that we were motivated to embark seriously on this research study with the aim of addressing this imbalance in literature, and also to give our students a theoretical background which may be taken for granted in their study of other literature in future.

The reason for choosing Milubi N. A and the topic on 'defamiliarisation' is that according to our knowledge, the poet is regarded as a poet par excellence of our time in Tshivenda literature. This is indicative of his outstanding contribution towards the Tshivenda literature. This notion has been broadly addressed in the Biographical sketch of the poet at the end of this chapter.

The fact that Milubi's works are also selected to serve as a source of reference in the poetic language, is because some critics like Madadzhe R. (1986) have given some meaningful comments in appreciation of this poet and playwright.

In commenting on "**MUKOSI WA LUFU**" and "**NDI MUTODZI MUNI**" Madadzhe (1986 : 155) says;

**"Milubi is an author who reflect  
a sense of responsibility.  
His woks serve as a very good  
example to prospective Vhavenda authors."**

Regarding the style of the poet Madadzhe goes further and says;

**"as far as effectiveness is  
concerned, Milubi's style  
cannot be compared to anyone else's  
in Venda. He has achieved this  
through the usage of 'poetic  
language' such as metaphors,**

**Idioms, proverbs, to mention  
a few." (p : 155)**

We appreciate such comments and accept such praises only on the basis of a trust that Madadzhe have arrived at them after considering his opinions objectively.

### **1.3 SCOPE**

Although this poet has written other poetry books such as '**Ipfi la Lurere**' (The voice of the buds) '**Vhutungu ha vhupfa**' (The agony of feeling) and '**Muhumbull Mutambull**' (The suffering Thinker), we have decided to limit our scope of research study, and our attention will be given to only **ONE** poetry book '**MUIMAWOGA**' (A lone Voice) because according to our observations, this poetry book has much poetic language worth analysing from the point of view of the 'Russian Formalist framework. The recent poetry book entitled; 'Muungo wa Vhuwhi (The echo of silence) is also of a very high standing. Unfortunately it was released when this work was fully done, and would as a result fall outside the ambit of this research.

The research study will comprise five chapters. Chapter one will serve as an introduction wherein we shall have the following aspects, aim, motivation, scope of research study, approach or methodology to be adopted, the biographical sketch of the poet. His contributions to the Tshivenda literature in South African institutions and abroad, will also receive our careful consideration.

In the second chapter of this study, we shall endeavour to examine the 'Theoretical Framework' of this research study, viz 'Russian Formalism'. The following aspects will receive our due consideration;

- definition of the concept 'Russian Formalism'
- its origin and scientific claims
- the role played by the 'Literary Theory' (formalism) in defamiliarising poetry.
- Poetic techniques as propagated by Shklovsky and other formalists. These will include; linking, parallelism, alliteration, and other tropes.

Included under this same chapter will be a brief review of some opinions from other critics who have also expressed their views on the concept of 'defamiliarisation' in their work of literature.

The third chapter starts off with a discussion on the "Language of Poetry". Included in it will be a discussion on the characteristics and elements of the language of poetry. A closer look on the concept of "poetic language" which is 'linguistic approach' with specific references to Milubi's works will also receive our due consideration. We shall also concentrate on those types of deviations as propagated by Jakobson, Shklovsky and others, and a closer examination of their levels of approach namely 'morphological', 'syntactical' and 'semantic' level, will be discussed in brief under this chapter.

Chapter four will examine the poetic works of Milubi N. A. with special reference to the concept 'Imagery' as a poetic technique. Imagery will not be studied only for itself, but for its defamiliarising capacity.

We shall pay special attention to the use of some 'image patterns' and their defamiliarising techniques as they are employed by the poet in his works.

In this chapter, we shall also examine the employment of 'Figurative Language' in **Mulmawoga**. An examination of how images are built with the employment of 'Similes', 'Metaphors', 'Personification' and others will also receive our due consideration. Included under this chapter will be a discussion on the concept 'Symbolism' and how symbols played a leading role in their defamiliarising capacity in the works of our poet.

The fifth chapter will be our conclusion, wherein we summarize the research study to see whether or not the poet has succeeded in addressing the topic on 'Ostranenie'

#### **1.4 APPROACH TO BE ADOPTED**

There are presently many views that have emerged with an aim of determining the nature or essence of literary works. According to Sebate (1992 : 7), he quotes Rimmon Kenan, (1980, and Selden 1985) as saying;

**"These approaches concentrated on the formal features, manner of arranging language, and the structure of content."**

These scholars aim at making an attempt in determining what distinguished 'literary' material from 'non-literary' material.

In this research study, we shall adopt the 'Formalist Literary Theory approach' to study the poetic works of Milubi N. A. This study will be approached under the umbrella of 'Russian Formalism Theory' which we regard as the modern and scientific approach which according to our understanding is the only method according to which literature and especially poetry, can be analysed and which is being used even today.

According to this approach, day-to-day language, is made strange hence the term 'Otranenie'. We shall also examine the employment of these deviations techniques of literature in '**MUIMAWOGA**' to see how they have been realised in the poetic language of our poet.

The Formalists approach is adopted because it helps us analyse the writer's technical prowess and craft skill, (Selden 1985 : 7). They (Formalists) believe that in any work of art such as poetry, the poet sometimes deliberately defamiliarises the raw material and objects of familiar actions and words, that he uses to build up his poem.

A poet can also defamiliarise his language by the usage of what they regard as 'poetic devices'. These devices are some of the tricks of form that the Formalists propose in works of art.

It is very important at this stage to state that the Formalists focused primarily on poetry, and they maintained that the contents of a work of art are not proof of its literariness, but that of significance is the manner in which the contents have been arranged. Accordingly, they believed that artistry can only be judged by the

author's use of poetic devices. These devices would include 'parallelism', 'linking', 'alliteration', 'Figurative language' and other tropes.

## **1.5 BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Ntshavheni-ndi-mukomana-kha-inwi-ni-songo-tambela-kha-nne-mathando Alfred Milubi the son of Maanda and Makwarela Milubi, was born on 8 August 1958 at Nzhelele in the district of Dzanani in Venda.

Like any Muvenda young man of his time, Ntshavheni grew up in an environment that exposed him to vast natural beauty. He herded cattle and took part in the ploughing seasons, hunted small game and experienced in the art and skills of snaring and shooting at wild birds. He also bathed and swam in the local Nzhelele River, and took part in other related activities.

He received his primary education at Dzanani Primary School, and then proceeded to Nzhelele Higher Primary School. After completing his primary schooling in 1968, he went for his post-primary education at Mphephu High School in Venda in 1969.

He completed his standard 10 certificate in 1973, and went to the University of the North. Milubi's love for writing developed its roots in the early stages of his life, and his inspiration to write seriously came in 1976. During this time his writings included poetry, drama, grammar, and prose. The Soweto uprising and human suffering were some of his sources of inspiration.

While at the University of the North, Milubi completed the following degrees;

In 1979 he completed his B.A. PAEDAGOGICS majoring in History, Venda and Education and he also studied through UNISA for non-degree purpose.

Milubi's post-graduate degrees are as follows; in 1980 he completed his B. Ed, and in 1981 his B. A. Hons, while in 1983 he completed his M.A. degree and the subject topic for his research paper was; 'The poetry of R. F. Ratshitanga' A critical evaluation of the poetry of protest', while in 1988 Milubi completed his D. Litt. and the subject topic for his thesis was 'Aspects of Venda Poetry'. A Critical Evaluation of the development of Venda poetry from Oral tradition to modern forms'.

Milubi's love and appreciation of literature were nurtured by many African writers as well as his experiential whole. It was during this time of his stay at the University of the North that he published a number of works;

His poetry books include the following; 'Muhumuli Mutambuli' A Suffering Thinker) which appeared on the market in 1981, while 'Vhutungu ha vhupfa' (The Agony of Feelings) was published in 1982, and in 1986 'Ipfi la Lurere' (The Voice of the buds) became available to the public. In 1990 'Muimawoga' (The Lone Voice) witnessed its first appearance on the market. In 1995 (this year) 'Muungo wa vhuhwi' (The Echo of Silence) which is an anthology also became available to the public.

Apart from his wide range of poetry contributions, Milubi has published the following drama books; 'Mukosi wa Lufu' (The cry of death) in 1983, and in 1984 'Ndi Mutodzi Muni?' (What Tears are These) also appeared on the market, while

in 1987 Milubi published 'Madombini a Ngoho' (Under the Shade of Truth), and in 1991 he published 'Khorozu sa dzhenelani' (Conflicting Homestead). His only novel 'Ngezwi yo tambulaho' (The suffering Babysling) was published in 1986.

He has published the following grammar manuals; 'Ngoma ya Vhatei' (The initiation of the Novice) in 1985, while from 1988 - 1990 the following grammar manuals appeared on the market namely;

- Mutoli wa Tshivenda Std 6
- Mutoli wa Tshivenda Std 7
- Mutoli wa Tshivenda Std 8
- Mutoli wa Tshivenda Std 9 and
- Mutoli wa Tshivenda Std 10

While at the University of the North, his career history is as follows; In 1979 he was appointed Junior lecturer in the Department of Tshivenda, and in 1982 was promoted to the position of lecturer. In 1985 he was made both Senior Lecturer and Acting Head of Tshivenda respectively, while in 1989 after completing his D. Litt. degree in 1988, Milubi was made Associate professor, and is currently a full professor.

Milubi has delivered many papers on poetry at different conferences both locally and internationally, and the following are some of his works;

In 1992 at Nwanedi - Luphephe, he read a paper on 'Rekindling the fire of Folklore' at the Folklore Society conference, while in 1991 Milubi delivered a paper on 'South African Poetry' at Lebowakgomo at the Ramaila Literary Prize giving



ceremony. In 1991 he read a paper at the 'Association of Lebowa Authors at Hotel Seshego' on 'In Search for Relevance.'

In 1990 at Soweto College of Education, he delivered a paper on 'An approach to the poetry of R. F. Ratshitanga, and in 1989 Milubi delivered a paper on 'The poetry of Sigwavhulimu' A 'Russian Formalistic Approach' at the ALASA conference which was held at the University of Pretoria. In 1987 he delivered a paper on 'The development of Venda Poetry from Oral tradition to modern forms at the ALASA conference which was held at the University of the Transkei. In 1983 at Seshego Hotel, Milubi read a paper on 'The poetry of Ratshitanga' at the Association of Lebowa Authors. He has read a paper on South African poetry at the University of Namibia - Namibia.

He has published the following articles on poetry in the ALASA journal; 'The Aspects of difamiliarisation in W. M. R. Sigwavhulimu's poetry' in 1991 and 'The development of Venda poetry from Oral Tradition to modern form' in 1990 respectively. His article on 'Response to challenges'. 'A reflection of African Poetry in South Africa' was published in 'MASENO' journal of Education Arts and Science at the University College of Kenya in KENYA.

Milubi has also delivered many papers abroad, the following are some of his contributions overseas;

At Chicago State University in 1992, he delivered a paper on 'Black literary Act, Culture and Criticism, Immitation of Innovation' and in November of the same year, at Seattle in Washington, Milubi read a paper on 'The Politics of an Interacial Culture in the New South Africa' at 'African Studies Association Conference.

In February 1993 he delivered a paper at the University of Illinois on 'Reflections on some of S. African poets' while in April of the same year, he delivered a paper on 'Poetry and Politics in South Africa' at the University of North East Missouri, and at 'African Literature Association Conference' at the Pointe A Pitre De Guadeloupe (Caribbean Islands in French West Indies) Milubi delivered a paper on 'Domination and Resurgence of Oral Tradition in S. Africa, while from 25th March - 2nd April 1993 at W.E.B. Dubois Memorial Centre, in ACCRA, GHANA, Milubi read a paper on 'South African Poetry and the Search for New life.'

From 7 - 9 April 1994 at Pennstate University in Philadelphia, he read a paper at a conference on 'Ngugi wa Thiongo and his influence on South African Literature, and from 15 - 17 April 1994 at Rutgers University in NEW JESSEY, Milubi delivered a paper on 'African Writers. Beyond Survival', while on 13 April 1994 he delivered a paper on 'The deep current in Serote's poetry' at St. Lawrence university in CANTON. NEW YORK. In June this year (1995) Milubi delivered a paper on 'The Language Issue in South Africa. An experience of the Northern Province" at Tel Aviv University.

He has also given lectures and interviews on South African Poetry abroad at the following places;

- University of Illinois in 1994
- University of Florida - Gainesville in 1989
- School of Oriental and African Studies, at the University of London.
- University of North - East Missouri in 1993
- University of St. Lawrence. New York in 1994
- University of Florida - Geinsville in 1994

In 1992 - 1993 Milubi went to the University of Illinois URBANA - CHAMPAIGN to research on AUTOSEGMENTAL PHONOLOGY which is also regarded as Multi - Linear Phonology.

He served as an external examiner for the University of Zimbabwe during the period 1980 - 1985, and is currently an external examiner for the following institutions;

- University of South Africa (UNISA)
- University of Venda. (UNIVEN)
- Rand Afrikaans Universiteit (RAU)
- Vista University.
- University of Stellenbosch
- Moderator of Tshivenda for Teachers' Training
- Moderator of Independent Examination Board.

Milubi is a member of the following academic societies;

- ALASA (African Language Association of South Africa.
- Linguistics Society of America
- African Studies of America
- African Literature Association of America
- Vice-Chairman of South African Folklore Society. North Region.
- Chairman of the Tshivenda Language Board.

He served in the 'Language in Education Commission of the North Province' during the period 1994 - 1995, and in the Steering Committee for the establishment of the Provincial Language Committee.

Milubi has won some literary awards through his publications and the following are some of the awards;

In 1994 his drama works; 'Khorozizi sa dzhenelani' (Conflicting Homestead) was awarded second position, and in 1991 his poetry 'Muimawoga' (A lone voice) obtained position 1 while 'Ipfi la lurere' (The voice of the Buds) was placed in position 3. In 1989 his drama works, 'Madombini a Ngoho' (In the Shade of Truth) and 'Ndi Mitodzi Muni' (What Tears are these) were awarded 2nd and 3rd positions respectively.

Milubi is an active member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and apart from serving his community at the University of the North during office hours, on a part-time basis, he is the secretary of the Turfloop Parish Council. A member of the Diocesan Council (Northern Diocese) and also a member of the Church Council representing Northern Diocese. He is the Chairperson of Pepps - Presbee, Pre-School - Management Council (private school). He is Vice-Chairperson of Presbee Parents Committee. He is also a member of Pepps Management Council (Private School which caters for Primary and currently Post - Primary Education). He is also a member of the Board of Trustees.

He is married to Mokgadi Joyce, and have been blessed with three children.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 RUSSIAN FORMALISM THEORY

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the theoretical Framework on Russian Formalism Theory of Literature, and its scientific approach in the analysis of poetry.

Theories are functions of a specific historical ideological and intellectual situation. They are developed by individuals, socialised within a specific social situation.

Russian Formalism is also a theory linked to the history of Russian Society in the early years of the 19th century. It was characterised by fierce battles and these led to the revolution and the formulation of proletarian states, which resulted in the different branches of art as well as the new revolutionary literature.

Selden (1988 :8) regards Russian Formalism as;

**"a literary theory which views literature as 'the sum total of all stylistic devices employed in it"**

## 2.2. ORIGIN AND SCIENTIFIC CLAIMS OF RUSSIAN FORMALISM.

Russian Formalism as the name indicates, originated as a reaction to Romanticism. It emerged from two groups namely; '**Moscow Linguistic Circle**' in 1915 under the chairmanship of Roman Jakobson and the '**Society for the Study of Poetic Language**' Known in abbreviation, (**Opojaz**) in St. Petersburg (Patrogrand) in 1916, under the chairmanship of Viktor Shklovsky.

It began with seminar-meetings and discussion groups which had somewhat overlapping but never fully identical interests and methodological orientation, one consisting mainly of scholars of philology (the Moscow Linguistic Circle) and the 'Society for the Study of Poetic Language).

The term '**Formalists**' was first applied derogatively by the opponents of the movement because of its focus on the formal patterns and the technical devices of literature, to the exclusion of its Social values and subject matter.

The primary objective of the Formalists amongst others, was mainly to propose a scientific study of poetic language, and this was a reaction to the prevalent general trend of Russian literary scholarship among them Symbolist poetic, which focused strongly on religious and philosophical matters. (Maake 1944 : 29).

The Formalists regard literature as a special use of language. Their aim was to outline models and hypothesis in order to explain how aesthetic effects are produced by literary devices and how the 'literary', is distinguished from and related to the 'extra-literary'.

One of the influential pioneer of this mode of criticism which came to be known as Russian Formalism was Roman Jakobson. He advocated the principle that 'the

object of the science of literature is not literature, but literariness - that is, that which makes a given work a work of literature' (quoted by Boris Eichenbaum in Lemon et al 1965 : 107).

The above formulation represented a fundamental departure from the dominant orientation of literary studies. They (Formalists) insisted that 'how' a work was constructed - that is what literary techniques and conventions it employs - was of far greater significance than what is said, should be the central of literary studies, and scholarly study of literature was then to be scientific study of those devices or techniques which distinguish literary discourse from other groups of discourse, (Royan et al 1992 : 17).

Further, the Formalists critical theories is the idea of '**defamiliarisation**' that poetry makes strange (Ostranenie) what is familiar in ordinary speech or the real world. It is this aspect of poetry which makes it different from other forms of discourse - its '**literariness**'. Accordingly, they were concerned with poetry, which they regarded as the prime medium which transgressed grammatical rules. In their concern for defining what made literature different from other forms of discourse, the Formalists argued against the traditionally held view in aesthetics that imagery was the distinctive feature of poetry.

Shklovsky, another early pioneer of Russian Formalism is also one of the first to give a comprehensive statement of this early phase of Formalist poetics who advocates for 'Art as Technique'. He pointed out that the essential criterion of art generally, and of literature in particular is 'imagery'. Citing what he takes to be a general law of perception, he argued that 'our perception of familiar things become merely automatic'. According to him, 'Art is a means of overcoming the

automatic quality of familiar perceptions'. He goes further and quotes Lemon & Reis (1965 : 12) as saying;

**"Art exists that one may recover the sensations of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stony stony. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make object 'unfamiliar' to make forms 'difficult' to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important"**

He locates the literariness of literature in devices of defamiliarisation amongst them the making strange of familiar objects and acts by removing them out of their familiar contexts.

These devices which serve to enhance the immediate experience of a thing or of a word, are such as simple and negative parallelism, simile, repetition, symmetry, hyperbole and others. Other devices such as the play with synonyms and homonyms, signal the difference from practical language.

Finally, one of the areas in which the Formalists made original and decisive contributions was in the study of 'poetic language'. Even from their very beginning, the formalists drew a distinction between 'poetic' and 'practical'



language. This aspect on 'Poetic Language' will be discussed in full in Chapter three of this research study.

It would also be appropriate to state at this stage that it is the driving force behind the Russian Formalists Theory that motivated us to approach Milubi's poetry '**MUIMAWOGA**' from the theoretical framework of Russian Formalists thinking. This theory is adopted because it helps us to critically analyse the technical prowess and craft skill of the poet.

## 2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this sub-section is to make some meaningful literary review on the application of 'Russian Formalism Theory in African literature from other scholars and critics of literature on the concept of 'defamiliarisation'.

As far as the application of this theory on African literature is concerned, no major study based on Formalists thought has been carried out especially in Tshivenda literature. Very few people have so far done some meaningful attempts in other languages in this regard. This is because this field of literary theory is still in its infancy.

Although the search for 'defamiliarisation' is scarce in our literature, we are however grateful to some scholars and critics of literature who have contributed towards this theory, more especially the topic on 'Aspects of 'defamiliation in W.M.R. Sigwavhulimu's poetry' by Milubi N. A. We regard him as a pioneer in this field of theoretical research study on 'Formalism'.

It is for this reason that the ensuing discussion will focus on Milubi's paper which will explore the significance of Russian Formalist Theory, and how through the employment of some devices 'techniques' of poetry, day-to-day language in Sigwavhulimu's poetry has been made strange. Milubi's works will then be followed by those of Maake N. P. (1994) and Sebate P. M. (1992) respectively.

### 2.3.1 ASPECTS OF DEFAMILIARISATION IN W. M. R. SIGWAVHULIMU'S POETRY By N. A. MILUBI.

The purpose of Milubi's article is to reflect on the nature of W. M. R. Sigwavhulimu's poetry. According to him, his poetry touches a number of crucial aspects of human existence and it is assessed against the background of the basic tenets of Russian Formalism. The concept of 'defamiliarisation' is realized in Sigwavhulimu's poetry through the employ of well known techniques such as 'metaphors', 'symbols', antithesis, 'repetition', as well as the employment of compound expressions, archaic, diction and other poetic devices that characterize his poetry.

Milubi states that the Formalists regard literature as a special use of language. He quotes Selden (1988 : 8) who says;

**"The Formalists' technical focus led them to treat literature as a special use of a language which achieves its distinctness by deviating from and distorting 'practical' language. Practical language is used for acts of communication, while literary language has no practical function at all and simply makes us see differently"**

Milubi went further and quotes Shklovsky, one of the early pioneers of Formalism who sees the language of literature in terms of the concept of 'defamiliarisation' (Ostranenie) i.e. making strange. He believes that poetry differs from the ordinary language because it 'defamiliarises' that which is familiar. Ordinary language would, for example, speak of a beautiful girl, whereas the language of poetry would refer to a beautiful flower. Thus, the beautiful girl, a familiar phenomenon in a

layman's expression, is 'defamiliarised' through the usage of the metaphor of a flower.

Images, hyperbole, parallelism, repetition, comparison or any other trope are potentially all equally effective in committing poetic violence to ordinary language, and it is this differential function and not any inherent quality that constitute their interest for Russian Formalism.

As an illustration, Milubi presents the following poem entitled '**LUFU**' (Death) by Sigwavhulimu. In this poem, Sigwavhulimu employs the devices of poetry such as repetition, alliteration, linkage and parallelism so as to attain the concept of '**defamillarising**' poetic language;

"Lufu lu fulu  
 Fulu ndi lufu  
 Vhunga zwi faho lufu zwi fulu  
 Fulu ja zwi faho lufu ndi fulu  
 Lufu ndi fulu  
 Ndi phedzo ya zwinzhi.  
 (Mirunzi ... 1971 : 5)

*(Death is great  
 Great is death  
 For those that experience death are  
 great The greatness of all that  
 experience death is great  
 Death is the end of many things)*

In the above stanza, the poet makes use of repetition, which is realized in words such as 'Lufu' and 'fulu' which team throughout the stanza. There is also alliteration which comes in the form of consonants 'f' and 'l'. The adjectival stem

'-fulu' (great) in the first line, forms linkage with '-fulu; in the second line.

Included in this stanza, the noun 'lufu' (death) on the other hand forms left to the right oblique linkage with the noun 'lufu' in the second line. Left to right oblique linkage is also found in lines four and five, while right to left oblique linkage is also found in the third and fourth lines. The expression 'lufu lu fulu' (Death is great) in the first and second lines and 'lufu fulu' in the third and fourth lines shows parallelism.

Through the usage of these techniques, Sigwavhulimu is able to express his views about death in a way that appears 'strange' and difficult to his audience - hence the concept of 'defamiliarisation'.

In conclusion, Milubi states that Sigwavhulimu's 'Ostranenie' has raised both praise and criticism from readers. Those who raised praise for him felt that his poetry is poetry of a good standing through the employment of literary techniques, while other critics contend that the usage of his poetic devices was just meant to make his poetry not only difficult, but unintelligible as well.

Sigwavhulimu succeeded in the employment of symbols, metaphors, repetition, left and right oblique linking in the same stanza. These and other techniques were employed with much coherence. He employs them with much astuteness that a simple and familiar phenomenon ends up being 'defamiliarised'.

### 2.3.2 TRENDS IN THE FORMALIST CRITICISMS OF WESTERN POETRY AND AFRICAN ORAL POETRY 'A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED CASE STUDIES' By MAAKE N. P. (1994)

In his doctoral thesis, Maake makes some meaningful contribution to the Russian Formalist Theory in the list of theories he selected from his detailed discussion for his case studies.

He states that the 'Formalists' objective amongst others was mainly to propose a 'scientific' study of poetic language'. Central to the Russian Formalists Critical Theories is the idea of 'defamiliarisation' that poetry made 'strange' (Ostranenie) what was familiar in ordinary speech. (1994 : 28)

Maake quotes Shklovsky as one of the early pioneers of this theory, who states that it is this aspect of poetry namely 'literariness' which makes it different from other forms of discourse.

The Formalists were mostly concerned with poetry which they regarded as the prime medium which transgressed grammatical rules and used certain formal structures which were 'foreground' and thus called for attention. Shklovsky, Jakobson, Eichenbaum and others propagated what came to be known as 'devices' or 'techniques' of poetry. These devices include linkage, parallelism, repetition, Figurative language, Imagery and others.

In order to illustrate one of the above notions, Maake makes some meaning presentation on another kind of parallelism which is achieved through vertical - line repetition as an example in the following poem;

**"Ha kena Leubane la Mokhachane  
Ha kena Leubane Leitsomadi  
Theb'e lebenyane ya Rantseosi**

**Theb'e lebenyane ya RaMasopha  
 A hana a funyella Seforong  
 A batla a ba ghalanya Seforong"  
 (Maake 1994 ; 2261)**

***(There entered the Swooping Falcon  
 of Mokhachane There entered the  
 Swooping Falcon the  
 bird of prey The shining shield of  
 Rantheos! He heeded not, but went into  
 their stronghold  
 And nearly did he scatter them from out  
 their stronghold).***

In the above example, the parallelism runs vertically from Ha kena Leubane in the first line to the same phrase in the second line. These are divided into two phrases; Ha kena and Leubane. The phrase 'Theb'e lebenyane in the third line and the connective 'ya' makes two vertical lines each to its repetition in the fourth line and from the fifth line Seforong is repeated vertically in the sixth line.

Throughout his case study Maake proved to his readers that the view that literature differs from 'practical' language is because of its quintessential literary use of language, that 'artistic' use of language with quality of its own, and this view requires an understanding of the central tenets of Formalists thought.

## SETTING; PLOT STRUCTURE AND NARRATIVE POINT OF VIEW IN J. S. SHOLE'S SHORT STORY COLLECTION 'O FOO KE FANO' By SEBATE P. M. (1992).

In approaching his research study on Shole's collection of short stories 'O foo ke fano' Sebate adopted an 'eclectic approach' in his research works. This means that he employs two approaches namely the 'Formalist' and the 'Structuralist' fused together. According to him, the 'Formalists' approach is adopted because it helps us analyse the writer's technical prowess and craft skill. (Selden 1985 : 8)

Sebate goes further and states that, in poetry, which was the starting point of Russian Formalism thinking, the poet could 'defamiliarise' the arrangements of certain words, and events in order to suit his style of writing. They (Formalists) went further to distinguish between 'fabula' and 'syuzhet' and state that fabula is the raw material in its original and natural order, while syuzhet is seen as an arrangement of events through art devices.

These two terms 'fabula' and 'zyuzhet' refer to the story and the plot respectively. Maake quotes Selden (1985 : 12) as saying the following on Formalism Theory of Literature;

**".... plot is not only the  
arrangements of events, but it  
also includes all the devices  
used to interrupt and delay  
the narration."**

The Formalists maintain that the contents of a work of art are not proof of its literariness, but they believe that of significance is the manner in which the contents have been arranged. According to them, artistry can be judged by the poet's use of poetic techniques. In poetry these devices would include imagery, repetition, parallelism, linkage, Figurative language and any other trope and their main focus



was on poetry which became their starting point of departure in their study of poetic language.

Like any other modern literary critic of his time, Sebate is congratulated on his contributions in this field of theoretical study and especially his belief in the Russian Formalism that it is the only modern and scientific approach which is being used in the analysis of texts even today.

We shall now focus our attention to some of the devices of poetry that were propagated by the Formalists, and to show how they have played a leading role in defamiliarising practical language in Milubi's poetry.

#### **2.4 SHKLOVSKY'S DEFAMILIARISING TECHNIQUES**

Some of the highly recommended tools towards transforming the 'practical' language towards the realisation of literariness are Shklovsky's devices for 'defamiliarisation'. In order that language could be employed in a poetic manner, Shklovsky recommended that it should be transformed. i.e. it should be in a position to 'making strange' familiar acts and objects by describing them as they were seen for the first time or by removing them out of their ordinary context, Ryan et al (1982 : 17).

The ensuing discussion will focus on Shklovsky's devices of poetry and how they have defamiliarised the 'practical' language of our poet.

#### 2.4.1 PARALLELISM

Cohen (1973 : 192) defines parallelism as;

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

With parallelism, Ntuli as quoted by Milubi (1988 : 29) says 'we expect each unit in the first member of a verse to be balanced by another unit in the second member. If this correspondence is found between all the units, we have perfect parallelism'.

Schapera (1983 : 19) defines parallelism as follows;

**"It is a correspondence, in sense or construction of successive clause of passages .... where in each pair of lines, the first halves are identical in wording and the second are basically alike in meaning"**

Parallelism constitutes to the musical quality of poetry, and can be regarded as a general term for various forms of repetitions.

Kunene (1971 : 68) identifies three types of parallelism namely;

1. Parallelism of thought through the repetition of words and phrases.
2. Parallelism of thought through the re-statement of ideas by synonyms and indirect reference.
3. Parallelism of grammatical structure through the repetition of syntactical slots.

The main form which this poetic device takes is repetition.

According to Kunene's approach, 'Parallelism ramifies into various forms such as 'cross-line repetition patterns', 'repetition of words and phrases', 'repetition of emphasis', 'mixed tenses of the verb and', so forth.

In this dissertation we shall not deal with all the above examples as stated, but we shall limit our scope and deal with a few examples and definitions in order to give a general idea of the principles underlying Kunene's critical method, and especially how they influenced the poetic techniques our poet.

The following stanza from the poem entitled '**LUHURA LWA MUDI UNO**' (The traditional-fence of this homestead) illustrates the device of parallelism by repetition where oblique-line repetition pattern is used;

**Ndo sedza luhura lwa mudl uno**

**Nda lma nda sedza hafhu"**

**(Muima... 1990 : 49)**

***(I casted my eyes on the fence of this  
homestead***

***I reposioned myself, and casted my eyes  
once more).***

The above example is what Ntuli calls 'left - right oblique line repetition'.

Another family of parallelism is what Kunene calls 'Vertical-line' or 'initial repetition pattern' which is one of the commonest form of parallelism known. In such an example, the repeated phrase or word occupies the same position in the preceding line.

Let us look at the following poem entitled "**BANGA LA MUHAṬULI**" (The sword of the judge) by Milubi when he says:

**'U Itwa nga u shaya nungo**

**U Itwa nga u vha mmbwa'**

**Yo kulwaho madungammbwa'**

**(Muima ... 1990 : 67).**

***(Your sense of helplessness  
renders you ineffective***

***You have become like a dog***

***Whose canines have been severed).***

We have yet another family of parallelism which Ntuli calls 'Perfect-parallelism', and which Schapera regards as '**Chiasmus**', where the first half of one line corresponds to the second half of another.

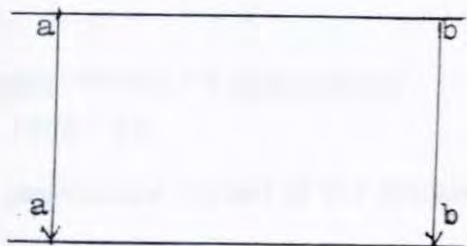
The following lines from the poem '**NNDWA YA VHUNE**' (The battle of the self) Milubi says;

**"Nndwni ya vhune**  
**Nndwani ya vhune"**.

(Muima ... 1990 : ).

*(In the battle of self - affliction*  
*In the battle of self - affliction).*

The above example gives us the following pattern;



The above pattern of parallelism resembles that of linking.

In poetry, parallelism also helps us in the building up of ideas, and suspense before the climax is reached.

Another dominant feature of parallelism is where some units balance each other by '**contradiction**'.

This contradiction may be in the form of general sense of the statement or antonym. We can illustrate this idea of balancing of each unit by looking at some lines taken from some of Milubi's poems;

In '**NDI MUDZUMBAMO**' (It is hide and seek game) the poet says;

**'RI dzumbama swiswini ri tshi**

**Shavha tshedza** (Muima .. 1990 : 55)

***(We hide in darkness for fear of light)***

We can also illustrate the above notion of balancing of ideas by contradiction by looking at the following lines taken from the poem '**BANGA LA MUHATULI**' (The sword of the judge) where Milubi says;

**'Sa shuvhuru phanda ha vhoravhalla'**

(Muima ... 1990 : 56)

***(Like the uninitiated in front of the initiator)***

In the above example, we experience a balance of units in each of the sentences which is being brought about by contradiction namely; 'swiswini' (darkness) and 'tshedza' (light) as well as

'shuvhuru' (uninitiate) and the (initiator) 'vhoravhalla'. These words form antonyms in the same syntactic positions.

Parallelism, just like repetition, is a tool of pleasure and convenience. On the one hand there is a touch of beauty in the skill with which the poet plays one set of

words against another without altering the structure of statement or the central message, on the other hand, there is a real need for a balanced framework which will order the vast amount of information harboured into a set of harmonious relationship.

#### 2.4.2 LINKING OR COHESION

On linking Freeman (1970B) says;

**"It is the way which independent choices in different points of a text correspond with or presuppose one another, forming a network of sequential relation."**

Just like in parallelism, linking is partially common in songs and chants. It can take the form of the last detail in one line of song or poem, becoming the first detail in the next.

Schapera (1983 : 19) defines linking as;

**"a word or idea occurring in the second half of a line and is repeated in the first half of the succeeding line".**

The above notion can be illustrated by looking at yet one of Milubi's poem

**'PHARANI DZA VHUTALI VHUNO'**

(In the crevice of this wisdom) where the poet says;

"Takuwa u sedze, u tielele

↙  
U sedze billimamboni lenell"

(Muima ... 1990 : )

*(Arise and take a look, peep  
 And discern in the midst of human  
 confusion)*

Right - left linkage is also experienced in these lines. In '**NWANANGA, SEDZANI**: (My son take care or be watchful) Milubi again illustrates this notion when he says;

"Nwananga sendelani tsini

↙  
 No sendelani sedze nala hedzi dzanga

(Mulma .. 1990 : 10).

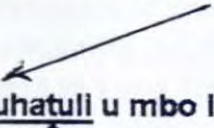
*(My son, draw very close  
 When closer, take a look at these fingers of mine*

In the above examples, one experiences a right - left swing type of linking, and this could be illustrated in the following diagram;



We may distinguish two types of linking namely; 'Vertical' (initial) and oblique linking. We prefer to call the above example oblique linking because it can be represented with lines having a slant from one side to the other. Ntuli (1971 : 36).

This right - left swing type of linking concurs with Copes idea of final linking. The following is yet another example of this type of linking from the poem '**BANGA LA MUHATULI**' (The sword of the judge) where Milubi says;

"Khulunoni ya muhatuli  
  
Muhatuli u mbo Imisa banga"  
 (Muima .... 1990 : 56)

*(At the throne of the judge  
 The judge lifts his sword).*

This repetition of words or stems in various positions in successive lines can result in beautiful patterns which could be significant in heightening the effect. Just like parallelism and repetition, linking provides artists with patterns of pleasure as well as convenience.

### 2.4.3 REFRAIN

Marie Heese et al (1968) says that 'refrain depends largely on rhythm and rhyme and was probably characteristics of the most ancient poetry'.

She went further to define refrain as;

**"A line or several lines  
repeated at regular inter-  
vals throughout the poem"  
(p. 43)**

Wheeler (1966 : 258) views the refrain as a poetic device whose functions are amongst others;

**"To contribute to the thematic or tonal unity of a poem, and its regular occurrence as a way of marking off structural divisions. By remaining unchanged, the refrain acts to keep the poem always circling back upon itself".**

In his poem entitled '**NWANANGA SEDZANI**' (My son look) Milubi uses the refrain to echo a strong warning to his son to remain watchful and refrain from falling victims of this somewhat devastating world in which he and his fellow human beings always find themselves when he says;

1. **Nwananga sendelani tsini**
2. **Nwananga sedza u sedzese**
3. **Nwananga ngavhe u tshi limuwa uri..**  
(Muima .... 1990 : )

***(My son draw closer  
My son take a deep look  
My son only if you could remember).***

This poetic device is also embedded in yet another of Milubi's poem '**MBANI MURINI**' where the poet repeats the phrase "Mbilu hei" (this heart) when he says;

1. "Mbilu hei ndi ludongo  
Lu fhisaho lu sa farei
2. Mbilu heyi ndi luselo  
Lwo pfuduwaho lu sa farlho tshithu
3. Mbilu heyi I khou llla  
I llla u vhona yone phakho"

(Muima ... 1990 : 34)

*(This heart is a frying claypot  
Which is hot and cannot be  
handled*

*This heart is a winnowing basket  
Which has a hole, and cannot hold  
anything*

*This heart is crying  
It longs for refuge)*

We can still identify this technique of poetry from another of his poem; '**IWE MUSIDZANA**' (You girl) where Milubi makes some meaningful attempts in employing this device where the phrase "Iwe musidzana" appears on the first line of each stanza when he says'

1. Iwe musidzana
2. "Iwe musidzana
3. "Iwe musidzana

(Muima ... 1990 : 34)

*(You girl  
You girl  
You girl*

In this poem '**MUSIDZANA**', all the lines include the phrase 'lwe musidzana' (You girl). The poet is purposefully repeating this phrase to keep on reminding the reader of the danger that is facing our girls especially the mature ones who are always falling victims of being physically abused.

Normally we rarely find Vhavenda poets making some meaningful attempts in the employ of this technique in their writings. One may conclude that this style of writing has some characteristic features of those techniques imported from the West which are not characteristic of the traditional and African form of Oral poetry.

#### **2.4.4 REPETITION**

Besides parallelism, linking and refrain, there is yet another poetic technique which many poets use to reinforce meaning, or to mark a feeling of excitement or agitation, whether in the sense of utmost delight or fear (Okpewho 1992 : 72)

Heese et al (1978 : 43) has this to say on repetition;

**"On repetition depends largely on  
rhyme and rhythm and was probably  
characteristic of the ancient poetry"**

Let us examine briefly the use of repeated phrases and words from this following poem entitled 'SA NNZHU' (Like a Black eagle) where Milubi portrays the ongoing circling movement of a black eagle in the sky when he says;

**"U mbo mona  
 Wa mona  
 Wa dovha, wa dovha hafhu.**

(Muima ... 1990 : 7)

***(You circle and circle  
 Again and again)***

The repeated use of the stem '-mona' and '-dovha' emphasizes the way this eagle continuously circles above the firmament in search of its prey. The purpose of employing this device is to emphasize a point, thought, action or feeling. Milubi does this by having one and the same word repeated in more than two successive lines or have it scattered in the whole poem.

In 'TSHIFHINGA' (Time) the poet has used the stem '-vhumbe' (to mould) three times but in changed form. His main concern is the reconstruction 'divhumbe' (the moulding) of humanity in this ever changing time when he says;

**"U divhumbe u vhumbe-vho  
 U vhumbe vhathu naho vha tshi u lamba  
 Vha ralo vha divhumbe-vho" (Muima . '90 : 22)**

***(Recreate and create too  
 create beings despite their despising you  
 So tht they are struck to an awareness,  
 and recreate themselves)***

The employment of this technique in the above stanza was for the purpose of emphasizing and aesthetic reasons.

#### 2.4.5 ALLITERATION

Abrams (1985 : 7) defines 'alliteration' as;

**"the repetition of a speech sound  
in a sequence of words"**

Alliteration is the way many poets enjoy playing upon the same letter for the purpose of achieving some effect in poetry. In alliteration, the term is usually applied to consonants, and this happens when the recurrent sound occurs in a conspicuous position at the beginning either of a word or of a stressed syllable within a word.

In "IPFI LA MUPFUMI' (The voice of the rich man) Milubi has got this to say;

**"Ndi nne mupfumi mupfuma lupfumo"**

(Muima ... 1990 : 45)

***(I am a rich man full of riches)***

For aesthetic reasons, the poet uses a combination of alliteration and assonance in the above example.

Five 'm' and six 'u' in this line are just enough evidence to illustrate the poet's objective. On the average this poet uses very strong and noisy sounds in this poem. A lot of 'pf' and also the melodic sounds like the 'm' respectively.

Alliteration is imbedded in most of Milubi's poems. Another very good example of this technique can still be drawn from the poem entitled '**KHA A FELAHO NGOHO**' (To the one who dies for the truth) where he says;

**"Ya u xoya ya xuxwa yo u kuya"**

**(Muima ... 1990 : 16)**

***(It crushes you and takes delight when  
it has ground you)***

In this example, the dominant letters are 'y' and 'x' and the vowels 'u' and 'a' which serve as reasonable examples.

It is appreciable to realise that the importance of these devices does not lie in their abundance, but on their function in the work in which they appear. The device of poetry as Jefferson et al (1993 : 38) says "are studied not for themselves, but for their defamiliarising capacity. Coupled with alliteration, **assonance** serves as another feature of repetition. In alliteration, repetition falls on consonants but in assonance, it falls on vowels.

#### **2.4.6 EVOCATIVES**

Evocatives are but one device of poetry. The use of evocatives or (emotion-arousing) words is very fundamental in poetry for defamiliarizing purpose as they also appeal to our senses. Of course the words themselves have no evocative

power. What is evocative in one context (or for one person) may not be evocative in another (or for another person). Indeed the same word may evoke opposite responses from different people.

Evocative words stir up emotions and bring about other responses. When speaking, for example, of frying bacon and eggs, one poet's choice of words will do little more than conjure up a vague image, while the words of a second will cause the reader not only to hear the bacon crackling and spitting in the pan, but virtually make his mouth water as the listener can practically sniff the aroma too.

In '**BERE NA MUNAMELI**' (The horse and its rider) the poet evokes some of our sense and emotions through the employment of these words when he says;

**"Ndwani yeneyi  
Bere ya akha misipha yayo  
U swika l tshi swika tshigani  
Misipha ya thinyea  
U thinyea hayo ha wisa muameli  
(Muima .... 1990 : 23)**

***(In this struggle  
The horse tauts its sinews  
Until they reach a point  
Where they are sprained  
The sprain made the master fall  
And the horse turns into a rider)***

In the above stanza, the language used is very powerful, forceful and evocative. This poet chooses words that are emotive, words that have that maximum effect



on the reader such as 'Nndwani' (struggle) 'ya akha misipha' (it stretches its sinews) 'ya thinyea' (it sprains), and others to defamiliarise his day-to-day language. These words appeal to a number of our senses. The feeling of pain, and heat from the struggle, anger, frustration, fear and irritation are all addressed here.

This is evocative language. These words and phrases employed in this stanza reveal the real tormenting situation the poet is subjected to. The situation is dangerous, tense and horrible. The images evoked in these lines are both visual and kinesthetic. It is these hideous images that clearly concretize the cruelty and wickedness of this world in which the poet constantly finds himself.

Any poet who writes abstractively and dully, rather than concretely and evocatively must be spending much time writing dull material. Evocative language the language of sense of appeal, is the language of poetry used to defamiliarize on 'practical' language.

#### 2.4.7 ALLUSION

In his 'African Oral Literature Background Character and Continuity' Okpewho, (1982 : 101)

on defining allusion says;

**".. a device whereby one idea or image is used in a tightly compressed form. The origin of the allusion is hardly apparent from the context in which it occurs, but the user**

**has assumed that the speaker of that language already knows that source."**

In Tshivenda, allusion comes frequently in the form of compressed metaphors which are commonly called proverbs (mirero). Let us illustrate this notion by drawing some Tshivenda proverbs where allusion is very evident. (The words that are always omitted are shown in brackets);

1. **'Zwa (zwithu) madzanga zwi a todana"**

Van Warmelo, (1989 : 34)

*(The precious and beautiful things seek one another. 'Like seeks like'.*

2. **"Ya (kholomo) longa khwanda yo nwa"**

(p. : 112).

*(If the ox puts its hoof into the water it must have drunk there. 'One who was there when the crime was committed must be the guilty party).*

The above few proverbs are just enough evidence to support this idea of 'compressed metaphors' which are commonly called proverbs.

In **'KANI-HA A THI FUNI'** (Did'nt I perhaps like it) the poet employs this technique very favourably when he says;

**"Nda ora-ha na vhanwe u sa bvisi mbale"**

(Muima ... 1990 : 25))

***(And I bask with others with that which  
does not course scars.)***

In this example, the poet deliberately leaves out the word 'mulilo' (fire) in order to present a more compact expression from his words.

Allusions are also virtually employed in praise songs and riddles in Tshivenda and other African communities as a way of committing 'violence' to the ordinary language.

#### **2.4.8 ONOMATOPEITIC WORDS**

According to Abrams (1985 : 138), Onomatopoeic designates;

**"a word, or a combination  
of words where sound seems  
to resemble closely the  
sound it denotes; 'hiss' 'bang'.  
These sounds are interjected  
much the same way we use sounds  
like 'ouch' or 'ahh' or 'oh'**

Onomatopoeic words are also a family of poetic technique that relies on sound. Simply it means that from the sound of the word, one gets an idea of the nature of event referred to.

Okpewho, (1982 : 92) defines Onomatopoeic words as;

**"sounds used in conveying  
a vivid impression"**

These words are frequently used in poetry and narratives for achieving a strong sensual or dramatic impact than any other words available in the language could have done. Tshivenda as a language of story telling is also very rich in Onomatopoeic words.

A very good example of this device can be drawn from **"KHA A FELAHO NGOHO"** (To the one who dies for the Truth) where Milubi says;

**"Yawee! malofha au o gamba'**

(Muima .. 1990 : 16)

***(Lo! your blood has clotted)***

The Onomatopoeic word '**Yawee**' in the above example, evokes in the reader's mind different sense perceptions. We experience a feeling of pain which is brought about by the Kineasthetic sense perception. The image created by this word makes the reader to hear, feel and perhaps even dislike the wrong portrayed by the poem.

Generally, Onomatopoeic words are used in various ways such as size 'mungafha' (of this size) distance 'hafhalaa' (thére!) movement 'taku-taku! (suddenly) 'taste', 'smell', and others. They are another family of stylistic language which appeals to all our senses, and are regarded as 'poetic devices' which also play a leading role in the language of poetry.

There are some other poetic techniques that many poets employ in their works of poetry such as rhythm, rhyme and others which were not included in this discussion. We have decided to limit our scope, and discuss only these few examples as they are relevant in 'MUIMAWOGA' in order to show how successful Milubi has been in the realization of the techniques of 'defamiliarisation' in his works.

Our attention will now be focussed on the aspect of 'Language of poetry' as this aspect also covers our main concern for this research study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3. POETIC LANGUAGE

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate from the various linguistic point of reference on how ordinary day-to-day language is used in poetry. 'Practical' language is analysed, and its constituent elements examined to see the extent of violation committed, and at the same time to cherish the aesthetic elements that emerge out of these deviations.

The Formalists extensive study of literariness of text led to the distinction between the language of prose and that of poetry. The language of poetry which is the focus of this chapter will be referred to in this ensuing discussion as '**poetic language**'.

#### 3.1.1 WHAT IS POETIC LANGUAGE

From long ago, it was the Formalists who took the lead of differentiating language according to the direction of discourse. According to them, poetry as literature was differentiated from other forms of literature like prose on the basis of how it is constructed, namely through form and code - or 'language' and 'literary' or poetic language. Practical language is used for the sake of communicating daily activities and experiences, whereas poetic language is a special kind of language which gains its identity by deviating from the standard rules and norms of day-to-day language and grammar.

According to Selden (1988 : 30) literary language has no practical function at all, and simply makes us see differently.

The study of poetic language involves the study of a certain type of arrangement and modification of the elements of day-to-day language. Some scholars are of the opinion that the study of poetic language is subject to systematic and vigorous description, whereas it is subjected to various degrees of deviations from the linguistic norm. Poetic language is licensed to these deviations. Features such as irregular word-order, and unusual collocations, tolerance of deviations and expectation of striking metaphors are some of the characteristics of poetic language. It is also regarded as the most creative of all discourse.

The language used by poets is sometimes much more effective, compressed and even intense.

Leech (1969 : 15) regard poetic language as;

**"a treasure in which has been  
controlled all that is best  
in the language of the past, it  
is a prescient set off from the  
ordinary language of the day."**

The ensuing discussion will focus on the analysis of poetic language with special reference to the various levels of linguistic approach to the study of literature. Our major focus will be on how 'defamiliarisation' from the linguistic structures has influenced and benefitted the poet as well as his audience. The three levels of linguistic approaches to the study of literature will be studied under the following categories;

1. The **Morphological Level**, where the formation of words from smaller units may be studied.
  
2. The **Syntactic Level** in which sentences may be studied in terms of the construction from smaller units such as words, phrases, or word groups.
  
3. The **Semantic Level** in which different kinds of meaning of sentences are brought by those of their smaller units.

It is the inclusion of such devices in one's work that makes poetic language rich, effective and interesting.

Both Ryan et al's (1982) and Jefferson (1989) et al's definition of poetic language fall not far from one another. They both regard sound texture and rhythm as contributory factors to the practical nature of a language. Jefferson et al (1993:38)

has Semantic as the third aspect of ordinary language which is violated by poetry. According to him, 'poetry differs from ordinary language in that it activates the secondary or collateral meanings of a word simultaneously'.

Nowothy (1962) agrees in support of Jefferson's view and cites as the characteristics of poetic language, 'the presentation of a word at more than one



level at the same time or alternatively, if one and the same utterance has more than one function in the structure of meaning in which it occurs

In poetry, the poet accords one word to more than one meaning, that is 'the meaning of a word does not stop at the edge of the dictionary's definition.'

The poet may intend his audience to understand his poem either from the level of simple meaning or literal meaning - 'denotation' of art, or the level of deeper meaning - 'connotation'

When an object, concept or action does not possess characteristics qualifying it to be labelled what the poet says it is - the existing label is connotative. This notion can be illustrated in praise poems where a brave soldier is said to a 'lion', a beautiful girl - a 'flower' or 'star'

It was this notion of literariness that made Russian Formalism **scientific** and **systematic**.

Shklovsky locates the literariness of a literary text on "the roughened texture of speech sound in verse" Ryan et al (1982 : 17) or as Jefferson puts it, "the subject of literary science is not literature, but literariness, i e. that which makes a given work a literary work". O Tool and Shukman (1973 : 17) in Ryan et al (1993 : 32). Poetic language is also characterised by alliteration, assonants, rhyme, rhythm and pararhymes.

In poetry, the creative poet enjoys unique freedom amongst other users of the language. Poetic language is licensed to any formal grammatical rules and norms of standard language. In poetry, the poet draws his language from past ages,

borrow features from other non-literary users of language like poetic diction and others.

The language of poetry must be vital, fresh and surprising in order to arouse emotions, and become effective. Poetry which has no surprise cannot attract our attention. Poetry then is vital, fresh and surprising language.

In poetry, it is 'ordinary' that constitute the main automatized elements made strange by art. In ordinary language, the word is pronounced automatically, but the effect of poetry is to make language 'difficult' or 'oblique' Ryan et al (1982 : 27). Everyday language is made strange (Ostranenie) in poetry. We can therefore regard poetic language as 'formed speech' (Ibid : 28) The language should be arranged in such a way that it appeals to all the senses for which poetry makes its lasting appeal.

Lastly, amongst the chief resources of poetry, are the 'techniques' or 'devices' we call 'Simile' and 'Metaphors' The Metaphorical use of language is a dominant characteristic feature of poetic language. Similes and Metaphors are ways and means by which poets who feel that language has become stale can revitalise it. Metaphors are at the root of language, and poetry extends its range by using them.

The fresh, vitality and originality of language, as well as diction, surprise and imagery are prominent in poetry. Without them no poet can achieve lasting success. Poetry stands for life and freshness of language, vitality and resources of experience.

It is also appropriate to state that as there is no firm dividing line between 'poetic' and 'ordinary' language, it would therefore seem unreasonable to enforce a clear division between these two aspects.

We shall now focus our attention on the analysis of poetic language with special reference to various levels of linguistic approach to the study of literature.

### **3.2 POETIC LANGUAGE AND LEVELS OF LINGUISTIC APPROACH.**

#### **3.2.1 MORPHOLOGICAL LEVEL.**

This section serves to illustrate some poetic violations found in the morphological structure as they are found in Milubi's use of poetic language.

Morphology is that discipline of the science of language which makes analysis of the structure of polymorphemic words. Polymorphemic words always contain one root and one or more morphemes commonly referred to as 'prefix' or 'suffixes'. For the purpose of rhyme, alliteration, rhythm, words in poetry are used either in their original form, or as formatives.

In the poetic language, we sometimes find deverbative nouns, which are products of the process of affixation of either prefixes and suffixes to verbal roots. An illustration of this idea is drawn from the poem entitled **'VHUAWELO HANGA VHU NGAFHI?'** (Where is my resting place?) wherein Milubi says;

**"Vhuawelo hanga a vhuho fhano"**

(Muima ... 1990 : 5)

***(My resting place is not here)***

In the above example, the word "**vhuawelo**" (resting place) is a deverbative which comes from -awela (rest)

**'Vhuawelo'** -vhu - is the prefix  
 -aw - the root  
 -el - the verbal suffix  
 -o - the terminative vowel

Another 'defamiliarising' technique which is commonly employed by many poets in their works of art for rhythmic as well as aesthetic purpose is '**Compounding**' of words. This device may also be employed for the purpose of conjoining information.

We may illustrate this notion by looking at the following line extracted from the above mentioned poem "**VHUAWELO HANGA A VHU NGAFHI?**" (where is my resting place?) where the poet makes some meaningful attempts in compounding the word '**mushayahawe**' (the homeless one) when he says;

**"Yawee! ndl nne 'mushayahawe' a no shaya  
 tshawe" (Mulima .. 1990 : 5)**

***(Lo! I am the homeless one who has  
 nothing of his own)***

'Mushayahawe' (the homeless one) is a phrase in itself and refers to a person without a place of abode. The poet seems to repeat to his readers and audience that he regards himself as one who has been robbed of everything including his place of abode in this world in which he finds himself.

Compounding words are abundant in **MUIMAWOGA**, and we can still draw some of these examples from the following lines;

**"Wa mbo vha 'mufelavhanzhi'"**

(Muima... 1990 : 18)

***(And you became the one who dies for others)***

**"Fhasi ha 'mlvhulavhusiku' ri mbo vhandana ra vhandana"**

(Muima ... 1990 : 14)

***(Under the 'mlvhulavhusiku' tree where we pat and caress.)***

In some instances, compounding of words takes the form of connecting two different grammatical features to form new words such as found in the following line;

**"Nga murahu musl lwo zhakwa nga danda la mutulume"**

(Muima ... 1990 : 19)

***(After it has been crushed by a 'mutulume' pole)***

The word 'mutulume' (male mutu) comes from;

NOUN + ADJECTIVE

Mutu - noun

lume - adjective

'Ellision' is another aspect of compounding which is used by poets to achieve certain required objectives in sentences. In order that a sentence in a certain stanza should be of the same length, or should have the same number of syllables, some linguistic items are omitted.

Generally the poet leaves out the class prefix still as a means of keeping the developed rhythm. In "NDI SWINA LANU A NI MPFUNI" (I am your enemy and you don't love me) Milubi purposefully omit the prefix 'dzi-' in the following lines for the purpose of defamiliarising his ordinary language when he says;

**"Khuvha dzanga thabelo ndo zuzo z<sup>o</sup>the"**

(Muima ... 1990 : 27)

***(For I have exhausted all my prayers)***

In the above example, the prefix 'dzi-' is left out in the word 'thabelo' (prayer) to shorten the sentence.

Another feature common to many poets is **'Neologism'** which is the coining and using of new words as a defamiliarising technique which is commonly employed in poetry.

These created words are special, specific and relevant to the poet's expressions, and it is another method of extending the horizon and appreciation of the poet's vocabulary.

The word **'Tshirahadonngi'** in the poem **"NNE NDI NGUVHO"** (I am a blanket) serves as a relevant example of this phenomenon where Milubi says;

**"Ya dzula fhasi ya kotha nduvho ya  
tshone 'tshirahadonngi'**

(Muima ... 1990 : 43)

***(And it settled down and paid homage to the  
'donkey-kicker) (Meaning : Ultimately, he  
had to tolerate covering his head with a  
urine-smelling blanket - a show of much  
tolerance)***

### **3.2.2 SYNTACTIC LEVEL OF APPROACH**

Under this sub-section our aim is to show how some specific linguistic items may be analysed and explained from the syntactic point of view of poetic language.

Syntax is regarded as a 'linguistic discipline which looks into the rules according to which words are combined to form larger entities such as word groups and sentences'.

The Oxford dictionary of Current English (1982 : 1084) defines Syntax as ;

**"the analysis or the grammatical arrangement of words in speech or writing to show their connection and relation"**

The combination and the arrangements of words are controlled by a strict system of rules, but in poetry these rules are relaxed as it (poetry) does not abide nor respect such rules. Poetry is governed by 'poetic licence' which is the openness to some syntactic deviation and violation of grammatical rules. This means that the poet is at liberty to violate, exploit and bend the syntax of a language to suit and achieve his purpose

In poetry, word-order plays a very leading role even where no deviation is experienced. Aesthetic effect, characteristic feature of a good poem, is subject to effective and sensitive word choice. The so called 'devices of poetry' also depend on word choice and arrangement which include rhythm and rhyme.

Factors like transformation, repetition, refrain and others also fall within the domain of syntactic level of investigation.



The following discussion will now focus on poetic violation which is found in the syntactic structure of language which will now be discussed as part of Milubi's use of language of poetry.

### 3.2.2.1 TRANSFORMATION

In Tshivenda, for instance, the basic sentence structure always consists of at least a **SUBJECT** and a **PREDICATE**. We normally find that the subject is basically positioned to the 'left' of the verb.

Fowler (1975 : 30) argues that in poetry "poets are at liberty to orchestrate a complex variety of transformation with the effect of crucially moving semantic material from their canonical position to the left of their syntactic position, or to their canonical position to the centre of the string or to the end or right of their syntactic position"

#### (a) OBJECT PREPOSING

In poetry, the idea of transferring an 'object' to the left or beginning of a sentence is done with a purpose, which is either to contribute towards emphasizing a specific idea or thought, or to create a better sound effect.

In "**NDI SWINA LANU A NI MPFUNI**" (I am your enemy and you don't love me) the poet expresses his humble surrender and meakness towards his lord through his abstract token of acknowledgement of overlordship when he says;

**Tshandanl ndo fara nduvho ya vhukonani**

(Muima ... 1990 : 27)

***(Holding a token (tribute) of friendship in my hand)***

In day-to-day language, the above underlined sentence should read thus;

**"Ndo fara nduvho ya vhukonani tshandanl"**

*(Holding a token (tribute) of  
friendship in my hand)*

The poet further illustrates this concept of object preposing and says;

**"Khuvha ndo zuza thabelo dzanga dzothe"**

(Muima ... 1990 : 27).

***(For I have indeed exhasuteed all my prayers)***

In ordinary speech, we expect the above sentence to read as follows;

**'Dzanga thabelo khuvha ndo zuza dzothe'**

or

**'Thabelo dzanga khuvha ndo zuza dzothe'**

***(For I have exhausted all my prayers)***

## (b) SUBJECT POSPONING

The notion of subject postponing is concerned with the movement of the subject from its syntactic position to the right of the sentence. In **"NNDWANI YA VHUNE"** (The battle of the self) the poet says;

**"He ha ralo u thubwa vhuthubwani ha Babele"**

(Muima ... 1990 : 67)

We expect the above sentence to read thus;

**"Babele vhuthubwani he ha ralo u thubwa"**

*(In Babylon where we were captured)*

In the above example, the subject 'Babylon' is purposefully left to the end of the sentence with the aim of showing and emphasizing the concerned place of suffering where the nation of God was forced to remain in exile for many years irrespective of their daily pleas in remembrance of Zion.

### 3.2.2.2 CONVERGENCE

The above notion has stemmed, in large part, from Roman Jakobson's (1980B) famous dictum;

**"The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection, into the axis of combination"**

Jakobson argued that 'poetic language' seeks in its chain, or combination relationship - its syntactic elements, the same properties of close coherence that are to be found among the individual members of a choice relation or paradigm.

In poetry, convergence is the overflow of sense from the first line to the next line without pausing at the end of each line. In MUIMAWOGA this technique is very common and the poet enjoys defamiliarising his language through its employ

In "PHARANI DZA VHUTALI VHUNO" (In the crevice of this human wisdom) the poet presents a meaningful illustration of the continuation of an idea that overflows from the first into the second line when he says;

**"U Ita'ni u tshi ralo u qidina  
Nga u linga hone u lukulula"**

(Muima .... 1990 : 47)

***(Why do you keep on worrying yourself  
By trying to unravel)***

The fact that the comma was omitted at the end of the first line is an indication that it is in fact one sentence that has been broken into two lines of poetry. In this example, it is not even necessary to begin the second sentence with a capital letter because in this case we experience an overflow of ideas from the first to the second line.

### 3.2.3 SEMANTIC LEVEL OF APPROACH

One branch of philology which is concerned with the study of language is called Semantics. It is a linguistic discipline which involves the study of meaning. A study of Semantics presupposes that "all words in the lexicon of a language always stand in a certain semantic relationship to each other, and those standing relationships of words are controlled by the rules set up in a particular language".

Our objective in the study of poetic language is to focus on the poet's ability to 'defamiliarise' the day-to-day '**semantic**' relationship of words by deviating from those standard norms and rules of their daily language.

On the Semantic level of approach, this concept of defamiliarisation will be perceived from the point of view of **synonyms**, **Homonyms** and **antonyms**, and we shall analyse how they are employed by the poet to achieve some meaningful effects from some of Milubi's poems.

#### 3.2.3.1 SYNONYM

Cuddon (1982 : 677) defines Synonym as;

**"A word similar in meaning to another. It is rare to find an exact synonymous meaning. It is usually a shade of meaning."**

The process of repeating almost the same idea using different terminology, not only satisfies and pleases the reader, but also helps in emphasizing and driving the poet's major issues home.

In "SA NZHU" (Like a black eagle) Milubi uses the words 'Kunuwa' (break) 'Nyodowa' (break of) and 'vunde<sup>u</sup>a' (break off) in different sentences metaphorically to intensify the significance of the deprivation he has experienced from his overlords when he says;

"Tari la mbo nyodowa la kunuwa  
 U nyodowa ha tari ha nyodola na phapha dzau  
 U vho babamela muyani nga phapha dzo vunde<sup>u</sup>a.."  
 (Muima ... 1990 : 7)

*(And the leaf breaks off and falls off  
 The breaking off of the leaf breaks your  
 wings as well. And you are now fluttering in  
 the air with broken wings)*

Yet in another of Milubi's poem 'IDANI-HA' (Please do come) the poet employs this technique of antonyms to emphasize and to drive his point home when he says;

"Ro fhambana ra furalelana  
 Ra fhambana"  
 (Muima ... 1990 : 26)

*(We severed our relationship  
 and turned our backs to each  
 other, and then separated)*

Milubi goes on to say;

"Dza llla, dza honda, dza tavha na  
gosi" (Muima ... 1990 : 26).

We further identify synonyms in the ensuing lines of the same poem where the poet goes on to say;

**"Idani-ha ri songe mutumba  
 RI totelane, ri fembedze, ri atsamule  
 Ro no daha zwi bvaho khambanani na  
tshiboboni"**

***(Come let us reconcile  
 Let us share the snuff together, let us  
 sniff and sneeze together.  
 After sniffing that which comes  
 from the snuffbox and the snuff tin).***

It is quite appreciable to see how the poet enjoys the employing of this poetic technique in defamiliarising the day-to-day language in this example. The words 'totelana' 'fembedza' and 'daha' carry with them almost the same linguistic meaning of 'sharing snuff' in the Tshivenda culture. It is through the employ of these words that the poet appears to extend a sort of a reconciliatory message to all those who are in authority that through peaceful negotiations, both of us can reach a meaningful goal in this ravaged life of today.

### **3.2.3.2 HOMONYMS**

According to Cuddon (1982 : 310) homonymy is :

**"a word having the same sound  
 and spelling as another, but  
 with a different origin and  
 meaning."**

The difference lies in the differentiation between those forms, and which will depend on the reader's understanding and mastery of the language employed. Another factor which facilitates the comprehension of their meaning is the environment (surrounding) within which the words are found.

Let us illustrate this idea by looking at one of Milubi's poetry "**NNE NA MUFUNWA**" (I and my lover) where the poet compares his former beautiful life which was white like snow but has now lost its colour when he says;

**"Vhutshena halwo ho no birima  
sa birima"**

(Muima ... 1990 : 14)

*(Its whiteness has lost its colour  
like wrath in pulp or beer brewing)*

### 3.2.3.3 ANTONYMS

The word antonym is generally employed for the opposite in meaning.

The Concise Oxford English Dictionary (1989 : 39) defines the term 'antonym' as;

**" a word of contrary meaning  
to another."**

In language, we distinguish between lexical antonyms and morphologically derived antonyms.



**(a) LEXICAL ANTONYMS**

These are words whose inherent meaning is such that they are semantically opposite. This oppositeness has not resulted from the affixation of certain morphemes in the structure of these words. This notion is illustrated by looking at the following examples from some of Milubi's poems.

In 'TSHIPFULA TSHA MBILU' (The magical sickness of the heart) the poet seems to present a reconciliatory mood to his sick heart that has been hurt and made sick by the ills of this world by employing antonyms when he says;

**"Ndi nyl-ha a no do tengula a thadula**

**Mbilu dzo lemelwaho"**

(Muima .... 1990 : 8)

***(Who then is going to scoop and release  
the heavy ladden hearts)***

The words 'thadula' and 'lemela' in the above line are examples of two extreme words, and their inherent meaning is also such that they are semantically opposite.

The poet goes on to say;

**"Phodzo I siele tshengelo ndila  
Vhuhall ha tshengelo na mbiti dza swina  
Zwi noke zwi shanduke munoko"**

(Muima ... 1990 : 8)

***(Healing power should allow***

***prolonged suffering to pass by  
Let the ferocity of human suffering  
Melt and change into nothingness)***

In the above example, the poet makes use of oppositeness, in conveying and drawing his point home.

The word 'phodzo' (healing ) is semantically opposite to 'tshengelo' (suffering) while 'vhuhali' (anger or ferocity) and 'mbiti' (rage) are in opposite with 'noka' (melt/cool down) and 'munoko' (melting down or bringing down of rage or temper)

#### **(b) MORPHOLOGICALLY DERIVED ANTONYMS**

Morphologically derived antonyms are used by poets for rhythmic and aesthetic purpose. The employ of this device in poetry also shows how good the poet is at playing around with words, sometimes he cannot do without a good command of language.

These antonyms result from the affixation of morphemes to verbal stems and nominal roots.

Morphologically derived antonyms are not common in MUIMAWOGA, but nevertheless, we can identify a few examples from the poem; "TSHITUMBANI TSHA NYOFHO" (In the pen of fear) Milubi avoiding the employ of a common phrase 'thungo ino na thungo ila' used the two words with opposite meaning to extend the horizon of our perception when he says;

**"A li posa ngel na ngeo"**

(Muima .. 1990 : 42)

***(And he throws it yonder and yonder)***

In this example, the meaning in the first part of the line is completed in the second part where the difference on the position is compared.

The affixation of the vowels 'i' and 'o' respectively to the nominal root has resulted in another example of morphologically derived antonyms.

Milubi goes on to say;

**"Sa vhalo! vho tshelwa vho wanedzwa nga  
vhalolwa"**

(Muima .... 1990 : 58)

***(Like the witches whom were trapped by  
the bewitched)***

**"Tshine u poswa 'ngel' na 'ngeno'**

(Muima ... 1990 : 42)

***(Which is thrown at yonder and thither)***

We conclude this discussion by stating that it is the employment of some of the techniques of 'defamiliarisation' by the poet that his poetry is not only regarded as attractive but also very appealing, rich and effective.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. IMAGERY

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Formalists thinking between the period 1914 and 1930 has long regarded the existence of images in literature as one of the acknowledged fact and one of the major poetic devices. The poetic image is only one of the means of intensifying the impressions and as such the role of imagery is similar to that of other poetic devices already discussed in the previous chapters.

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the role that Imagery plays in poetry, and it is further to illustrate how Milubi uses the skill to enhance the quality of his work.

Heese and Lawton (1979 : 62) say;

**"The words employed by a poet need not be different in themselves from ordinary words used in straight forward prose or everyday speech, but in the context of a poem, they may acquire that extension of meaning which stimulates and delights the imagination. His use of language here is not straightforward, because it is non-literal. He is creating, with words what we call an 'image.'"**

Now what do we understand by the term 'poetic image'?

In its simplest form, it is a picture made out of words. Originally, the word 'image' meant 'a visual picture'. But in the language of literary criticism, its meaning has been extended to include the calling up in the hearings, taste, touch, and smell. An image may be presented in a phrase or a verse, by conveying to our imagination, something more than the accurate reflection of an external reality" Lewis (1968 : 18)

An image can therefore be regarded as a 'word or cluster of words that stimulates sense perception'. The manner in which words are used should appeal to the reader's five senses, because it is primarily the striking freshness and precision of the images which give the reader the aesthetic or poetic pleasure necessary.

On defining imagery Abrams (1971 : 76) says;

**"Imagery is used to signify all the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to in a poem or other works of literature, whether by literal description, by allusion, or in the analogues (the vehicle) used in similes and metaphors."**

Maake (1994 : 146) further quotes Brooks as saying;

**"Images are not restricted to evocation of perception through sight, but also evoke all the other senses - touch (tactile) temperature, smell (Olfactory), and sound (audible or auditory)**

The existence of and significance of imagery as a literary communicative device has long been an acknowledged fact. Imagery according to Miller and Currie (1970 : 63 - 64) should be understood to mean the part of literary work of art which appeals to more than one sense at once, or it can refer to one sense in terms of another sense creating what they referred to as 'Synaesthetic Imagery'.

Cuddon (1984 : 323) agrees with the above views on imagery, and according to his terminology, imagery is viewed or referred to as the different senses to which images may be applied. He further identified six image patterns as embodiment of symbolic vision namely; Sight (visual images), Olfactory (smell images), auditory (hearing images), tactile (touch images), kineasthetic or (bodily movement and effect images), and also thematic images).

In **'MUIMAWOGA'** Milubi gives a great deal of these sensory stimulations. Through images, he feeds our vision and also makes us as active creative beings. Imagery as employed by this poet, is a way and means of sharing thought, and a means of involving the reader in the activity of the imagination.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, with regard to Milubi's use of imagery will be as follows;

- We will look at the various types of sources where he draws his images. This will give us a glimpse at his writings, such as his likes, and dislikes, the yearnings of his heart, his frustrations and hopes.

- Parallel to the above notion, the interpretation of Milubi's imagery will be concentrated in the context of the imagery, namely, the immediate, (line, stanza or poem) together with the poetry as a whole or in wider context.

This view is in agreement with Clement (1966 : 3) as quoted by Moleleki (1988) who states that;

**"every image gains clarity and significance only from its context."**

Just like any other poet, Milubi's images are drawn from the human experiences such a pain and suffering, his aspirations and defeats, his sense of courage, as well as from the natural world.

Some images will be well understood when they are studied from the so called 'Socio-political Cultural point of view', just like Kunene (1971 : 102) who fully recognizes the importance of Cultural Connotations some images may have when he says;

**"When however, they are localized as to time and place, they reveal cultural traits which may be unique to the people who provide them with context."**

The ensuing discussion will now focus on some of the image patterns as they are employed by the poet in his works and how they played a leading role in the 'defamiliarisation' of our day-to-day language.

## 4.1 IMAGE PATTERNS

### 4.1.1 IMAGES RELATING (ASSOCIATED) TO HUMAN EXPERIENCE.

There are quite a good number of images associated with human experience where Milubi draws his images from, but for the purpose of this research study, we have decided to limit our scope to this area by looking at only three types of image patterns that relate to the physical conditions of man namely; disease, pain and suffering, victory or power and prosperity.

#### 4.1.1.1 Images relating to disease

In one of Milubi's poems "VHUAWELO HANGA VHU NGAFHI" (Where is my refuge) the poet says;

"Hanga zwino ndi ngafhi?  
 Ngauri ndi shanduka muhumbell o shulwaho  
 nga phadi  
 A no nengisa, a si sedzee  
 Ane naho a tshi humbela, a tou tapelwa  
 nga lutanda  
 One masita a kale-kale a sa lel"

(Muima ... 1990 : 5)

*(Now where is the place that could  
 be called mine  
 For I have become like a beggar  
 whose body is covered with scabies  
 Who is disgusting and detestable  
 Who whenever he asks for food,*



***Is despicably tossed to him with a  
stick  
The inedible suppurated food of long  
long ago)***

The imagery evoked in the second line is related to a very painful and irritating disease called 'itch' or scabies (phadi).

Scabies is a type of disease which is very irritating, and it renders some itching feelings on the skin of the sufferer. It is also very much nagging and people suffering from it are always isolated from the rest of the community. The disease is greatly feared because it is easily transmittible.

The image that is evoked in the reader's mind is a tactile one. We are tempted to conclude after going through the above line, that the person's life appears to be in great danger because of the situation in which he finds himself. This is further exaggerated by the conduct of his fellow men who so greatly despised him and isolated him from the entire community, and also by the manner in which they serve him with food, namely that of 'tossing' it to him. This is the type of world he and his fellow human beings find themselves in. A sick type of world, which is itching, irritating and uninhabitable.

It is through this word that the poet wants to echo to his readers the type of pain he is subjected to after being deprived of his pride and dignity in his country. This deprivation makes him so sick that he finds himself homeless, irritated and a somewhat despised being.

The image of scabies also portrays to the reader's mind an unfriendly and unacceptable world in which this poet finds himself. The picture portrayed by the

image is very undesirable to human beings. We all withdraw ourselves from patients suffering from scabies.

#### 4.1.1.2 Images relating to pain and suffering

Coupled with images relating to disease, Milubi also draws his images from images relating to pain and suffering in some of his poems. Let us illustrate this view by looking at yet another of his poems entitled; 'MBILU YANGA YO PFULWA' (My heart has been pierced) where the poet says;

**"Ndo fhufha nda fhira luhura holwu**

**Luhura lwa divhi la v<sup>h</sup>utungu."**

(Muima ... 1990 : 3)

***(I jumped and crossed over this very fence  
The fence within which there is a pool of  
pangs of pain)***

When we come across a phrase 'divhi la v<sup>h</sup>utungu' (the pool or pangs of pain) it evokes in our mind an image of unbearable pain which may even result in the reader's body shuddering and withering as though this pain is being inflicted in his own body.

Through the employ of this image, the poet tries to present a mental picture to the reader on the way and manner the 'masters' of this world painfully and endlessly inflict pain on their subjects. These masters appear to be merciless in their actions. According to this poet, the pain presented by this phrase appears to be permanent like a perennial pool of water.

Images relating to pain and suffering are abundant in 'MUIMAWOGA' and the following are some of the examples cited;

**"Vhutunguni hovhu vhu zhazhavhelaho"**

(Muima ... 1990 : 23)

***(Within this intolerable and unbearable pain)***

**"Ndi vho nga nngu**

**Yo sedzaho vhashidzhi**

**Vha no I thuthumuzha nga banga**

**Ya kondelela, ya midza vhutungu**

**hothe yo fhumula" (Muima .. 1990:12)**

***(I am like a sheep***

***Facing its killers***

***Who stab it with a sword***

***While it tolerates and swallows  
the pain quietly)***

The above lines evoke in the reader's mind different sense perceptions. These are the tormenting emotions that appear to pressurise the poet heavily through his life experience, that are a source of his pain. Through these lines, the poet clearly presents a clear picture of yet a very hostile world which human beings inhabit. The world appears to be unsafe and unfriendly for him to inhabit. This poet successfully portrays through these images, the harshness and wickedness of life which he experiences as a protest poet.

#### 4.1.1.3 Images relating to power and victory

After discussing those images relating to disease, pain and suffering, the reader is presented with a picture of a sick, unfriendly and tormenting world. Now in order to cure this sick world, a medicine should be obtained to rescue man's life from this suffering.

It is because of this situation in which the speaker finds himself that he makes use of images associated with power and victory. These images are a sign of the speaker's way and means of his strong desire to free himself forcefully from this sick and horrible life in which he and his people find themselves.

A very good illustration of this idea can be drawn from the title poem "NDI DO KUNDA" (I will conquer) where Milubi says;

**"Mbilu yanga yeneyi ya goga lothe  
fulufhelo  
Ya mbo atsamula sa o dahaho nyatsi  
Ra sedzana ra pinelana na tshone tshira  
Sa munna a tshi lmedzana na munna ngae  
Ya mbo farana hu tshi lilwa lone gundo."  
(Muima .. 1990 : 1)**

***(This very heart of mine then  
plucked all the courage  
And sneezed like one who has  
inhaled 'nyatsi' (sneezing snuff)  
And we squarely looked at each other  
in the eyes  
Like a man facing another man  
And we all engaged in a fierce fight,  
fighting for victory)***

The images evoked in the reader's mind by these lines are visual. This poet skillfully and successfully paints a picture of a boxing tournament where two rivals are facing each other squarely in the eyes with an aim of gaining victory.

It is this phrase 'ya farana' (they grappled with each other) which portrays that crucial moment of a fierce engagement in a fierce battle between two enemies. A mere mention of such words make our temperature rise and our emotion evoked when we visualize such scenes. It is through the employ of these lines that the poet seems to convey to his readers that at a certain stage, he will have to make no other choice, but to face the realities of this world physically. The poet also appears to echo to his audience that it is only through physical combat that he can regain that which was deprived of him in this world. This is in complete agreement with the English saying that;

**"If you want to prepare for peace, you  
must prepare for war."**

One may also add that, through the employ of these lines, the speaker wants to point out to his readers that through hope and courage there is always victory. The title heading of this poem 'NDI DO KUNDA' is suggestive by nature that through hope and courage, there is victory at the end of the tunnel.

#### **4.2 IMAGES ASSOCIATED WITH TRADITIONAL BELIEFS**

It is quite interesting to realise that some of Milubi's images are related to the traditional beliefs of the Vhavenda Culture such as Mythology, ancestral worship and witchcraft. There are a good number of varieties of culturally drawn images

which Milubi uses such as 'the medicine-doctor' (nanga) 'zombies' (matukwane), traditionally feared animals like wolves, (dzipele) and owls (makhwitha)

Regarding images associated with traditional beliefs, Kunene (1971 : 127) holds the same view, and according to him, imagery is the poet's way in which he;

**"arouses emotional response in the reader by a prolific use of concrete terms, enticing the mind with the particular, in order to suggest the general. This awakens the imagination, and creates vivid pictures in the reader's or listener's mind"**

The ensuing discussion will now focus on some of these images as they relate to the traditional way of the Vhavenda life style as they are employed by the poet in his works;

#### **4.2.1 Images associated with witchcraft**

A very good illustration of this idea is drawn from the poem entitled "**NDI A NI DIVHA**" (I know you) where Milubi says;

**"Si sendele kha nne,  
Ndo ni fema nda ni femba  
Sa nanga I tshi femba nga thwallma"**

(Muima .. 1990 : 18)

***(Never dare come nearer me  
I have breathed and sniffed you  
Like a medicine-doctor who sniffs by***

***'thwalima' (type of a divine bone)***

The word 'nanga' 'femba' and 'thwalima' are all associated with Vhavenda traditional witchcraft, and they all evoke in the reader's mind a visual sense, as they all carry with them the traditional techniques of the medicine-doctor while in the process of 'fembo' (the smelling out parade).

We are tempted to conclude that the poet appears to be sounding a very strong warning to his 'lords' and oppressors that through magical power and divining bones, he has already sniffed and detected all the evils and weaknesses that are being done to him and his people, and that they should refrain from associating with him because he already knows their weak points. All their tricks and tactics are open to the eyes of the public through this magical power of a medicine-doctor.

Yet in another of Mlubi's poem '**MAFHANDENI A MUYA NA NAMA**' (At the cross-roads of the soul and flesh) the poet says;

**"N<sup>^</sup>e na Inwl ro t<sup>^</sup>angana mafhandeni  
Ra sedzana, ra zwondololana  
Ra kundwa hone u reshana  
Sa vhalol vho tshelwaho, vho wanedzwa nga  
vhalolwa" (Muima ... 1990 : 58)**

***(You and I have met at the cross-roads  
And we looked at each other and  
glared at each other angrily  
And we even failed to greet each other  
Like witches who were untimely discovered  
by those who are being bewitched)***

These concrete terms 'vhaloi' (witches) and 'vhaloiwa' (the bewitched) also carries with them a visual image, and are connected with witchcraft in most African Culture and some Vhavenda people in general. In the Vhavenda culture for example, witches are regarded as having some supernatural power over their subjects, including that of sending an evil spell to someone, even far away. Such a person who is possessed of such a spell is believed to be well impossible to cure by any other ordinary person rather than by a medicine-doctor.

One may say that the poet tries to paint into the reader's mind an image of revulsion which he experiences by the situation in which he finds himself. A situation occupied by people who are so merciless and dangerous to human beings like witches and wizards, that he himself threatens to face this situation squarely through some super-natural powers, in order to eradicate these evils.

A mere mention of the word 'vhaloi' in the Vhavenda Culture, makes one tremble, and accordingly these words are regarded as 'taboo' because they may not be uttered anywhere else, especially at night.

Through these lines, the poet seems to refer to his tormenters as witches who are going around freely casting their evil spells on these harmless and innocent victims who are not only harmless but are also armless. We both experience a visual as well as the kinaesthetic images as portrayed through the synaesthetic imagery.

Images associated with witchcraft include animals such as 'wolves'. These are embedded in Milubi's poetry, and this notion can still be illustrated with the following lines extracted from his poems where he says;



**"RI tou vha dziphele**

(Muima .. 1990 : 55)

***(We are just like wolves)***

**"Vhalol vha vho ratha nga u funa"**

(Muima ... 1990 : 31)

***(Witches are now freely crossing)***

Judging from the above lines, we are tempted to conclude that Milubi's images associated with witchcraft clearly portray the situation and the conditions he yearns to expose to his reader. His application of these images has resulted in making his poetry more artistic and appealing to the listeners. This poet has succeeded in 'defamiliarising' his 'practical' language through the employ of these devices of poetry.

#### **4.2.2 Images associated with mythology**

It is also much appreciable to realise that Milubi draws some of his images from some images associated with African Mythology. On Mythology Moleleki (1988 : 85) quotes Wright in (A review on Antone-Roger Bolamba's Ezanzo-songs for my country) as saying;

**"The poems are about African life. They conjured up its scene, suggest its ways and its atmosphere. There are also evocation of Africa's mystery and magic"**

These evocations of Africa's mystery and magic as laid down by 'Wright' are clearly illustrated in the poem 'TSHITUMBANI TSHA NYOFHO' (In the pen of fear) wherein Milubi says;

**"A dzi tsha vha thoho dza vhathu  
Ndi thoho dza zwidudwane"  
(Mulima ... 1990 : 42).**

*(They are no more peoples' heads  
They are zombies' heads)*

Regarding the Myth of 'Liduxwane' Mathivha  
(1972 : 4) has this to say;

**"In this story, the Venda believe that when a person dies, some people with evil power may take the corpse and cut off the tongue and then use the person to plough the fields at night. This belief makes people put branches (thorn branches) of the 'mutshetshete' over the new grave, or to keep watch over the grave for the first few days. Sometimes the graves are made in the huts or in the village where the people who are related to the dead person live, with the aim of protecting the corpse"**

Images associated with mythology are also found in the following stanza where the poet says;

**"Iwe Mwali-we-denga  
U do ri pfela-vho llini vhu<sup>x</sup>tungu  
Wa ri kudza pfumo, ra li doba  
Ngalo ra runga - ra pfa thodzi**

yalo i tshi nzwatimela mbiluni  
 Sa mufakwa we sinini mavuni a  
 mutavha" (Muima .. 1990 : 54)

*(You Mwali-we-denga  
 When will you feel pity for us  
 And throw us a spear, which  
 after we have picked up, shall  
 stab until we hear its point tearing  
 deeply into the heart  
 Like a 'mufakwa' (a European-made hoe  
 with a collar through which the handle  
 is passed) which goes deep into the  
 sandy soil).*

Mathivha (1972) goes further to explain this concept of the 'myth' concerning the supernatural beliefs in the Vhavenda culture and says;

**"In this stories, we get 'NWALI'  
 the God of the Vhalemba and  
 Vhasenzi, and the practices  
 performed to appease him.  
 Mwali stays in heaven and has no  
 connection with human beings  
 directly, but through 'RALUVHIMBA'  
 who acts as the medium through which  
 the people can communicate with  
 'MWALI' and vice-versa" (p. : 6)**

A closer examination of the above definitions regarding the concept of supernatural beliefs reveals that Milubi's meticulous choice of his images associated with Vhavenda mythology is rather very important. His choice of images appears to be an unconscious way of resorting to his cultural and traditional heritage as ways and means of solving intricacies and complexities of life. It may on the other hand

symbolise his desire to take a deep look into the world of history in the culture of his people and to sort out some useful aspects that may be helpful to his present situation and his people.

This idea is further supported by Guma who was quoted by Mathivha (1972 : 3) as saying;

**"The term (myth) is very intimately entangled with the hardest problems of thought of religion and early history. An attempt is made to explain the relationship of man to man in his environment and to solve numerous questions that baffled him. His answers to mysteries of life and death, love and hatred. This took the form of a story which is generally referred to as 'myth'"**

We can still identify some images relating to mythology from the following lines;

**"A re nne ndo zwi llmuwa hu si kale  
Zwauri mubvumo u pfallaho zwiretheni  
zwanga  
Ndi wa mvula ya mithathabo na  
dzindadzi  
I no vika-vika ya sinyedzasinyedza  
Yo pakata yone nndwa zwishashani."  
(Muima .. 1990 : 1) "**

***(It is not long that it has come  
to my realisation  
That the thunders that I hear on my  
heels is that of a thunderous rain and  
lightning. Which plays and winks in the sky***

***Hoarding war within its arms)***

Kunene (1971 : 120) in explaining the use of the thunderbird (ndadzi) as a symbol or image associated with mythology says;

**"Closely related to this symbols of the thunderbird, the sky and the elements, the thunderbird may be used as a symbol of anger of the sky, together with lightning, and thunder, hurricane and storms."**

Maake (1994 : 234) appears to agree with Kunene regarding the myth of the thunderbird and says;

**"Coupled with these climatic conditions, there are images used to symbolize attributes, both good and ill. Storms and hailstorm may symbolise 'anger' while the sky symbolizes protection and benevolence, but the rainbow to symbolize 'strength'"**

He goes further to quote Kunene as saying the following regarding the bird of thunder;

**"The myth of a bird of thunder leads to a chain of association, some of which superstitiously appear illogical. Almost all the actions are characteristics of a bird may be described as the action and characteristics of lightning/thunder"**

Apart from the images associated with the mystery of the thunderbird, Milubi went further and employs some other culturally drawn images which are associated with the magician-doctor while in the process of diving when he says;

**'Yawee ndi I wana'fhi *phamba ya u kata*  
Nda mbo *dzivhela* vhutungu ha heyl  
mbilu yanga hel.'** (Muima .. 1990 : 3)

***(Lo! where will I get the charm  
That I can ward off the pain of my heart)***

The phrase 'phamba ya u kata' and the word 'dzivhela' are all associated with the 'herbalist' in the Vhavenda Culture and are used as ways and means of protecting and warding off evil spirits. It is through the employ of these phrase and words that the poet seems to convey to his readers and listeners that he yearns to acquire this form of magic that can prevent him from falling victims of this horrible world in which he finds himself. We are tempted to conclude that the poet appears to believe that there is no more hope of survival, rather than to resort to some supernatural powers and charms from the magicians and their magical powers.

#### **4.2.3 Images associated with ancestral world.**

Regarding the fundamental concept on the importance of ancestral worship, Moleleki (1988 : 90) quotes Kucketz as saying;

**"Another reason for the ancestors' universal significance is that they are a means of interpreting certain negative events which occur in a person's life."**

In another of Milubi's poem, the poet evokes our senses by drawing some of these images associated with the ancestral universe when he says;

**"Vhupfa hashu ha ralo ha ri namedza ra  
namela  
Ra namela ra shanduka, ra fhufha  
vhadzimu nga ntha" (Muima....1990 : 14)**

***(Our feelings did so and took us to an  
ascend and we ascended  
And we ascended, after which we were  
changed and flew over the ancestors)***

Milubi indirectly refers to the most popular Vhavenda ancestor 'Vhadzimu'. Accordingly, in the Vhavenda Culture, these ancestors are usually regarded as supreme beings who should be appeased but who can also bring down death and destruction through some natural phenomena like famine, disease, drought and hailstorm on human beings.

The poet's attitude towards the ancestors is that of safety and security. Through the employment of the word 'vhadzimu', and the ascendance over the Vhadzimu, Milubi seems to reveal the idea of victory and the ultimate sense of fulfilment.

On the other hand, one may also say that this poet is yearning to remind his readers and listeners

of the Vhavenda's perception towards their culture and the sense of security that it used to offer.

#### 4.2.4 Images associated with violence

The images the poet chooses, which are related to violence are those that Frye as quoted by Moleleki (1988), maps it as follows;

**".....the world of the nightmare  
and scapegoat, of bondage and confusion .... the world also of perverted  
or wasted world, ruins and catacombs  
Instruments of torture and monument  
of folly ... (It) is closely  
likened with our existential hell, like  
Dante's Inferno, or with the hell  
that man creates on earth."**

The images that Milubi employs that are associated with violence are so appealing and shocking that they appear so vivid in the eyes of the reader as they sometimes include shocking sights of blood gushing out of human beings, as the case in the following poem; **"NNDWANI YA MATARELWA"** (the battle of the wild dogs) where the poet says;

**"A mbo lwa, a lwa a sa fhedzi  
A mbo lwa a vetana a shibulana"**  
(Muima .. 1990 : 66)

***(They fight, and fight endlessly  
They fight, and, scratch and plough  
each other)***

In this poem, the poet uses words that appeal to our visual sense perception. The word 'matarelwa' (wild dogs) symbolises violence, danger and death. Accordingly,



Accordingly, the poet likens the type of people with whom he always associates with as dangerous, vicious and cruel as these wilddogs. We are again tempted to conclude that this poet through the employment of these images seems to appeal to his people that we are now living in a world full of bloodshed, where human beings have turned against one another like wilddogs. Fighting killing and bloodshed have now become the order of the day.

On the other hand, the poet also seems to remind his readers and listeners that they should remain vigilant in all their activities and perhaps to try and avoid maiming and killing people unnecessarily.

Milubi goes further to paint this picture of violence in the following stanza;

**"Matarelwa a mbo vusa muvhango  
 Wa phukha I si yao  
 Linwe Il tshi ndi yanga  
 Linwe le ndi yanga" (Mulima .. 1990:66)**

***(The wilddogs then engage in a strife  
 Of a carcass which is not theirs  
 One claiming as his  
 And the other one claiming as his)***

The above stanza evokes in the reader's mind a feeling of fear, frustration and anger. The poet through these lines, seems to remind his listeners and readers that competition for supremacy and power are the fundamental courses of today's violence in our country and the world in general. When these super powers and rivals engage in battle, like these wilddogs, even the smaller animals (human beings) at the grassroot fall victims at the receiving end of undeclared wars, and

that where possible such conflicts should be avoided. One may also say that, this poet, through the employ of these line, would like to sound a warning to all those in authority to reconsider the issues of unnecessary struggle for power and supremacy as these may have some harmful effects on those poor and innocent people who are at the bottom. We appreciate the manner in which Milubi evokes some of our senses through the employ of these images in his works.

Yet in another of his poems; 'TSHIFHATUWO TSHA LISWOLE' (The face of a soldier) the reader sometimes comes across surprising incidents where there appears to be proud in all the violence committed in human existence as it is shown in the following lines;

**"U tshuwa'ni wa tshuwa  
Hafhu he wa llvha hone  
U tshl khou tapa  
Wa tamba nga malofha"**

(Muima ... 1990 : 2)

***(Why are you frightened, and what  
frightens you  
Because wherever you are heading for  
You are going to tap  
And play with blood)***

The phrase 'u tamba nga malofha' (to play with blood) evokes many sense perceptions in our bodies.

It is surprising to see normal people cherish playing with human blood as though this is something worth achieving. One begins to wonder as to where our

peoples' sense of humanity has gone to (vhuthu) 'u buntu'. This phrase 'u tamba nga lofna' (to play with blood) is a spine-chilling picture, and evokes a visual as well as a kineasthetic feeling which is brought about by the fear of death. The scene appears shocking and terrible. Our body shivers at the sight of gushing human blood. The scene may make one cry or run away.

This is the type of situation in which Milubi finds himself in his world, and all the violent experiences that surrounds him and all his people and everything that go with them, which are images of his writings. Milubi seems to witness and reveal the horror of bloodletting. He reveals again how in the world of today, violence, bloodshed, man slaughter has become the order of the day.

Through these lines, we can see the yearnings, interests and dislikes of the poet through these images, and also understand his frame of work and context of his poetry. These killings, and maimings of people are but the works of the 'demon' as Frye terms it, and that it should be stopped immediately.

#### **4.3 IMAGES RELATING TO THE WESTERN WORLD**

In going through 'MUIMAWOGA' one realises that most of Milubi's images associated with the Western World have been drawn from the Christian sphere of culture. The fact that the poet is a christian, and that his contributory role in the running and organization of his church, and perhaps, the notion that he was brought up under a christian education, might have also played a contributory role in his thinking, and might have influenced him in the choice of his images in his poetry.

It is for this reason that the ensuing discussion will now focus on some of these images which were drawn from the Christian sphere of culture.

#### 4.3.1 Images of Biblical origin

In 'MUIMAWOGA' we realise that some of Milubi's images found in his poems have complete resemblance with some important Biblical connotations.

On the concept of 'Biblical influence' Kunene (1971) quotes Stalknecht's observation as saying;

**"Perhaps the most frequently  
recurring literary influence  
on the Western World has been  
that of the Old and New Testament."**

Let us now look at some examples to illustrate this point;

In 'KHA A FELAHO NGOHO' (To the one who dies for the Truth) the poet says;

**"Yaweel malofha au o gamba  
A mbo vhea govho  
Ngeno hu tshee matsheloni, a sa athu funa  
Yaweel Mulmawoga -  
Nndwani ye wa lwa wo lwa u wothe  
Ngeno u tshi lwela Ngo<sup>h</sup>o"  
(Mulma .. 1990 : 16)**

**(Lol your blood has clotted  
And made a clot  
In the morning  
Lol the Lone voice)**

***In this struggle that you fought alone  
for the Truth)***

If one looks carefully at the above stanza, one sees that there is complete resemblance between these lines, and the Biblical context of the death of Jesus Christ as we read from the last chapter of the Synoptic gospels.

These lines remind the reader about the painful death of Jesus at 'Golgotha' which took place in the early hours of the day as we read thus;

**"It was nine O'clock in the mornig  
When they crucified him" (Mark : 15; 25)**

These lines recreate the painful manner in which Christ met his most cruel death on Calvary. The word 'crucified' recreates in the mind of the Christian reader the cross on which Christ was 'nailed', and this word evokes a feeling of fear, pain, anger and despair.

We are also tempted to believe that this poet may be conveying a message of hope and reconciliation to both the 'masters' and the 'servants', that the blood of Jesus Christ was shared on Calvary for the redemption of ALL our sins.

Another Biblical image is drawn from '**A U NA NUNGO**' (You are powerless) where Milubi says;

**"Muhatull o lma  
A lmlsa mbada yawe!  
A lmlsa mbado yawe!  
(Muima ... 1990 : 4)**

***(The judge stood up  
And raised his rod  
And raised his axe)***

Once more, the above lines remind the reader of the second coming of Jesus Christ, when we shall stand up facing him as the only judge on the judgement day.

These lines evoke in our mind a visual sense perception. We visualize Christ on the judgement day sitting on his judgement seat, when all the saved ones shall be separated from the non-believers.

The poet employs the words 'mbada' (rod) and 'mbado' (axe) to symbolize the harshness and cruelty of the type of judgement they (non-believers) are going to be subjected to. We all experience a feeling of pain, and torture which is brought about by the tactile and visual senses. We all feel like withdrawing from such situations. The words conjure up in the reader's mind a mental and auditory picture of a cry emanating from the application of these weapons the 'rod' and an 'axe' on human beings. Our bodies shudder and writhe as though this internal injury is being inflicted on our bodies.

Included in this discussion, we can still illustrate this concept of Biblical origin with the following examples;

**"Iwe n̄wana wa muthu"**

(Muima ... 1990 : 68)

**(Mortal man)** Compares favourably with

**(Mortal man)** in (Ezekiel : 21 : 1).

while

**"Idani-ha ri songe mutumba  
RI totelane, ri fembedze, ri atsamule"**

(Milubi ... 1990 : 26)

**(Come let's reconcile and share our  
common ideas together)** teams well with;

**(The LORD says; "Now, let's settle the matter.  
You are stained red with sin, but I  
will wash you as clean as snow.  
Although your stains are deep red,  
you will be as white as wool)**

(Good News Bible : 1976 : 670)

#### 4.3.2 Hymnal choices

In his poetic works, Milubi borrows with ease from some well know Venda hymns. This poet grew up in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and their hymnal book is '**NYIMBO DZA VWHATENDI**' by Dr. P. E. Schwellnus.

These Christian hymnals from 'Nyimbo dza vwhatendi' have left an indelible marks on Milubi's Christian life style, and his borrowing of so many of the Venda hymnals is therefore no excuse.

Gerald as quoted by Moleleki (1988 : 57) agrees with this concept of the Christian hymnal choices when he says;

**"A Christian hymn, after all, is little else than a praise song to God, and early African writers were bound to find the genre congenial as it enables them to put traditional literary taste and poetic technique in the service of their new beliefs."**

We shall then compare a few lines found in his poems in '**MUIMAWOGA**' with those lines that we find from the Venda hymnals such as;

**"Duvha lo suvhela  
La kovhela henengel  
(Mulma .. 1990 : 53)**

**(*The sun has set  
It has set far away towards the west*)**

is similar to

**"Duvha lo kovhela  
No li vhona naa?" (Shwellnus : 1976 ; 168)**

**(*The sun has set  
Have you ever seen it?*)**

**"Vhutshilo hashu vhu dzula ho livha  
henengel**



**Khulunoni ya muhatull"**

(Muima ... 1990 : 56)

***(Our life is always leading towards  
the throne of the judge)***

compares favourably with

**"Vhutshilo he ra vha khaho  
Ndi lwendo fhedzi lu yaho  
Hayani hashu ngel tadulu"**

(Shwellinus : 1976 : 175)

***(Our present life is always but  
a journey  
Leading to our home in heaven)***

We may conclude by stating that when one looks carefully at the above lines, one finds that there is no difficulty in recognizing the sources from which the poet draws his images. We are made to believe that these hymnals are the poet's source of aspiration.

#### **4.3.3 WORLD - VIEW**

Word-view, according to Goldman as quoted by Moleleki (1988 : 44) is regarded as;

**"Historical and social facts.  
They are totalities of days of  
thinking and feelings which  
In given conditions, are imposed on  
men finding themselves in a similar  
economic and social situation, that  
is, imposed on certain social  
groups"** (Moleleki : 1988 : 44)

While we have the above idea in mind, it is our contention that, even though the poet's world-view is surrounded by the Socio-political as well as the Economic epoch in which he and his people live, he is however to a great extent influenced by the Christian beliefs that have been embedded in his school education. These Christian teachings manifest themselves throughout Milubi's presentations, and this will be illustrated with some examples extracted from his poems;

**(a) Sense of Justice**

The following lines extracted from "NDI SWINA LANU A NI MPFUNI" clearly demonstrate that Milubi's justice is overtly Christian;

**"Ndi gwadame kani nga magona ndi gwadame  
Ndo gwadama ndi ni rabele nga ifhlo thabelo  
ine na do I pfa?  
Khuvha dzanga thabelo ndo zuza dzothe."**

(Muima ... 1990 : 27))

***(Should I kneel down, and worship you?  
If I kneel down, which prayer must I use  
that you will be able to understand?  
For I have exhausted all my prayers)***

These lines remind us of the Biblical context when Jesus Christ was tempted by Satan after his baptism as we read from (Matthew Chapter 4 : 10);

**"Then Jesus answered! Go away,  
Satan, The scripture says 'Worship  
the Lord your God and serve only  
him"**

According to these lines, the poet seems to be pleading for peace with his tormentors. He also appears as though he is a sinner who is confessing his sins to a minister.

**(b) Concept of God as refuge**

In some of Milubi's poems, we find that the poet finds repose and sanctity in his Christian religion. This is clearly illustrative in the following examples;

**"Vhuawedzwe, vhu awele u devhekana  
Vhu shanduke musuku  
Vhu nwe vhu nwelele vhukhethwani haho."**

(Muima ... 1990 : 3)

***(So that it could be restored, and rest  
from being scratched and crushed  
So that it could change into gold  
And dissolve and sink into its glory)***

When one looks at the above line, one finds that the speaker seems to have that yearning for attaining that Christian God's glory (vhukhethwani). The speaker

looks forward to that eternal happiness, and his feelings seem to fill him with hope of immortality in which he finds refuge.

The concept of God as our refuge is also illustrated in the following lines;

**"Vhuawelo hanga a vhuho fhano  
Vhu henengel vhusendamis!"**

(Muima ... 1990 : 5)

***(My refuge is not here,  
It is far away in the far east/west)  
(vhusendekamisi)***

These lines indicate that this poet always wants to find his refuge in a far away place, which is in heaven. One may allude that it appears as if in times of tribulations and trials, he clings to his future hope in his eternal God. It is through this poet's steadfastness to his Christian religion that he finds safety and security from all dangers that might surround him while he is still in this world - as the Psalmist says;

**"Even if I go through the deepest  
darkness, I will not be afraid,  
LORD for you are with me.  
your shepherd's rod and staff  
protect me." (Psalm : 23 : 4)**

We can however further identify some images associated with God as our refuge from the following lines;

**"Pharadiso ya ri tsvhela-vho"**

***(So that paradise can also dawn for  
us)***

The word 'pharadiso' (paradise) evokes in the Christian reader's mind a feeling of safety and sanctity. We all look forward, to joining our Lord Jesus Christ in paradise when the final trumpet of the Lord shall sound.

The image of 'paradise', with all its beauty and promises touches the hearts and minds of all the Christians as they long for his quick return to rescue them from this world of torment. This is the type of prayer and conception of the poet towards this world in which he lives. Through the employment of these lines, the Christian reader may experience a sort of 'religious fulfilment' through the word 'paradise'

### **(c) Conception of God as the creator**

Milubi's conception of creation seems to be in harmony with God's account of creation as we read from the Book of creation in the Old Testament. In Genesis Chapter 2 we read that 'God created the whole Universe'

This conception has been clearly illustrated in some of Milubi's compositions. Let us consider the following example;

**"Ya mbo livhala zwa<sup>u</sup>ri I do han<sup>u</sup>wa, zwa  
fhela  
Nga tshenetshi tshilazwulo hetshi**

Tshl re tshandani tsha 'Musiku wa  
zwothe' (Muima ... 1990 : 36)

*(And it forgets that it will be trapped,  
and that it will be its end  
By this very fish line (hook)  
Which is in the hand of the creator.)*

The word '**Musiki**' (creator) has been capitalized to indicate the omnipotence of the creator as we have noted from the book of Genesis. God is not only the creator of the whole Universe, but also the owner of this Universe and everything that is in it.

In some of his poetry, Milubi does not only regard God as the creator of the Universe, but he also regard him as the saviour and the only one who possess power to rescue us from all our sins. This conception is indicative of his believe in God in the following lines where the poet says;

"Swiswi he<sup>^</sup>li lo rarekanaho vhuswiswini  
hovhu hanu .  
A li rarukuluwi nga ndivho heyl yanu ya  
vhuvhumbiwa.  
LI konwa nga murumbulo u bvaho n<sup>^</sup>andoni ya  
Tsiko.' (Muima .. 1990 : 41)

*(The darkness that has mingled in this  
darkness of yours  
Cannot be dissolved by a mental creation  
But by a burning rod from the furnace of  
Creation)*

Once more the words 'vhuvhumbiwa' (creation) and 'Tsiko' (creation) both convey to the reader's mind a feeling of God as the creator and owner of this Universe, but the word 'Tsiko' which has been capitalized symbolizes the omnipotence and the power that God the creator has over his creation.

This poet seems to echo to his audience that he believes that his conscience and well being are not his personal prosperity and power, but a gift from God the Almighty, the creator of the heaven and the earth.

#### **4.4 IMAGES RELATING TO THE NATURAL WORLD**

Regarding the conception of the natural world, Wanthier has been quoted by Moleleki (1988 : 105) as saying;

**"... all beings, people as well as things, are so many related forces which are all part of the 'ntu', the being itself, the universal cosmic force. This belief in a sort of intimate coherence of the Universe enables the African poet to identify himself with the whole of nature."**

With the above conception in mind, one may state that apart from drawing his images from the human experiences, Milubi also draws some of his images from the natural world in most of his poetry.

It is not always very easy to make a distinctive division between those images relating to human experiences and the natural world, but nevertheless, we shall try and distinguish these images, and discuss them under four sub-categories namely; (1) landscape, (2) birds and insect, (3) natural decomposition, and (4) animals.

#### 4.4.1 Images relating to the landscape.

In order to 'defamiliarise' his world, Milubi sometimes uses symbols to express various images of physical landscape such as 'gorges', 'cliffs', 'caves', 'ravines' and some other symbolic experiences to symbolize imprisoning, conquest or rendering of powerlessness.

Let us illustrate this conception with the following extract from the poem '**KHOLOMO MAROROMANI**' (A cow in the mash) where the poet says;

**"Kholomo yo tshenzhemala a i tsha kona  
Yo wela matzhafani, ya phirimela ya  
guma nga hafha  
Yo sunguhela i nga si tsha kakarika"**

(Muima .. 1990 : 9)

*(The cow has become stranded, it  
is powerless  
It has landed in a mashy place, and has  
sunk up to this point  
It has sunk deep down into the mire,  
it cannot struggle anymore)*

The idea of rendering powerlessness, conquest, imprisoning and defeat is indicated in the above stanza by the usage of words and phrases like 'tshenzhemala' (stranded), 'a i tsha kona' (it is powerless) 'ya phirimela ya guma nga hafha' (it has sunk up to this point) 'i nga si tsha kakarika' (it cannot struggle



any more). The poet seems to echo a message of complete defeat that he is experiencing in this world.

The poet appears to find himself completely and helplessly engulfed and swallowed up in this Socio-political situation of his country and his fellow man just like a trapped cow in a marshy area. The words 'sunguvhela' (sunk deeply) and 'phirimela' are evidence enough to support the idea of service of powerlessness and total defeat. We all avoid some experience and scenes of being trapped and being swallowed up by the earth. These words and phrases evoke in the reader's mind both the kineasthetic as well as the tactile and the visual sense perceptions. The poet seems to echo to his readers that the pain he is subjected to is not only unbearable, but is also very embarrassing and frustrating like a prisoner.

We can further cite an example of these images associated with the landscape from the following lines where the poet says;

"La tsa  
 ^  
 Le muedzini dzhita ..."  
 ^  
 (Muima ... 1990 : 39)

*(It descended  
 And landed in the crevice...)*

The word 'muedzini' (donga, or crevice) evoke a visual image which comes from the topography of the speaker's landscape. One can positively say that this is a visual metaphorical image. Milubi sees similarity between life's misfortunes as

compared to the 'donga', ravines', 'gullies' and 'gorges' in his life style. These words in a figurative point of view, are somewhat similar to the misfortunes of life.

Seemingly, one may conclude that this poet appears to echo a warning to all his listeners and readers that life is not always a bed of roses, but it is a road full of dongas, valleys, ravines and gorges.

Some examples of the above notion may be taken from Milubi's poetry in which images associated with the landscape are found, images such as;

**"Thungo dzothe dza lwanzhe"**

(Muima .. 1990 : 42)

***(On both sides of the sea)***

**"Vha neta vha wela tivhani la maneto"**

(Muima .. 1990 : 49)

***(And they became helpless, and fell into  
the dam of helplessness.)***

#### **4.4.2 Images relating to the birds and insects**

It is also much appreciable to realise that the poet quite often draws some of his images from birds and insects to evoke some of our senses in his presentations.

We can illustrate this idea by looking at the following extract taken from one of his works;

**"A re nne ndi do tharamudza phapha  
Sa goni nda fhufha nda nenga."**

(Muima .. 1990 : 50)

***(For I will stretch my wings  
Like an eagle I will fly away and  
disappear)***

In the above lines, the main emphasis is not the eagle as such. What is really important is its unique ability to fly freely in the sky without hindrance. This poet sees his freedom being exemplified in the eagle's unhindered movement of flying. This suggests that the poet finds himself in an invidious position. According to him, this world appears to have chains that hold him in constraint.

According to the speaker, the eagle symbolizes a burning desire of freedom. This freedom that the poet yearns for is attainable and it is in the concretized form of the eagle.

This idea of freedom is again embodied in the images evoked in the following lines;

**"Wo wa wa papamala tshikhalani  
Sa tari wa tulutshela hone u vhuvhama."**

(Muima ... 1990 : 39)

***(You fell and remained floating in the  
firmament)***

*Like a leaf you yearned to float)*

"Sa goni muyani  
 Nne ndi do rwa lini phapha  
 Nda dzi tharamudza hedzi phapha hedzi  
 Nda papamala muyani  
 Ha mbo vha u wana yone Mbofholowo"

(Muima ... 1990 : 50)

*(Like an eagle in the sky  
 When will I stretch out my wings  
 To stretch out this wings of mine  
 And float up in the firmament  
 So as to attain my true Freedom.)*

When one examines this last stanza very carefully, one realises that there is a very strong reason for the poet to choose the word 'mbofholowo' (freedom). This poet appears to be in bondage, and desires to be set free like an eagle in the sky. The images evoked by these lines appear to the poet as healing power to his suffering thought. The poet seems not to understand the reason why he is always forced to live in this restrictive and chaotic world which is full of sins, bloodshed and deaths, while insects and birds have been endowed with the freedom of flying about unconstrained.

Milubi also draws some of his images from the world of insects, and this can be illustrated as follows;

"Tshisusu tshi takuwa billmamboni  
 la swlswl' (Muima ... 1990 : 61)

***(The butterfly takes off from the  
thickness of darkness)***

"Ndi vho nga notshl I no mona-mon".

I tshl nona dzuvha li si naho tshalo."

(Muima ... 1990 : 21)

***(I am like a bee  
Which buzzes and hums around a flower  
that holds nothing of its own)***

According to the poet, although man has been endowed with all powers to rule everything, but he appears to have created bondages for himself and his fellow man. Man is supposed to be free, yet he has lost his freedom. Man has, according to the poet succeeded only in negating his freedom. It is the ability of the innocent creatures like butterflies and bees that can fly in freedom, that make the poet to become envious and makes an introspection into his own life to try and find out where he might have possibly offended his creator. If not, the poet then asks himself why man is bent to self-destruction and the destruction of his fellowmen.

#### **4.4.3 Images relating to animals.**

Milubi draws some of his images from the animal world in order to evoke his reader's senses.

A very good illustration of this notion is found in the following example;

**"Ndi vho nga nngu**

**Yo sedzaho vhashidzhi**

(Muima ... 1990 : 12)

***(I am like a sheep***

***Facing its slaughterers)***

From this stanza, the poet makes a direct comparison between man and sheep. There is complete resemblance between this line and the Biblical allusion of the word sheep (lamb) as we read in the book of (Isaiah : 15 ; 17).

**".... like a lamb about to be  
slaughtered.**

**Like a sheep about to be sheared**

**He never said a word".**

A sheep even from the Biblical point of view, is a symbol of meekness. From the Christian point of view, Jesus Christ is always regarded as the lamb (sheep) that died for all mankind, so that we could be redeemed.

A sheep appears so meek and submissive that people can do whatever harm they like with it and it will never resist, let alone even those who may desire to take its life in a very cruel manner like when the poet says; 'Vha i thuthumudzha nga banga' (they stab it mercilessly with a sword), a sheep endures everything, and most surprisingly enough, it will never bleat as other animals would do under the circumstances.

With this idea in mind, this poet appears to equate human beings with a sheep. Man appears to be meek or perhaps cowardly to face the challenges and realities of this tumultuous world in which he finds himself. According to the poet, man appears to have surrendered himself to the desires and challenges of this world, but he forgets that from creation, man was empowered to rule everything on earth.

The above context evokes in the reader's mind a feeling of guilt, submission and a feeling of powerlessness. One may add that the poet seems to be engaged in a sort of self-introspection, trying to picture his role as human being in this world.

It is through this sense of anxiety that the poet finds himself, that makes him feel as a sacrificial sheep ready to offer its life quietly-uncomplainingly, and die for the sins of this world like Jesus Christ who sacrificed his life for our sins.

Images associated with the animal world are still found in the following lines;

**"Bere na munamell wayo"**

(Muima ... 1990 : 23)

***(The horse and its rider)***

**"Nguluvhe I baralala thopheni"**

(Muima 1990 : 54)

***(The pig carelessly sleeps in the mud)***

**"Kholomo yo tshenzhemala a I tsha kona"**

(Muima.....1990 :6)

***(The cow is stranded and helpless)***

We would like to conclude our discussion on images relating to the natural world by looking at those images which are related to the natural decomposition.

#### **4.4.4 Images relating to the natural decomposition.**

A very good illustration of this phenomenon is cited from the following lines;

**"Lufuno lwo tlaho lwa mulovha  
Lwo sitaho namusi."  
Sa muladza wa mbodza**

(Muima ... 1990 : 32)

***(Unyielding love of yesterday  
That is suppurated today  
Like yesterday's underdone left-overs)***

In these lines, the word 'love' symbolizes hope, prosperity, peace and good life. This word evokes a number of senses in the reader's mind, but the speaker's love is pure disappointment, disgraceful and pure frustration. This is manifested in the words 'tilaho' (hard to cook) 'lwa mulovha' (left-overs) and 'sitaho' (suppurated). The images evoked by these words are both visual and olifactory. Any food that has reached a stage of being suppurated is naturally unpalatable, and may induce one to vomit.

It is through these lines that Milubi likens that some what good and beautiful life he once experienced, that has become like suppurated food. According to him, this



world appears to have fallen into a state of decomposition which appears suppurated and not worth to be enjoyed any more by any human being.

One may state that the image of joy (love) which is now followed by sadness and disappointment is analogous to the cyclical movement of natural life. Nature is both good and bad, and by so saying the poet seems to remind the reader that life is not always made up of beautiful experiences, but it is also like a river full of both **good and bad experiences.**

We may still draw some of these images associated with decomposition from the following examples;

"La vho shanduka dakalo li siho  
li sllngisaho mbumbo ya nama."  
 (Muima ... 1990 : 35)

*(It has turned into joy that is non-existence  
 Which nauseate the creation of flesh)*

"Li do fhomela magege  
 Ndi gumba lo slnaho, li no do phwashea"  
 (Muima ... 1990 : 37)

*(It will appear covered with termites  
 It is a rotten and smelling egg, which  
 will be broken up)*

**(Lumemeni Iwonolwu muvhango wa fholodza"**

(Muima ... 1990 : 67)

***(At this precipice, the fight aborts)***

**"Hu tuta masifa na masinwa**

**Ha mweka mbungu duvha ll si na musl"**

(Muima ... 1990 : 52)

***(All sorts of rotten heap up***

***And worms then writhe day afer day)***

Words and phrases like 'gumba lo sinaho' (rotten egg) 'fholodza' (abort) 'mbungu' (worms) and others all evoke in the reader's mind both the olifactory and visual sense perceptions. These words touch the very core of our whole being as they expose our life's situation in the world in which we find ourselves today. One may infer that the world and all its activities are now so bad and horrible that it needs a cure or some sort of medication to save it from its stage of complete decomposition. It is needless to state that this poet has succeeded in employing these techniques in 'defamiliarising' his language throughout his presentations.

## 4.5 FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

The purpose of this section is to illustrate the role that figurative language plays in poetry, and it is further to illustrate how Milubi uses the skill to enhance the quality of his works in MUIMAWOGA.

Figurative Language was long described primarily as 'ornaments of language' but it is integral to the poetic as well as the functioning of language. It is not only indispensable to poetry, but to all modes of discourse.

Peck and Coyle (1984 : 37) says;

"Figurative' means language being used in a non-literal way; most commonly the poet uses either a metaphor or a simile to extend the significance of what he is saying"

Abrams (1985 : 66) on defining Figurative Language says;

".... a deviation (departure) from what users of the language apprehend as the standard meaning of words, or else the standard order of words, in order to achieve some special meaning or effect."

The ensuing discussion will focus on some figures of speech as they are employed by the poet in his works of art to 'defamiliarise' the 'practical' language

Maake (1994 : 227) quotes Kunene as suggesting that; 'the use of figure of speech is a way of 'avoidance' a feature which the poet employs in order to avoid 'reportage'. The poet uses figures of speech to 'distort' what he is talking about by using metaphors, similes, understatement and others.

In poetry, the usage of these figures of speech is not primarily in the meaning of the words, but in the syntactic order or pattern of the words. In this discussion, the most common types of figures of speech that the poet employed during his presentation, will receive our careful attention.

#### 4.5.1 Simile

Simile is defined as an explicit comparison as compared to metaphor where the comparison is implicit. Simile draws an explicit or direct comparison between two elements that belong to usually dissimilar categories. The two elements consist of the tenor and vehicle. The vehicle is used to qualify the tenor. In Tshivenda, a simile is always introduced by the explanatory connective 'sa', 'no nga' and 'u fana na' and so on (like, as, such as) A characteristic that exists in both is selected to form the basis of this association.

Okpewho (1992 : 99) regards a simile as;

"a comparison achieved by indirect reference" (a is like b).

Leech (1969 : 156) says;

"Simile is an overt, and metaphor a covert comparison. This means that for each metaphor we can devise a roughly corresponding simile, by writing out tenor and vehicle side by side, and indicating by 'Like' or other formal indicator, the similarity between them".

Let us now illustrate the employ of this technique in MUIMAWOGA to see whether or not their employment has contributed in 'defamiliarising' his works.

In 'TSANGA I NO DO RI LWELA' (The spear that will defend us) Milubi says;

"Ro vundekana

Sa phapha dza goni. (Muima .. 1990 : 20)

*(We are completely broken down*

*Like the wings of an eagle)*

In the above example, the phrase, 'Sa phapha dza goni' has been employed figuratively as a simile. In the context of this poem, the word 'phapha' (wings) carries with it a symbol of freedom and prosperity. Naturally for many years, man has always envied a bird for its ability that it can easily fly, but in contrast this poet brings home a feeling of discouragement and hopelessness by the use of the phrase; 'Ro vundekana' (We are completely broken down). According to this poet, it seems that the 'spear' (tsanga) that he always put all his hope on, is now useless, and helpless.

The idea appears to be very abstract. Its destruction is then likened to the dropping and falling wings of an eagle. The poet's creative power in employing this techniques is highly appreciated in achieving his objective.

#### 4.5.2 Metaphor.

The concept 'metaphor' is described and defined as 'an applied comparison'. Two objects are compared with each other in their totality. One may thus represent the other to evoke a deeper or figurative meaning. In Tshivenda praise poems, (zwickhodo) and (zwirendo) brave men are sometimes referred to as 'crocodiles' (ngwena), 'lions' (ndau) and others.

In a metaphor, a word which in standard language denotes one kind of thing is implied to another in the form of identity instead of comparison.

Peet and Robinson (1977 : 91) defines a metaphor as;

" language that applies relation-ship of  
wich similarity is significant feature between  
two things and so change or  
apprehension of either of both".

A metaphor asserts the identity without a connection such as 'as', 'like', or a verbstem 'appears' as is the case with a simile.

In a metaphor, the basic is comparison or analogy. It may be a word or expression which in literal usage, denotes one kind of thing, or an action is applied to a distinctively different kind of thing or action, without asserting a comparison.

In another of his poem entitled; "NDI MUDZUMBAMANO"

(It is a hide and seek game) the poet employs this technique in the following lines to achieve his objectives where he says;

"Ri tou vha dziphele"

(Muima ... 1990 : 55)

*(We are just wolves)*

In this example, the poet uses a metaphor 'vhathu vha dziphele' to explain the characteristic behaviour of the people he always comes across with in this world in which he inhabits whose characters are so evil which can be compared to those of wolves. The word 'dziphele' has been employed in this example metaphorically to denote the bad type of people the poet wants to address.

Milubi goes further to illustrate this idea of 'amplifying meaning, without necessarily increasing the amount of verbal space required, by adding the connotations of one word to the connotations of another' when he says;

"Ri tou vha manzaranzara"

(Muima ... 1990 : 55)

*(We are just like strident and jarring sound).*

By means of the metaphor 'Ri manzaranzara' the poet can easily transmit feelings into words. This word 'manzaranzara' which is applied literally to one kind of object, namely 'music' is applied by analogy to another for the purpose of 'defamiliarising' day-to-day language.

#### 4.5.3 Personification

Barent (1985 : 105) defines personification as;

"The attributes of human feelings or characteristics to abstractions or to inanimate object."

Heese and Lawton (1979 : 63) says;

"Personification is a kind of image too. It is that kind of image where the 'something' concrete relates to human beings, while the 'something else' is not human."

The object in personification can be addressed as if it is a human being, or be made to speak. In so doing the poet makes the reader identify himself with the object, so that the feeling expressed by the object has immediate and direct appeal to him.

In 'TSHIFHINGA' (Time) Milubi says;

"Iwe tshifhinga  
Wo ima wa tielela



Sa mme a no lamba vetete  
 Wa mbo lamba yeneyi  
 Yone nyito yo pfuvhaho sa muthanyi"  
 (Muima ... 1990 : 22)

*(You time  
 You stood up and peeped  
 Like a mother who rejects a spoiled  
 child. You then rejected  
 Human weaknesses tinged with  
 bitterness line an underdone  
 'muthanyi' vegetable)*

In the above example, Milubi appears to address time as if it is a human being capable of understanding and taking instructions. In this example, Milubi speaks directly to time which is an inanimate and abstract object to perform some special tasks which are normally performed by human beings.

As a means of poetic expression, personification is inherently part of traditional praise poem, a very abundant phenomenon in Milubi's poetry.

We can identify some examples of this notion from the following stanza, where the poet says;

"Nge damu la tavha mukosi,  
 li tshi tavhela vhunna hovhu  
 La tzhema, heli damu lau iwe  
 musadzi, Li tshi tzhemela yone  
 mbofnolowo" (Muima .. 1990 : 24)

*(Because your breast has cried  
loudly, crying for this manhood  
And cried loudly, this breast of  
yours, you wife, crying for freedom).*

In this stanza, the breast makes an emotional reaction against oppression. One may say that the breast is symbolic of women's cry for their freedom. Freedom from oppressive tendencies of men. This cry for women emancipation is realised in personifications such as 'la tavha mukosi' (it yells a big cry', 'la tzhema' (It yells) 'Li tshi tzhemela' (Yelling for ...)

It is only a human being who yells. But when the breast reaches a stage where it yells like a human being, then this turns to show the seriousness of the oppression that women are exposed to in relation to men.

#### 4.5.4 Hyperbole

According to Abrams : (1985 : 86) hyperbole is defined as;

"a figure of speech which  
is bold overstatement  
or extravagant exaggeration of act  
or of possibility, used either for  
serious or ironic effect".

Exaggeration is another technique of 'defamiliarisation' and is incredible because of its variance with the day-to-day standard of language. In poetry for example, hyperbole 'distorts' by overstating.

Cuddon (1980 : 316) defines hyperbole as;

"A figure of speech which contains an exaggeration for emphasis. It is used by poets to emphasise a feeling or to produce a humorous effect; that is, to bring it to the listener to understand how great, how enormous, how extraordinary the concept described is".

Milubi uses a relevant figure of speech to show how people moved away so quickly while avoiding a stench that comes from a smelling rotten egg where in 'MATUNDE NA THONGOLA' the poet says;

"Vhothe vha ravhula, vha kusuwa  
Mirwe yo vhamba dzone ningo".

(Muima ... 1990 : 37)

*(And they all walked away holding firmly  
on their noses)*

These phrases 'vha kusuwa' and 'vho vhamba ningo' are examples of exaggeration of emphasis employed by the poet for the purpose of bringing to his listeners to understand how extra-ordinary the situation described was.

#### 4.5.5 Euphemism.

We would like to conclude our discussion of Figurative Language by looking at yet another trope which is also very common in Milubi's poetry, namely 'Euphemism'

The term 'Euphemism' comes from the Greek word 'to speak well'. Euphemism is the use instead of the blunt term for something disagreeable, terrifying, or offensive, of a term that is vaguer, more roundabout, or less colloquial. This figure of speech is frequently used in reference to death, and other terrifying experiences. Milubi in "NDI DO KUNDA" (I will conquer) instead of describing death using its concrete and familiar language (terms) he employs a technique or term common and agreeable when he says;

"Nda fhedza nga u u sedza wo no ombana na mavu". (Muima ... 1990 : 1).

*(And I then looked at you after you have  
kissed the soil)*

The poet employs the phrase 'u ombana na mavu' abstractly as Euphemism in order to avoid the concrete phrase 'to be dead' or 'buried' which appears frightening and disagreeable in the ears of the listener. The employ of concrete words evoke many senses in our bodies, and our bodies shiver when word like 'death' or 'graves' are mentioned. The images evoked by the employ of these phrase are visual and kineasthetic.

There are nevertheless other images and figures of speech that are very important in 'defamiliarising' the day-to-day language in poetry which are not discussed in this analysis. We have decided to limit our scope because we realise that a study of this kind cannot attempt an overall survey of a subject.

#### 4.6 SYMBOLISM

Symbolism, like Figurative Language already discussed here above, is also another 'defamiliarising' technique which occurs much in poetry.

Ntuli (1971 : 175) quotes Chiari defining symbolisms as;

".... a form of indirect, metaphorical speech meant to carry or to suggest a hidden reality".

Okpewho (1992 : 101) further states that;

"a symbol is a concrete or familiar object that is used in reference to or as an explanation of, or an abstract idea or a less familiar object or event".

A dove, for example, symbolises peace, a rose, beauty. Actions and gestures are also symbolic. Shaking of the head signifies rejection, dissatisfaction or refusal; arms raised denote surrender.

In poetry, to be regarded as a symbol, the object in a poem should have an independent identity. A symbol therefore could be described in terms of being equivalent to some abstraction.

In general, symbols are 'conventional' or 'public' and our poet, uses such conventional symbols of which their further significance is determined within his particular culture. In poetry, a reader may see symbolisms in a poem in which the other reader may fail to see. It is therefore our privilege to try and make some

meaningful interpretations that are likely to be influenced by our Venda background and culture, as they are employed by the poet.

The ensuing discussion will focus on the few various types and varieties of symbols as they are found in 'MUIMAWOGA'

#### 4.6.1 Symbols relating to deprivation

In most of his poems we usually find that time and again Milubi refers, in passing, to the way the blacks of this country have been deprived of their country and their property through racial discrimination. This is not surprising because generally this writer is a protest poet by nature.

Protest writing has always been the backbone of Milubi's approach as it is reflected in most of his poetry books such as 'MUHUMBULI MUTAMBULI' 'VHUTUNGU HA VHUPFA' and others.

Milubi views protest literature in terms of the Black man's idea of 'conscientising' his black reader and of regaining his real image which has been tarnished by other people who deprived him of his rights for so long.

Bob Leshoi as quoted by Milubi (1988 : 199) agrees with this view, and borrows the words of Chinua Achebe who says;

"I believe it is impossible to write anything in African without some kind of sommitment, some kind of message, some kind of protest. Even those early novels that look like very gentle

recreations of the past - what they were saying in effect, was that we have a past. That was protest because there were people who thought we didn't have the past".

In "ZWIFHONDO ZWO SALAHO ZWI ZWOTHE" (The lone chicks) Milubi presents a picture of this idea of deprivation when he says;

"Ro vha ro tamba nga mukhaha  
Mbilu dzo tshena nga dakalo  
Musi mugobi a tshi u dodela, uri a  
tangule hau vhutshilo" (Muima . 1990 : 15)

*(We had bathed ourselves in milk  
Our hearts were white with pride  
When a poacher stealthily approached,  
to deprive us of our rights to life).*

In this stanza the word 'mukhaha' is a symbols of purity and fullness of life. The poet appears to refer to the inferiority complex felt by many people because of the way their purity and fullness have been secretly stripped off from them by the strangers (poachers).

#### 4.6.2 Symbols relating to adversity

Milubi enjoys using darkness and owls in most of his poems. Darkness usually symbolises death, and misfortune.

In 'GOLE LITSWU' (The dark cloud) the poet describes the unfortunate situation the state of affairs which exists among his people through ignorance when he says;

"Gole <sup>^</sup>lit<sup>^</sup>swu-lit<sup>^</sup>swu  
 Lo <sup>^</sup>adamela <sup>^</sup>la <sup>^</sup>alamela <sup>^</sup>lit<sup>^</sup>ad<sup>^</sup>ulu  
 Vhutswuni honovhu ha gole <sup>^</sup>lit<sup>^</sup>swu-lit<sup>^</sup>swu"  
 (Muima .. 1990 : 68)

*(The darkest cloud  
 Has spread all over and unto heaven  
 In this darkness of the blackest cloud).*

The phrase 'Gole <sup>^</sup>lit<sup>^</sup>swu-lit<sup>^</sup>swu' in this example, has something to do with adversity brought by this phrase and is a conventional symbol of death, mourning and unhappiness.

#### 4.6.3 Symbols relating to hope

Closely related to the symbols of a flying bird that has already been discussed in this chapter, is that of the stars and the rising sun as well as the rising moon, as a symbol relating to hope, prosperity and life.

There is no doubt that the shining stars and the bright light in this poem 'HO NO TOU BODOBODO' (When it is pitch black) is symbolic to new hope especially after 'the setting sun' (which symbolizes death) when Milubi says;

"Tadulu <sup>^</sup>naledzi <sup>^</sup>dzi a tandavhala  
 Dza <sup>^</sup>naidza-<sup>^</sup>naidza tshone tshedza".  
 (Muima ...1990 : 52)



*(Up in the sky the stars are beginning to  
stretch out their legs  
And twinkle twinkle, twinkling the real  
light)*

In conclusion, it would be proper to state that there are still more symbols that have been employed by the poet which have not been included in this analysis. The above few examples are sufficiently evident enough to show how successful the poet has been in addressing this device of symbolism.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. CONCLUSION.

The purpose of this research study was to critically analyse the poetic works of Milubi N. A. from the Russian Formalism Theory of Literature. The study was also an attempt to see how successful the poet has been in the employ of the techniques of poetry as proposed by the Russian Formalists. A study of this nature tends to be superficial, but due to the limited scope of the research paper, it was not possible for us to investigate all the poetic techniques employed by the poet in MUIMAWOGA.

Our experience throughout our research study has revealed that there is no firm dividing line between 'poetic' and 'ordinary' language, and that it would seem unreasonable to enforce a clear division between the two aspects. Poetry is language, it cannot be said that language is poetry. In an attempt to define poetry, more than half the existing definitions regard language as the essence of poetry. The point is, poetry is language used or organised differently. The poetic manner of expression is one characteristic that makes it distinctive, contributing towards the reaction of the uniqueness of its quality.

One can state that poetic language is 'every poet's own creation'. The poet is free to exort, or twist the ordinary practical language with the advantage vested in him with the acknowledgement of 'poetic licence'. Mental processes at times interact with cultural millieu to create new meanings for old form. Words from one category may be paired with others from other caregories (tactile + visual) or

may be transferred from one category to another (from tactile to visual). Poetic language serves as a mediator between man and his experiences.

Milubi in his capacity as a poet took this opportunity of using language as his powerful tool to express his and his audience's grievances, where and when necessary to commend on certain issues and also to share with them valuable information. He appears not an observer, but an active participant directly affected or involved in what is being happening in his life style.

For better understanding, Milubi sometimes compares life, an abstract concept, to 'gorges', 'clifs', 'caves', 'ravines' and dongas as obstacles of his life's situation. Sometimes these ups and downs of life are compared with dangerous animals such as wolves, thunderbirds and vultures to defamiliarise the day-to-day language

Still in the same vain, Milubi instead of addressing his audience directly about the Saviour Jesus Christ, he talks about a 'sheep' (lamb). Even here, one has to look deep into the nature and involvement of this sheep to understand the connotation of the information in general. We are made to believe that Milubi experiences special disparity between blacks and whites of this country and feels the need to bring this to light but in a way that it will inspire the oppressed and to accept the situation in an understable manner .

During our research study we have realised that like any other poet, Milubi was also influenced by both the indigenous and as well as the Western world, more especially the Christian sphere of Culture in drawing some of his images. This aspect received our careful and thorough consideration in chapter 4 of this research paper.

Milubi's poetry reflects on religion, nature, death, love as well as human suffering, his success and failures, anger, courage and others.

The poet's success in borrowing material from different sources was because of his unlimited scope of the Tshivenda language, his Christian background, and perhaps the same knowledge and understanding of his Socio-political and cultural world in which he finds himself.

It is proper to state that Milubi's poems are protest by nature, and that the idea of deprivation and oppression appears to be the main message behind his writings, but we appreciate the tactful way in which he reconciles the reader's mind through the employment of images and symbols that he chooses to bring home the spirit of reconciliation and repentance amongst human beings. We appreciate the style of his writings because although he has the material to evoke our anger and frustrations, he has also the skill and method of re-directing our feelings and views towards harmony and reconciliation.

Although Milubi appears to have been successful in the employment of the devices of poetry, he should not be discouraged from using such Western forms of poetic features like meter, rhyme, rhythm and others. Coupled with the above notion, it was also realised that throughout his presentation, Milubi may also have employed yet another important indigenous and African form of Oral poetry which is 'proverbs'. Proverbs according to Guma (1967 : 65) is;

"a pithy sentence with a general bearing on life. It serves to express some homely truth or moral lesson in such an

appropriate manner as to make one feel that no better words could have been used to describe the particular situation."

Proverbs are abundant in the Tshivenda Language, and their usage in such poetic works, would have enriched the standard and quality of the poet's presentations, but nevertheless, Milubi cannot be held responsible for such omission. As a poet he is free to employ those devices that he finds suitable and appropriate.

We would like to conclude by stating that this research study is but a preliminary study of Milubi's poetry under the Russian Formalism Theory, and only acts as a direction to which students of poetry could follow and study more in future. We are therefore tempted to state without any reasonable doubt that Milubi has succeeded in addressing the aspect of 'defamiliarisation' (Ostranenie) throughout his poetry, by making strange that which is familiar. He achieved this through the usage of archaic and poetic devices, and also by the intelligent use of well-known techniques that characterize African poetry, like parallelism, repetition, linking and others, and his poetry has so far won many hearts among Vhavenda readers, and that the impact of his poetry on readers is quite remarkable.

Despite some shortcomings that critics might level against Milubi, one notes that the employment of literary techniques in his poems, is not done haphazardly. He skillfully employs the techniques in a more artistic manner. In our day-to-day language, the use of repetition, metaphors, and imagery are abound, but the difference lies in the intelligent manner of using these devices in such a way that readers and the audience are able to discern a shift from the familiar to the difficult 'defamiliarisation'. These devices were not just employed indiscriminately like

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many would do in their everyday language, but Milubi employs them with much astuteness that a simple and a familiar phenomenon ends up being 'defamiliarised'. Milubi's style is so alluring that we have no doubt that in future, he will serve as a model of good poetry writing in the Vhavenda nation.

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