

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN SOTHO POETRY

FROM

1950 - 1980

BY

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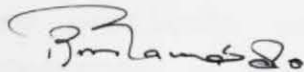
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DECLARATION

I declare that "THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHERN SOTHO POETRY FROM 1950 - 1980" is my own work, and that all the sources I have quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



.....
M.R. MAMABOLO

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THIS STUDY IS DEDICATED TO:

My late father ALFRED KULU MBATHA
My mother MARTHA MAPHEHLI MBATHA

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIM OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to distinguish, assess and reflect on the development of Northern Sotho poetry between the years 1950 - 1980. To highlight the general background to the development of poetry, to understand and appreciate works of literature, especially poetry. To be able to identify the most commonly used poetic forms and devices. To be able to define and identify relevant literary terms; and further to show that poetry is not only to be memorised but to be read for pleasure and instructions like other types of literature. Lastly, an attempt will be made to explain the concept systemic approach.

1.2 SCOPE

This study will consist of five Chapters. Chapter 1 will serve as an introduction giving the outline of the approach - (systemic approach) and the historical development of Northern Sotho Literature. The main concern of this study being to distinguish, assess and reflect on the development of Northern Sotho poetry from 1950 - 1980.

Chapter 2 looks at the poets and their times thus: Period 1950 - 1959 - Prominent poets:-

P.M. Mamogobo (1953)

E.M. Ramaila (1954)

E.M. Ramokgopa (1955)

J. Lephaka (1956)

Period 1960 - 1969 with:-

S.R. Machaka (1960)
 Matome Fela (1961)
 M. Bopape and S. Ratlabala (1967)
 O.K. Matsepe (1968, 1969)

Period 1970 - 1980 with:-

O.K. Matsepe (1970, 1971, 1972)
 H.M.L. Lentsoane (1971, 1973, 1979)
 N.S. Puleng (1980)

Chapter 3 will deal with the themes of various poems according to the above period/times.

Chapter 4 will be assigned to the poetic devices following the periods 1950 to 1980.

Chapter 5 will be general remarks and a conclusion.

1.3 THE SYSTEMIC APPROACH

According to C.F. Swanepoel (1990) the systemic approach aims at interpreting literature according to semiotic schemes on account of general regularities in communication systems. The theory was developed in the 1970's by the Tel Aviv schools, Itmar Even-Zohar and G. Toury. Literature is viewed as a complex whole or unity of systems which are in constant process of influencing and affecting one another. The relationship between systems finds itself in a state of change, depending on, and brought about by the values or norms dominating literature in a specific period. (African Literature: Approaches and Application 1990: 24)

José Lambert (1985: 36) as quoted by P.R.S. Maphike (1991: 2) in his thesis intimates that in 1922 Youri Tynjanov wrote that "Literature should not be studied in terms of essences, but terms of relations". That was the beginning of a new dimension in literary studies. In 1970 Itmar Even-Zohar launched the polysystem Hypothesis based on that idea. According to this hypothesis, the usual collection of literary data and its analysis "on the basis of their material substance" was to be replaced by a functional approach that was based on the analysis of relations. A breakthrough was thus made in the detection of rules that governed the diversity and complexity of phenomena, rather than merely classifying them. Known facts therefore, previously viewed in isolation from observed data gained more meaning in their relationship with the latter. The idea was inevitably extended to methods and structures. This inter-relatedness in structures, methodology and function was, for the first time regarded as forming a system.

The Belgian Scholar, José Lambert, who visited South Africa in 1986, is strongly in favour of a polysystemic view of literatures of South Africa. Instead of accumulating largely historical and literary evolution a researcher has to look for norms and models (genre, styles, etc.). He/She has to determine how literature is organised and what kind of system it is (Lambert 1985: 35). According to Lambert the degree of literary autonomy of each South African Literature could be investigated by means of a series of general and particular questions, to quote but a few:

- a. Are the literary norms and models imported or not?
Are they traditional or not?
- b. Which are the dominating genre rules?

- c. From which literary systems do they import texts? Are they translated texts? Who is translating them? According to which selection rules does this happen? etc.

These are some of the questions posed by Lambert. Albert Gerard supports Lambert's view of the literatures of South Africa, he says: "Actually the national literature of the Republic of South Africa is an outstanding instance of what Itmar Even-Zohar has called a 'polysystem'".

Thus the idea of system has made it possible not only to account adequately for "known" phenomena but also enable the discovery of altogether "unknown" ones. In addition, known data which had never been thought of a correlatable with the data observed now become meaningful for the latter. Itmar Even-Zohar as quoted by C.F. Swanepoel (1990: 288).

1.4 SYSTEM AND POLYSYSTEM

1.4.1 STATICS VERSUS DYNAMICS

According to Itmar Even-Zohar, the idea that semiotic phenomena, that is, sign-governed human patterns of communication (eg. culture, language, literature, society) should be regarded as systems rather than conglomerates of desperate elements, has become one of the leading ideas of our time in most sciences of man. Thus, the positivistic collection of data, taken bona fide on empiricist grounds and analysed on the basis of their material substance, has been replaced by a functional approach based on the analysis of relations. Viewed as systems, it became possible to describe and explain how the various semiotic aggregates operate.

Subsequently the way was opened to achieve what has been regarded throughout the development of modern science as that latter's supreme goal: the detection of those rules governing the diversity and complexity of phenomena rather than their registration and classification. Since the pre-functional approaches hardly ever attempted to detect such rules, what were taken as phenomena (i.e., the objects for observation/study), did not actually overlap what it became possible to detect once functional hypothesis were launched. Thus, the idea of system has made it possible not only to account adequately for "known", phenomena, but also enabled the discovery of altogether "unknown" ones.

The functional approach has not quite been unified. The two different and great incompatible programs have been circulated. Unfortunately, this fact has not always been understood, and that has caused much damage to the development of the various semiotic disciplines.

Itmar Even-Zohar (1980) refers to the respective programmes as the "theory static systems vs the theory of dynamic system". The theory of static systems has wrongly been identified as the exclusive "functional" or structural approach, and usually referred to the teachings of De Saussure. In his own writing and in subsequent works in his tradition, the system is conceived as static (synchronic) net of relations, in which the value of each item is a function of the specific relation into which it enters. While the function of elements, as well as the rules governing them, are thus detected, there is hardly any way to account for changes and variations. The factor of time-succession (diachrony) has been eliminated from the "system" and declared as something which cannot be accounted for by functional hypothesis. It has thus been declared to be extra-systemic, since it was exclusively identified with the historical aspect of systems, the latter has been virtually banished from the realism of linguistics.

Firstly, it must be admitted that both synchrony and diachrony are historical, but the exclusive identification of the latter with history is untenable. As a result, synchrony cannot and should not be equated with statics, as at any given moment, more than one diachronic set is operating on the synchronic axis. Therefore, on one hand a system of both synchrony and diachrony; on the other, each of those separately is obviously a system. Secondly, as the idea of structuredness and systemacity need no longer be identified with homogeneity, a semiotic system is necessarily as heterogeneous, open structure. It is therefore, very rarely a uni-system but is necessarily a polysystem - a multi system a system of various systems which intersect with each other and partly overlap, using concurrently different options yet functioning as one structured whole, whose members are inter-dependent.

1.5 DYNAMIC STRATIFICATION AND SYSTEMIC PRODUCTS

According to Even-Zohar (1980: 293) heterogeneity is reconcilable with functionality if we assume that the system of concurrent options are not equal. There are hierarchies within the polysystem-centre-and-periphery relations, or dynamic stratification. It is the permanent struggle between the various strata. Tynjanov has taught us, which constitutes the synchronic state of the system. It is the victory of one stratum over another which makes the change on the diachronic axis.

In this centrifugal vs centripetal motion, phenomena are driven from the centre to the periphery while, conversely, phenomena may push their way into the centre and occupy it. However, with a polysystem one must not think in terms of one centre and one periphery, as several such positions are hypothesised. The inter-systemic transfers of properties (or models) usually occurs from the periphery of one system to the periphery of an adjacent system within the same polysystem, and may, in due course, put

its way to the centre of the latter. Transfer processes which result in such transpositions are to be called conversions.

Traditionally, we have often been faced with the results of such conversions either without realizing that they have occurred or ignoring the source of their results. Even-zohar goes on to say: "the relations which are obtained within the polysystem do not account only for polysystem processes, but for polysystem procedures" (1980: 294). That is to say, the polysystem constraints turn out to be relevant for the procedures of selection, manipulation, amplification, detection, etc. taking place in actual products (verbal as well as nonverbal) pertaining to the system. Therefore those interested not in the processes taking place in their specific field such as language or literature, but in the "actual" constitution of products (e.g. linguistic utterances, literary texts) cannot avoid taking into account the state of the particular polysystem with whose products they happen to deal. Naturally, when only official products (standard language utterances, literary masterpieces) were treated, the work of the polysystem constrains could not be detected.

1.6 SYNCHRONIC AND DIACHRONIC LITERARY STUDIES

Jacobson and Tynjanov as quoted by Maphike (1991: 10), emphasise the importance of synchronic studies for "it reveals the nature of language (literature) as a system at each individual moment of its existence". And at the same time Viljoen (1985: 23) warns that pure synchronism is an illusion because every system has a past as well as future which are inseparable elements of the system. The significance of synchronic literary study is generally acknowledged as studying the condition of the system as seen at the moment, as is usually the case with text analysis. Viljoen (1985: 23) however, warns that such an approach is unreliable as the system is continually undergoing a change as result of interaction with neighbouring systems. A diachronic

literary study would compare the literary systems over a predetermined period. It is for the latter reason that De Saussure saw the history of language (literature) as "a succession of synchronic states".

Theoretical research, Lambert maintains, calls for the application of hypotheses to all observed phenomena, rather than to select material from our historical stories to prove our own misconceptions. Hypotheses are good only if they help us interpret all the material within a prescribed area.

Maphike (1991: 10) goes on to say: Mere accumulation of historical data does not help a literary researcher much to describe literature and literary evolution; he must look for norms, models (genre, style, etc.) and relationships. In this way he will grasp the systemic feature of the literature under observation. Literature also has synthetic features, i.e. it shows a complex unity of elements in varying relationships.

It has thus become clear that the polysystem hypothesis revolves round relationships. As Swanepoel puts it "relationships, norms and models - these are the fields of interest of the systemic researcher" (1986: 2). For such a researcher to attain his goal, Lambert suggests a series of leading questions to be answered, inter alia: since when? where? by whom? why? under what circumstances? where from? what is the influence on tradition?

C.F. Swanepoel (1985) answered Lambert's questions on the systemic approach to the concept "National literature" and applied it to Sesotho literature. He gives a comprehensive historical overview of the origins and evolution of the literature within and across the borders of the Republic of

South Africa in perspective, showing contact between the traditional African and Western values (intersystemic interaction).

1.7 THE ROLE OF TRANSLATION IN INITIATING CREATIVE WRITING

C.F. Swanepoel states that African Languages of Southern Africa owe their initial publication to the Evangelical call of white foreigners who had settled in different parts of Southern Africa during the middle decades of the 19th century. Translation played an important role in initiating creative writing amongst the Black people.

Tiyo Soga's Xhosa translation appeared in 1866, under the title of Uhambo lo Mhambi, while J.W. Colenso's Zulu Ukuhama kwesiHambi saw light in 1883.

Southern Sotho's Leetlo la Mokreste translated by G. Mabile appeared thirty years after the Xhosa edition in 1896, while John Moffat's Tswana Leeto lwa ga Mokreste was first published in 1907. E.B. Giesekke's Venda translation, Lwendo lwa Muendi followed in 1960, and J.R. Rammala's Northern Sotho version, Leeto la Mokriste was published in 1966, one hundred years after the Xhosa.

For Northern Sotho N.C. Phatudi translated Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe (1958) and Julius Ceasar (1966). For Tsonga S.J. Baloyi translated Julius Ceasar (1957) and also Booker T. Washington's Up from Slavery as Ku Hluvuka in 1953. The same book appeared in Southern Sotho as Tokoloho Bokgobeng in 1947, the translator being H.H. Lekhethoa. There were more translations by Southern Sotho translators and also Zulu translators. On the whole world literature contributed substantially to the awakening of creative writing in the African languages of this region. (A.S. Gérard 1983: 61)

1.8 NORTHERN SOTHO LITERATURE

Serudu in his lecture as recorded by Gérard (1983: 94), says: The Berlin Luthern missionaries played a major role in converting Northern Sotho to written language. It is this early endeavours which laid a sound foundation for subsequent creative writing in the language. It goes without saying that the primary aim of the missionaries was to enable members of their congregations to read the Bible and other religious writings.

There were many books which were written by the missionaries, for instance Puku ye xo kopantšoexo xo eona Ditaba tša mehutahuta (Book containing all sorts of things). This was a collection of stories, mainly biblical. Ditaba tše dingwe tša Bodumedi (Tales of Believers), this dealt with the sufferings and experiences of the early martyrs. The writers of these books are all unknown.

Having learned to read and write, the Northern Sotho people started reading works which were written in English and later in Afrikaans. The reading matter was no longer strictly religious in content. They started writing books dealing with secular topics. Good examples of such books are: Mebušo (Governments) by Hoffmann, Tša Magoši le Dilete (of chiefs and tribes), Maphelo (Hygiene) both written by Schwellnus.

Schwellnus wrote for Sub A - Std VI which improved Northern Sotho language. G.H. Franz also wrote Dipadišo tše monate which were for the Sub A - Std II. They had illustrations which were made by his wife, children enjoyed reading them. In 1957 Hoffmann, van Heerden and Moloisi wrote A re Bale also for lower standards up to Std V. Phatudi and Mojapelo introduced another series called Balang ka Lethabo, these were arranged according to the syllabus of the primary schools (Gérard, A.S. 1983).

1.9 MODERN LITERATURE

The writers here had to act very cautiously when selecting materials for their works in order to satisfy the current tastes of their readership. Their writings were named "Serious literature" meaning that they were good "writings". These include also translations. These writings were divided into four groups or types of genres according to their period of publishing, e.g. novels, short stories and poetry.

A. PERIOD 1950 - 1959 - NOVELS

The writers of this period were still more inclined to christian writings, they were morally oriented. Here we find K.R. Makwala Puledi le Thobja and C.N. Phatudi: Thaka ye Kgwadi. Thereafter a number of works which were based on "contact themes" were published. Among them were works of M.J. Madiba: Tsiri and Nkotsana, A. Phalane: Motangtang, M.M. Sehlodimela: Tša Maabane, D.P. Tsebe: Noto-ya-masogana, E.M. Ramaila: Tsakata, etc. They developed and made popular the theme that became known as "Makgoweng Motif". However, these were not successful plots because authors did not use any extra devices in order to improve the constructions of their plots. They seem to have been satisfied with the bare framework upon which the story was build.

PLAYS

The first plays were based on animal stories which had messages for the people. This was written by H.I. Make: Mokgelekgetha (1954), G.H. Franz in Maaberone based his theme on the conflict between traditional life and christian life. Other writers who followed the same theme were: C.K. Nchabeleng, J.S. Mminele and L.M. Maloma. G.H. Franz wrote another drama called Modjadji, this was mainly on the traditional life of the Balobedus. E.K.K. Matlala in his work Serogole, wrote on change brought about by

the Western culture that is, when the Black people met with the White people in this region and the difficulties they encountered.

SHORT STORIES

During this period three books of short stories were published, two of which were written by E.M. Ramaila, i.e. Molomatsebe (1951) and Taukobong. In these stories the white speaks of a mysterious force of power which determines the course of Bantu Social relationship, viz. that evil will be counteracted by evil in a mysterious manner.

ESSAYS

So far we had only one book containing essays written by E.K.K. Matlala, called Mengwalo.

POETRY

The first poems were mainly praise poems, good examples are those which were written by M.J. Madiba: "Kgomedi a Lekgothoane", and "Mafakudu a bo Joni". Their works were mostly what we call "Traditional poetry". Moloto (1970) calls it indigenous poetry. He defines it as poetry "which was produced ... without outside literary influence ..." We shall endeavour to define it as a poetry peculiar to a people, unaffected by other.

P.H.D. Mashabela says: "Other writers based their works on animals and other things which they know in their environment. Other poets seem to have been concerned with life as a phenomenon with its ump-teen inexplicabilities." (1979: 39)

To quote Mashabela when writing about Mamogobo as one of the poets he says: "Bristling with metaphorization from every day life and folklore, Mamogobo nevertheless threw his searchlight on to present day life to try and answer the vital questions: What is life? What is the aim of living? Wherein lies the way to happiness?" Poetry has shifted from the traditional to the semi-traditional, that is traditional in form and modern in content. (1979: 39)

B. PERIODS 1960 - 1989

According to Serudu et al (1990): This is a very important period in the development of Northern Sotho literature. Numerous creative writings by Northern Sotho writers were produced. The incentive must have come from the demands made by the schools, which at the time had increased tremendously in number. Some of the works were written with the aim of getting money, while others of course were conceived with no ulterior motive of gain. Such works in most cases proved to be valuable in the long run.

Works published during this period covered a variety of themes, among other, the conflict between African beliefs and Christianity - Nchabeleng's Masela wa Thabanaswana and Mminele's Mahlodi; love - Moloise's Kgopotšo go Beatrice wa Botlokwa; the clash between traditional family authority and the individualism of modern times; Rafapa's Leratosello; polygamy as revealed in the novels of Maditsi, Bana ba ga Mmatšhatšhe; and Shai-Rogoboya's Makhurumetša. There was a noticeable drift from the renowned religious themes and the Makgoweng Motif, which were characteristic features of the period prior to the sixties.

Serudu goes on to say, in spite of all this productivity, one is still perturbed by the fact that quantity seemed to have overridden quality. Of the many works which have been produced to date, only a handful can survive a strict literary test. Writers tended to be superficial in their treatment of theme; the weaving of their plots and their character delineation. In other words, there was very little attempt to probe beneath the surface of life. The reason is that, most of the works were written for pupils and students in our primary and secondary schools.

It was only towards the middle of the sixties that writers like O.K. Matsepe and S.P. Mminele came to the forefront with work of better quality. To date Matsepe is still recognised as one of the most outstanding Northern Sotho writers. This is not only based on the number of works he has written, but also on the quality of these works. In all his work Matsepe shows great skill in language usage and the creation of life - like characters inhabiting a very credible world. His plot patterns are woven in a mastery manner.

The themes in this various works reflect diverse faces of life in a traditional society; Kingship, human greed and jealousy, leadership, human relationships, etc.

However, this does not imply that Matsepe's works are provincial. To Matsepe traditional life forms the basis from which he can express his views about man and his fellow man, man and his world, man and the universe, and human relationships. Matsepe was always striving to bring peace among people.

The prominence of Matsepe's literary works over those of other Northern Sotho authors, has created a major problem in the development of the literature. Almost all young writers have been influenced by him. Among these young writers one can

mention the names of Sekhukhune, Lebopa, Rafapa and Puleng. One can only hope that with the passage of time Northern Sotho writers will outgrow the influence of Matsepe and become more realistic and creative.

It is however, encouraging to note that there are already a few writers who, although they do not write prose, write on contemporary themes. Their works reflect the happenings of their time in various spheres of life. Among others, they are H.M. Lentsoane, P. Mamagobo and D.P. Sekhukhune. (Gérard 1983: 94-95)

Our main concern in this article will be the development of Northern Sotho poetry. Groenewald says: the development of Northern Sotho poetry as a whole can be ascribed to:

- a. Northern Sotho becoming a written language; and
- b. the changing of the social, cultural and political circumstances which determined the Northern Sotho's view of modern life.

What actually happened hereafter was that an experimental phase in the development of Northern Sotho poetry set in, and in the beginning two trends in the writing of poetry could be distinguished. At this point in time three main streams can be recognised. Firstly, the category of the praise song written in line with the traditional practices. Secondly, the category of experimental verse, such as the poems of Ratlabala and Lentsoane. Thirdly, the category which includes poems composed in a traditional matrical style, but which are thematically and structurally in line with the experimental poems. (S.A. Journal of African Language 1988, 8 (3))

Northern Sotho poetry then, originates from the traditional praise poetry of the past before the advent of writing. This oral art was an integral part of certain traditional ceremonies at family, clan or tribal gatherings. Although we cannot say who is the "creator or praiser", his contributions are however, part of a poetic heritage which was carried from generation to generation by word of mouth. This oral art was not a universal art creation but a pure form of national art, and its meaning significance are largely limited to a specific milieu. As opportunities of renditions decreased most of these praise poems were lost to society, but because of some authors and researchers some of these were committed to tapes, records and paper and preserved (Pretorius, W.J. 1989).

We thank the efforts of, amongst others, the following early writers:

- i. Johns, J.C. Puku Readers Series C.L.D. 1956.
- ii. Phala, D.M. Kgomo e a tshwa H.P.B. 1935.
- iii. Lekgothoane, S.K. "Praise of animals in Northern Sotho". KA M.J. Van Warmelo, Kago "Bantu Studies 12" Witwatersrand University Press, 1938.
- iv. SehloDIMELA, M.M. Bala o tsebe J.L. van Schaik, Pretoria, 1948.
- v. Ramokgopa, E.M. Mofolletšhi, A.B.P. 1955.
- vi. Ramaila, E.M. Sereti sa Thabantsho, A.P.S., 1954.

The above period of oral poetry was followed by an era of transition which is characterised by Northern Sotho taking the path of written poetry in which features of the traditional poetry e.g. linking, parallelism, alliteration, rhyme, etc. were

blended with those of modern poetry. It was during this period that stretches from about the late 50's to about the early sixties that authors adapted the techniques of praise poetry to their everyday experiences. Praise poetry was thus weaned from its services and replaced by this written poetry.

As it will be observed in the examples that will follow later that in all these praise poems that escaped extinction were those tribal units (meeno), chiefs and their righthand men who were renowned for their heroism. Notwithstanding any meritorious achievements a commoner might have made, many a praise-poem of these commoners have been lost for good and will never be recovered.

CHAPTER 2

2. THE POETS AND THEIR TIMES

2.1 THE POETS AND THEIR PERIODS/TIMES

For the purpose of a systemic approach we shall look into the development of Northern Sotho poetry using the prominent poets for the specific periods. This will be followed by the themes and poetic devices.

2.2 PERIOD 1950 TO 1959

2.2.1 PHOROHLO MAMOGOBO (1953)

Mamogobo, a poet of repute, excels in descriptions, mostly aptly done of the dancing and singing of warriors, of touching scenes of sorrow and sadness, of dignity and tenderness by which the aloofness or indifference, a characteristics of the traditional stories as well as the moral story has been renounced. His poetry is a baffling lyricism, a display of language usage in which rhythm, sound and meaning are moulded together to exalt and to stir the emotion. Mamogobo is one of the first Northern Sotho poets to write modern poetry.

As a student Mamogobo came into contact with Western poetry, and was impressed by this type of poetry. To some extent we find evidence of the influence of the Bible in Mamogobo's poetry.

It is common knowledge that an artist cannot work in a vacuum. For him to produce anything a number of influences work on him. In the first place these influences are his experiences which he expresses in the medium of his choice. In the second place he is influenced by the models of expression found in his cultural and artistic environment.

No artists can claim to be completely independent and original. As Garrison puts it: "If originality were defined as the creation of entirely new products or ideas, without dependence upon the work of others, few if any of the world's masterpieces could be termed original." (Garrison, p. 576)

We should point out that originality as such should not be over emphasised because it is not an aesthetic criterion. A piece of art can be poor despite its claim to originality. Our task here, is to assess whether Mamogobo did anything positive with that material.

We shall endeavour to determine to what extent he conforms to classical approach, to imitation which, in the work of White ... insists that imitation is not enough, and demands that individual originality be shown by choosing and using models carefully, by interpreting borrowed matter and by improving on these models and that matter. (White p. 18)

Oral traditional narratives provided Mamogobo with much that he could use to enrich his work. Traditional poetry refers to those compositions that belong to Northern Sotho oral lore, consisting mainly of praise-poems of chiefs and tribal heroes. They also include praises of animals as well as lullabies and nursery rhymes.

Having looked at the influence of the traditional and foreign works on Mamogobo we should further consider whether this combination of forces did succeed in producing an interesting new type of poetry.

Mamogobo in his poetry book, "LEDULEPUTSWA" depicts the following themes, christian aspects, love, politics, philosophy and admiration of nature. Concerning christian aspects, Mamogobo divided these into two kinds of beliefs (i.e. traditional and christian beliefs). We sometimes find these two beliefs (i.e.

"Sepela botse Hunadi,
o ba dumedīše,
o re lokisētše ditsela.
Tšea kobo še."

(Go well Hunadi, Greet them and prepare the way for us. Take this blanket.)

They bury him/her with the blanket. The Priest will lead them from the known to the unknown. The poet shows his aspirations in the following lines:-

"Ke sekege wa rothi la pula" - Be as pure as rain drops
"Ke phele ke seke" - To remain pure all the time
"Go šale morodi wa nnete
tšhipi ya bophelo - To remain strong and faithful in life.
(Leduleputswa p. 1)

The poet here shows that he is a believer and wants to remain pure.

Mamogobo uses figurative language and imagery to express his thoughts well. Let us examine these lines:-

"Wena setšokotšane sa badimo"
"Gogola mašoredi a lefase"
"Gogola pilo ke tšwe botsweng"
(Leduleputswa p1)

The word Setsokotsane means whirlwind. He compares the Holy Spirit with the whirlwind. "Mašore"di means evil spirit. He says wipe away the evil spirit that I may remain pure. "Gogola pilo" - wipe away the black powder made of burnt herbs or grass.

"Mašore"di and pilo" are being compared with bad things which obstruct the poet from being pure.

Most of the poems in Mamogobo's poetry book are lyric poems with the exception of one which is a narrative poem, called "Leduleputswa". The epic poem in its authentic form as practised in Western poetry, tells a story of a great historical, national or universal appeal in an elevated style. We do not have anything like yet, but have the narrative poem which falls under the epic. It can be either a short or lengthy poem that treats a subject of lesser appeal, but like the epic it tells a story with subtle plot and characterisation. In "Leduleputswa" the main character is Leduleputswa, a very old man who was left alone after the attack of the village by the enemies. All the people in the village were killed. This old man relates the sad story that happened a long time ago, when people were still killing each other cruelly, he says:- "Ba jana ka marumo" - (they are killing each other with assegais and spears). The loneliness of the old man made him to count seconds and minutes each day. All these are characteristics of an epic poem.

In Northern Sotho we do not have much of the epic poems. I know only a few of these, they are "Sebilwane" by Matome, "Ga se ya lešaka le" by Lentsoane, "Modupi" by Masola in Maatla Mpulele and "Leduleputswa" by Mamogobo. Let us examine what Leduleputswa says:-

"Lemo ke šitwa go bala ka ya diatla
 Ke tampela go ya maoto ka gakanega,
 Ke lemo ditelele marega ke malatedi,
 Ke mengwagangwaga, go bala ke a šitwa."

(Leduleputswa p. 4)

"Here am I, unable to count with my fingers
 I try to do it with my toes, still I get mixed up
 It is a long time ago,
 I spent many winter seasons
 And still unable to count."

Leduleputswa is very much frustrated. He is trying to find out how old he is, but all in vain. The people in those days could not count, because they had no schooling. He goes on to say:-

"Go fetile makoko a mantho,
Go rutlile sesedi sa mokgeledi 'a mantho,
Go wetš^ve malokoloko,
Ba ile pele go - tsebja - ke - ba - ntshe."

"Many people have passed away,
The whirlwind has swept them away;
The nation has fallen
They went before us
Where they went nobody knows."

The old man was lonely, worried and desperate. The people had been swept away by the cruel death, which is revealed by these words:-

"rutlile" - destroyed
"wetš^ve" - fallen and
"ile" - gone

He then asked his forefathers and said:-

"Badimo nkweng
Nkweng lena Badimo ba thaba boila kii ya selepe,"

"My Gods hear me
Hear me my Gods of the mountain."

Mamogobo used a lot of repetition and linking in his narrative poem. There is cross linking in the above lines, "Badimo and Nkweng". Repetition appears on page 7:-

"Ka tintatinta, ka tintatinta,
Ka tintatinta ka iša go Badimo:"

(Leduleputswa 1953 p. 7)

The Northern Sotho people believe that "Badimo" (gods) are found on the mountain. When they pray for rain or bury their chiefs, they go to the mountain. We may compare this with Psalm 121 in the Bible, it says:- "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help". The Israelites also believed that their gods are on the mountain. Mamogobo goes on to say:-

"Tšhweu ye ya boMahlako ke mpho ya Badimo,
O imilwe ka ntšū la Tompane morongw'a Badimo ba Mogodumo".

(Leduleputswa 1953 p. 9)

These lines tell us about the birth of Jesus Christ. Tshweu ye ya Mahlako refers to Mary, the Mother of Christ. Mpho ya Badimo is Jesus, Tompane is the Angel that brought the message to Mary.

We also find a beautiful sonnet in Leduleputswa: "Go Hunadi". A sonnet is a lyrical poem. It consists of fourteen lines of iambic pentameter linked by an intricate rhyme scheme. As we have mentioned that Mamogobo was exposed to Western poetry and was impressed by this type of poetry, he wrote more on modern poetry. He is an observant and an imaginative poet. He is able to write on the happenings and changes that take place in his environment. Some of his poems are "Afrika Boa:" and "Afrika, Nagasello".

2.2.2 E.M. RAMAILA (1954)

Ramaila's poetry is characterised by the theme of heroism with a highly descriptive and highly figurative language with similes, metaphors, eulogues, parallelism, repetition and archaic words. It is important to note that Ramaila has not written the poems but collected them from various tribes. The basic element of

praise poetry is the name by which the composer introduces himself: "Kgoši Mampuru".

"Ke nna Mašišimale a gabo Mošiane tlou a Mabasa,
Tlou ya manaka ke eme Marutle gabo Lekgolane,
Ke šišimetše ke etša letlapa, lefsika lapeng la bo Matobole".
(Seriti sa Thabantsho 1954 p. 16)

From the above we realise that any warrior who is worth his salt goes about by a variety of names e.g. "Mašišimale, tlou ya manaka, letlapa, lefsika," etc. These names reveal features that are characteristic of this warrior like his habitat "Marutle gabo Lekgolane," his physique, Tlou ya manaka, his strength and hardiness "Ke etša letlapa" and his exploits. All these qualities are expressed and implied in the naming. That is why Kunene groups these names as:-

- a. Naming Eulouque: i.e. those which are coined as aliases for hero; each one inspired by its own set of circumstances as the poet sees them.

"Ke nna mašišimane -"

- b. Eulouques of associative reference; in which the hero is not named, but rather praised for his association, either in blood or marriage relationship - in-arms, with other people. (Heroic Poetry of the Basotho 1971 p. 35)

"Ke nna mašišimale a gabo Mošiane -"

Kunene says that praise poetry is dramatic verse that concerns itself with action that is centred around "conditions of life which constitute an over-present challenge to the valour of men-"

i. Frequent wars, battles and skirmishes -:

"Ke Moretele a noka ke retetš^ěe.

Ke reteletš^ěe maburu a Jubere.

Ke retelela le mašole a Ramapantana.

(Seriti sa Thabantsho: p. 15)

ii. Frequent encounters with wild beasts, thus:

"Tau e tšwele ga Rasehwane e khotš^ěe,

E rora, e duma, e lle digoba tš^ěa motho."

(Seriti sa Thabantsho: p. 34)

iii. and frequent use of linkage that abound in the whole composition linking ideas together through repetition of words, concepts and/or word groups from line to line, thus:

"Ke nna Sekwati: sa Mmaboforohlo,

Sekwatakwatiš^ěa motho botlakala.

Ke Sekwati sehlwa le ngwanana ntlong,

E le maano a go ja tatago ngwanana.

(Seriti sa Thabantsho: p. 12)

It was during this period that stretches from about the late 50's to about the early sixties that authors began to adapt techniques of praise poetry to their every-day experiences. Various heroes in educational spheres were lauded in this new praise poetry. Very impressive adaptations are exemplified by amongst others the laudations of M.S. Madiba's "Mafakudu" which refers to John Latimer Fuller, thus:

"A itlhaka koma Gauteng morw'a Fuller

A epa sediba sa thuto, senwewakebotlhe,

A fatela bona bana ba mosadi e moso.

O rile a bona se sa ba kgodiš^ěe

A tlo fata sedibana Setotolwane;

Sa thoma nka se a tshotshoma,
Morago sa fihla ka maribana.

(Mahlontebe, v: p. 43)

2.2.3 E.M. RAMOKGOPA (1955)

Praise poetry is characteristic of Africans. In most cases, praises are recited for the warriors who have gone to battle and proved their valorous worth. Praises could be recited in praise of chiefs, cattle, clan, mountains, etc.

In praise poetry it is not customary for one to praise oneself, although a person such as a warrior could stand up and praise himself amidst the cheering and the ululations. Ramokgopa in his poetry book MOFOLLETŠI, writes more on praise poetry. His poetry is characterised by the theme of heroism with a highly descriptive and highly figurative language with similes, metaphors, repetitions, etc. Let us consider the example below from his poem "Kgoši Mmamafa Ramokgopa I (Ramotlhale Peter)".

"Ke Piti wa go pitimetša batho,
O tšwele Maubeng a ba peputše
Batlokwa ke mašeka,
Ba mo meletše meno a godimo
Ba fetogile ka moka Mabjaneng."
(Sešegotheto 1989, p. 52)

"He is Peter, one who tumbles down other people
He come from Maubeng carrying his people on his back,
The Batlokwa people are cannibals
They have turned against him
They have all changed at Mabjaneng."

From the above we realise that Ramokgopa praises his chief, Kgoši Mmamafa Ramokgopa I. Kgoši Mmamafa has saved his people from a tribe called "Mauba" and took them to Botlokwa.

Pretorius, W.J. in his article says: The praise poem was not a universal art creation, but a pure form of national art, and its meaning and significance are to a great extent limited to a specific nation and to a specific milieu.

The above poem was dedicated to a real-life hero. The poem is characterised by certain allusions which refer to realities and events in the life of the praised person. Although a fictitious adaptation of genuine events has been done an element of reality is still prevalent. (S.Afr. J. Afr. Lang: 1990: 10(3))

The above lines show the bravery of Chief Mmamafa Ramokgopa I, and how he protected his people from the enemies; but the very people he protected and saved, turned against him. He goes on to say:

"Go fetogile le bana ba dikgadi,
Ba apa le go mo loma
Mohlana o peputše dira Matome -"

"His sister's children also turned against him
They talk about biting him (meaning killing)
In his back he carried his enemies -"

In his other poem called Setumola Morena (Theodore, Kgoši Masedi Ramokgopa III. Ntwa ya 1914 - 1918) Ramokgopa praises Chief Masedi Ramokgopa III. Here we are told about his military abilities. Let us examine the following lines:

"Eeeuu ...! Agee Setumo a Morena,
Gohlegohle, ba a mo tseba
O tsebja ke makgowa a Engelane.

(Sešegotheto 1989 p. 54)

"Thank you Setumo; the most respected,
 You are well known from all over
 And also by the White people from England.

Chief Masedi Ramokgopa was in the first World War in 1914 and was able to go to England and France during this period. The lines below consist of the identification of the praised hero by means of praise names. They again elaborate on and qualify the information given above. As the poem develops, it gives further information of the praised hero and also includes certain actions performed by the hero and suggest the actions in which the hero was personally involved. Let us examine the lines below:

"Nka Mošwešwe le Mmangwato ba nyogile?
 Tlou ya nakalegolo, Maphetša a Ramokgopa
 O pheditše ka sekepe, a nyoga!
 A kitimela ntwā ...
 Ge a ekwa Fora mekgoši e lla -"
 (p. 56)

"Why is it, that Mošwešwe and Mmangwato went overseas?
 The elephant with a big horn, Maphetša a Ramokgopa
 He crossed the big sea -
 Rushing to war ...
 When he heard that French was in trouble!"

In the above lines the author portrays a true incident in the life of the hero, appreciating his military abilities. The hero went over to France, to join the soldiers in the first World War of 1914 - 1918. Ramokgopa wrote more on praise poetry and his theme is heroism.

2.2.4 J. LEPHAKA AND J. KHAAS (1956)

Praises of common objects and animals were also coined during this transitional period. Let us take the example from "Ka

emaema ka reta dibata" by J. Lephaka "Maru" clouds:

"Ke sepipimpi sepipa molomo 'pi',
Se pipile mmakwele seremong.

Ke meetse 'a noka tše kgolo go ratana go etalana,
Ke dirwalwakemoya dithibaetša sa dinaledi."

(Sešegotheto p. 61)

"It is an unknown secret,
It is also unknown to the birds.
It is water from the big rivers which love to visit each
other,
It is carried by air and covers the stars.

Lephaka is telling us about the mystery of the clouds, that is, how clouds form and how rain comes about. He goes further and say:

"Ke meetse ke mong wa meetse legoleng,
Go sego rena pula o ka e bona kae?
E hupile ke rena maleng a matelele,
Mola dimela ka moka di lebeletše godimo -"

(Sešegotheto p. 61)

"I am water and the owner of water in the land
Without us where can you get the rain from?
It is contained within us very far,
While all plants are looking up on us."

In the other poem he praises water thus:

"Ke nna meetsefula a bokgomo,
Sera mathaba ka mpa go khora."

(Sešegotheto p. 62)

"I am the floods of the cattle
The enemy that becomes happy when satisfied with food."

The author gives us the importance of water and that every living organism needs water. Water can also be dangerous, it can kill the very organism through floods or otherwise.

There is also a poem on war:

"Ke ntwana ngwana' mosadi yo moso!,
Yo ba rego ka botse o phala le lešela.
Ke nna moneanyi ke a bešeletša,
Bagale ba fetšana ka marumo ke širetše."
(Sešegotheto p. 63)

"I am the child of a black witch woman
Whom they say, she is more beautiful than a piece of material
I am an instigator, I incite people into action.
The heroes kill each other with assegais while I
remain invisible.

From the above verses we observe that praises of objects come into being as evidence in J. Lephaka's "Maru", "Meetse" and "Ntwa". We also find praises of heroes in his other book "Kongkong". The poem is Pholokgolo.

"Ke nna Pholokgolo seala sa hlolo,
Ngwana' Mopedi ke tšhaba ke apere mahlare.
Ke Pompa morwa' mohlanka, yo ba rego:
Ga ke gate tema ke se mpara, ke upa nonyana."
(Sešegotheto p. 58)

J.H. Khaas in his poetry book called KHUNGWANE, we find praises of animals. "Mokoko" is an example of this praise poetry:

"Makgethe a wona a dumiša bohle,
Wa raga dithole mokoko o moso,

Wa raga maphego mokoko o moso
Wa kona molala o itheta phaswa.

(Khungwane 1956 p. 44)

The poems were usually stiff and formal making use of stereotype metaphors, similes, idiophones, etc. but they revealed that Northern Sotho speaking people were capable of poetically rich language to express their ideas.

Some poems had morals to teach while others were descriptive, describing objects to reveal their origin, use and advantages or disadvantages, beauty or destruction, etc. as exemplified by J.H. Khaas "Kgobadi ya nyedimane", thus:

"Ke kgobadi ya nyedimane
La ema sogana le le sese
'Sekeletone' selo sa marapo,
A lebana le Phampha bodiba
Ba ntšhana bobete, ba ntšhana mereba,
E fela ella ya mahlola
Sono, kgobadi ya nyedimane."

(Khungwane 1956 p. 47)

Looked at very closely, the above collections reveal one important feature that while the form of poetry still remained traditional, the content deviated. The poets here were concerned with life and its difficulties and its inexplicabilities.

The language used in this poetry is that of a praise poetry with its declamatory tone and unlimited metaphorisation. In these collections the authors tackled a variety of topics of special interest particularly to scholars.

2.2.5 PERIOD 1960 TO 1969

We now enter the period starting from about the sixties upwards. This period is the so-called the period of modern poetry, especially from the late 60's to date. This poetry is characterised by poems with definite stanzas, similes, bearing the stamp of the author, have diverse themes such as love solitude, happiness, etc. with an expressive language abounding with rhyme and rhythm and with most poems expressing the language at heart.

Numerous creative poets emerged during this period in the Northern Sotho poetry. The incentive must have come about from the demands made by schools, which at the time had increased manifold in number. Some of the works were written of course, with the aim of making money and thus allowing a lot of chuff to be let into our educational establishments. It is these works that would later not survive the strict literary test. Other works were however, produced with no ulterior motive of gain and these were proved to be very valuable in the long run. Under this period we shall discuss the following poets:-

S.R. Machaka

N.M. Fela

M. Bopape

S. Ratlabala

O.K. Matsepe

2.2.6 S.R. MACHAKA (1960)

In the 60's as Mashabela says, there was an appreciable shift in content from the concrete to the intangible, while the language maintained the same declamatory tone with unlimited metaphor.

Serudu says, Machaka in most of his poetry books, discusses various aspects of life. He depicts human frivolities, greed and sheer trickery. However, he never forgets to include a poem in praise of God in his anthologies. For it seems he believes that nothing can go well in this World without the help of God. This love and trust in God reflected in one of his poetry books called "Seedi" (1979).

His love for his people and home is shown in the poems in which he praises his home district. Other poems deal with family life and the relationship between man and man. (Article on North Sotho Book Review) (p. 126)

The love for people and home is shown in the poems which he praises his home and district. This is reflected in the following poem: Kgaragara:-

"Re a go lotšha wena Thobela Morena
 Re loba wena mongmabu a Diaparankwe.
 O letšatši wena morwa' Puledi Masenyane,
 Gobane mo go gatilego, wena, re bone seedi,
 Gape O boletše wa theeletšwa gohlelegohle.
 Ruri re nyakile go hwa re sešo ra bona!"
 (Mehlodi ya Polelo 1960)

"We greet you the most respected (Thobela Morena)
 We hail you the owner of the land - the Chief.
 You are the sun, You son of Puledi Masenyane
 For where you pass we see light,
 You talked and were listened to by all.
 Really, we nearly died before we saw wonders!"

Kgaragara is one of the high schools at Botlokwa. He praises the school in his district, and he says:- "Kgaragara o ba ngwathetše tsholo ya dithuto", meaning Kgaragara gave the people of Botlokwa the most precious thing meaning education.

In the same poetry book we find the love poem "Phuti", he says:-

"Ruri Phuti o nkgomaretšē mo moyeng!
 Yo a nkganelago le Phuti ke mmolai wa ka,
 O nthibela ke enwa meetse a lerato,
 O ntšupa sedibeng sa meetsematapa.
 Lerato la Phuti le ntateditšē molala."

"Truly; Phuti you stick to my soul
 He who refuses with you is a killer,
 He refuses me to drink the water of love;
 He shows me a well with tasteless water
 Phuti's love winds around my neck."

2.2.7 NATHANIEL MATOME FELA (1961)

Matome Fela is a musician, composer, actor and a writer. He took part in several plays, for example: The meeting at the station by J. Baker. The comedy of errors by Shakespeare, The Magic garden by D. Swanson. The song of Africa at Killarney Studio, etc. He was also a dancer, thus, music and poetry formed a very important part of his life. His first poetry book "Sebilwane" was published in 1961.

Fela is one of the creative poets which emerged during this period in the development of Northern Sotho poetry. Sebilwane is a narrative poem telling us a story about the people of Mokutu. These people were attacked by the enemies during a very quiet night while the old women were at "Boitshebong" Maternity room, helping the chief's wife, Mmamorati who was in labour for her first child. The people of the village were expecting a baby boy, who was supposed to be a future chief of the tribe. Unfortunately she bore a baby girl "Sebila" taboo. At the same time there was another woman in the same village who was also in labour. This woman called Mmamothoi gave birth to a baby boy.

Mmakgoši, the mother of the chief instructed the women to exchange the babies for it was taboo for the chief's wife to start with a baby girl. This was again done to save the baby girl, because she would be killed. She was taken as an object portending evil. During the process of exchange the enemies attacked the village. The women carrying Mmamothai's baby boy were killed together with the baby. All the people of the village were killed with the exception of Mmamorati, her baby girl and Letlakadumo, Mmamorati's uncle and chief's Counsellor and the two dogs Tilu and Mpaka.

The narrative in the poem often refers to an event in the past in which the praised one was either directly or indirectly involved. The poem is characterised by an interaction between the narrative and the descriptive. Let us now see how Matome Fela describes the night when the Mokutu tribe was attacked by the enemies: (Pretorius 1989: 63)

"Go rile tu ... u ... u ... u ...
 Go rile tu ... u ... u ... u ...
 Le tšhohlo-tšhohlo ya ditšhipa e homotše,
 Tšhohlo-tšhohlo ya bo matsoma-bošego ka moka,
 Bo matsoma-bošego bophukubje ramahlale-hlale."
 (Sebilwane 1961 p. 1)

The above lines show an ideophonic representation of footsteps of the springbucks, jackals, snakes, lizards, etc., that there was none of such sounds or footsteps on that very night. He further says:

"Le diphauhau tša batsomi ba magotlo
 Bohii-hii ... ba mahlo - magolo;
 Le dintswiri-tswiri tša didula mekoting
 Le diphuri-šwahlaa tša digwagwa ...
 Ka moka di rile tu ... u ... u ... u ...!
 (Sebilwane p. 1)

Matome describes the quiet, fearful night with suitable ideophones to represent the sounds made by owls, crickets, frogs, etc. He also uses figurative language and imagery which enable him to express his thoughts vividly and concisely. His poetry appeals more to the reader's sense of hearing than to sight. His poem has a pattern of rhythm which is created by the regular length of certain syllables in the lines of verse. This is enhanced by the use of rhyme which is often a feature of poetry.

Most poetry is an apprehension of wonders of creation, the meaning of life, and the expression of the network of human emotions. It has the task of communicating a simple story of a highly complicated one involving a variety of interacting human emotions; an intense response to beauty in nature or in art ... a significant idea with its implication for the future of mankind.

This task of communicating intense feelings or some profound thoughts on life through creating some experience, is not an end in itself it aims at soliciting response of some kind - sensual, emotional, intellectual - from the reader. So, the success of poetry lies in its ability to communicate. It lies in its expressive capabilities.

The poet expresses himself through language only, and so it means he has to take most out of the expressive power of words in order to be effective. It also brings us to the discussion of imagery, which constitutes much of the language of poetry.

Imagery involves presenting or describing one object or concept in terms of another by drawing similarities between the two; it also involves the use of figurative language to create images or pictures that can appeal to the reader's five senses. Matome puts it this way:

"A emiša hlogo bjaka phuti,
 Ge e be e re ea potuma,
 Ya kwa dikotana di thokgega,
 Goba ya kwa šwahlašwahla mahlareng a omilego,
 E ke ke tau ge e nanaretša ..."
 (Sebilwane p. 20)

Matome compares Mmamorati with the Springbuck. This comparison is explicitly announced by the conjunctive "bjaka" "like". The description in the above lines reveals the way Mmamorati was frightened by the situation in which she found herself. When Mmamorati got up, the village was in a terrible state, walls were broken, houses burnt and the whole place was full of smoke. The writer says: She got up like a springbuck which was about to sleep and was disturbed by the footsteps of a lion walking slowly and stealthily on dry branches and dry leaves. As she was standing not knowing what to do, she thought of kneeling down and talk to her "gods".

"Mpontšheng sešupo badimo bešo,
 Sešupo sa gore le a mpona, le a nkwa ...
 Ge le sa mpontšhe,
 Nka ya kae?
 Ka yo dirang?
 Ke ye le mang?
 Ke ye bjang?
 Ke ye neng?
 (Sebilwane p. 20)

These questions were directed to the "gods", asking them to reveal the mystery to her, and to show her signs that they hear her plea. If they do not answer her, where will she go? to do what? and with whom? how would she go there and when? She continued her search as she walked towards the mountain, she discovered her uncle, Letlakaduma covered by rocks and dead bodies. She pulled him out saying:

"Badimo bešo, mo feng maatla;
 Badimo bešo fang motho yo maatla."
 (Sabilwane p. 22)

According to Matome Fela the people had no power, all the power came from the gods, thus she was able to pull him out and cleaned his eyes that he may see. Letlakaduma was very grateful to Mmamorati.

Unfortunately Letlakaduma could not make it, but before he died he said to Mmamorati:

"Tšea lepe sa ka, tšea thebele ya mošate,
 Tšea thebele o ye le naga."

"Take my axe, take a bag of divining bones
 with traditional medicines of the king's kraal
 Take it and go through the land ..."

Matome Fela ends the narrative poem by saying:

"Tilu pele, mosadi le ngwana ka mohlana,
 Mphaka morago ... Ba metšwa ke bošego ...
 Ba ile ... le bona ba ile ...!"

Where have they gone to? Are they dead or gone to a new country to start life again?

Tilu and Mphaka are the names of the dogs that helped Mmamorati to go through the land.

2.2.8 BOPAPE AND S. RATLABALA (1967)

Bopape and Ratlabala in their poetry book called "Ithute Direto" took a different line from other poets like Machaka, Ramokgopa and others, who mainly concentrated on praises of chiefs, heroes

and other objects. Their approach is quite different. They are very observant and imaginative poets. They write on the happenings that take place in their environment. Their stanzas are not equal and are controlled by thoughts and ideas of the poets. Let us look at the following lines from the poem "Tumo" (page. 113).

"Ke bona gore
Go fihlile mo
E ka rego
O tla ntšuhlela motse
Ke tšhetše molemo wola
Gore o šute wena."

(Sešegotheto 1989: p. 113)

"I think you
have reached
the piont where
You are breaking my family
I have given you that medicine
So that, you may vanish."

This poem tells us about a man called Molemogi, his wife Mmamolemogi and his concubine Mmatumo. Mmatumo became jealous of Mmamolemogi and gave Molemogi poison to kill his wife. Molemogi told his wife to invite Mmatumo and that poison was given to Mmatumo and she died. Thus the poet says:

"A apea bja lelabo,
Bjo bošwana bja lereneke
Mphaga wa go kgerekgetša
Wa šiišwa makgopa.
A mo thotha ka dijo
Tše bose le matsaka."

(p. 113)

"She cooked porridge
 White and appetizing
 A hen laying eggs
 Was killed and it left the eggs
 She killed her with
 Very tasty and good food."

Bopape and Ratlabla give us a good picture of a marriage with problems caused by one partner who was not faithful to the other partner. These are some of the happenings that took place in the environment of the poets. These are references to actual incidents or facts based on personal experiences of the poets.

These poets are able to express very deep thoughts through the use of well chosen words. In one of their poems 'Moratiwa wa ka' (my loved one) they say:

"Ke gosasa
 Phoka e wele,
 Dinoka di a ela.
 Go kwala melodi ya dinonyana.
 Botala bja bjang
 Phefšana e a foka."

(Sešegotheto p. 115)

Unlike traditional poems which praised animals and other nature phenomena, nature elements are exploited by these poets as a medium of thought. They use images of nature phenomena to reflect about life (Pretorius 1989: 89). Nature is applied to intimate or to reflect and it is not merely described. Bopape and Ratlabala compare love with dew which falls on the grass or plants and moisten the soil; with flowing water in the river; with sounds made by birds; with green grass and morning breeze. All these things are full of life, they do good to the human being; they all resemble love. Northern Sotho poetry reached

the modern phase with the publication of M. Bopape S. Ratlabala's Ithute direto.

Even in this collection there is often a return to the semi-traditional or even to the purely traditional.

2.2.9 O.K. MATSEPE (1968 AND 1969)

P.H.B. Mashabela says: Matsepe's poetry is in essence a poetry of censure. Social and moral improprieties are chided. In all his poetry, social censure, religious concepts and assessment of Nature there is always a vein of censure. That he is an innovator is quite evident.

Matsepe's poetry is vast and varied. To understand it better it will be divided into thematic fields: praise poetry, social censure, religion and nature, we could then add to his mode of expression. (The outline survey of O.K. Matsepe, p. 36)

Pretorius (1989) sees Matsepe as a man who lived in two worlds: that of Western civilization with dregs of traditional life and that of traditional life with a tinge of civilisation. These two induced in him a yearning for the third world: that of untainted traditional life. It was the life of the Kopa people in the misty past that he chose, to reveal life as it then was, reflecting also as it is now, and how he wishes it to be in the future.

Matsepe in his six collections, Kgotla o mone (1968)

- Molodi wa thaga (1968)
- Todi ya dinose (1968)
- Kwela-pele (1969)
- Molodi wa mogami (1969) and
- Phalafala ya koma (1970)

was to take up what became pronounced with the publication of P.M. Mamogobo's Leduleputswa (1953).

There are many poems in these collections whose common characteristic is the use of the formal exclamation "Kgomo e a tshwa!" (The cow bellows) and the response to it: "E gangwa ke mang?" (Who milks it?) The lexical meaning is very controversial. There are two propositions relating to its meaning. The first is based on the fact that the herdboys are also acquainted with the lowing of their cows that they identify them easily thereby. Then there is the practice of showering praises on each lowing cow or bellowing bull. This practice gives the herdboys a good exercise in reciting praise poems to their cattle. It again give rise to the practice of competing in reciting these praise poems. The second propounds the theory that the stem - tshwa (to spit) is a poetic corruption of - swa (to burn). To get more insight into this category we shall view some of Matsepe's praise poems: Ntlhakodišeng (help me) "Kwela-pele"

"Kgomo e a tšha!

E gangwa ke mang?

E gangwa ke mang ge e se Ntlhakodišeng -

Batho ka moka ba dikile nna fela -

Go thwe Ntlhakodišeng o re o hlalefile.

O tloge a nyaka go hlalefetša marena."

(Kwela-pele 1969 p. 34)

"The cow is burning!

Who milks it?

Who milks it; if not Ntlhakodišeng

All people are against me

It is said Ntlhakodišeng thinks he is more intelligent

He is even prepared to cheat the chiefs."

This poem tells us about a hero, who calls himself Ntlhakodišeng. He is an intelligent man and people hate him. They are jealous of him and say he thinks he is very intelligent, he is greedy and wants to have everything for himself.

Ntlhakodišeng then says:

"Mohlodi wa lehloyo ke o tlwaetše,
Ke tla se o tlwaele bjang ba ntšhupa ka monwana,
Ba re ge a ilale o hloma nke o hlalefile -"
(Kwela-pele p. 34)

"I am used to people being jealous of me
(I am used to people showing some resentment to me)
How can I not be used to it while they point fingers at me,"

Ntlhakodišeng had no parents and was the only child of that family. People were against him and said many things about him. He felt bad about the illtreatment they gave him and said:

"Ntlhakodišeng ka go ntesetša bana bešu
Ke tswetšwe ke nnoši ebile ga ke tshwenyega."
(Kwela-pele p. 35)

"Help me by doing away with me my people,
I was born alone and I am not worried."

Let us examine another modern praise poem in Molodi wa thaga (1968) by the same writer:

"TSEMIŠI"

"Kgomo e a tshwa!
E gangwa ke mang?
E gangwa ke nna Tsemiši wa masogana

Yoo molamo wa gagwe o tsemišitše tholo ka dinaka
Kua sethokgweng sa maganagobušwa ..."

(Molodi wa Mogami 1968: p. 10)

This poem is also characterised by the formal exclamation as mentioned above. He knocked down an antelope (kudu) with a kierrie, in the forest of Maganagobušwa, which was infested with lions. He is fearless, and notwithstanding his slender stature, is not idle to challenge the robust.

It will be noted that Ntlhakodišeng and Tsemisi are themselves narrators of their episodes. In the traditional society honour is given to people who excel in the field of hunting and the battlefield. Tsemiši's field of glory was that of hunting while Ntlhakodišeng was a gifted person, and very talented; and was praised for that.

Matsepe was the most prominent poet of this era. He went even further as to drop from his pen the English (Shakespearean) sonnet which consists of a douzain and a concluding couplet. An example of this sonnet "Go Kwena", follows:

"Ka meetseng se o se boifago wena ke eng
Ge dihlapu o di bolotša ka nose?
Ka ntle se o se boifago wena ke eng
Ge le bana ba ditlou o sa ba noše a mabose?
Komelelo e iphile maatla, meetse ke madibana,
Fao ke mo o bunago o sa tshwenyeye.
Re nwe eng gore bophelo re bo thekge?
Bojato bja gago bo swane le bja lewatele
Le hupilego diphiri le ganago go di utulla,
Mereba ya gago e swana le ya dithaba ga e kgahle,
Gobane di gana ka ditsela ge re di bula.
Mohla dinoka le madiba di pšhela sa ruri,
Tlala le tlhokakwelobohloko di tla go bolaela sa ruri,"

(Molodi wa Mogami 1969 p. 19)

The prominence of Matsepe's poetry over those of other Northern Sotho poets has created serious problems in the development of their poetry. Almost all the young poets have been influenced by his style with the exception of a few. But all the same; they do not equal Matsepe in both perception, quality and quantity.

2.3 PERIOD 1970 TO 1980

In this period we shall focus our attention on the following poets:

O.K. Matsepe
H.M. Lentsoane and
N.S. Puleng

2.3.1 O.K. MATSEPE (1970)

Matsepe continued with his most inspiring modern poems during this era. His poetry also postulates an ecology that runs through nature: one object destroys the other; one element devours the other; one creature feeds on another. This is God ordered. It is only when man tries to impose his will on this order that things go wrong. The sadism implied in "O llelang" (Phalafala ya koma 1970) is indicative of this. According to Matsepe all social and moral vices spring from violation of this order in one way or the other. This is his philosophy of life. (P.H.D. Mashabela, MA dissertation, University of the North, 1979.)

"O llelang ge ke go jele wena seenywa -
Ga o tsebe ge lebitla la gago e le molomo?
Go wela fase o bole naa o be o go tshepile -
Go ena le ge bjale mmele wa ka o o fepile?"

(Phalafala ya koma 1970 p. 51)

"Why are you crying while I ate your fruit -
 Don't you know that your grave is in the mouth?
 To fall down and rot is what you hoped for
 Rather than when you nourish my body?"

These type of poems appear almost in all his poetry books; and we again find that in many of his poems a diversity of social improprieties are attacked; to give a few examples: slothfulness, "Ge diatla le mogopolo di tšwafa".

"Ge diatla le mogopolo di tšwafa ngwanešu,
 Mogolo le leleme a di se rotofale."

(Phalafala ya koma p. 18)

"If hands and mind are slothful my brother
 The gullet and the tongue must not be active.

There are those poems which tell us about humiliation and oppression of the poor. We find a good example in Todi ya dinose: "ngongorego ya modiidi",

"Ka mpa tše pedi ba dula ba bipetšwe,
 Taong a ka mala a dula a šaletše

(Todi ya dinose 1968 p. 17)

"With two stomachs they are always constipated,
 In bed my intestines are always empty."

Matsepe's poems on religion reflect both the traditional and modern christian convictions. His attributes are: Father, Lord, King, Provider, Defender, Chastiser of evil, fount of love. These attributes he reveals in the many prayers that permeate his whole poetry.

One example of a religious poem: "A A fihle Moreneng" (Phalafala ya koma letl. 1)

"A a fihle Moreneng malebo, banabešu,
 Bo be bo tla re tsefela neng mola e se be Yena? ...
 ... široša mollong O wo O phelago sa ruri Modimo."

"Let our thanks go to our Lord, my brothers,
 How would we enjoy if it were not through Him?
 Protect us from the everlasting fire God."

We find other good examples where Matsepe does not tolerate the medicinemen who grow opulent by fraud. He also disapprove of the ineffectual ancestor worship. For example: Le be le dišitše eng? (Molodi wa Mogami p. 31).

According to Serudu Matsepe is recognised as one of the most outstanding Northern Sotho writers. This is not based on the quantity of his works but also on the quality of his works, (nine novels and six volumes of poetry). In almost all his work Matsepe shows great skill in language usage and the creation of life - like characters inhabiting a very credible world. (Albert S. Gerard 1983)

2.3.2 H.M.L. LENTSOANE (1971, 1973, 1979)

Lentsoane is one of the most observant and imaginative poets. He is able to take stock of the happenings and changes that take place in his environment. These incidents and happenings he fruitfully used them as poetic material.

Lentsoane's poems fall under the category of experimental verse, like the poems of Ratlabala. It is said that during the seventies there was a lull in the poetic activities; but Lentsoane was able to produce three volumes during this period, namely: "Direto tša mang le mang 1971", "Ga se ya lešaka le 1973" and "Mokgako 1975". The poems in these three volumes reflect Lentsoane's new approach to Northern Sotho poetry. In

"Mokgako" we find good examples of the poems which reflect his new approach: "Maphamoladikanapa" (The bag-snatcher).

"Ke ipegile motsemogolo
 Motse wa mabaibai
 Ka re ke moeng nkamogeleng
 Le šišintše hlogo tša Phatla tša mašošo
 La re Matome ikgate mohlala."

(Mokgako 1975 p. 32)

"I reported at the big city
 A city of splendour
 I said I am a visitor, receive me
 You shook your wrinkled faced heads
 And said Matome go back."

This poem gives us a picture of a man coming from the rural areas, and caught up in great desperation. The feelings of frustration are revealed by the poem. Thus the majority of them resorted to illegal means of making a livelihood. He goes on to say:

"Ke ile tau e ja mohlololwa
 Ka rutlologa bothong."

"I said the lion preys on the unfortunate
 I shed off humaneness."

"Ka ipeletša bophoofolong"

"I became barbaric"

(Mokgako p. 32)

Matome shows frustration, he casts off his human nature and assumed the nature of an animal, he takes the law into his own

hands. Lentsoane has presented the facts as he observed them, this is the question of influx control.

In his other poem: "Bahlatswadiaparo" Lentsoane gives us a picture of Washerwomen's lot in our big cities. He expresses his feelings by comparing the strugglers who fend for their young ones with the well - to-do people, thus he says:

"Moo ba bangwe ba kwakwaletšego ditulong
 Ba lokišwa meriri
 Bangwe ba bolaile ke dithai.
 Go tšhitšhila basadi,
 Ba teka teka mebileng,
 Dihlogong ba swaraletše thaba ya diaparo."
 (Mokgako p. 36)

"Where others recline in comfortable chairs
 Being plaited their hairs
 Others with their ties on.
 Women stagger and wobble in the streets
 With heaps of clothing on their heads."

Lentsoane is able to draw a vivid picture of the washerwomen using well selected words and apt imagery. He is making a contrast between these women and other women of a higher "class". This contrast is brought by the phrases: "ba kwakwaletše ditulong" and "go tšhitšhila basadi".

Lentsoane maintains that the efforts of these washerwomen are not in vain. Like their counter-parts they are able to give their children not only food but also education which is necessary in modern life. He says:

"Bommamerwalo ga le merwalo
 Le a rwala bophelong,

Bommadithoto ba Soweto, re le rolela dikuane,
 Re itiantšha matolo ga re le bona

Gobane matsogong a lena go tšwele dinaledi
 Go sa tla tšwa mahlasedi."

(Mokgako p. 36)

"Load-carriers you are not a burden
 You carry throughout your lives
 Goods-carriers of Soweto, we take off
 our hats for you
 We kneel down on our knees
 Because from your toil with your
 hands, came out stars
 Sunbeams will still emerge."

The words dinaledi (stars) and mahlasedi (sunbeams) are symbolic of the achievements that the children of these women attain. This shows that Lentsoane was very observant and was able to take stock of the happenings in his environment. And indeed, these poor washerwomen were able to produce leaders of tomorrow.

Serudu says: Lentsoane has therefore, lifted Northern Sotho poetry from its subjective nature to the most objective. A beginning of such poetry was made in the early fifties by Mamogobo in this book Leduleputswa. He further quotes M.O. Okogie of Nigeria in his book "Songs of Africa" and says: Africa has much native custom and culture which lends itself to imaginative poetry. In other words, the African poet need not go far to draw aspiration for his poetry. In one of his poems, "there is love in Plaiting" he describes the beauty of Nigerian women.

Lentsoane is therefore, no exception. In his poem, "Barwedi ba Africa" (Daughters of Africa). Although Lentsoane appreciates and admires their beauty, he is also perturbed by certain

peculiar traits in their personalities.

"Boswana ke bja Afrika
 Bja Amerika bo tšwa Africa
 Go tloga Egepeta go fihla Kapa
 Go tloga Tanzania go fihla Zaire
 Go nkgwa boswana fela mmala wa Afrika."

"Blackness is of Africa
 that of America comes from Africa
 From Egypt to the Cape
 From Tanzania to Zaire
 It is all blackness, the colour of Africa."

In the last verses of this poetry, Lentsoane is worried by the behaviour and mode of dress by some of the black women. He says:

"Go tšwele bo Yvonne le bo Sara
 Melomo nka ba gamotše bobete
 Ba ronwa wa mafelelo."
 (Mokgako p. 40)

"Then came Yvonne, Sara and company
 With red lips, as if they drank blood
 Being extremely clumsy."

In his poetry book "direto tša mang le mang (1971)", we also find modern poems like those we have just discussed. Poems like "Yunibesithi ya Leboa, Gagešo ga Marišane, Apollo ya lesome - tee (Apollo 11).

In his narrative poem "Ga se ya lešaka le (1973)", Lentsoane tells us a story of a man called Marabe, who went to the cities to work and came back after a very long time, his mother was very old using a walkingstick and semi-blind. He married a woman with

a child, he said "Ke tla e gapa le namane" (I will take it with its calf) meaning I will marry her with the child.

He agreed to pay lobola for the mother and child, but a few years thereafter, he changed his mind and said: "Ga se ya lešaka le", (It is not of this kraal). The trouble started and child called Kgotlelelo (Perseverance) lived under a very difficult situation.

Lentsoane has made a very good contribution to the Northern Sotho poetry. Through the use of well selected words, he managed to bring his thoughts and ideas in vivid images. Serudu referred to his approach as a new trend, and it is in actual fact a continuation and improvement on what was started earlier by Mamogobo.

B.N. Tseke, S. Ratlabala and N.S. Puleng also made good contributions during this period.

2.3.3 B.N. TSEKE (1978)

Tseke is one of those poets who makes use of well chosen words to express his thoughts. In one of his works "Therešo ke ya mang?", he made an effective use of figures of speech, imagery and other poetic devices. Let us look into the following examples: "Go Moratiwa" (To my love) and "Maswi a kgomo tša Moshweshwe".

Go Moratiwa

"Mphe nakapedi tsa hlogo ke go adime tladimolomo,
Tse bohlokwa o gamole meale a molomo wa ka.

(Therešo ke ya mang? letl. 1)

"Kiss me and I will also kiss you
What is important to you is to take the advice from my
mouth."

Tseke associates ears with horns, this brings a sense of tenderness and love.

Maswi a kgomo tsa Moshweshwe

"Ke go bone pitšeng tše kgolo o tlakaletše,
Tlhwatlhwadi o tlhwatlhwameletše bothakga."

(Therešo ke ya mang? 1978 p. 4)

"I saw you spell-bound in the big pots
The fermenting and bubbling beer bringing happiness."

The sound tlhwatlhwadi o thlwatlhwa, is made by the bubbles coming from the beer. Maswi a kgomo tša Moshweshwe means beer. He compares beer with milk.

2.3.4 S. RATLABALA (1979)

Ratlabala produced one of the most stimulating poetry in Northern Sotho. He expresses his philosophy of life. His work shows an intensive desire or a longing for productivity, but unfortunately he fell ill and was admitted to Weskoppies Mental Hospital, and thus, he was incapacitated to continue with his work. This becomes clear in his poetry book "Ditsinkelo tša sereti" (Thoughts of a poet). He says:

"Le ge ke golofetše,
Fela ke le tšoba
Le bego le sa thunya,
La ripša pele
Le ntšha peu."

(Ditsinkelo tša Sereti 1977 p. 1)

"Although I am handicapped
I am a flower
Which was still blooming
and was cut before
It produced seeds."

These lines are full of meaning. We get the reflection that this man realises his short-comings in life and that these short-comings are beyond his control.

In the poem "Bofelong bja matsatsi aka" (At the end of my days) Ratlabala expresses a very sad and yet hopeful note of humanity.

"Ke tla tsena Elisiamo
 Ke opela 'Alleluya'
 Ka lethabo le legolo.
 Kgare ya bophelo bjaka
 E nkemetše gae ga ka
 Ka ge ke bunne
 Puno ya leeto la ka.
 (p. 51)

"I will enter Elisium
 Singing 'Alleluya'
 With great joy
 the crown of my life
 Is waiting for me at my home
 Since I have gathered
 The harvest of my journey."

Serudu says: Ratlabala's greatest desire in life is to leave literary works which will be a heritage to the next generation. What particularly makes Ratlabala's poetry most touching and thought provoking is the fact that it reflects his mental inability as well as his awareness of the fact that illness has deprived him of becoming one of the most renowned poets in Northern Sotho literature in particular.

2.3.5 N.S. PULENG (1980)

Puleng's poetry is interesting. His first book is "Ditlalemeso" which was published in 1980. Puleng covers several themes in his

works, like religion, education, witchcraft and superstition, hypocrisy, death, corruption and bribery and other social evils. He has got a lot of imagery in his poetry. The influence of P. Mamogobo and Matsepe has been great in Puleng's poetry. In ditlalemeso Puleng starts by mourning Matsepe, he says:

"O be a le ntshe monna wa banna,
 Lerumo la gagwe la pene le bogale
 Legadima bjalo ka legadima;
 Mogale wa bagale polelong
 Senatla sa 'gaKopa
 Mohu Oliver Kgamedi Matsepe.

(Ditlalemeso 1980 p. 1)

"There was once a man of men
 His spear was a sharp pen
 Glittering like lightening
 A hero of heroes in the language
 The powerful man of the Kopas
 The late Oliver Kgamedi Matsepe."

Puleng expresses his sadness at the death and/or loss of Matsepe. Matsepe died in the prime of his life while he was blooming like a flower as Ratlabala says. He was still going to produce more work in Northern Sotho, as he was one of the best writers in our literature in particular. He has also left literary work which will be a heritage to the new generation.

Development in literature could never be real without the use of systemic approach, because language is a system. Literature is viewed as a complex whole or unity of systems which are inconstant process of influencing and affecting one another. Therefore the relationship between the systems finds itself in a state of change, depending on, and brought about by the values or norms dominating literature and in a specific period.

CHAPTER 3

THEMES COVERED BY NORTHERN SOTHO POETS

3. INTRODUCTION

Theme is what is called the governing idea implicating the original situation of conflict that becomes, in the end, the meaning of the whole. (Brooks et al 1967: 15)

Pretorius and Swart (1982: 4) see theme as: "The interpretation of life as conveyed by the story."

Hees and Lawton (1983: 97) maintain that theme is the central idea, the basic issue with which the poet, novelist or playwright is concerned, and on which he comments through the medium of story.

Perrine (1978: 103) is of the same opinion as the above authors when he says: "The theme of the work, poetry or fiction is its controlling idea or its central insight. It is the unifying generalisation about life stated or implied by the story. To derive the theme of the story we must ask what its central purpose is: What view of life it supports or what insight into life it reveals"

According to Smuts (1979: 35) theme is more often used with reference to the core of a literary work as far as its content is concerned; in such a way that it also includes the idea contained in the work.

In the light of the above definitions, I think theme is what the author has in mind when writing poetry, play or novel. It is the

central idea with which the poet or playwright is concerned and on which he comments.

Themes of the various poets from 1950 - 1980 will be discussed in this Chapter. Themes will be grouped into three periods according to the times of the various poets.

That is: Period 1950 to 1959

Period 1960 to 1969

Period 1970 to 1980

3.1 THEMES - PERIOD 1950 TO 1959

Mashabela (1982) points out that Northern Sotho poetry falls roughly into two categories, the traditional and non-traditional. The former consists of the oral praise poetry lauding heroic deeds of men in battles, hunting expeditions and casual encounters with beast of prey. This poetry was handed down from generation to generation through constant recital at family, clan or tribal gatherings, forming the most important record of heroes, lineage and national history; very little of this poetry has found its way into Northern Sotho written literature.

The non-traditional phase appears with the adaptation of traditional poetry to current needs. Poetry for school needs had to be found. Objects in the environment were made to laud their importance, revealing their origin, shape and uses, in the manner of the old.

The themes in general will include: Heroism, Eulogues, Social and Moral patterns, Nature and Natural phenomenon, Religious Aspects and Protest poems.

3.1.1 HEROISM

Heroism is the central theme of the traditional praise poems. Most of these poems are of a combatant nature. Motifs are inspired by war.

The subjects of these poems are usually chiefs who are praised. Heroes (bagale) who have distinguished themselves on the battle field are also praised.

According to Pretorius (1989) Ramaila in his poetry book, Seriti sa Thabantsho (1959) has made a good collection from various tribes or clans found in the Northern Sotho speaking areas of the Transvaal. The poem "Kgoši Mampuru" is one of the traditional creations already recorded in 1954 by E.M. Ramaila and later included in his volume of poetry "Seriti sa Thabantsho (1959)". He says:

"Ke nna mašišimale a gabo Mošiane.
Tlou ya manaka ke eme Marutle gabo Lekgolane."
(Seriti sa Thabantsho letl. 16)

"I am the adamant of the place Mošiane
elephant of Mabasa,
Elephant bull, I stand at Marutle, place of Lekgolane."

This praise poem "Kgoši Mampuru" was dedicated to a real-life hero. Therefore the poem is characterised by certain allusions which refer to realities and events in the life of the praised one. Although a fictitious adaptation of genuine events has been done an element of reality is still prevalent. He goes on to say:

"Gale borangwane le fetošā batho batseta
Ge le tšea boSebape morwa Mmakhudu la etišā pele."

"By the way, uncles, turn people into peasants,
When you moved people like Sebape, the son
of Mmakhudu to the front."

In these lines the uncle of the praised one is accused of neglecting the people of the praised. Ordinary people have been elevated to nobility. The chief, therefore, has been excluded, while ordinary people like Sebape, the son of Mmakhudu, have taken the front seat. In spite of this malpractice, Mampuru becomes an honoured chief who remains unyielding.

Sometimes the narrator seems to enter into the poem and addresses the praised one directly or addresses an imaginary audience. If the person praises himself, he may also address the audience.

Sometimes the narrator identifies with the circumstances he describes. Most stanzas in this poem start with a reintroduction or a further identification of the praised person, by means of praised names. He says:

"Ke nna mašišimale ...
Ke sekitike ..."

In this poem the reader has to reconstruct history as it were, in order to place the hero's experiences in a chronological and casual context.

In the modern praise poems we find the Matsepe and Segoa poems which originated as individually written poems. These too, are distinguished by the term praise poems because they show structural links with the traditional genre and in particular thematically, they are characterised by certain praise motifs.

W.J. Pretorius (1982) says, in these poems certain literary conventions, characterizing the traditional poems are respected, although there are significant "architectural" differences -

indicating certain development tendencies in this particular genre.

The traditional praise poetry was rendered orally, and the stanzas for this type of poetry never existed. Formally it is possible, however, to distinguish stanzas according to the grouping of ideas and the breathing process which aid the sense. The written form of stanzas is therefore determined by the main ideas.

Ramokgopa (1955) wrote more on heroism themes. He praised the chiefs of the Batlokwa tribe. To give a few examples from his book "Mofolletšhi" (1955), let us examine the following examples: Kgoši Mmamafa Ramokgopa I (Ramotlhale Peter).

"Ke Piti wa go pitimetša batho
O tšwele Maubeng a ba peputše -
Batlokwa ke mašeka,
Ba mo meletše meno a godimo."

(Sešegotheto 1989 Letl. 52)

Peter is the rescuer of the Batlokwa tribe, thus he is being praised for his heroic deeds. He saved his people from their enemies, (Mauba tribe from Ga-Mphahlele). Unfortunately the very people he said turned against him; we get this from the sentence "Ba mo meletše meno a godimo".

The second poem is "Setumo 'a Morena" (Theodore; Kgoši Masedi Ramokgopa III. Ntwa ya 1914 - 18) (the 1914 - 18 war).

"Eeeuu! Agee!! Setumo a Morena,
Gohlegohle, ba a mo tseba.
O tsebja ke Makgowa a Engelane;
Lebala, naga ye tšhweu ya Botsie."

(Sešegotheto 1989 Letl. 54)

Chief Masedi Ramokgopa III went to the first World War of 1914. He is also praised for his heroic deeds. The people who come back from war are usually treated as heroes. Chief Masedi went to Europe. Thus it is said, he is known by the White people in England.

3.1.2 EULOQUES

In his work *The Heroic Poetry of the Basotho*, Kunene classifies in chapters three and four different types of praise names which are to be found in traditional poetry, namely:

Deverbative euloques

Metaphorical euloques

Regimental euloques

Descriptive euloques

Clan euloques

We also have the associative euloques, namely

Association with relatives

Association with peers

Association by genealogical reference

DEVERBATIVE EULOQUES

These are derived from verbs. The verb so used refers to an action someone has performed; and while a few of these are actions performed by persons other than the hero, as where a passive verb is used to indicate an action performed upon the hero. By far the majority of these names are passed on verbs predicating about the actions performed by the hero himself, many of which are combatant in nature. The name *Mašišimale* in the poem *Kgoši Mampuru* is derived from verb *šišimala*.

METAPHORICAL EULOQUES

These are the eulogues which identify the hero with phenomena of nature which are noted for possessing to the highest degree the qualities observed and praised in the hero. There are the usual associations here - lightning associated with speed and deadly accuracy; the lion with strength, ferocity, majesty, etc. However, the metaphorical names used of Northern Sotho heroes are mainly names of animals: Tau, Sebata, Tlou, etc. Quite often inanimate objects are also used as phenomena of comparison. In Kgoši Mampuru, the poet says: "Ke tlou ya manaka, Ke eme Marutle gabo Lekgolane".

A metaphorical eulogue is seldom used by itself. Mostly, it is followed by an associative reference relating the hero to some famous ancestor or parent or to his clan, or, in a few instances, to his place of origin. Here are a few illustrations:

Descent:

"Ke nna mašišimale a gabo Mošiane tlou a mabasa."

"I am the adamant person of the place of Mošiane, elephant of Mabasa."

Place of Origin:

"Ke mo go tlogo lethebeswane la noka a Tubatse,
Le leke la ga Mphahlele e weditše ka meetseng."

"That's me: the wave of the river of Tubatse,
The tin of Mphahlele's place it lets fall into the river."

REGIMENTAL EULOQUES

Every regiment had a name. Regiments were named in accordance with varying circumstances, the decision being quite arbitrary. Some of them acquired the circumcision name of the senior man in the age-group which, having been circumcised together, automatically constituted a regiment. The seniority of the senior man often arose from his status: for example he might be the son of the chief. But also he could simply be one who distinguished himself among the boys at the circumcision lodge, and who thus became the natural leader of the group, and so of the regiment. For example:

"Motodi: mmasakwane 'a monepe
Ke Dimo mosana 'a Marota."

DESCRIPTIVE EULOQUES

The term descriptive eulogie is used as a reference to the hero arising from some physical or moral attribute, or singular manner of dressing, of handling a spear or shield, etc. The name speaks for itself as far as moral calibre is concerned: Mogale yo mongwe wa Maroteng. (The brave one from Maroteng)

"Ke nna thololo maokeng
Mopedi a go rwala lengina la tsebe
Ke 'tlapa le kgokologa Madikabje
'Tlapa la segatlaganya motho.

(Seriti sa Thabantsho 1989 p. 17)

The physical characteristics used in praising the hero are those which distinguish him from other people, particularly those who make him look awesome or fierce, and are likely to inspire fear into his adversaries. He says:

"Segwai ke letlapa ga magatiše
 Tlapa le kgokologa thabeng
 Lentswe sekgatlaganya matswitswa
 manaba ba Mošitadi"

(Seriti sa Thabantsho p. 17)

"I am the stone that rolls from the mountain
 The stone that destroyed the Ndebeles
 The enemies from the mountain of Mošitadi"

This hero compares himself with a stone. He is very strong, the enemies fear him because he does not leave any stone unturned.

THE CLAN EULOQUE

The clan is more often named after an animal - mokwena, tlou, tau, kgomo, nare, kolobe. A hero is sometimes praised by identifying him with his clan. The hero is called by the name of that animal.

Ramaila in his work, Seriti sa Thabantsho has got more of these clan eulogues.

EULOQUES OF ASSOCIATIVE REFERENCE

a. Association with relatives

In this subsection we shall talk about lateral extending from the individual to his brothers, sisters, children, parents, uncles, wives, nephews, nieces, etc., as against genealogy which is described as vertical, since it has to do exclusively with descent. Most of the horizontal relationships are reflected, not in nouns used as names for the hero, but in phrases describing the relationship, as in the following: Ba ga Masemola

"Re ba Masemola a' Poo le Mokwene.
Bana ba nong e kgolo Matlebjane."

(Seriti sa Thabantsho p. 30)

"We are the Masemolas of the bull and Mokwene
Children of the big vulture Matlebjane."

He goes further and say:

"Ke nna 'pekwa sa Makgalwa a Borwa
Ke morwa Matule 'a Kopi."

(Seriti sa Thabantsho 1954, p. 33)

"I am the eagle of Makgalwa of south
The son of Matule of Kopi."

b. Association with peers

Often a man's praises make references of his famous companion-in-arms. The word "Thaka" is frequently used in most cases, meaning age - mate. Good examples are found in South Sotho. Thus Moshoeshe is known as:

Thak'a Shakhane le Ramakoene

Age-mate/peer of Shakhane and Ramakoene

(Heroic Poetry of the Basotho 1971, p. 48)

c. Association by genealogical reference

Genealogical references praise the hero by associating him with his progenitors. Normally a reference to one or more of the hero's ancestors, are picked at random. Mostly these references occur preceded by other eulogues of almost any description - narrative, metaphorical, descriptive, etc., as shown by many of the examples quoted above. However, there are cases, even though

not so many, of deliberate use of genealogies in their own right. A few examples are: Kgoši Mampuru -

"O re: Ke sekitike se modumo,
Ke kgomo yabo Mmaselatole,"
(Seriti sa Thabantsho 1954, p. 16)

"He says: I am the one who moves to and fro
with a mighty sound.
I am the beast of Mmaselatole."

3.1.3 SOCIAL AND MORAL PATTERNS

As it was said earlier that poetry always reflects man in various situations of life; his attitude towards nature and his fellow men do not escape the poet's eye. In every society there are deeds, inclinations and thought patterns that are regarded as appropriate, while improprieties also abound. Social and moral patterns may be divided into the following aspects:

- a. Marriage - procreation;
- b. Slothfulness - beggary and theft;
- c. Conceit, intolerance, oppression and humiliation;
- d. Gossip;
- e. Drunkenness, etc.

We got examples of this theme from the poetry books of Mamogobo and Khaas.

Mamogobo uses figures of speech to make his descriptions clear. He chooses the language that is calculated to elicit the right response from the readers; thus bringing love theme clearly.

"Pheladi yo mašwana kunutu la pelo ya ka,
Pheladi ngwanana basotho phetathaga ya pelo.
Ke go bone kae ngwanana tšhikinyamatswalo?"

Ke gahlane nago kae wena tlhogohla maikutlo?
O ntšee^šse pelo o ntlholetš^še tshwenyego."

(Leduleputswa 1953, p. 11)

The poet praises the woman he loves, that she is light in complexion, child of the Black, the most precious, she touched his heart and stirred up his feelings. The poet reveals his feelings about the woman he loves by using well selected words.

Mamogobo gives us another poem "Go Hunadi". The pattern is the same as the above poem. He says:

"Nnele bjalo ka pul 'a modupi Hunadi yomošwana,
Mpele makhur 'a monate reledi sa kgopolo tša ka."

(p. 19)

Hunadi is compared with rain and fat, culturally, rain and fat represent wealth or something good. The language is again characterised by wealth of proverbs and figures of speech to bring out the message to the people he addresses.

Khaas writes beautifully on love theme in his poetry book "Khungwane (1956)". We shall use the poem "Go Moratiwa".

"Ntle le wena phelo keng?
Ntle le wena thabo keng?
Pelong ya ka o agile;
Pelong ya ka o thakgile."

(Sešegotheto 1989, p. 72)

"Without you what is life?
Without you what is happiness?
You have a seat in my heart,
You make my heart feel good."

3.1.4 NATURE AND NATURAL PHENOMENA

Poets use images of natural phenomena to reflect about life. Nature is applied to imitate or reflect something, Lephaka (1956) wrote more on this aspect of Nature and Natural Phenomena. From his collection, "Ka emaema ka reta dibata" (1956) we have the following poems to illustrate our theme, "Maru", "Meetse" le "Ntwa".

The poem Maru is reflected under the aspect of nature as a man's friend, thus;

"Ke meetse ke mong wa meetse legoleng,
Go sego rena pula o ka e bona kae?"
(Sešegothetho 1989, p. 61)

"I am water and I own water in the land,
Without me where will you get rain from."

The poem of "Meetse" reflects nature as a man's enemy. Water is compared with floods, there are dangerous animals in the water which are a threat to the people. On the other hand water is useful to people, plants, etc. The poet warns us not to look at the bright side only, but also at the danger that the water can bring to us.

The poem "Ntwa" represents nature as man's enemy. It destroys life, therefore is a threat to society.

Matlala tells us about the importance of marriage, that in marriage the two people are made one, and that marriage is blessed by God. He goes further and say:

"Tšatšing leno bobedi bo be bongwe,
Mme le dule le kgabe go ya ka go sa feleng.
Morena šegofatša banyadi bana, Marung

A maso o be sedi la bona, goiša lehung."
 (Sešegotheto 1989, p. 41)

"From today be one
 Remain happy for ever
 God bless this couple, from the dark clouds
 Be their light until they part."

Marriage here is seen as holy and blessed by God. At the same time this poem is a prayer, the poet is asking God to bless this couple. In our tradition marriage is regarded as appropriate and gives the couple a certain status. The couple is expected to bear children and bring them up.

In another poem by Matlala, called "Ngwana", he says:

"Megau yohle ya Legodimo e tletše
 Ngwaneng, ke pula ya kgogolamooko
 E tloša ditšhila le dimeko bathong ..."
 (Sešegotheto 1989, p. 41)

"The grace of God is on the child
 It is like the rain that falls after harvest
 Which removes all dirt from the people."

3.1.5 RELIGIOUS POEMS

Biblical influence is evident in Northern Sotho poetry. During the early stages of modern education among the Northern Sotho, missionaries played an important part. In the school much emphasis was laid on the reading and study of the Bible. This accounts for the abundance of Biblical stories and experts in Northern Sotho poetry. In his poem "Pitšo" (Invocation) Mamogobo says:

"Theoga Moyamokgethwa,
 Theoga fula la Modimo,
 Theoga ka modumo mokwewa Galelia
 Duma o šišinye
 O kobe botšwa pelong."

(Leduleputswa 1953, p. 1)

These lines remind us of the coming of the Holy Spirit. We find these in the book of Acts Chapter 2. Mamogobo started with this poem in his work as a sort of prayer, calling on the Holy Spirit to come and help him and fill the hearts of the audience.

The poem "Majakane" (Believers) is about the Bible, Holy Communion and baptism. Mamogobo says:

"Majakane maena puku nkgotho
 Puku totolo kunutu la mantho
 Majakane magaiwa pelong
 Swao la modiši le tsebja ke modiši ka noši
 Ba ntle ba bona fela nke ke nyepo
 Diba sa meetse le monyan ya beine le sengkgwa."

(Leduleputswa 1953, p. 20)

3.1.6 PROTEST POETRY

As early as 1953, Mamogobo wrote some poems on political aspects. The poems are "Afrika Boa" and "Afrika, Nagasello". He writes this:

"Boa Afrika fase la borre twehlanyaditšhaba,
 Mohlabamonolo thari ya bana ba mosadi yo moso,
 Mpho badimo bengmagola madulagodimo maakaakaleng.
 Boa wena naga-boroko makhura a bana ba mosadi yo Moso,
 Boela go beng, beng ba tseba tshenyi ba phala maswena
 Matlakagothopa."

(Leduleputswa 1953, p. 23)

N.A. Milubi (1984) says, protest poets are artists who are concerned with the creation of a timeless monument. Their activities are part of man's self-realization as a result of his wrestling with nature.

It follows then that, because of its social character, protest poetry as a creative process and also an end, is conditioned by historical and social forces and pressures.

Seen in this light, the product of a protest poet's pen both reflect reality and also attempts to persuade us to take certain attitude towards the reality. The persuasion here is an indirect appeal through influencing the imagination, feelings and actions of the recipient in a certain way towards certain goals and a set of values, consciously held by him. (S.A.J. Afr. Lang 1988, 8)

3.2 THEMES - 1960 TO 1969

This period falls under the Non-Traditional phase that appears with the adaptation of traditional poetry to current needs. Mashabela (1982) says, in the 60's there was an appreciable shift in the content from the concrete to the intangible, while the language maintains the same declamatory tone with ultimate metaphor. This is evident in collections like:

- N. Matome Fela : Sebilwane (1961)
- S.R. Machaka : Therešo (1966) and Naledi (1967)
- O.K. Matsepe : Kgotla o mone (1968)
- Molodi wa thaga (1968)
- Todi ya Dinosi (1968)
- Molodi wa mogami (1969)
- M. Bapape and S. Ratlabala : Ithute direto, etc.

The poetry of this period is vast and varied. To understand it better it will be divided into thematic fields: praise poetry,

social and moral patterns, Nature and Natural phenomenon, Religious Aspects and protest poetry.

3.2.1 MODERN PRAISE POETRY

Matsepe's modern praise poetry originated as written poetry, the poems were written in the spirit of the tradition. They, create the whole atmosphere of traditional life, both in the reference alluded to and in the language employed.

Matsepe's praise poetry is characterised by the formal exclamation "Kgomo e a tshwa!" and the response to it: "E gangwa ke mang?" Whose lexical meaning is very controversial. There are two propositions relating to its meaning. The first is based on the fact that herdboys are so acquainted with the lowing of their cows that they identify them easily thereby. Secondly, it may mean that "the cow is burning", i.e. its udder is on fire with abundance of milk; it is not easy to milk; only an experienced milker would manage. Let us examine the following example:

Kelelagobedi

"Kgomo e a tšha"

"E gangwa ke mang?"

"E gangwa ke kelelagobedi ga di bolelwe ka moko,

Wa mo seba o itshenyeditšhe nako

Kelelagobedi o šeditšhe ka moo molato o theogelago."

(Kwelapele 1969, p. 16)

Kelelagobedi is a person who is not honest, who does not stick to what he said; he keeps on changing until everything suits him.

Matsepe has got a lot of such poems which are characterised by such formal exclamation "Kgomo e a tshwa! E gangwa ke mang?", etc. The theme is heroism where the heroes are praised for their heroic deeds. The poet creates the heroes from his imagination, unlike the traditional praise poem where the heroes are praised for what they did in real life.

Machaka (1960) praises his chief Kgaragara in one of his poems, he says:

"Re a go lotšha wena thobela Morena:
 Re loba wena mongmabu a Diaparankwe.
 O letšatši wena morwa, Puledi Masenyane
 Gobane mo o gatileng, wena, re bone seedi;"
 (Sešegotheto 1989, p. 73)

There is also a high school named after Chief Kgaragara, we get this from the following lines:

"O agile kgoro ya bana ba lapa la mangwalo.
 Seo o se bonang mmotong wa bo Mabuša;
 Mmele le moya sefilwe ke kgoši ya boima,
 Kgaragara o ba ngwathetše tšholo ya dithuto.
 (p. 74)

The poet shows appreciation to the chief in this praise poem.

3.2.2 POEMS ON NATURE AND NATURAL PHENOMENA

Poets like Matsepe are able to view nature through the spectacles of the community, he portrays, but their vision penetrates through the society well.

The nature of Matsepe's poems and other poets of this period on natural phenomena will be investigated. Their view of nature

present three aspects as mentioned before: Nature as man's friend, as a mystery and as man's enemy.

a. Nature as man's friend

In the poem "Ge ke bona Marwallo a dithaba" the poet is attracted by the mountain ranges that are visible. He is full of joy, when he approaches the mountain ranges and in reality, he finds, there the embodiment of all natural charm. He says:

"Ge ke bona marwallo a dithaba tša kgauswi le tša kgole,
Ge ke bona methopo ya dinoka le yona ya megobe
Pelo yaka e re ga se nnete ge meetse a botsefala
re le kgole;

Mojakong wa ntshe a ke fihle le nna ke o momolle".

(Molodi wa Magami 1969, p. 16)

"When I see the mountain ranges, far and near.
When I see the river fountain and the lakes
My heart refuses to accept the beauty of the water
from far."

The theme in this poem differs or deviates from the theme of traditional poems in the sense that the mountains are not merely described in terms of their external features, but rather serve as a medium to reflect about life.

b. Nature as a Mystery

In one of Matsepe's collections, "Kgotla o mone" we find an example of a poem on nature as a mystery. "Segokgo" (Spider). He says:

"Go hlwa ke go bogetše e bile kutullo.
Ya gore a gago a agwa bjang modulo.
Dikokwaneng le mahlomong le dipalelong

Ga mmogo le manting ke mo ka kgopolong
 O ntlabago gore o ile neng etšwe ke le fa?
 Thutseng le bjanyeng ga o tšwe eupša
 o feditše šifa."

(p. 18)

The poet has been looking at the Spider weaving its web. He says:

"Something has been revealed to me, how you build your house. You have never gone out to fetch building materials, that is; poles, grass for thatching, ropes for tightening up but your house is complete."

The other poem Khunkhwanyane from Matsepe's collection "Todi ya Dinose" says:

"Bohlale bja gago bo tlaetša bjaka
 Ge o swanetše go tseba ge mpa e beelwa."

(p. 37)

This poem also reveals nature as a mystery. The poet is stunned by the way the beetle can save food for future use.

c. Nature as man's enemy

Lentsoane in his poetry book: "Mokgako" has good examples of poems on nature as man's enemy. "Komelelo (draught)" he says:

"Komelelo o lenaba
 O re gadikelang re sa phela?
 Bogale bja gago bo a tšhoša,
 Le tau ya tswetši o ka efepela."

(p. 11)

The poet remarks that draught is an enemy, it is burning us alive. It is more fierce than the lion.

The other poem on old age called "Botšofadi" says:

"Botšofadi, o morwalo,
O kotlo, o kgati
Mogopolo ya ba wa ngwana,
Go sepela ya ba ga leobu,
Bangwe ya ba go hlahlwa."

(Mokgako p. 5)

Old age is a burden and punishment, which also reveals nature as man's enemy. The old person thinks like a child, walks slowly and sometimes he is led. This poem deals with old age. No person wants to become old because he/she becomes a burden to other people.

Matsepe also composed poems which deal with nature, man's enemy. The poem "Ge nka be ke tseba" in Todi di Dinose, is an example.

"Ge nka be ke tseba setho seo mmeleng wa motho
Botšofadi e lego se se bo tlišago ke be ke tla se
thakgola."

(p. 47)

Matsepe like Lentsoane sees old age as man's enemy; the person undergoes changes mentally and physically, he goes back to childhood and becomes a burden to other people.

3.2.3 POEMS ON SOCIAL AND MORAL PATTERNS

As it was said earlier that poetry always reflects man in various situations of life. His attitudes towards nature and his fellow men do not escape the poet's eye. In every society there are

deeds, inclinations, and thought patterns that are regarded as appropriate, while improprieties also abound.

Matsepe, like other poets, sets himself this task. He throws his searchlight on the society he portrays and reveals to us their social patterns and their moral ideals. His view can be divided into the following aspects:

- a. Marriage - procreation;
- b. Theft, beggary and slothfulness;
- c. Selfishness, jealousy;
- d. Conceit, intolerance, oppression and humiliation;
- e. Gossip;
- f. Drunkenness, etc.

Matsepe has written quite a number of poems dealing with marriage. In his poems we find traditional concepts concerning marriage. In one of his poetry books, "Kwela - pele" we find good examples. "Re Madimabe Bjang". He says:

"Ra belega ngwana a tloga,
 Mohlatlami le yena A re amoga -
 Mmago banake, tlogela go riboga."

(p. 2)

This couple has realised expectations that were not easy for them to meet. In this poem there were threats of infant mortality, whose effects do not differ from those of sterility and impotence. They have lost their first and second born and probably also the third and fourth born.

The renaming of the bride gives her a certain status in the community. The couple is expected to live up to this status by producing the necessary children. The despair of the couple over this catastrophe, which God has thrust upon them is clear in the above lines.

There is yet another poem in "Molodi wa Mogami" called Moswanomong, meaning (we are the same). In this poem we find two women married to one man. The first wife is jealous of the second wife; she always passes funny remarks whenever the man goes to the second wife. The second wife says: By his death we are now the same, I am free from being insulted by you, whenever he came to my house you made funny remarks. The husband is dead and we are both the same, and without a husband.

"Ka lehu la gagwe bobedi re moswanomong,
 Go hlapaolwa ke wena ke go khutšitše bjang
 Ge ka ga ka a tlile e tla re re sa le mehlamong
 Wa be o šetše o rogana o pšhatla mamati gore mang
 Le mang a tsebe ge nna ke go phaketša yena."

This poem Moswanomong, reveals selfishness and jealousy concerning this marriage. Matsepe on the other hand asserts that living together implies being a burden on one another. As each man has his own characteristic weakness, little frictions will always appear, but tolerance and understanding are a potent remedy.

This is also reflected in the poem "Se nkomanye" in the poetry book Kwela - pele; wherein the relationship between ordinary people is highlighted.

"Ke a go tlhakiša le nna ke a ipona.
 Ke tlhakiše mang, wena ge o bona?
 Ka boikokobetšo hle, se mphelele pelo.
 O nkgotleletše go tloga letšatši lela,
 Ke go tenne neng ka pela ge o bona?"

(p. 6)

"I am aware I am a burden to you
 but whose burden do you think I should be?"

You have been patient with me from the beginning;
Why have you suddenly become fed up with me."

Matsepe seems to believe that tolerance is the key to universal happiness.

3.2.4 RELIGIOUS POEMS

Northern Sotho poems on religion reflect both the traditional beliefs and modern christian convictions. Let us examine Matsepe's "Molodi wa thaga" "Motse wo moswa" (The new city).

"Mohlodi le moloti wa setšhaba se ka moka
Ka magoro ka magoro a go tšweng kgomonaka
Meeta ya malwa magapa go tšwe dinatla
Motse ka moka o theogele ntshe o opa diatla."

(Molodi wa Thaga 1968, p. 20)

Matsepe in this poem reflects the traditional beliefs of the Northern Sotho people; each one should bring an ox and a big pot of beer to make sacrifices to the ancestors, to ensure peace and prosperity in their homes. Beasts are slaughtered and pots of beer are poured on the ancestral graves, and they all clap their hands.

In the poem "Ge e ka ba go bjalo" Matsepe addresses God directly in conversation. He says:

"Ka sa Gagwe seswantšho go thwe re bopilwe,
Ka tša Gagwe diatla ga gwa bopša rena fela.
Punong ka ge go se seo re kago go se tlogela,
Re goroga nawa le tloo le tlhodi di topilwe."

(Kgotla o mone p. 3)

"God created us in his image
With his hands we are not the only ones created

At the end there is nothing we can leave behind
We go to Him having completed our work."

In another poem he says:

"Ke mahlatse mang a ka, Mong wa ka,
Ge o ntlošitše lefaseng lela wa ntliša go le,
Gobane ruriruri mola go se be bjalo -
Tša mono ke be ke tla di tseba neng?"

(Molodi wa Thaga 1968, p. 1)

"How lucky I am, my Lord, that You removed me
from that World and brought me to this one,
For surely; if it had not been like that
When would I have known things of this World?"

Matsepe explains life by the analogy of travelling from place to place, to widen one's knowledge, which process is God ordered, for which opportunity we have to thank Him.

3.3 THEMES - 1970 TO 1980

Numerous creative poets emerged during this period in the development of Northern Sotho poetry. The most prominent poets of this era are O.K. Matsepe, H.M.L. Lentsoane, N.S. Puleng, S. Ratlabala, S.R. Machaka, F.J.R. Malebana and B.N. Tseke. Their poetry is also vast and varied. Their themes may be divided into the following aspects: Social and moral patterns, Nature and Natural phenomenon, Religious Convictions and also protest poetry.

H.M.L. Lentsoane writes more on love, death, influx-control, women, youngsters, admiration of beauty and life in general.

3.3.1 THEMES ON WOMEN

Lentsoane is one of the observant and imaginative poets. Let us examine some of his poems on women, in his poetry book "Mokgako (1979)". He says:

"Lemagang barwedi ba Afrika
Boswana ke bjo bo botse
Ke bjo bo botse mahlong a rena
Ma-Afrika."

(Mokgako 1979, p. 41)

"Take note daughters of Africa
Blackness is beautiful
It is beautiful in the eyes of
the Africans."

In another verse he says:

"Matšatši a di ikgateletše
Diroko di hlatloga matolo
Bošego le mosegare."

(p. 37)

"These days they are hard on it
Dresses are shortened to
above the knees day and night."

According to Northern Sotho customs and traditions a woman is not supposed to wear short dresses which expose her knees. Lentsoane here is irritated by the mini skirts (short skirts). The impression we got from the above lines is that women these days are beginning to lose their sense of decency. The exposure of the better parts of their lower limbs seems to be aimed at attracting their male counterparts.

The attitude of women is further outlined in another poem, where Lentsoane is worried about women's drinking habits. In African customs and tradition, it is taboo for women to drink alcohol. Serudu in one of the articles in Limi (1981 Vol. 9) says: "Hers was to take a sip (go ntšha sehlare/to take out medicine) when she gave men a pot of beer but not to compete with men as it is observed today". This lax behaviour of women according to Lentsoane is the main cause of broken families and poorly brought up children. He says:

Malapa a lebetšwe
 Dihlogo di hlakane
 Di gopola ka meetse masehlana
 Meetse a go tswala bagalé."
 (p. 39)

"Families are neglected
 They are mixed up
 They think of the greyish
 water (beer) only
 Water that produces the brave."

The development of large cities and urban dwellings, necessitated a change in the allocation of domicile areas. These removals and resettlement of people in the Republic of South Africa was not always welcome. Lentsoane brings out this view through the words of the people who were involved in the resettlement.

"Khutšo e kae?
 Ke e hlokile ke sa tobatoba
 Ke ntšhitše mahlo dinameng
 Ge ke sa hlwe ke bolela gona?"
 (p. 63)

"Where is the peace
I missed it while still alive
What more when I can no longer speak."

What seems to touch the heart of the poet is the fact that when certain areas were removed the graves were also exhumed and the bones reburied at the new areas.

3.3.2 RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS

Other poets like Ratlabala, Puleng, Masola, Machaka, write more on modern christian convictions. Retlabala in one of his poems "Bofelong bja matšatši a ka" says:

"Ke tla tsena Elisiamo
Ke opela Alleluya
Ka lethabo le legolo
Kgare ya bophelo bja ka
E nkemetše gae ga ka
Ka ge ke bunne
Puno ya leeto la ka."

(Ditsinkelo Tša Sereti 1977, p. 51)

"I will enter Elisium
Singing Hallelujah
With great joy
The crown of my life
Is waiting for me at my home
Since I have gathered
The harvest of my journey."

Ratlabala believes in the life to come, he is quite convinced that he has done his work, now he is ready for the life to come. He is not ashamed of his actions, and his greatest desire is to leave literary works which will be a heritage to the next generation.

Masola in one of his poems "Sello sa Mahlalela" comments thus:

"Ke lapile, ke fahlilwe, ke ikgolofaditše,
 Ntapolle Modimo wa Israele, tša lefase di mpheditše,
 Se ntlole nna ngwana mošwana, ke šia tša bophelo,
 Ke sentše, ke nyamišitše bohle boka ngwana lehlaswa,
 Ntope, ntope go tša bophelo lefase le a nthaka.
 Lefase le tletše dinalete le meetlwa, ke e tomotše."

(Maatla Mpulele p. 2)

This is the prayer of an unemployed person after he had met with so many disappointments. He is comparing himself with the prodigal son; and is appealing to God of Israel to pick him up because the world is full of thorns and needles; he is thrown away.

I agree with Ntuli (1984) when he says: the modern African writer is to his indigenous tradition as a snail to its shell. Even in foreign habitat a snail never leaves its shell behind. (Poetry of B.W. Vilakazi) Thus, when we investigate and analyse some of the religious poems in African literature we observe that most of the poems reflect both traditional beliefs and modern Christian convictions and in some of the poems the ancestral spirits emerge.

Matsepe's poems on religion reflect both the traditional beliefs and modern Christian Convictions. The ancestral spirits emerge in the poem "Motse wo Moswa". He says:

"Motsemotala wa gešo ke marope a moswa.
 Maropematala a gešo ke motse o moswa:
 Morago re tšwago re šadišitše gabotse:
 Ka ditlhoboša ledimpho tše dingwe tše botse."

(Molodi wa thaga 1968, p. 20)

This poem reflects the traditional beliefs. When migrating from any place it is a practice to make sacrifices to the ancestors to ensure peace and prosperity in the new place. Beasts are slaughtered and beer is poured on the ancestral graves. Sacrifices were also made on arrival at the new place to ensure a happy living.

To reflect the modern Christian Convictions, Matsepe in another poem "A a fihle Moreneng", he says:

"A a fihle Moreneng malebo, bana bešo,
 Bobe bo tla re fihlela neng mola e se be Yena?
 A mabetšana a re a phetšego a go leboge rena,
 Tše re sa di thakgago ke molato wa rena
 batho bešo."

(Phalafala ya koma 1970, p. 1)

3.3.3 THEMES ON LOVE

When writing about true love S. Ratlabala has this to say:
 "Lerato" (Love)

"Ka ntle le lerato.
 Motho ke lehanata
 Le le hlokago
 Dienywa le dijo."

(Ditsinkelo tsa Sereti 1977, p. 12)

"Apart from love
 A person is a desert
 That has nothing
 Neither fruit nor food."

Lentsoane, still on the same theme, in his poem "Lerato" comments thus:

"Le swana le mohlašana
 Le a kgolakgolelwa
 La hlagolelwa ngwang
 La golela pele
 Le a nošetšwa."

(Direto tša Mang le Mang 1971, p. 38)

"It is like a small plant
 It is to be handled with care
 You remove weeds
 It grows further
 You water it."

3.3.4 POLITICAL DISPENSATION

S.R. Machaka in his poem "Tokologo" asserts the following:

"Motho ofe le ofe o bopilwe
 Ka 'swantsho sa Tate
 Mmala e ka ba o mosehla,
 O Mošweu, o moso
 Tsebang lena ba le bonago
 nka le balekodi ba rena,
 Re bopilwe ka letsopa le tee
 le madi ga a fapane."

(Seedi 1979, p. 44)

"Every person is created through
 the image of God
 The colour may be grey, white
 black
 You must know, you who
 think you are our supervisors
 We are made from the same soil
 our blood does not differ."

In the above poem Machaka wrote about the new political dispensation in South Africa. He wanted to reveal to the White people that we are all created by the same God, from the same soil, white or black. Our blood is also the same.

Lentsoane in his poetry book "Mokgako" wrote on a few poems which are more similar to the above poem of Machaka. He wrote on the Urbanization of the Black people of South Africa which brought numerous problems in life, unemployment, influx control, etc. Poems like "Boa gape gosasa" (come again tomorrow), "Apara re sepele" (put your clothes on and we go), "Nkabe ke na le Mafego" (I wish I had wings), "O Tla bolela Pele" (You will say it in court), etc. Let us examine the following poem "Boa gape gosasa":

"Tshepho e ile gobane maabane ke
hlwele mo
Pampiri tša lena dia tshotshoma
Ke lapile go di lapa
Bjale le ntlaišetša eng?"
(Mokgako 1975, p. 61)

"I have lost hope because I spent
the day here yesterday.
Your papers are greasy
I am tired of patching them
Now why do you torture me?"

In the above lines the poet reflects the tiresome process of reporting to the office in successive days without getting what one wants.

It is evident that the above poets write about contemporary issues using several different themes in modern poetry. They are the poets of the modern period and their poetry is of high order.

CHAPTER 4

4. POETIC DEVICES - 1950 TO 1980

Cohen (1973: 49) maintains that style pertains to an author's choice of words and their arrangement in patterns of syntax, imagery and rhythm. This arrangement of words constitute the author's imaginative rendering of whatever thoughts, emotions, situations or characters he chooses to create and communicate."

Holman (1983: 432-433) defines style as "the arrangement of words in a manner which at once expresses the individuality of the author and intent in the author's mind".

According to the above definitions style includes the idea that should be expressed and the individuality of the author. No two writers can produce exactly the same work. Choice of words is also regarded as an important feature of style. It is again difficult to separate language from style since style comes from language. Therefore, style comprises choice of words, sentence pattern, imagery and figures of speech.

The student of literature should make a systematic analysis of those features that distinguish works of literature from other forms of discourse. The formalists on the other side, focused their attention on the aspects of poetry. They reached the conclusion that poetry can be defined as "impeded, curbed language", as a language construction. Shklovsky's view that art is a means of becoming aware of the making of things, and that "the things made are not important in art", has strengthened the impression of a one sided interest in technique.

Literariness in the work of literature is brought about by various literary devices. Through the latter the aesthetic neutral material is transformed into literary work.

This "material" as far as poetry is concerned, would be the ordinary or everyday language which is transformed into literature through literary devices such as metre, rhythm, figures of speech and imagery.

A fundamental feature of literary devices is the faculty of Defamiliarization which consists in the "making strange" of familiar acts and objects by taking them out of their ordinary contexts or by describing them as if they were seen for the first time.

In the development of the Northern Sotho poetry we find that poets used various techniques in the composition of poems. These specific techniques are used to create specific desired effects. Let us now discuss briefly the following elements which have a bearing on our study of poetry: repetition which includes rhyme, rhythm, parallelism, linking, alliteration, refrain and assonance. We shall also discuss imagery and other figures of speech. Here are some of them: Simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole and symbolism.

4.1 POETIC DEVICES - 1950 TO 1959

REPETITION

4.1.1 RHYME

Rhyme is the similarity or identity of sounds existing between accented syllables occupying corresponding positions within two lines or verse. Vowel sounds feature mostly in rhyme, but in some poems only consonants rhyme in pararhyme. Sound and not spelling, determines rhyme; syllables may be spelt the same and yet be pronounced differently. In our language tone will play an important part because vowels that differ cannot said to rhyme. A successful rhyme scheme is the one that is retained in all the stanzas of the poem. Other types of rhyme include pararhyme: where only consonants rhyme:

Internal rhyme: When the rhyming words occur in the same line.

Initial rhyme: When a group of lines start with words that rhyme.

Cross-rhyme: With an abab cdc rhyme scheme.

If used functionally rhyme can add music to the poem, make the lines memorable, and link lines that convey similar ideas.

In traditional poetry we do not have rhyme as a poetic device, but we have repetition which differs from rhyme in the sense that rhyme is formed by two different words having different meaning. In repetition the word is repeated or part of the word is repeated and the meaning is the same.

There are several reasons which make it difficult for the Northern Sotho poets to form rhyme in their poems. Northern Sotho language has got fewer vowels than English and Afrikaans.

The division of words is more open in Northern Sotho (Consonant and vowel) - mokgalabje: mo-kgala-bje. The last vowel in a line or sentence is not pronounced clearly. The accent in some words spoils the rhyme in Northern Sotho poetry. In Afrikaans these words can form rhyming (hand and sand); in English (crowd and cloud) also can form rhyming. Rhyming is formulated easily in Afrikaans and English than in Northern Sotho.

We get good examples of rhyme in the works which were translated. Some of the poets who used rhyme in their works were Khaas, in his poetry book "Khungwane le Direto tše Dingwe" (1956), E.K.K. Matlala in "Manose" (1953). In the poem "Khungwane" Khaas has got a lot of rhyme:

"Motho ga ke a kobiwa - a
 Le yena o tla thopiwa - a
 Kua mošašeng a ka lala - b
 Go madulo ga wa tlala - b
 Gosasa o tla ya tšhemong - c
 Go yo leta kua mašemong -c

(Khungwane 1956: p. 14)

C.B. Swanepoel in his article in the South African Journal of African Language (1987) says, rhyme in the African language as a verse technical means is something new to African poetry. It is also principally limited to the written or so called "modern" poetry.

Initially the matter of rhyme was somewhat problematic in the African languages. The limiting factor proved to be the structure of open syllables accompanied by a whispered closing syllable which limited effective variation.

In order to employ rhyme effectively in the African language it requires similarity of sound in both the penultimate and the ultimate syllables of the rhyme word or at least the ultimate syllable together with the consonantal phonemes must be considered for the purposes of schematization. Separately neither of them possesses rhyme value.

There are quite a few authors in Northern Sotho who have showed their skill by producing excellent work in this field.

4.1.2 RHYTHM

According to Pretorius and Swart (1982: 38), rhythm is one of the most important components of traditional, and some modern, African poetry.

A distinction must be made between the rhythm of European poetry and that of African poetry: Whereas rhythm in European poetry depends upon the successive usage of stressed and unstressed syllables within a specific time duration, African rhythm is determined, mainly, by pauses, stress, tone and length or duration in succeeding lines.

Let us examine the following example from Mamogobo's poem taken from an article by P.S. Groenewald (1979: 38), "'n Oorsig oor die geskrewe Noord-Sotho poësie:"

"Bo : tse bo i : le/bo e : tše sammaru : ri
 Bo fele : tše/bo ile mole : te mohlaela thu : pa.
 Go tlogi : le bo : tse/go tlogi : le phagamiša matswa : lo
 Go tlogi : le nama : ne ya pe : lo/go še : tše ho : wa le
 se nang n : tlo, ..."

(Leduleputswa: 21)

He goes further to say: Rhythm creates atmosphere in the poem. A fast rhythm can at times be used to create an effect of "hot-temperedness" and "anger", whilst a slower rhythm can perhaps create an atmosphere of sadness.

4.1.3 PARALLELISM

In parallelism related ideas are paralleled by using similar construction or words in successive lines. The same idea may also be repeated by using different constructions or words in constructive lines, with each line extending on the original idea and leading to either a climax or an anti-climax.

We also have cross parallelism or chiasmus: Here we have a unit in the first part of a line being echoed in the last part of the next line. Let us consider the following lines from Mamogobo's poem "Leduleputswa".

"Badimo nkweng

Nkweng lena Badimo ba thaba boilakii ya Selepe."

(Leduleputswa 1953, p. 5)

"The gods hear me

Hear me the gods of the quite mountain."

Lephaka (1956) in his poem "Phala" has an incomplete parallelism, the units do not balance, for an example:

"Ke swere gapaapa, ke swere sethunya,

Ke swere sa mpatana go roba."

(Sešegotheto 1989, p. 60)

4.1.4 LINKING

The most common form of linking is when the last part of one line is repeated or echoed in the first part of the following line.

During this period the poets did not use much of parallelism and linking techniques. We get very few examples of these. Let us examine the following example from J. Khaas (1956). The poem is "Go Moratiwa":

"Homola we, pelo ya ka

E seng bjalo hle, homola."

(Sešegotheto 1989, p. 71)

"Please be quiet my heart

Not now, please be quiet."

4.1.5 ALLITERATION

By alliteration is meant the repetition of similar sounds in a line. Repetition of consonant sounds is called consonance, and repetition of vowel sounds is called assonance. Alliteration may

serve to link words expressing related ideas or be used for emphasis. It must also seem the echo to the sound. Repetition of certain sounds can suggest certain movements or feeling in the poem.

Mamagobo in his poem "Leduleputswa" brings out a lot of alliteration:

"Katintatinta, ka tinitatinta
 Katintatinta ka iša go Badimo."
 (Leduleputswa 1953, p. 7)

The repetition of the consonant sound "t" forms the consonance alliteration and the vowel sounds "i" and "a" also form assonance alliteration.

4.1.6 REFRAIN

A refrain is a line or lines that are regularly repeated at similar positions in all the stanzas of the poem, with little or no variation at all, this is for purposes of emphasis.

We shall take another example from Mamogobo's poetry book, "Leduleputswa" again.

"Theoga Moyamokgehwa,
Theoga fula la Modimo
Theoga ka modumo mokwewa Galelia."
 (Leduleputswa 1953, p. 1)

Khaas also has more examples of refrain in his poems:

"Ntle le wena phelo keng?
Ntle le wena thabo keng?"

Pelong ya ka o agile;

Pelong ya ka o thakgile."

(Sešegotheto 1989, p. 72)

From the above examples of refrain we observe commencement with the same consonant sound of three and two closely-positioned words in each example respectively.

4.1.7 THE USE OF IMAGERY AND OTHER FIGURES OF SPEECH

Poetry in itself has a task of communicating intense feelings or some profound thoughts on life through recreating some experience, is not an end in itself. It aims at soliciting response of some kind - sensual, emotional, intellectual - from the reader.

So the success of poetry lies in its ability to communicate, it lies in its expressive capabilities. The poet expresses himself through language only, and so it means he has to take most out of expressive power of words in order to be effective. Imagery constitutes much of the language of poetry. It is of prime importance to note that rhythm and other formal elements can only influence meaning and in themselves do not mean anything, whereas imagery is meaningful and does convey meaning.

Essentially imagery involves presenting or describing one object concept in terms of another by drawing similarities between the two; it also involves the use of figurative language to create images or pictures that can appeal to the reader's five senses of hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch. By creating such pictures even abstract ideas or complex feelings or experiences can be described in concrete terms, so that they are immediately perceptible to our senses. They enable us to relate them to our immediate experiences. James Reeves puts it more succinctly:

"If there are to be ideas in a poem, it is better that they should be apprehended through concrete and sensuously realised imagery. Otherwise we have what tend to be versified philosophy" (Understanding Poetry, pp. 156-160)

A good poet does not just tell you what is wrong and what is right. He creates an experience through such concrete descriptions as can suggest those ideas. Here are some of the main forms of imagery: metaphor, simile, personification, symbolism and hyperbole.

4.1.8 SIMILE

Simile is an expression of a similarity between two things or people considered unlike. Similes are usually introduced by like or as. In Northern Sotho simile is always introduced by explanatory conjunctives bjalo ka, ka ka, swana le, etc.

Mamogobo in his poem "Go Hunadi" (to Hunadi) says:

"Nnele bjalo ka pul'a modupi Hunadi yo mošwana,
Mpele makhur'a monate reledi sa kgopolo tša ka."

(Leduleputswa 1953, p. 19)

"Rain on me like a continuous rain Hunadi with
light complexion
Be like tasty fat the 'butter' of my thoughts."

The poet compares the person he loves (Hunadi) with rain and fat, these are both healthy, rain is something good for people and fat also can be used in many ways to soften the skin or as food.

Khaas in his poem "Go Moratiwa" (To my Love) says:

"O swana le yona Rosa,
O matšoba o a tsoša."

(Sešegotheto 1989, p. 72)

"You are like a Rose
You are a flower you wake me up."

She is being compared with a rose flower, she makes him feel good.

4.1.9 METAPHOR

A metaphor may be described as a condensed simile. Whereas the comparison in a simile is directly expressed with the help of the words such as like or as in a metaphor the comparison is implied. A metaphor does not contain the word like or as and appears as a statement of fact.

Lephaka in his poem "Meetse" (Water) (1956) gives us more examples of metaphor.

"Ke nna meetsefula a bokgomo
Ke senatla rasebinakakala la more."

(Sešegotheto 1989, p. 63)

"I am the floods of the cattle
I am a strong man who tramples on the leaves of the tree."

Water is identified with the floods and again with the strong man with very heavy weight.

4.1.10 PERSONIFICATION

This figure of speech is related to metaphor because it implicitly identifies or equates one object with another.

Through personification the poet attributes human traits, actions or emotions to something that is not human, or not even animate. The object can be addressed as if it is a human being, or be made to speak. We shall discuss a few examples from Lephaka's poetry book, "Ka emaema ka reta reta dibata" (1956). The poem is "Ntwa".

"Ke ntwana ngwana' mosadi yo moso moloi,
Ke ntwana ke ratana le bagale ba marumo"

(Sešegotheto 1989, p. 64)

"I am war the child of a Black witch woman
I am war, I am in love with the heroes of the war."

The war is addressed as a human being, is a child of a Black witch woman, and is capable of loving heroes who came back from war.

The period 1950 to 1959 is full of praises, thus we do not get much of this figures of speech, they are very infrequently used. The praises are addressed mainly to the chief, king or any other hero, who is already a person and cannot be personified further.

4.1.11 SYMBOLISM

A poet may use related images to represent similar concepts, or use an image recurrently yet in such a way that it can always be interpreted in the same way or be associated with related concepts, although it occurs in various instances and contexts. Such an image is called a symbol. Not always does the poet make it explicit that an object symbolises something else, or name the thing that is symbolised; it is the reader who feels that the object suggests something outside itself and needs wider interpretation because of the striking manner in which it is used.

Symbolism is well used by the poets of this period.

We shall discuss a few examples from different poets. E.K.K. Matlala (1953) in his poetry book "Manose" in the poem "Ngwana" says:

"Foko la 'sea le tswetšwe', ke pula ya tsheola
Pelong ya setšhaba ke gakwe le tsetsemang
Pelong: ditho le moya di pala go hlakasela."
(Sešegotheto 1989, p. 41)

The sentence "a baby is born" is like the first rain in the heart of the people.

This shows that a new born baby is regarded as something very precious, not only by parents but by every individual who gets the message.

He goes on to say:

"Ke kgabaletala la mmitša tšhemong, Gadimang
Gohle fahlogo di a monyela, di benya kganya
Ya lethabo."
(Sešegotheto 1989, p. 41)

Through the use of words and phrases Matlala is able to draw a picture of the new born baby - "kgabaletala" meaning the green mealie plant in the field which symbolises "life". People show bright and happy faces.

Lephaka (1956) in the poem "Maru" (Clouds) puts it this way:

"Ye ba rego kgomo go hlabana tša šaka le tee.
Di itše di hlabana maloba tša llišana,

Megokgo ya tšona ya hlohlora dihlare
Ya ba ya ruta le dingaka go epa dihlare."

(Sešegotheto 1989, p. 62)

The poet compares the clouds with the cattle that fight in the kraal and their tears make leaves to fall and thus teach the traditional medicine men to dig out the roots for their medicines. The tears here symbolise rain drops; the rain fell very hard and the land was very wet and easy to work on.

4.2 PERIOD 1960 TO 1969

REPETITION

4.2.1 RHYME

From the 1960's poets like Matsepe, Machaka, Matome Fela, Bopape and Ratlabala and others used repetition to form rhyme in their poems. Let us examine the poem "Ontšheditše Go Reng?" by Matsepe in Kgotla o mone (1968).

"Go se ipone go ba selo ke a ipona, - a
Ka la ka leina bodutu se itloše gobane bona - a
O ntiba go gafela kgopolo ya ka go Yena - b
Yoo ka tša Gagwe ke bopilwego ke Yena - b
A se solege e sa le lehono, Mong wa ka, - c
Seo ke se šaetšago hle, kgoši le Mong wa ka." - c

(Kgotla o Mone 1968, p. 27)

Matome Fela in his poetry book "Sebilwane" uses internal and initial rhyme:

"A rwala seroto, a rwala selepe
A rwala thebele ya mošate
A rwele le mphago a poputše ngwana."

(p. 32)

The words "a rwala", "a rwala" which occur in the same line form internal rhyme. Matome goes on to say:

"A di feta topo tšhe letšego fao
A di feta di sa mo tšhoše ka selo
A di feta monagano o dikadika."
(Sebilwane 1961, p. 31)

Bopape and Ratlabala give us the following scheme in their poetry book "Ithute direto" (1967). The poem is "Balemi".

"Bjalo ka ditšhošane di bone thete, - a
Bjalo ka manong a bone tonki ye e hwileng - b
Go kgobokanetšwe se se ngwe se se weleng - b
Bangwe ba rothiša mamila, bongwe ditete." - a
(Sešegotheto 1989, p. 114)

The above verse uses the scheme abba.

4.2.2 RHYTHM

We also get rhythm in "Sebilwane". Let us look into these lines:

"Ge le sa mpon: tšhe,
Nka ya Ka: e?
Ke ye le ma: ng?
Ke ye bja: ng?
Ke ye ne: ng?"
(Sebilwane 1961, p. 20)

4.2.3 PARALLELISM

Matome Fela in his poetry book "Sebilwane" brings parallelism and linking beautifully: Parallelism with antonyms.

"A iša hlogo ka mo a e iša ka kowa."

(Sebilwane 1961, p. 20)

Another example:

"Ngwedi o a ba bona ba ga Mokutu,

Ngwedi o a ba bona bahlasedi ba motse."

(p. 11)

This is parallelism using similar constructions.

An example of cross-parallelism:

"Tše dingwe dintlo a di lemoga

A di tseba gabotse tše dingwe dintlo."

(p. 17)

4.2.4 LINKING

This poetic device was well used by the poets of this period.

Matome Fela in his traditional poem "Sebilwane" says:

"Maabane a tsena boitshebong

Boitshebong bja tshadi ya ga Mokutu."

(p. 14)

The above lines bring cross-linking with the word boitshebong.

Another example from the same book:

"Badimo bešo fang motho yo maatla

Mofeng maatla Badimo bešo."

(p. 22)

We also get linking with synonyms:

"Sa go ntemoša gore le a nkwa;
Sago ntšhupetša gore ke kae mo ..."
(p. 16)

4.2.5 ALLITERATION

In Matsepe's poem "Kgomokgwana" we find the sound "kg" forming the consonance alliteration.

"Kgomokgwana o tswetšwe a nnoši motlogeleng,
Wa mo Kgwathakgwatha o fetoga sefowa."
(Kgotla o Mone 1968, p. 43)

The consonants kg, kgw and th form the consonance alliteration.

Matome Fela's examples bring out assonance alliteration:

"Bohii-hii ... a bo mahlo-magolo;
Le diphau-phau tša batsomi ba mogotlo."
(Sebilwane 1961, p. 1)

4.2.6 REFRAIN

We get good examples again in "Sebilwane". Let us look into the following examples:

"Wa rialo monagano wa mosadi,
Wa rialo monagano ge a retologa,
Wa rialo monagano a hlokosetša ngwana
Wa rialo ge a phumula keledi tša gagwe.
(Sebilwane p. 37)

Other examples from Machaka (1966) in the poem "Therešo":

"Ka yona o tla le phutha la phadima lefaseng
Ka yona o tla bontšha selete sa lena Kopana,

Ka yona o tla tshotsholela go Mophološi."

(Therešo 1966, p. 9)

From the above example of refrain we observe commencement with the same consonant sound of four and three respectively.

4.2.7 IMAGERY-SIMILE

Matome Fela's epic poem is full of imagery, we find many examples concerning imagery.

"Pelo ya gwe ya re tu ...

A emiša hlogo bjaka phuti

Ge e be e re e a potuma."

(Sebilwane 1961, p. 20)

"Her heart stopped beating

She raised her head like a springbuck

When it was about to fall asleep."

Mamorati is being compared with a Springbuck that was about to sleep when it heard a noise and raised up its head to get the sound clearly.

Matsepe in his poem "Ke mahlatse mang a ka Mong wa ka" says:

"Bjalo ka tšhimanyana ka moka ke dišitše

Ka seleka nabo kua madišong ka mekgwa e mentši."

"Like small herd boys out in the veld

I did all sorts of tricks with them in many ways."

The poet compares himself with the herd boys. In Northern Sotho we can have comparison with natural phenomena, comparison with animal life, with plant life, etc.

4.2.8 PERSONIFICATION

We have more ode poems in Matsepe's work. These type of poems give us good examples of personification. We shall examine a few examples from Matsepe's works.

In this poem "Ke Wena" (It is you) in "Kwela-pele" (1969) Matsepe says:

"Ke wena o tagilwego bjala e sego nna,
Go nwele wena pele ga ka o a tseba?"
(Kwela-pele 1969, p. 1)

"It is you beer, who is drunk, not me
You drank before me, you know."

This poem is addressed to "beer" - that is, the beer is personified.

Machaka in the poem "Tshitshidi" (Bedbuck) says:

"Wena tšhitšhidi, o a hlakiša,
O reng o loma batho ba robetše?"
(Therešo 1966, p. 52)

"You bedbuck, You are troublesome
Why do you bite people while asleep?"

The bedbuck is being addressed as if it were a human-being. The bedbuck is an insect, is endowed with personal attributes.

4.2.9 HYPERBOLE

This is an exaggeration or an overstatement of an idea, attitude, emotion or detail in a literary work. (Cohen 1973: 186) Machaka and Ratlabala used this figure of speech to reveal the state of

condition in which the poet found himself. Let us examine the example below "Moratiwa wa ka":

"Ra tlengwa ke tše swanago
Ra kgahlwa ke ditee,
Ra bonela gotee
Ra kwela gotee
Ra gopolela gotee."

(Sešegotheto 1989, p. 116)

"We were bound by the same things
We admire the same way
We see the same way
We understand the same way
We think the same way."

Matome Fela also uses this figure of speech beautifully in his poetry book "Sebilwane" (1961). He says:

"Go rile tu ... u ... u ... u ...
Le tšhohlo-tšhohlo ya tšhipu e homotše,

Tšhohlo-tšhohlo yabo-matsoma-bošego ka moka,
Bomatsoma-bošego bophukubje ramahlale-hlale."

(Sebilwane 1961, p. 1)

The quietness of the night has been exaggerated, it was very very quiet, there was no movement made by any creature, springhare, jackals, snakes, ants, owls, etc all people were fast asleep when they were attacked by their enemies.

4.2.10 SYMBOLISM

Symbolism is highly used by the Northern Sotho poets in their works. This is an indirect metaphorical speech meant to carry

out or suggest a hidden reality. Let us take an example from "Sebilwane" again. Matome says:

"Maabane a tsene boitshebong,
Boitshebong bja tshadi ya ga-Mokutu."

(p. 14)

The word boitshebong here is used to refer to maternity room where she was going to give birth. Boitshebong comes from "seba" meaning to tell a secret. In the above lines the word boitshebong is used differently or in a different context.

Matsepe in "Bo a galaka" (life is difficult) gives us a good example of symbolism.

"Go nna bo nokilwe ka letswai bophelo,
Go wena bo nokilwe ka todi bophelo."

(Kgotla o Mone 1968, p. 17)

"To me life is salted with salt
To you life is sweetened with honey."

Salted life is bitter, difficult not happy life for the man while the wife is having a good or happy life.

4.2.11 IDEOPHONES

Matome Fela uses idiophones to emphasise and to reinforce what is being described in his poem, "Sebilwane". He says:

"Bo rile tu ... u ... u ... u ...
Le diphau-phau tša batsomi ba magotlo,
Bohii-hii ... ba mahlo-magolo;
Le digwaša-gwaša tsa mekgaditswana ...
Le dintswiri-tswiri tša didula mekotianeng."

(Sebilwane 1961, p. 1)

The poet describes the quiet night, there was no sound, no movement everything was quiet, the people were all asleep when the enemies attacked their village and killed everybody with the exception of Mmamorati, her baby, Letlakaduma and the two dogs Tilu and Mphaka.

Matome Fela uses repetition in many ways to emphasise what he describes; let us examine the following lines:

"Mogopolo wa ka o ya dikadika
 Mmele wa ka o ya tekateka
 Tsebe ya ka e ya lomaloma
 Mahlo a ka a' timatima
 Hlogo ya ka e a dumaduma."

(Sebilwane 1961, p. 18)

The above lines mean that Mmamorati's mind is revolving on the same idea, the body is shaking, the ears are itching the eyes are giving up and the head is heavy and makes sounds.

He further uses synonyms for the same purpose of emphasis.

"Ka tiišetšo le kgotlelelo, ka boikemišetšo le boifoko."
 (p. 15)

"With the strength and perseverance, with determination and courage."

4.3 PERIOD - 1970 TO 1980

The poets of this period made quite an improvement on poetic devices. They used various poetic techniques in their poems.

4.3.1 RHYME

Matsepe in "A a fihle Moreneng" (Give thanks to God) gives us the following scheme of rhyme:

"A a fihle Moreneng malebo bana bešo - a
 Bo be bo tla re tsefela neng mola e se be Yena - b
 A mabetsana a re a phetšego a go leboge rena - b
 Tše re sa di thakgago ke molato wa rena, batho bešo." - a
 (Phalafala ya koma 1970, p. 1)

In "Mokgala o Kae" the scheme is aabb, etc.

Puleng, N.S. (1980) uses the following scheme in the poem "Ntogiše Hlagana Sekhwi":

"Motheo wa hlagana sekhwi ke a o bona, - a
 Ke gona ge o nwelela o ya boyagosabowego - b
 O ya ntshe mo banna le basadi ba feletšego - b
 Gobane ba hlokile thapelo ya sephiri ka teng ga bona." - a
 (Ditlalemeso 1980, p. 29)

4.3.2 RHYTHM

Let us examine Mokgohloa's poem "Ke a mane":

"Diatla hlohlore ke beile
 Dia: tla hlohlo" re ke bei: le
 or
 Dia - tla hlohlo - re ke bei - le."
 (Thagaletswalo 3, p. 41)

4.3.3 PARALLELISM

Cross-parallelism or chiasmus.

"Ga se ya lešaka le
Ke re gase ya lešaka le."

(Ga se ya lešaka le 1973, p. 28)

Another example:

"Ke a tseba gore o tate ga o tate.
O tate ka molomo e sego ka sebele."

(p. 29)

4.3.4 LINKING

We get examples from Lentsoane's poetry book again:

"Ke mosadi wa Ntwadumela
Ntwadumela yoo a ithobaletšego."

(Ga se ya Lešaka le 1973, p. 12)

Initial linking from Lentsoane's poetry book:

"Moo go nyeumago batho
 Moo go beanago difatanaga
 Moo go fofago dipaesekela."

(Mokgako 1975, p. 36)

Linking by synonyms:

"O lebile sekolong se sefsa
 O lebile mphathong wa Lehlabile."

(Ga se ya Lešaka le 1973, p. 14)

Sekolong and Mphathong both mean school, she went to school.

4.3.5 ALLITERATION

In the poem "Ga se ya Lešaka le" we find the following example:

"Le lengwe le le lengwe la hlabala la sobela le tša lona."
(p. 3)

The repetition of the consonant sound "l" forms the consonance alliteration and the vowel sounds of "e" form assonance alliteration.

4.3.6 REFRAIN

In "Mokgako" Lentsoane says:

"Mosadi ke mosadi le ge e le Letebele,
Mosadi ke mosadi le ge e le Motswetla,
Mosadi ke mosadi kae le kae."
(Mokgako 1975, p. 46)

Another example from "Ga se ya Lesaka le":

"Mmaphoko wa maoto a moraro,
Mmaphoko wa mahlo a mane,
Mmaphoko o mošweu hlogong,
Mmaphoko wa mašošo."
(Ga se ya Lešaka le 1973: 1)

From the above examples of refrain we observe commencement with the same consonant sound of three and four closely positioned words in each example, respectively.

4.3.7 SIMILE

Imagery is well used by the poets of this period. We shall examine a few examples below:

Lentsoane in the poem "Meaparo ya kgarebe tša sefsa" says:

"Meaparo nke maphoto a lewatile."

(Mokgako 1975, p. 37)

"The made of dress is like the waves of the sea."

The poet expresses similarity between the dresses of the women and the waves of the sea, the way the women change from fashion to fashion.

Lentsoane in his poem "Lesebo" (Gossip):

"Le itia boka tladi

Le phumphanya tšohle."

(Mokgako 1975: 27)

"It strucks like lightning

It destroys everything."

He compares and or contrasts the tongue/gossip with lightning. He creates an image of a person who uses his/her tongue to destroy others.

He goes on to say:

"Melomo nke ba gamotše bobete."

(p. 41)

"With mouths as if they drank blood."

The poet detests the use of make-ups by Black women.

4.3.8 METAPHOR

Metaphor like simile is more used by all the poets. Let us look into the following examples:

"Mosebjadi"

"Mosebjadi ke mohumi mahlokong,
Ke modiitšana leratong le lethabong."

(Mokgako 1975, p. 49)

"Mosebjadi is rich in pains
She is poor in love and happiness."

The poet is disappointed because things did not go well between him and Mosebjadi, the woman he loved.

4.3.9 PERSONIFICATION

Lentsoane uses a number of methods in order to personify. We shall discuss a few examples.

Apostrophe

Lentsoane likes to address various objects as if they were human beings capable of hearing and understanding what he tells them. He gives instructions to these objects. In the poem "Leleme" (tongue) he says:

"Leleme o lemetše
O reng o hloka sephiri."

The tongue is being addressed as if it is a human being. The poet questions the tongue for not having a secret, for being loose and just saying anything.

In another poem "Lesebo" (Gossip) he says:

"Lesebo o reng o hloka mekgwa
Ithute hlompho."

He addresses gossip (lesebo) that it has no manners. It would be better that it learnt to respect. He goes further and says:

"O tšhabe go welawela batho."

"Don't pounce upon people."

He instructs gossip not to pounce upon people.

It is remarkable that the inanimate objects the poet apostrophises make movements. It is probably this movement which makes the poet associate these things with animate objects. He actually elevates the objects. Further in that by talking to them and giving them instructions and they also listen to his views about some aspects of life.

The objects which the poet addresses do not reply. They are presented as sympathetic listeners to the poet's comments. One gets an indication that the views expressed by the poet need not be debated, but should be accepted or pondered on seriously. We could even speculate that the poet indirectly wishes that man could listen to him sympathetically just like these objects.

Human features

In some of his poems Lentsoane gives his inanimate objects physical characteristics which are found in human beings. In his poem Lehufa he says to Lehufa (jealousy):

Lena le pelotelele (It has patience)

"Lehu (Death)
Ke nkgwete ke a kgwetenkiša

Ke fentše ke fentšwe
 Ke nkgišetšana mahwafa
 Le Kriste Morwa Modimo
 O mphentše o ntšhitše mereba.
 A tsoga ka tšatši la boraro."

The poet visualises death as a brave person who is very strong who sometimes defeats people and is sometimes defeated. Death fought with Jesus Christ but Christ defeated it because He rose up on the third day.

In conclusion we must concede that personification is well used in the praises. Emotion and human actions are the main methods that are employed. But compared with other types of images, personification is very infrequently used. This is not surprising if we consider that the praises are addressed mainly to the chief, king or any other hero, who is already a person and cannot be personified further. Objects that come in for personification are of secondary importance.

4.3.10 SYMBOLISM

Shipley (1970, p. 322) defines symbolism as, "The representation of a reality on one level of reference by a corresponding reality on another"

It is this difference of the levels of reference that distinguishes the symbol from the metaphor, so that, "... we feel that we can not stop at the literal level, something invites us, as it were, to see further significance in what is presented to us" (Ntuli, 1978, p. 208). While an image may be used purely as a symbol, on occasions it may initially be used as a metaphor but by its recurrent use in a particular sense it then graduate as a symbol, as Wellek and Warren aptly puts it: "An image may be invoked once as a metaphor, but if it persistently recurs, as

presentation and representation, it becomes a symbol" (1949, p. 194)

In one of his poems "Bahlatswadiaparo" Lentsoane draws a very accurate picture of the washerwomen's lot in our big cities. He contrasted their struggle to fend for their youngsters with that of well to do people. He expressed his feelings thus:

"Moo ba bangwe ba kwakwaletšego
ditulong,
Ba lokišwa meriri;
Bangwe ba bolailwe ke dithai
Go tšhitšhila basadi,
Ba tekateka mebileng;
Dihlogong ba swareleditše
thab'a diaparo."

(Mokgako 1976, p. 86)

"While others are sitting in
comfortable chairs
Being plaited hairs
Others with their ties on
Women are staggering
Wobbling in the streets
On their heads supporting a
mountain of clothes."

Through the use of choice of words and apt imagery, Lentsoane is able to draw a vivid picture of the washerwomen. This image is enlarged by the contrast he makes these women and other women of a higher class.

He does this through the use of phrases like "Ba kwakwaletše ditulong" compared with "Go tšhitšhila basadi". The last two lines in the extract not only imply physical burden of the load

the washerwomen carry out, also give one the impression that these women earn their living the hard way.

The poet maintains that the efforts of these washerwomen are not in vain. Like their well-to-do counterparts they are able to give their children not only food but also education which is a necessity to modern life. He says:

"Bommamerwalo, ga le merwalo
 Le a rwala bophelong,
 Bommadithoto ba Soweto, re le rolela
 dikuane,
 Re itiantšha matolo ge re le bona
 Gobane matsogong a lena go
 tšwele dinaledi
 Go sa tla tšwa mahlasedi."

(Mokgako 1975, p. 36)

"Load carriers you are not a burden,
 You carry in life,
 Goods carriers of Soweto we doff
 our hats for you.
 We shiver at the knees when we see you,
 Because in your arms there are
 stars
 Sunbeams will still emerge."

The word dinaledi (stars) and mahlasedi (sunbeams) are symbolic of the achievement that the children of these washerwomen attain. They show that even this poor washerwomen are able to produce community leaders. This shows us that leaders do not always come from well-to-do families but can also come from the lowest families in the community.

We also get a lot of symbolism in Matsepe's poetry, the poem "E sa le ka meso" is a good example concerning symbolism:

"E sa le ka meso molodi go lla wa kgaka le wa kgwale,
 Motsomi o ithintha phoka a kgalegile nama,
 Ya bo mmutla tsoga Lehlokwa e go beye sehubeng
 Le hlatloge meboto le theošane melapo."

(Molodi wa Thaga 1968: p. 19)

Matsepe gives a good picture of a real morn, full of activity, the re-awakening of all life. The guineafowl and the pheasants are croaking their happy songs, while the hunter happily shakes off the dew from his feet. High up on the smooth rocks the rock-rabbit is perched to welcome the first rays of the sun. The eagle wheels his way in the sky ready to plunder any nest, that catches its eyes. The roar of the lion is heard from deep in the forest.

Matsepe symbolises destruction and threat to the beauty and order of nature. The hare is threatened by the dog, which in turn is threatened with failure and starvation. The rock-rabbit is threatened by the eagle; the chicks that the eagle seeks are threatened by starvation, if the mother bird fails to turn up with something. The roaring lion is a threat to all animals.

4.3.11 HYPERBOLE

Lentsoane in one of his poems "Barwedi ba Afrika" has used this technique successfully. Thus:

"Go tšwele bo Yvonne le bo Sara,
 Melomo nke ba gamotše bobete
 Ba ronwa wa mafelelo."

(Mokgako 1975: 41)

"There comes Yvonne, Sara and company
 With mouths as if they drank blood
 Being extremely clumsy."

Lentsoane exaggerated the behaviour and mode of dress of some of the Black women. He loathes the use of wigs, especially red and grey ones. To him such capital integuments spoil the natural beauty of the women. He also detests the use of make-ups; he says: "Ba gamotšhe bobete" (With mouths as if they drank blood) exaggerating the use of make-ups.

In another poem on women, Lentsoane used the hyperbole to reveal the mode of dress used by the Black women. He says:

"Matšatši a diikgateletše
 Diroko di hlatloga matolo
 Bošego le mosegare
 Dikgatha nke di mokatong
 Ga re tsebe gore di hlaganetše eng godimo."
 (Mokgako 1975: 37)

"These days they are hard on it
 Dresses are shortened to above the
 knees day and night
 They speed up as if at the race course
 We do not know what they are hurrying upwards for."

The impression we get from the lines is that women in our days are beginning to lose their sense of decency. The statement is over exaggerated when the poet says the exposure of the better parts of their lower limbs seems to be aimed at attracting their male counter-parts. In other words women have become promiscuous.

We consider imagery to be the hallmark of a good poetry. Consequently, most of the images are very effective and succeed in clarifying and enhancing what is being described. It is imagery which heightens the standard of Northern Sotho poetry.

There are other figures of speech which are not used as associative devices or based on comparison like those we have just discussed, but which are nevertheless very important to poetry. They are irony, sarcasm, humour and satire. They are not used to create certain feelings and attitudes in the poem. Some poems rely much more on these figures than on imagery for effect.

CHAPTER 5

5. THE GENERAL REMARKS AND CONCLUSION

We have at the outset of the development of Northern Sotho poetry pointed out that there are three stages of development viz.:

Traditional (oral) stage;
 Transitional (semi-traditional) stage; and
 Modern stage.

Some scholars prefer to demarcate the above stages according to decades. This may be convenient, but sometimes there is really no justification for such a division. Yet some other scholars divide these periods according to what may be regarded as "movements". Such movements may be manifested in popular themes characteristic of the said period under review. For the sake of this attempt I have used the periods viz.:

1950 to 1959
 1960 to 1969
 1970 to 1980

Although I have to contend that chronologically these periods are not watertight.

I found the systemic approach to be of value to the discussion of the development of Northern Sotho poetry, as literature is viewed as a complex whole or unity of systems which are inconstant process of influencing and affecting one another. The relationship between systems finds itself in a state of change depending on and brought about by the values or norms dominating literature in a specific period.

Lambert (1985: 36) as quoted by Maphike, P.R.S., maintains that "no single national literature can be explained or defined in static terms as being just a national literature ... We have to take into account the various and complex links with particular neighbouring literatures, with recent and older traditions, or with other systems, for example political or artistic systems". What poses a real problem to him is the question of the boundaries of a literature. He intimates that, in spite of attempts over a century and half by comparatists to "improve this nationalistic perspective", for the moment all theoreticians can do is suggest descriptive models adapted to the situation they want to clarify. The same applies to Northern Sotho literature.

The Belgium scholar, José Lambert, who visited South Africa in 1978 and again in 1986, is strongly in favour of a polysystemic view of literature of Southern Africa. Instead of accumulating largely historical and literary evolution has to look for norms and models. He/she has to determine how literature is organised and what kind of system it is. (Lambert 1985: 35)

Lambert (1985: 38) suggests that the question of literary autonomy for South African literature in particular, and for all South African literatures in general, has to be discussed by a series of general and particular questions, which Swanepoel (1987: 95-100) rephrased for clarity. A few questions will be discussed below:

Are the literary norms and models imported or not? Are they traditional or not?

The norms in poetry are both traditional and imported. In Northern Sotho we have dithetogale (traditional poetry), the norms are traditional in style, structure and theme. There have been instances in the development of the poetry sub-systems where

structural interferences from foreign systems occurred simultaneously with the traditional traits of rhythm and repetition - while these interferences occupy the peripheral strata of the system we had an era of transition which was characterised by Northern Sotho taking the path of written poetry in which features of the traditional poetry e.g. linking, parallelism, etc were blended with those of modern poetry. It was during this period that stretches from about the late 50's to about the early sixties that authors began to adapt the techniques of praise poetry to their everyday experiences.

From which literary systems do they import texts? Are these translated texts? Who is translating them? For what purpose?

The Berlin Lutheran Missionaries played a major role in converting Northern Sotho to written language. It is this early endeavours which laid a sound foundation for subsequent creative writings in the language. On the whole English and Afrikaans are the dominating literatures.

Translation played an important role in initiating creative writing amongst the Black people. For Northern Sotho C.N. Phatudi translated Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1958) and *Julius Caesar* (1966).

Having learned to read and write, the Northern Sotho people started reading works which were written in English and later in Afrikaans. The reading matter was no longer strictly religious in content. They started writing books dealing with secular topics; the examples of which were mentioned in Chapter one.

The period 1950 - 1960. The beginning years in the history of Northern Sotho literature were most promising, and very early the scene was set for exciting developments. (P.S. Groenewald, 1983)

The fifties were the first of the important years of the poet: whereas only six volumes of poetry were published up to 1950, from 1950 up to 1969 twelve volumes were to come from the press. Some of these poets wrote in a traditional vein, but the influence of the missionaries was, however, perceivable in a number of volumes in which the poets tried to set their thoughts to rhyming verse. This was a radical deviation from the traditional practice, and these poems did not meet with any success. But the experiment did not die with these authors and the first really innovative poetry was written by Mamogobo and was published in 1953. Mamogobo kept to the traditional metrical idiom, but thematically his poetry is intensely emotional, personal; poetry in which he takes man's plight to heart, acting as a mediator between man and God. This was only a beginning, and all was set for the following years in which some of the most important names in Northern Sotho poetry were to make their debut and which would take us well into the Matsepe era.

THE PERIOD 1960 TO 1980

These years were to become the decade of the masters and the S.E.K. Mqhayi prize for Black literature was during this period awarded no less than four times to the Northern Sotho writer. In the field of poetry there are many names to be mentioned: firstly, there are the names of Machaka and Maditsi who were both awarded winners; Secondly, the name of Fela is fit to refer to as he wrote the epic verse, Sebilwane (1961), reminding the reader of the old epics, such as the Finnish Kelarala, which is characterised by a lyrical quality rendered to those poems by the strong rhythmical component as well as the euphonious sound stratum; Thirdly, we have the name of E.K.K. Matlala who composed his third drama in verse Tshukudu (1976): Fourthly, the name of Matsepe together with those of many other new writers who came to the fore with important experiments, opening new Vistas for the Northern Sotho poet by which he can express his thoughts.

A clear-cut division between different poetic trends has become possible: some of these poets do still keep to the traditional lines; others having joined hands with Mamogobo; whereas a new group has come into being, poets who have come to experiment with a diversity of rhythmical and metrical devices giving way to meditative poetry in which the poets reflect on questions concerning man's fate, contemplating life and death. (P.S. Groenewald (1983)) During the seventies there was a lull in the poetic activities, but during the eighties the poet was as active as before. At this point in time three main streams can be distinguished: Firstly, the category of the praise song written in line with traditional practice. Secondly, the category of experimental verse, such as the poems of Ratlabala and Lentsoane. Thirdly, the category which includes poems composed in a traditional metrical style, but which are thematically and structurally in line with the experimental poems. (P.S. Groenewald 1988)

While I have respect and great appreciation for works published in Northern Sotho, I believe there are some areas that need attention. For one thing, especially from the period 1970 to date, the scope of our themes seem to have narrowed down. Before the 1970's writers like Madiba, Mminele and Mamagobo wrote on a number of themes like egocentricity, the cruelty of the white man, pride, etc; most themes after the 1970's seem to be love and chieftaincy. May be most surprising on chieftaincy and its problems (polygamy, witchcraft, adultery, power, conflicts, etc.), because of Matsepe's creative and interesting work on this area and his dominance of Northern Sotho during that period.

In view of the changing political winds and the somewhat flexibility and willingness on the part of publishers to publish work on a variety of themes and political views, one can only hope that in future people, even in Northern Sotho will increasingly write on themes based on people, Black people daily experiences, unemployment, crime (including necklacing and multi-

murderers) politicization of different institutions like church, schools, etc. Another thing that attracts our attention is that most of the themes are adult orientated e.g. love, family-problems, witchcraft, etc. There is hardly anything that is child orientated, especially for the high school child. For the primary school pupil Madiba, M.J. made a commendable contribution and some authors like Lemekoane, Ramushu and Mphahlele have added some new ideas. Translations from other languages have also contributed to the enrichment of our language. The high school pupils would enjoy themes written on; truancy, gangsterism, or mob-psychology, influence by role models, experimentation on drugs, liquor, tobacco, disco, school experiences, competitions, sporting events, etc.

Many teenagers seem to have little interest in our literature because of the nature of our works. The readership is very low in the Black community as a result. We hope that the increasing awareness of these opinions will lead to writing of works that cover a wide variety of themes in future.

Corresponding to our adult orientated themes, the characters in most of our literature, be it poetry, drama or prose (and most of our songs too) are for adults. There is very little particularly written for children with children as characters. While in real life adults sometimes model behaviour for children to imitate or identify with, it is not necessarily true with literature. Literature is supposed to be an experience during the reading process and not merely something that someone hears of or "listens to" or consumes passively; if it is to have much meaning to the reader. To the extent that more literature is adult-orientated while our main readers of Northern Sotho literature are mainly students; we have a problem. One sees the opposite picture in Afrikaans and English Youth literature. Take for example in Afrikaans; "Trompie Series", "Dirkus in die knyp", "Malisel en die tweeling", "Die geheim van Job se grot", etc. In English: "Charles Dickens' great expectations", "Oliver

"Twist", "Tom Sawyer", "Njabulo Ndebele's uncle" in "Fools and other stories", etc. All these books are based on youth and the characters are youngsters too! These indeed institute youth literature in the true sense. Youth literature in Northern Sotho is almost non-existent as a concept. Youth are forced by prescription and/or syllabus requirement to read adult literature based on adult themes narrated or acted by adult characters in adult settings. We need to produce literature that will foster certain perceptions in order to facilitate changing certain attitudes and stereotypes.

On the other hand I believe that Northern Sotho literature as a whole is chauvinistic in nature. All it is about, is the glorification of maleness. It worships males throughout; most of the heroes and major characters are males. Females are reduced to minor roles; in most cases witches, thieves, tempters, etc. - subservient roles. So far there is only one work by a female that tries to change this view and present females as equally intelligent and with rights and responsibilities: "Nonyana ya tokologo". More work need to be done to put females where they rightfully belong.

To conclude, one may say, we still have to produce literature that will be relevant to the many adults who are attending "literacy classes" and may thus not enjoy children's literature or understand adult orientated literature which may be too complicated for them. I think we need to start writing on female themes, children and youth themes and using females and youth as characters; and writing from feminist and youth points of view, if our work is to remain meaningful and relevant to our readers. I believe we are well on that path and hopefully with the possibilities that also reach the depths and heights that other languages have long reached. For sometime we shall need help, advices and training; and with that we too shall reach some destination. Until then we shall have to do with what we have got. What else can we do?

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