

THE POETRY OF C.L.S. THOBEGA

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN THE SUBJECT

AFRICAN LANGUAGES

at

VISTA UNIVERSITY

PROMOTER: PROFESSOR R.S. CHAPHOLE &

DATE SUBMITTED: OCTOBER 1995

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My greatest gratitude goes to C.L.S. Thobega for the time and advice he had during our interview and telephonic discussions.

My sincere gratitude goes to my promoter Professor R.S. Chaphole for his guidance and patience throughout the course of this study. His inspiration and encouragement made the inception and completion of this study possible. Ke a leboga Kgabo!

A word of thanks to all my colleagues and all those who showed interest in my work.

I am greatly indebted to my family, my brothers and sisters, who have been a pillar of strength through thick and thin. To you Mavis, my dear, thanks for your support. Ke a leboga Batlounge!

I am also thankful to Mrs M.D. Mhlongo for typing this work without complaint.

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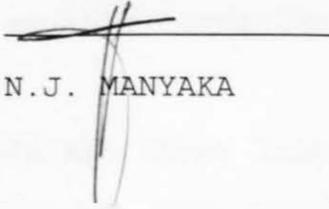


DEDICATION

To my mother, KUTAMA and the little girl MPH0

DECLARATION

"I declare that: **The Poetry of C.L.S. Thobega** is my own work, that all the sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references, and that this thesis was not previously submitted by me for a degree at another university".



N. J. MANYAKA

SUMMARY

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'A man with one theory is lost. He needs several of them, or lots! He should stuff them in his pockets like newspapers.'

(Brecht, in Makaryk, 1992:viii)

This study looks at intertextuality and influence in C.L.S. Thobega's poetry. The two concepts viz. intertextuality and influence are subsumed under the theory, **DECONSTRUCTION**, a theory which tells us that there is a relationship between texts and writers themselves.

In the first instance, we observed that Thobega as a bicultural person, has been influenced by both his cultural background, hence his reference to oral traditional literature and his religious background.

In discussing the oral traditional influence, we looked at his use of proverbs. The study also looked at aspects like imagery and themes to show the effect of influence in his poetry.

An aspect of intertextuality comes into the picture, when we looked at the relationship between the poet's texts with others (previous texts) and also between the poet himself and other poets/writers (precursors).

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

Sometime in the early 1970s we awoke from the dogmatic slumber of our phenomenological sleep to find that a new presence had taken absolute hold over our avant-garde critical imagination: Jacques Derrida. Somewhat startlingly, we learned that, despite a number of loose characterizations to the contrary, he brought not structuralism but something that would be called "post-structuralism". The shift to post-structuralism direction and polemic in the intellectual careers of Paul de Man, J. Hillis Miller, Geoffrey Hartman, Edward Said, and Joseph Riddel - all of whom were fascinated in the 1960s by strains of phenomenology - tells the whole story, (Leutricchia quoted by Culler, 1983:12).

One of the most interesting aspects the theory **Deconstruction** has brought along is intertextuality. Intertextuality, together with

influence form the main basis of this study. It is our observation that a number of features, within Thobega's language, environment, beliefs (religious and cultural) are covered by a wide scope of his poetry. Therefore tracing these features can only be adequately done through Deconstructive framework. Isn't the case that it is Deconstruction which informs us that there is and will always be a link between texts themselves and between writers (new writers and precursor writers). Leitch (1983:59) captures this point clearly by stating that:

The text is not an autonomous or unified object, but a set of relations with other texts. Its system of language, its grammar, its lexicon, drag along numerous bits and pieces - traces - of history so that the text resembles a Cultural Salvation Outlet with unaccountable collections of incompatible ideas, beliefs, and sources. The "genealogy" of the text is necessarily an incomplete network of conscious and unconscious borrowed fragments. Manifested, tradition is a mess. Every text is intertext.

(Emphasis mine).

It is through this linking between a text with other texts, environment, history and others that we clearly come to realise the extent Thobega has been influenced by all these features. His writing through such influences is an expression of a sober-minded and intelligent writer. His poetry is an expression of societal, religious, cultural life and a rejection of unjust social values. To borrow from Jefferson and Robey (1984:72), Thobega's poetry,

... is not a turning loose of
emotion but an escape from
emotions, it is not the expression
of personality, but an escape from
personality.

Thobega's poetry objectifies his feelings, expressing them directly and indirectly through 'objective correlations'. The uncompromising stance the poet adopts in his poetry is reflected in what he said during our interviews.

In writing my poetry, I don't
beg, I write what I think.
And somewhere, somehow good
people will see and observe my
good poetry, then publish
prescribe and write about it.

1.1 Aims of study

The purpose of this study is to make a detailed analysis of the poetry of CLS Thobega written in Setswana. This will be done by involving influence and intertextuality as analytical bases to foreground the old works/texts as we grapple with contemporary ones. The word text in this study will be taken to mean written works. Thobega's control of old textual, societal, biblical, political and other features will be given particular attention. Nowhere in Setswana literary studies, poetry in particular have influence and intertextuality been treated (save Manyaka 1992 - which deals with Prose). Therefore this study will open new avenues in Setswana in as far as poetry is concerned.

1.2 Scope and framework of study

This study will present the poet's biographical sketch. The biographical notes will present the poet's background so as to shed some light on the influences which play(ed) a role in his works.

The study will comprise six chapters. The first chapter will serve as introduction to this study and to the poet himself. The same chapter will also give views on poetry both modern and traditional.

The second chapter develops a theoretical framework which underpins this study. The framework **Deconstruction**, especially its sub-part intertextuality informs the study. We will also discuss influence in this chapter. The third chapter discusses the types of influence and show their importance in the poet's composition.

Chapter four evaluates imagery in Thobega's poetry. Under imagery we will discuss metaphor, simile, personification and symbolism. The fifth chapter looks at themes in his poetry. The selection of themes reveals the poet's sensitivity to what goes on around him. Confirming this, Alvarez-Pereyre (1979:21) states that:

The true commitment of the writer does not consist in singing manifestos, deciding whether or not to vote, but in daring to depict reality as it really is. And this will necessarily lead to conflict with most other people because in general they cannot see this reality.

The last chapter gives concluding remarks.

1.3 Literature review

This sub-section will look at the literature review on poetry and also some works written on influence in genres other than poetry.

1.3.1 Poetry

Setswana has not produced much work/research in as far as poetry is concerned. But a study of note was written in 1970 by E.S. Moloto. In this study, Moloto emphasises the function of African poetry, in a way differentiating it from Western poetry. This study, does not look at the structural analysis of Setswana poetry as such, but despite this flaw, this study remains a valuable contribution to African languages.

In other Sotho studies, we have research by: Mashabela (1979) who discusses the influence of oral tradition on modern poetry. Aspects detected as part of oral tradition as he indicates are myths, legends and folklore. In his work, Mashabela does not show how our poets use these oral traditional aspects in their poetry.

Moleleki (1988) skillfully discusses influence in Maphalla's poetry. He shows how different aspects, viz. oral tradition (what he calls indigenous influences) and exotic (religious) influences have a role in shaping a writer's work. As part of

indigenous influences, he uses proverbs in their various forms. He also looked at the influence of politics on one's writing.

Lenake (1984) has done research on Ntsane's poetry. His study is basically a classification of Ntsane's poems in terms of their 'subject-matter' and 'themes'. He further looks at communicative devices, the "so-called speech act theory" as he calls them and limitedly looks at the poetic devices in Ntsane's poetry.

Mogale (1993) looks at factors which influenced Mamogobo's philosophy of life. He has observed Mamogobo's role in politics, as a member of the ANC Youth League and found traces of politics in the poet's work, hence his theme of protest in his study.

Ntuli (1984), like Moleleki, discusses the influence of oral traditional poetry, prose narratives, Western poetry and religious influence in Vilakazi's poetry.

Milubi (1984), looked at the theme of protest in Ratshitanga's poetry. In investigating protest, he uses poetic techniques like repetition, rhyme, alliteration and skillfully employs other aspects like imagery and symbolism. He finalises his study by stating that the poet (Ratshitanga), reflects on the economic, political and cultural struggles of his own poetry. This study belongs to those studies which are of great importance to literature.

Milubi (1988) comes with a very convincing account of the reflection on the development of Venda poetry from traditional to modern forms. In his study he discusses a variety of aspects that characterize the Venda poetry. Furthermore Milubi skillfully discusses the theme of protest in poetry in his study.

Other valuable studies done on poetry are: Mona (1994), Zotwana (1993) and Mampa (1992).

1.3.2 Prose

Serudu (1993) skilfully investigates the different types of influence in Matsepe's novels. He looks at societal (traditional) and religious influence to analyze aspects like plot, patterns, style, character and themes. This, is an extremely valuable contribution to Northern Sotho in particular and literature in general.

Manyaka (1992) looks at influence and intertextuality in Monyaise and Mmileng's works. He highlights the influence Monyaise (host) has on Mmileng (parasite), and how Monyaise's texts also feed on Mmileng's texts.

Msimang (1986) skillfully discusses the influence of folktales on the Zulu novel. He shows the extent to which the Zulu novel has been influenced by the folktale and its aspects. He looks at the plot of the novel which has features of the plot of a

folktale,

setting, characterization, themes, style of both the novel and the folktale. This remains the most valuable contribution to literature. Therefore, this sub-section (1.3.2), indicates to us that more research has to be done around influence, especially in poetry.

1.4 The poet and his environment

Thobega has written poetry and has tried his hand on other types of genres. He has written volumes of poetry, volumes of short stories, novels, dramas, traditional folklore and school books which present an analysis of poetry, prose and drama. The writer, started writing in 1974, at the age of 16. By 1984, he had written and published 15 texts (covering all genres). Ten years later, i.e. 1994, he added another fifteen, to have 30 books to his credit. Some of his well known books are:

- * Mathaithai
- * Sekitikiti
- * Thari ya Aferika 1
- * Thari ya Aferika 2
- * Ga lowe 1, 2 and 3
- * Khupamarama
- * Mokubukubu
- * Sethunya sa bohutsana

- * Dinaledi 1 and 2
- * Ithuteng go boka 1 and 2
- * Mokgosi wa Diphetogo
- * Molodi wa Dikgang and others.

The novel Sekitiki and the poetry volume Dikeledi tsa lefatshe, won him the Sol Plaatjie Award, presented by the Setswana Language Board. Thobega is presently undoubtedly the most promising young author in Setswana.

Cedric Lebese S. Thobega was born at Mankodi, a Bahurutshe village in Botswana. His father Stephen Abel Thobega was supposed to be a chief of this village, but refused because he felt he wanted to be a priest. His father got married to Mercy Boitshwarelo Seboni, a sister to Professor M.O.M. Seboni, who has written extensively in Setswana. The family moved to Molepolole and is still living there today. His father has stayed in South Africa, where he did Theology at Rossettenville College and became a 'religious poet' (a priest) as CLS Thobega describes him. The family stayed in places like Kimberly, Johannesburg, Vryburg, Kuruman, Orange Free State, Mafikeng and many other places, hence most of his poems, reflect the places he has been to.

Reverend Thobega has been a member of the African National

Congress during the years 1950' - 1960s. As a youth, the police used to come and question him about his political involvement

during their stay in South Africa. The family went back to Botswana where his father became a Parliamentarian and passed away in 1970.

Thobega, as a qualified teacher, has taught at Madiba Secondary School, Lobatse Secondary School, Kgari Sechele II Secondary School, Shashe River School and the Teacher Training College of Francistown. He later joined the Ministry of Education, where he worked as an Assistant Bursaries Secretary and later moved to Curriculum Development and Evaluation. Presently he is with the Educational Broadcasting Corporation (EBC).

Thobega has visited many overseas places representing Botswana (Setswana) as a writer. He has been to Russia attending an International Afro-Asian Writers Conference. He has visited Zimbabwe, London and Paris to represent Botswana writers in Writer's Forums.

1.5 Views on poetry

Different views on poetry have been expounded. It will be difficult then to align oneself with just one view. Reeves (1970:21), agrees with this by stating that:

Most experts would agree to call certain literary works poems, but when it comes to agreeing on a definition of poetry that would cover all such works, there, the trouble begins.

Most scholars, (because of the difficulty poets go through in their composition of poetry) simply see it as hard work, as it entails changing, replacing, rewriting and even forcing words, phrases and lines to give the poet what he wants to achieve in the production of poetry. In adopting this coined definition of poetry, this will fit exactly well with what Jakobson (1960) terms selection and combination when talking about the language of poetry. This also ties well with Spencer and Gregory (1970) as they use the terms set and collocation. These, whether by Jakobson or Spencer and Gregory, entail choosing (selecting/set) best words and arranging (combination/ collocation) them in the best order (in poetry). It is our belief that such an act of selecting and putting together words and phrases into lines and stanzas of a poem, is not an easy task, but a heavy and hard one.

Wordsworth sees poetry as a spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions. This definition sort of fits well in oral traditional

poetry, where a performer (bard), filled with internal (suppressed) emotions and excitement) as the praised-one (chief, warrior) approaches the gathering, will just stand up to externalise his

powerful emotions. His emotions will pour out in words of praise, like an overflowing river in floods. Closer to Wordsworth's definition of poetry, is the one by Simpson (1967:03) when saying,

Poetry is thought expressed in
rhythm. Poetry incorporates
images and ideas than can
be found in prose, but
poetry begins with a vital
rhythmic movement,

Reeves (1970:4-5) says,

Poetry is an affair of the heart,
no writer can make you fall
in love ... Poetry can
never be fully explained. It
can be felt, and it can be
talked about with profit.

It is without doubt that poetry and its expression are something which come from within an individual, 'especially' if we talk

about oral traditional poetry, which is not coined and forced. This is the type of poetry which comes right from within one's inner self, it is one's feeling, one's emotions, which must be accompanied by a certain sound (that very soft music) - rhythm.

The rhythm talked about here will always appeal to one's ears. Hence Untermeyer (1938:4) says,

Poetry is not a "perculiar art".
It is one of the most powerful of
all arts. With the exception of
drama, it is the only art which
appeals through both the eye and
the ear. All the other arts make
their appeal through the eye or
ear, not through both.

It must be noted that the definition covers both modern and traditional poetry and will always appeal to the ears because of its rhythm and to the eye because of its structure. Therefore, it is not for us to choose the best definition of poetry as most definitions will suit the type and occasion of poetry.

1.5.1 Types of poetry

1.5.1.1 Modern Poetry

African Modern Poetry is that type of poetry which is imported

from Western poetry. It is much easier to state what it is than what it is not. The contact between our poetry and the Western poetry has influenced our own writing of poetry. This resulted in the African poetry being termed African Modern poetry. Again, of significance are the resemblances, between the two viz. African Modern Poetry and Western Poetry. Jabavu quoted by Ntuli (1984:34) says,

It is English influence in exercise, by reason of its outright invitation of English modes (metres, long, short and common, all varieties of stanzas, and even the heroic couplet reminiscent of Pope and Dryden) all punctiliously observed. Even the titles remind one of Keats in disguising their subject, ensuring that *ars artem Celare est*.

The above quotation, emphasises the similarities between English (Western) and African Modern poetry. The resemblances in features make this type of poetry differ completely from oral traditional poetry. This type of poetry is characterized by features like, rhyme, which is one of the main features of modern poetry. Its use in our own poetry, in some areas spoil the writings of poets. Poets will obviously try to force their poems to rhyme, by coining certain words and phrases.

The form of these poems, is another matter which was adopted from Western poetry. The poems will consists of stanzas of equal lines, where each stanza will have its own idea. These poems

will always be characterized by a variety of themes, something which contrast it with the oral traditional poetry. The themes will range from love, death, power, protest and many others which are fully dealt with in Thobega's poetry.

1.5.1.2 Oral traditional poetry

We will start by citing what Irele (1990:27) says about the distinction between modern African literature and traditional African literature when he says,

... traditional African literature is something which exists in our indigenous languages and which is related to our traditional societies and cultures, while modern African literature has grown out of the rupture created within our indigenous history and way of life by the colonial experience, which is naturally expressed in the tongue of our former Colonial rulers.

As such oral traditional poetry has got something to do with our own culture, to extol virtues to manly praises of courage, strength and others. Hence the main theme of this type of poetry

is heroism. These poems were handled by bards, through the word of mouth. The mastery of language was a highly significant feature found in these bards. Finnegan (1983:88) says,

The style was full of archaisms, obscure language, and highly figurative forms of expression.

Two most significant characteristics of this type of poetry are images and repetition. The imagery in this form of poetry, provides a striking contrast to the more straight forward expression in prose. By far the most striking/common form is that of metaphor. Repetition is another essential aspect of praise. Okpewho (1992:71) talks of it as;

... the most fundamental characteristic features of oral literature. It has both an aesthetic and a utilitarian value: in other words, it is a device that not only gives a touch of beauty or attractiveness

to a piece of oral expression ...
but also serves certain practical
purposes in the overall organization
of the oral performance.

In conclusion we can say that modern (written) poetry consists of fixed texts that have a certain number of lines (equal lines) per stanza. We cannot alter its organization except the original poet. Everything remains intact whereas oral traditional poetry can be modified to fit the specific performance, (Okumu, 1992:55).

CHAPTER 2

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genreless text; there is always a genre and genres: yet such participation never amounts to belonging. And not because of an abundant everflowing or a free, anarchic, and unclassifiable productivity, but because of the trait of participation itself.

- Jacques Derrida, "The Law of Genre".

The main concern here is to outline a theoretical framework which will form the basis of our analysis in subsequent chapters. This will be preceded by a "detour" paragraphed DERRIDA, DECONSTRUCTION and STRUCTURALISM. The envisaged approach will be informed/fed by loaded concepts like Host and Parasite, Intertextuality and Influence. In the body of the thesis these concepts, related as they are, will form self-contained chapters.

2.1 Derrida, Deconstruction and Structuralism

Deconstruction is the term associated with the thinking and pronouncements of the French philosopher, Jacques Derrida. The theory itself is a reaction to some of the tenets of

structuralism. We must bear in mind though that deconstruction is not a replacement of structuralism, but a critique and refinement of it.

In the event we have the equally graphic "post-structuralism", a term that seems not to have what we do in the present at all, but rather to re-name structuralism itself, as what we used to do in the past. It provides a post to which structuralism is then hitched, confining it by means of the shortest tether the language has to offer, (Machin, 1988:02).

As we deal with deconstruction, we are still operating within the realm of structuralism, since deconstruction constitutes an adventure of vision, a conversion in the way of putting questions to any object. Grabe (1991:123) says that familiarity with Saussurean language theory is indispensable for an understanding of the deconstructive notion of the sign which derives from it (Saussure's language theory). Jefferson and Robey (1987:112) take this point further when they say that any critique, then, must necessarily be made from inside the structuralist system.

Derrida's problem with structuralism does not in any way take issue with the Saussurean principles, but only with the way in which it (structuralism) has unwittingly betrayed the same

principles on which Saussure's 'revolution' was founded. In structuralism, the elements which constitute language structure are signs. A sign in terms of structuralism, consists of twin aspects which are equal. These are the signifier and the signified which are also in an arbitrary relationship. Within this arbitrariness, Saussure knows that there is that difference between language signs themselves. These differences which exist between signifiers, constitute the meaning in texts. For instance, a speaker of English knows very well that the word 'cat' is not the same as 'rat' as /c/ and /r/ are not the same and do not sound the same.

Where traditional theories of meaning like structuralism imply a vertical relationship between the signifier and signified, in which the signifier is seen to reflect or harness meaning other than itself, as Ryan and Van Zyl (1982:92) indicate, Derrida wishes to replace this model of the vertical relationship between the word and its meaning, by reducing the generation of meaning to a process which occurs within a horizontal system of relationships. Ryan and Van Zyl further say that to put it in simple terms, signifiers no longer refer to entities or things beyond themselves; signifiers no longer refer to other signifiers, and meaning is a quality which is never free, never in fact separable from the signifier which 'invokes' it.

Derrida's theory is influenced by these Saussurean principles, "that language consists of a differential network of arbitrary

signification, he nevertheless raises a number of points of criticism against Saussure's language theory, (Grabe, 1991:124). In reality, Saussure's point emphasises the fact that writing is there, just to convey speech. He further states that speech is represented by the written symbols. In such a case, structuralism ranks speech over writing, a point which 'annoys' Derrida. In reacting to this, Derrida prefers to use the concept *différance* which, while preserving Saussure's principle of differentiability, is totally non-substantive and non-hierarchical. It is easy to understand Derrida's 'annoyance' because he (Derrida) needs a written text to deconstruct which the supremacy of speech over writing deprives him of.

Différance is a word derived from the French word *differer* which means both 'to defer', postpone, 'delay' and 'to differ', 'be different from'. These senses of *différance* explain both the fact that any element of a language relates to other elements in a text, and that it also differs from them. This is the essence of intertextuality as we shall see in paragraph 2.2.1. For Derrida, the term *différance* is the opposite of and a substitute for logocentrism. Logocentrism suggests the existence of filled meaning guaranteed by presence and origin. *Différance* sees meaning as permanently differed by its difference from other meanings and thus volatile and unstable. In his own words, Derrida (1981b:8-9) says:

You have noticed that this a is written or read, but cannot be heard ... First différance refers to the (active and passive) movement that consists in differing by means of delay, delegation, reprieve, referral, detour ... Second, the movement of différance, as that which produces differing things, that which differentiates; in the root of all oppositional concepts that mark our language, such as, to take only a few examples, sensible/intelligent, intuition/signification, nature/culture etc. ... Third, différance is also the production, if it can still be put this way, of those differences of the diacritic that the linguistics generated by Saussure, and all the structural sciences modelled upon it, have recalled in the condition for any signification and any structure ... From this point of view, the concept of différance is neither simply structuralist, nor simply geneticist, such and alternative itself being an effect of différance.

Derrida suggests that the concept logocentrism always assigns origin to truth, to the logos, to the spoken word, to the core of reason, or the word of God. Therefore, in these circumstances, it is observed that the full presence of the voice

is valued over mute signs of writing. Writing as such is considered to be secondary to speech, writing represents a fall from full speech. This allows logocentrism to reduce writing into speech, into phonocentrism. As such the dynamics of logocentrism generate historical and cultural matrices or hierarchies: voice/writing, sound/silence. These are Saussure's logocentric dynamics as revealed by Derrida who is quoted by Leitch (1983:25):

It is this logocentrism which, limiting the internal system of language in general by a bad abstraction, prevents Saussure and the majority of his successors from determining fully and explicitly, that which is called the integral and concrete object of linguistics.

Derrida deconstructs the hierarchy of voice/writing by stating that even Saussure's signifier which one initially imagines as written is an acoustic image. Writing according to Derrida is the origin of language, the origin is not the voice(phone) transporting the spoken word(logos). Derrida believes that writing exceeds, proceeds and comprehends language. In its new role and status, writing signifies any practice of differentiation, arbitration and spacing. In building on structuralism, Derrida is not concerned with demonstrating how the text's structures signify but with the revelation of the inadequacies of these structures. He is more concerned with

gaps, indeterminacies, incoherences and places within a text where it (text) violates its own conventions or its contract with the reader. As Stevens and Steward (1987:38) state: to deconstruct the text, is to open it, to release the possible position of its intelligibility, including those which reveal the partiality of the ideology inscribed in the text. To this, Catherine Belsey (1980:104) adds as follows:

The object of deconstructing the text is to examine the process of its production - not the private experience of the individual author, but the mode of production, this material and their arrangement in the work. The aim is to locate the point of contradiction within the text, the point at which it transgresses the limits within which it is constructed, breaks free of the constraints imposed by its own realist form. Composed of contradictions, the text is no longer restricted to a single, harmonious and authoritative reading. Instead it becomes plural, open to re-reading, no longer an object for passive consumption but an object of work by the reader to produce meaning.

As soon as we recognize the elements that inherently contradict themselves or points where the writer/text inherently contradicts

himself/itself, that tells us that we have begun the act of deconstructing a text. Simply put, we can say that the text is said to deconstruct or it deconstructs itself, as it becomes open to a variety of meanings, or the plurality of meaning as Barthes puts it.

We have come to the end of the 'detour'. We now get back on track and consider relevant concepts which found, structure and nourish our analytical framework.

2.2. Developing an analytical framework

Deconstructionists (cf. Belsey (1980), Kristeva (1974), Swanepoel (1990), Bloom et al. 1979) see a text as an intertextual event, where other texts are involved in the interpretation and description of a given text. We cannot surely see a text as a fixed or stable thing as it belongs to language and the infinity of its play of differences. A text then cannot be viewed as an autonomous entity independently of other texts. Abrams (1979:475) sees it (text) as,

A chain of marks vibrating with free
and incessant play of differences.

The term **text** is used in this study to refer to language and everything which must be taken into account when we interpret it. For instance, signs will always rotate, relate and refer to other

endless chains of signs. Readers, are very encouraged to be actively involved in that play of signification as the writer and his intentions are not involved in the interpretation of the text. As such in its interpretation, there is nothing within and without the text which is not text, everything including the world is a text. Derrida(1976a:158) says,

('Il n'y a pas de hors-texte').

There is nothing outside the
text - there is no outside-the-text.

We can take this statement to mean that there are obstacles and barriers between texts, and between text and anything outside it. But in reality what we mean is that there is really nothing in this world which is not text. For instance when we state that Thobega"s texts /poems allude or refer to other texts(texts here can also mean religious, political, cultural aspects and others), we are trying to indicate a variety of texts embedded within his(Thobega). As such anything referred to by the poet is another/other text/texts.

Meaning is seen by deconstructionists as a product of the play of differences. In deciding the meaning of texts, or number of things can be taken into account as points of references. These include the history, the world and others as we said earlier. Jonathan Culler (1982:123) says:

Meaning is context-bound
but the context is boundless.

In determining the meaning of a text, other texts come into play, to act as "texts" of clarity or supplements. Jacques Derrida who coined the term **supplement**, describes it as the strange and peculiar logic of all discursive signifying structures. His focus on the term, is indicative of the fact that it is something added to complete and a thing or something added to a thing already complete in itself. Coyle et al (1990:780) say supplement means,

- either to supply a lack, to complete, or to add to, to provide extra, to go beyond -

We can, by way of an example, take an instance in Manyaka (1992:92) to exemplify such a case. He says:

On the other side Mmileng uses the same situation, portrayed by the host, where Mokgalajwe's wife, just like Diarona, is sick. Fortunately, unlike Pule, the oldman knows that a sick person needs to be cared for. Mmileng (parasite) in this case is alluding

to the host (Monyaise) by bringing a similar scene in his text. A very interesting thing in the two texts is that the host has used a proverb which a reader has to find its meaning, and the parasite has used the meaning of the host's proverb. Therefore the parasite's text is used as a supplement of the host's text, for it gives clarity and meaning to the host's (proverb).

Texts or different texts, will act as supplements of other texts, in cases where there are lacking aspects or "lost presence", (absence). As Derrida puts it in Positions (1972), no element in language is present in and of itself, because, no element can function as a sign without referring to another element which itself is not simply present.

This leads us to the last concept, **trace** which Derrida used from the same source as Freud. Ryan and Van Zyl (1982:103) say trace is an absence which always announces itself in that which is present, though it is not that which is present. Hawthorn (1992:08), has this to say:

When the words written on the writing pad are removed, a slight scratch or trace of them remains

on the surface. Freud sees this to be representative of the manner in which a trace is left in our physical apparatus of the perceptions which impinge upon it.

For instance, when the poet (Thobega) for that matter, writes poems relating societal events (past, present and future), religious, oral/cultural/traditional artforms, is he not bringing to the fore those aspects which are not present at that moment? Is the poet not tracing(trace) or foregrounding the marks that are not present? Surely he is, hence reference or allusion to various aspects in his poetry. Therefore we totally agree with Worton and Still(1990:12) who state that;

We would therefore suggest that every quotation is a metaphor which speaks of that which is absent and engages the reader in a speculative activity.

The term trace according to Derrida cannot be defined as it is used in a number of ways and in a variety of contexts. In his book Of Grammatology, he says writing is one of the representations of the trace in general, it is not the trace itself. The trace itself does not exist. The French "la trace" can be presented in English to mean track, mark, footprint, trail, or clue. Makaryk (1993:647) says,

For instance, as a mark of the absence of an anterior presence, the footprint too is a kind of trace and it helps us understand the curious double status which traces enjoy.

The footprint serves as a physical reminder of something which is no longer there: as a trace it mediates between presence and absence, between that which remains and that which is no longer presence.

Is it not the case that writers or new writers retrace the footprints of other writers? Isn't it the case that new writers have lived in a cultural, political, historical and other environment, that their writing will "always" trace those previous and absent aspects of life we come to witness in their writings? The new aspects, writings and others will be reminders of all those facts which have 'lost their presence' as we go through the new texts. In short we can say that in texts, all elements refer to others, and contain traces of others, rather than excluding them. To this Ryan and van Zyl (1982:98) say,

Since the sign must contain "alterity" (or fatal opposition) within, that which is thought to be absent from the text invades the text, displacing the present.

This invasion of that which is absent, occurs in new texts in various ways. It either occurs wittingly, where the new author becomes aware of that which s/he is taking from a precursor text. It also occurs unwittingly, where that which the author has gone through in the past just impinge in his writings. As such we talk of footprints which indicate that someone (texts and other writings) have "gone" past before.

2.2.1 Intertextuality

When it finds its way into a current text, a chip or piece of an older monument appears as source, influence, allusion, imitation, archetype or parody. When for example we read a contemporary sonnet, we recognize a stanza pattern, rhyme scheme, conventional thematic, and we recall perhaps Petrarch, Wyatt, Ronsard, Spencer or Milton, (Leitch, 1983:123).

Intertextuality, is a term coined by Julia Kristeva and it alludes to every text building itself as a mosaic of quotations (without quotation marks) which is an absorption and transformation of another or other texts. This term has become very influential as a way of thinking, a way of analysing texts

or a way of seeing how literary texts come to acquire meanings. Intertextuality informs us that a text consists of a range of other texts, discourses and becomes a form of repetition where traditional artform and others are almost embedded in current texts. The 'theory' of intertextuality insists that a text cannot exist as a self-sufficient whole and as such does not function as a closed system. The presence of other texts in one's work/text is what in literary circles is called intertextuality. This is very true as we always notice elements of one text in another. There are traces and elements of Monyaise's work in Thobega's texts. There are elements or quotations without quotation marks from Seboni in Thobega's works. All this will be witnessed in the subsequent chapter. Swanepoel (1990:23) says a text finds itself among a vast number of other texts from which it derives part of its meaning. He further says that in a way each text was influenced by previous texts. Culler (1981:103) says,

'Intertextuality' thus has a double focus.

On the one hand, it calls our attention to the importance of prior texts, insisting that the autonomy of texts is a misleading notion and that a work has the meaning it does only because certain things have previously been written. Yet in so far as it insists on intelligibility on meaning, intertextuality leads us to consider prior texts as contribution to a code which makes possible the various

effects of signification. Intertextuality thus becomes less a name for a work relation to particular texts than a designation of its articulation in the discursive space of a culture: the relationship between a text and the various languages or signifying practices of a culture and its relation to those texts which articulate to it the possibilities of that culture.

Barthes (1975:145) also sees it as a tissue of past citations, where bits of codes, formulae, and others pass into a text and are redistributed within it, for there is always language before and around the text. Therefore, a text in as far as intertextuality goes is a 'deliberate' re-working, recycling, rewriting and echoing of earlier texts which foreground the acknowledged ways in which texts borrow and re-use narratives and discourse generally. Van Gorp quoted by Swanepoel (1990:32) states that a text must constantly be read in its relationship with other texts of which it must be seen as an arrangement, adaptation or continuation.

Intertextuality does not only investigate sources and influences as traditionally believed, it also casts its net wide open to include anonymous discursive practices, codes whose origins are lost, that make possible the signifying practices of texts. Julia Kristeva quoted by Culler(1981:105) further sees it (intertextuality) as a sum total knowledge that makes it possible

for texts to have meaning, once we think of it (meaning) of a text as dependent upon other texts that it absorbs and transforms.

This absorption of one text by the other is a means of achieving or reading intertextuality as seen by Derrida in Plottel and Charney (1973:xvi) for whom,

every script (i.e. *écriture*) is a script of another script (i.e. *écriture d'une écriture*). Each utterance holds the trace of another utterance; everything written carries the mark of a gap with something else that is, or was, written even the ultimate signifier itself is a text of another text. In a sense all writing is a collage of other writing of language, and of tradition.

A writer of texts is a reader and lives within a societal, political, cultural, religious backgrounds before s/he is a creator of texts. As such his work of art is inevitably shot through with quotations, references and influences of every kind. A text is also available through a process of reading and is produced at the moment of reading due to the cross-fertilization of the packaged textual material. It is through this cross-fertilization that we tend to believe that writers borrow from

their own and other's writing when they write and in this process what they borrow appears in their writing and shapes it. In this sense T.S. Elliot says "minor poets borrow", "major poets steal".

These major writers, often employ allusions that are highly specialised, or else are drawn from the author's private reading and experience in the knowledge that very few will recognise them without the help of scholar annotation. Therefore, whatever is borrowed or happen to be in one's work and belongs to someone else helps to supplement both text (the precursor and current texts). To this, Aristotle once said we learn through imitating others. Therefore,

Every literature imitation is a
 supplement which seeks to complete
 and to supplement the original and
 which functions at times for later
 readers as a pretext of the original.
 (Worton & Still, 1991:07).

In treating intertextuality, scholars are confronted by a 'major problem'. This problem refers to the extent to which a new text uses or alludes to a precursor text or how repeated a new phrase/word/expression from an old text must be in a new text. Laurent Jenny in Culler(1983:104) talks about such an issue as a very delicate problem of identification and poses this question; at what point can one start to speak of the presence

of one text in another as an instance of intertextuality. This question leads us to two types of intertextuality; intertextuality proper and allusion or reminiscence.

Intertextuality proper as defined by Culler(1983:104) and Norris (1985:114) occurs, when a text alludes to or redeploys an entire structure, a pattern of form and meaning from a prior texts, whereas allusion or reminiscence refers to a case where a text repeats an element from a prior text without using its meaning.

In this study we will look at intertextuality in its broader sense, going beyond the position taken by Culler and Norris.

2.2.2 Host and Parasite in literature

If we see a great master, we will always find that s/he has taken and used what was good in his predecessors, and that is something which makes him great. Good and very good poets/writers like money do not spring out of the ground or grow from trees but they take their roots in the antique and in the best that has preceded them. To make sense of this statement, it would be great to say generally like the host and parasite nearly all artists live off each other. We cannot have a writer being a very good writer who has not learnt much or anything from his/her predecessors.

The preceding paragraph indicates to us that any writer wittingly or unwittingly like a parasite has fed on the work of other writers, on societal, cultural, religious and political aspects. As is always the case, one's work is inhabited by a long chain of previous texts and feed upon the 'guest' for survival. Harold Bloom talks of deconstruction finding in a text it interprets a double antithesis, for example the relationship of the parasite and the host thus, signifying the (inter)relationship between texts or writers.

A parasite is a species which lives and feeds on another(host). Their relationship i.e host and parasite is referred to as a parasitological relationship. It must be noted that a parasitological relationship between the two species of plants or animals(new texts) in which one plant/animal benefits at the expense of the other usually without killing it, is but merely a way of making its(parasite) life possible, as a precursor writer will to a new writer.

In this study a parasite will refer to a new writer who models his work along the lines of a precursor writer, and or even other influences like oral art, cultural, religious, political aspects and others. The host will refer to the emulated precursor writer because the new writer(parasite) feeds on him, and seeks what would make his work look good and survive.

For instance in his poetry, Thobega has unwittingly fed like a parasite on the works of other writers like Monyaise, especially when talking about cross-roads, as we shall witness in paragraph 4.4.1.1.

Parasite ... live on the body surface of the host ... They do not commonly cause disease in their hosts but rather suck blood or create superficial damage to skin, (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 2: 1046).

Writers, in presenting their texts, do so in the framework of previous text/writers. We can therefore speak of a writer who learns from his predecessors not as a creature/animal/plant that swallows what it takes in crude raw, or undigested, but that feeds with an appetite and hath a stomach to concoct, divide and turn all into nourishment. There is no superficial damage to the precursor writer caused by the borrowing or emulation done by the new writer. The association or comparison of writer to concepts host and parasite is just to highlight the type of relationship writers have in literary circles.

Bloom (1986:249) has recognised that a critical text and a literary text are each parasite and host for each other, each feeding on the other and feeding at destroying and being destroyed. Plottel and Charney (1978:xvi) have this to say:

... criticism has recognised that each text implies other texts. As Williams Carlos Williams puts it; let it be granted that whatever is new in literature the germs of it will be found somewhere in the writing of other times ... Nothing is original or more like one's self as feeding upon others.

Whatever is written past and present will never be original as the above quotation states, because every work will be inhabited by a chain of parasitical presences of previous other texts. As such no communication can be comprehensible unless it is or could be repeated or cited. Rightly so, the host and parasite can live together and benefit each other in the process. Their mutual relationship is such that the precursor text can also gain from the new text by gaining more clarity. Miller in Bloom (1986:225) explains; the precursor writer or text,

... is that ambiguous gift,

host in the sense of victim, sacrifice.

It is broken, passed around, consumed by the critic canny and uncanny who are in that old relation to one another of host and parasite. Any poem, however, is parasitical in its turn on earlier poems

in another version of the perpetual reversal of parasite host. If the poem is food and poison for the critic, it must have in its turn have eaten. It must have been a cannibal consumer of earlier poems.

A parasite text supplements the precursor text or put the other way, a precursor text 'feeds' on the new text by gaining clarity from it. The new text presents itself as an answer, a point of clarity to the reader. We must realise that a parasitical relationship does not occur by itself, it only comes/occurs when the two writer's texts are read. As such only, and only when the texts are read that we can subject the texts or writers to such titles (i.e. host and parasite). No writer or text can be host without one having detected aspects which qualify them to be such. No writer can be a parasite text/writer without one having gone through it or his texts, and detected features which qualify s/he to be such. Such terms/theories, such a relationship, will only occur under a deconstructive reading of a text.

2.2.3 Influence in literature

While, of course, I come down
from the past, the past is my
own and not something marked

Coleridge, Wordsworths ... (Bloom, 1973:06).

A very weak interpretation of Bloom's statement might mean that influence does not conceal/obscure originality as all texts/writers are original. But a very fertile interpretation of it is that each and every writer is influenced by the past, the past in this case equals, precursor writers, environment and others which came before a new or influenced writer. Despite being influenced, a new writer will always be himself/herself, his/her identity would not change to become someone else. Jabbi (1979:121) says originality can in fact be achieved in the very moments of influence.

What is this concept called influence? Influence, as we conceive of it, means that there are no texts, but only relationships between texts. Texts in this case implies anything written. Writers are influenced by a number of factors during the process of writing. Despite being influenced, a writer of integrity or a good writer seldom remains replicatively faithful to his sources. He may in some cases conceive of a common theme in accordance with his own particular sensibility or vision, which may turn to be completely different from those in his source. Bloom in Ellman (1994:173) declares that to live, the poet must misinterpret the father, by the crucial act of misprision, which is the rewriting of the father (precursor).

In his writing, Thobega has used common themes, events (religious, political and others), but what matters is how differently he has used them. To go back to the Formalists'

term, he has defamiliarised the familiar, distorted those aspects which appear in his precursors' texts. In the words of Ellman we could say, it is as if he (new writer) has misread his precursors.

Bloom, in his work 'Anxiety of influence', argues strongly that poets must struggle for priority against the overwhelming influence of their precursors; in the same way that the sons, in Freud's conception of the 'primal horde', must overthrow the father. The new or influenced writer, must turn against the work of his precursor by means of tropes.

The impression one gets from the above paragraph is that influence implies relating and alluding to other aspects of life, other writers in one's writing. A very unfair and derogatory statement about influence is made by Palmer (1982:06) who says,

A reasonably fair statement
of the position would be that
the African novel grew out of the
Western novel ...

This statement suggests that influencing one means causing him/her to write. Influence need not be taken or understood in this light as it is just one of those many factors and aspects which contribute to the emergence, writing and shaping of a work of art. These are just factors which "just" come, jump, impinge or interfere into one's mind in the creativity process or writing

process. One can just think that in talking about influence, in a work of art, one is merely highlighting some of the factors which seem to help in shaping the character of the work of literature. For instance, if a writer, that is, Achebe,

... uses proverbs, for instance
in the dialogue of his characters
partly for verisimilitude, can
they not at one and the same time
be an influence from Igbo oral?

(Jabbi, 1979:114).

Surely, this is influence from one source, but it is not a causative factor in Achebe's writing. Therefore, such an instance is described as the use of elements from oral tradition in a writer's text. A healthy reference or discussion of influence is the one where a critic has to be aware of the respective historical circumstances of the two writers s/he is analysing (so) as to point to the affinities of experience, circumstances and other because one may just start to analyze influence, starting by,

a dull sequence of parallelism
and similarities which declaim
or imply indebtedness without
attempting to assess the external

and quality of the writer's
responsive interaction ...

(Jabbi, 1979:107).

A study on influence can be much aided or improved by a close attention to the biographical details of the writers under study.

Wilde in Bloom (1973:06) comes with a very radical view on influence, which suggests that in influencing one, one is giving away his own soul (but) not just helping him to be himself as stated earlier. There is nothing one loses in influencing the other, in fact there is that mutual beneficial association between the influenced and the source. He (Wilde) says,

Influence is simply a transference of personality, a mode of giving away what is most precious to one's self, and its exercise produces sense and it may be a reality loss. Every disciple takes away something from the master.

In reacting to the above statement, we can say that the master (precursor) does not necessarily lose anything by influencing the new writer as both writers (texts) benefit in the process. We can take what Jabbi (1979:112) says when asking these questions, ... is it really necessary to put one's foot down one way or another over such an issue? Are we not just looking for roots

that fed and still feed this newly grown tree, or is it supposed to have only one root? Would it not be more fruitful perhaps, for a tree and question alike, merely to try and assess the nature and extend of the ways in which all historically valid backgrounds to African writing have respectively helped, or can still help, to shape the new literature?

Finally, it is our belief as discussed earlier that influence is not a causative factor in one's writing. But let it be noted that some of the writer's experiences, contacts and other aspects are revealed in one's writing. There is no way that a writer can evade or bypass elements from other sources no matter how small these elements are, as,

it is common knowledge that an
 artist cannot work in a vacuum.
 For him to produce anything a
 number of influences work on him.
 (Ntuli, 1984:15).

This brings us to the end of the discussion of
 will feature prominently in the chapters that follow. We move
 on to chapter 3 to discuss influence in Thobega's poetry.

CHAPTER 3

The later poet opens himself to what he believes to be a power in the parent-poem that does not belong to the parent proper, but to a range of being just beyond that precursor. He does this, in his poem, by so stationing its relation to the parent-poem as to generalize away the uniqueness of the earlier work, (Hawthorn, 1992:154).

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the influences that are visible in Thobega's poetry and to show how these influences have been ingested in his works. Our discussion of influence will be informed by aspects of the contents of the previous chapter. Many centuries ago, critics and scholars have dealt with influence of one author upon a later one who was said to have adopted, altered and rearranged aspects of the subject matter, form or style of the earlier writer(s). In this work, influence will not only be confined to one writer influencing another, but also to aspects like nature, religion and culture among others.

Our discussion of influence in this chapter will be confined to two main categories, namely, traditional and religious influences.

3.1 Traditional influences

Of the influence of oral traditional literature in one's writing, Nwoga (1979:44) says:

One important local influence is of course the traditional literature. Most African writers have said that in the process of finding their own voice they have had to go back to their roots to point where external influences have become mere catalyst of self-discovery.

For the purpose of this work traditional influences refer to influences from oral literature. The term oral literature will always remind us of the primacy of the spoken word even though this is rejected by Derrida as we saw earlier. In alluding to oral literary features, Thobega becomes an example of a poet who "extols his ancestors, ancestral marks ... and tries to recover the mooring of his oral literature", (Mphahlele as quoted by Irele, 1990:109). As such, his writing reflects the culture, tradition and way of life. Rosenberg quoted by Moleleki (1988:15) makes this point:

Writers mature within a culture; they learn their skill and their craft within that culture; and so inevitably reflect some aspects of that culture in their writing.

The traditional (oral) forms that will receive our attention in this chapter are the proverbs. The proverbs as we shall see are the main aspect of orality carefully used in Thobega's poetry and are by far the most popular.

3.1.1 Proverbs as source of influence

Okpewho (1992:226) defines a proverb as follows:

Put simply, a proverb may be defined as a piece of folk wisdom expressed with terseness and charm. The 'terseness' implies a certain economy in the choice of words and a sharpness of focus, while the 'charm' conveys the touch of literary or poetic beauty in expression.

Guma (1967:65) agrees with Okpewho that

A proverb is a pithy sentence with a general bearing on life. It serves

to express some homely truth or moral lesson in such an appropriate manner as to make one feel that no better words could have been used to describe the particular situation.

Nwoga (1979:51) says that a proverb as paradigm, refers to a poet who instead of giving the details of the physical event or situation, engineers the reaction appropriate to the pattern set by the event.

We consider the usage of proverbs in Thobega's work.

1. Ke iphorile ka tsamaya le Sebonego morwa
Kgaratlho, re ntshana seinong,

(a) Motho ga itsewe e se naga!

(b) E re o bona tshukudu o ikanye setlhare.

(Molodi wa lošalaba: 09).

(I deceived myself and left with Sebonego,
Kgaratlho's son, my best friend,

(a) You cannot know someone like you know
a place!

(b) As soon as you see a rhino run to a tree.

The first proverb (a) indicates to us that no one can claim to know everyone in this world. The very same person whom we claim to know and trust, can be our worst enemy without us being aware.

To avoid a lengthy description of event(s), the poet uses shorter descriptive proverbs to **trace** the gap or to retrace that which is absent. The author leaves it to us to fill in and make sense of what has happened earlier. The gaps created by the use of proverbs are supplemented by our own experience and knowledge. In the words of Gikandi, we are rewriting the text.

Without also telling us what happened in a particular situation, the poet uses the second proverb, an aspect prominent in oral traditional literature. The second proverb(b) in the same text is a way of telling us that when we see something dangerous we must, by all means, run for safety. The poet artistically brings proverb (b) after (a) which refers to a an evil person who comes to us. The implication here is that as soon as we see an enemy, an evil person, we must run for safety('ikanye setlhare'). This means that we must at all cost avoid such a person. In fact, this proverb is a warning that in whatever we do in life, we must have a back-up system. The use of the word 'tshukudu', signifies danger. 'Setlhare', indicates a place for cover, a haven to run to. Seen differently, 'setlhare' may be a cure (pheko) against danger. Hence this is a switching back to the past (folklore) by the poet, as Jones (1979:38-39) says that,

In all he (poet) has written and said, one sees a strong sense of cultural nationalism and his continuous reaction against the overwhelming presence of European culture. It is in this way that he derives influences from his own culture ...

(Emphasis mine)

2. (a) Phokoje go tshela yo' diretsenyana

(b) Mokoduwe go tsosiwa o a itekang

Nkwe e' manyedinyedi a apere 'tlalo

O apere 'tlalo go sikara 'tšhaba,

(Dikeledi tsa Lefatshe: 06).

(The jackal that survives is the cunning one

A lean cow gets helped if it helps itself

A shining leopard is wearing a hide

Is wearing a hide and heads a nation).

The underlined proverbs, emphasise the need to work hard in order to succeed. The poet has deliberately sequenced these two proverbs to drive the point home. The first, 'phokoje go tshela yo o diretsenyana', alludes to Khama's leadership in Botswana. Here the head of state is portrayed as a cunning, loved and a true leader. In the context of the poem the proverb means that

to lead and to lead well like Tautona Seretse Khama, one has to be as cunning as a jackal. Another sense of this proverb is that to live in a country like Botswana, where there are a lot of influences from other countries as reflected in lines 98-100 of the same poem, Batswana have to be very watchful in order not to be deceived by external influences. Proverbs portray a philosophy, an outlook to life of a given community.

Again this proverb, suggests that being cunning like a jackal, we need not be lazy so as to survive. The proverb is another way of highlighting the teaching Khama is giving his people. His assistance in meeting Batswana halfway and not doing everything for them is well captured in this proverb. This is a lesson that in life people must first try to help themselves before they seek additional help from somewhere.

3. Mooka o ka nna kotsi;

O agilwe ka motlha wa goo-Khama,

Ke fano o re tlogetse jaaka mouwane,

'Fi fa 'fi gore 'fi a go fe ka moso

Mmuso wa Gaborone o se ka wa lesa bana,

(a) Botlhale jwa phala bo tswa phalaneng!

(b) Thukwi o rile ke lebelo, marota a re ke namile.

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 42).

(A mimosa tree can be dangerous.

It was build during Khama's reign,

You have left us like mist

One good turn deserves another

Botswana government must not desert its children,

(a) The wisdom of a springbok is evident in its young one

(b) An erdworld said I am speedy, the hills said we are stretched).

These proverbs allude to home affairs in Botswana political situations generally. The first proverb(a) stresses the importance not to ignore the young and their advice. Normally the elderly do things alone and in the process a lot of wrongs occur. As such the poet is giving advice to the authorities to note that to be a big and developed nation, it is very vital that they listen to their subjects. The poet further says it is very wrong to rush and make decisions; this is reflected in the second proverb(b). We can rush to finish first, we can be in a hurry, to be at the top, ambitious and decide without thinking, but that won't bring any good to us. The poet seems to be saying that the decisions we make for others without involving them will always cause conflict "even though it is not possible to consult everyone all the time". Reference can be made to our own situation here in South Africa. There are complaints from different quarters that the people at the top (leaders) make decisions which affect us directly without involving us on the

ground. The road we have to travel is still too long, the life we have to live still has its own problems and complications and as such everyone's opinion in a society is very crucial. We still acknowledge that sometimes consulting everyone is not hundred percent possible, but the opinion of others is vital.

4. Lobadi lwa lorato longwe fela
 Kopano, kutlwano, go solofela;
 Go solofela tirisano-mmogo -
Mosadi tshwene o jewa mabogo.

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 60).

(Love has only one scar
 Togetherness, understanding, to hope;
 To hope/expect cooperation
A woman is a baboon,
she is liked for her good hands).

An allusion to our own culture is made by the underlined proverb, where a woman was married not because of her looks, but by being a hardworker. If only she could take care of her husband and children that would be enough. The underlined proverb teaches us especially the youth that the beauty of a woman lies in her hands. It is the work she can do in her house which tells that this is the right woman. This reflects our culture, beliefs and tradition. Our fore-fathers never married for one's looks but for the mere fact that the woman can take care of her house,

children and husband. If she lacks the required quality she is regarded as an 'ugly' woman (a baboon). This is in contradiction with today's behaviour and norm, where young men marry beauty queens who can hardly cook 'bogobe'. Therefore the poet is calling for a turning back to those olden or ancestral years.

5. Goo-rramotho go thebephatshwa

(Molodi wa lošalaba: 37).

(One's home is better than all places).

The proverb as a title of a poem tells us that one's home will always be better than any other place in the world. Despite all the happiness we get anywhere, despite the riches we get anywhere in the world, home will always be home. The poet portrays a person who leaves home to go and stay somewhere, meets problems and decides to go back home. Home sweet home is deferred and reflected in the last stanza of this poem which reads:

Ka welwa ke kotlhao e e sa natetsheng;
 Bolwetse ba ntsena ka bololela gae
 Ka mogologolo a re lapeng ga go lebalwe,
 Ke bothobogolo ka se ka ka laela.

(Molodi wa Lošalaba: 37-38).

(I was befallen by bad punishment
 I was attacked by disease
 As our forefather said home can't be forgotten
 As a respecting adult, I did not say a word I just
 left).

This also reminds us of a Biblical story, of the prodigal son, as we shall observe later. This further brings to mind what is happening in South Africa where all those who left the country for better life and protection many decades ago are coming back. It is partly because of the changes which are occurring now and also because of being home-sick. No matter who you are, where you are, home is where your ancestors are.

6. Ke ne ke ipalela dikgang-dikgolo
 Morwa rre a tla go ntseela dikgang ...
 Dipuleng, diphefong le bosigo;
Meno masweu a bolaya a tshega.
 (Molodi wa lošalaba: 09).

(I was reading great news,
 My brother used to come and tell me news ...
 During rainy, windy days and night
One's great friend is one's worst enemy).

The underlined proverb tells us that all smiles and one's sweetness, is not all that is good or virtuous. The people we trust in life, the people who are always smiling at us are the most dangerous. The poet through this proverb, teaches that inner good comes from the heart. We can also get much clarity in what is happening in today's world, people get into trouble because of their own friends. The underlined proverbs tell us to be very careful in helping others because it is not everyone who is a real friend. Even Jesus Christ was deceived and denounced by his disciples so who are we not to be wronged by our friends.

The usage of the above proverb, reminds us of R.D. Molefe's poem, titled Kgopolo ya motho (One's mind):

Kgopolo ya motho bodiba jwa kwena.
 O ka go metsa ntse o mo lebile
 Motho o tshwana le khai tsa makgoa,
 O ka apara paka wa ipelafatsa.
 Wa gata ka popota wa tswa makoko
 O sa itse fa phepheng e iphitlhile
 Ya go konya mo gare ga lekoko.

Kgopolo ya motho sentlhaga sa nonyane
 O ka se tshwara noga e ikgorile
 Wa utlwa e go konya mo monwaneng.
 Meno masweu, ke polaa e tshega

(Maipelo a puo: 51)

(One's mind the deep of a crocodile
 He can swallow you while you are looking at him
 A man is like the whiteman's clothes
 You can wear a suit and brag
 And walk tall like a king
 Not knowing that a scorpion is inside
 And knock you very hard.
 One's mind is a bird's nest.
 You can touch a snake inside
 And feel it knocking/biting you
 One's great friend is one's worst enemy.)

The poet tells us that we can never ever know the internal "being" of a human being, as the outside, as beauty does not reflect what is inside one's heart and mind. The poem also shows that one's good friend is one's biggest enemy. The poem associates one's head or mind with a beautiful bird's nest, which is shielding and harbouring a snake. One's smile is the same as a bird's nest because it hides sinister thoughts (of one's mind). Therefore the poem gives more clarity to the above proverb as it infiltrates and traces Molefe's poem.

The title of the poem viz. 'Mojammogo-mmolaya-motho' (the one you eats with you is your enemy or killer). The poet is warning us that we must be very careful of unfaithful friendships.

7. Lekang ka natla batho bantsho
 Kana go direlwa ga go a siama.
 Tsenyang marapo mo dinameng,
Phokoje wa morago dintšwa di a mmona.

(Molodi wa lošalaba: 24)

(Try by all means black people
 It is not proper for others to do things for you
 Do your level best
The jackal who comes last will be seen by the dogs).

The underlined proverb is very didactic in nature, it teaches people to make hay while the sun shines. The lines which precede this proverb give a picture of lazy people who always like to refer their work to others. It tells us that we must not let others do everything for us as we have the strength and ability to work for ourselves. The poet uses this proverb to exhort us to work hard. The poet says we don't have to be lazy, we must always do our best. In a job situation, one cannot play hide and seek and not expect to be dismissed. The same proverb is used in the poem 'Boitirelo' on page 25.

A bo ditshwakga di tshwere bothata!
 Di ratile ke go rerisa dinatla ka natla,
 Go ntse go twe ke dirisa semangmang
 Ditiro tse dikgolo gore a ntirele,
 Nteko go rutwa tshwene mapalamo.

Phokojwe yo o kwa morago dintšwa di a mmona.

(Molodi wa lošalaba: 25)

(Lazy people have a problem

They are very fond of talking to the brave.

Saying I am using so and so

To do some job for me,

While one is teaching a baboon to climb.

The jackal left behind is seen by the dogs).

In traditional folklore reference to a jackal indicates an enemy, a thief and a cunning animal. The usage of this animal in such proverbs is meant for us to know that jackals and dogs do not see eye to eye. In other words dishonesty as represented by the jackal, and honesty as associated with the dog, do not meet. The jackal in such a proverb is represented as an animal which is always on the run because it wants to get what others have toiled for. It does not want to do things for itself but cunningly steals from others. As people we have to work hard for our kids, and if we keep on cheating and stealing, what do we expect of our children? Do they have to cheat and steal as we parents do?

8. Montsamaisa-bosigo ke mo leboga bo sele

Ka ke a bo ke lemogile fa a lebogwa

(Molodi wa lošalaba: 32).

(My night-guide is thanked the next day

As I've realised that he has to be thanked).

This is a societal practice especially in the olden days; of giving thanks to whoever helps us. Our forefathers used to slaughter beasts to thank their ancestors for their achievement. In some cases they would slaughter beasts for thanksgiving and requesting more, a practice some of the modern people would not do. Is it not sad that everything we try to do these days does not bear fruit? Do we ever care to ask ourselves why is it happening? These days, things are different, everyone fends for himself. The poet by using this proverb, reminds us that whenever we are in need, there is always someone who can help us go through. As such what he says is that as soon as we are back on our feet, we must always give thanks to whoever helped us. The proverb comes to us as a moral lesson that we must never ever forget those who help us get through in life.

9. Ke utlwile mogala goo-Tshidi
 Fa malome a ile legodimong,
 A gapilwe ke Badimo:

Se ileng se a bo se ile,

Lefatsheng ga re na thata!

(Molodi wa lošalaba: 21).

(I heard a telephone call at Tshidi's place
 To say my uncle has gone to heaven,
 He has been abducted by our ancestors:
That which is gone is gone
 We don't have strength on earth).

The Bible teaches us that power on earth is God's power. The underlined proverb can be understood well in this context. The underlined proverb is an allusion to a well known Setswana saying that the dead won't come back in flesh and blood. This is captured in the last line, a line following this proverb 'lefatsheng ga re na thata'. The proverb teaches us that we should accept God's will to take whoever lives in this world whenever it suits God.

10. Muso 'a Botswana o' sekegele,
 Muso 'a Botswana e nne thebe.
Ka mabogo dinku a' thebana.

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 5)

(Hold on to the government of Botswana
 The Botswana government must be a shield
As people must help each other).

The poet by using this proverb, advises the king, Seretse Khama to hold on to his government and use it as a shield in Botswana. It tells the king not to be a self-centred being, but to work

together with the government to achieve whatever the nation needs. Working together is indicative of the unity which nations and establishments strive for. Therefore the poet through this proverb advises the king to use the services of other people. It also serves as advice to us as readers to know that for us to succeed in life, people must all help one another all the time.

11. Bojang jwa pitse ke jo bo mo maleng:

Seretse, o nne o re tlhokomele -

(Masa a sele: 15)

(A zebra's grass is the one in its stomach:

Seretse, you must keep on looking after us).

This proverb is an equivalent of a saying that a bird in hand is worth two in the bush. The poet through the underlined proverb, tells us that what we have is very important, and we must strive to care for and to keep it. This is also a reminder to politicians not to forget their immediate subjects. People are very accommodative when it comes to strangers and outsiders, but find it hard to please and accommodate insiders. Therefore the poet tries to suggest that our concern as leaders (government) must be to do our best for our own people than outsiders.

12. Busa ka natla, o lese ba ba motlapa,
 Busa, Kgosi ya rona, o nne lone letlapa,
 O re babalele rotlhe, re le tlhabologong,
Kgetsi ya tsie e kgonwa ke go tshwarwaganelwa!

(Masa a sele: 20).

(Govern by all means and leave the lazy ones,
 Our King, govern and become a rock
 You protected us all when we were in civilization,
A heavy bag of locust, is light if people help one
 another!)

Like example 3.1.1 no.10 (Mabogo dinku a a thebana), this proverb stresses the fact that if people like to work together, work becomes very light and easy. This goes hand in glove with the previous proverb no.10 where a nation can always overcome any obstacle which comes its way if it is united. Whether one is a king or an intelligent person, the assistance he receives from others is very important to him. The underlined proverb, is used as a plea to King Seretse not to overwork himself by doing everything on his own while the whole nation is idling and doing nothing. Therefore, we are advised to always group ourselves together for work. We can take cues from our own culture where the King will have "dikgosana" to assist him in the running of the country.

13. Malatsi ano, re tshela re sa itsholofela,
 Re etsa mebutla, re motlhofo jaaka boboa,
Ngwana yo o sa leleng o swela tharing.

(Masa a sele: 17).

(These days we live without hope,
 We are like hares, we are as light as fur,
A child who doesn't cry dies in his/her
mother's back).

The proverb "ngwana yo o sa leleng, o swela tharing", is an indication to us as readers who are actively involved in the text in interpreting its meaning that people have to express their dissatisfaction if and when it becomes necessary. We have to shout very loudly so as to be heard, hence the use of 'cry by a child'. If people are in power, as is the case these days, it is as though they don't have ears. It is really difficult to get them to listen to your problems. The best people can do, is to "cry" and shout so that they can be heard or listened to. The proverb teaches us not to suppress and repress our emotions, we must vent them out to the relevant people, because it is through crying that we can be heard and responded to.

14. Fa o sa utlwe molao wa batsadi o tsenelele,
O tloge o tsenele, o utlwe wa manong:

(Masa a sele: 54).

(If you cannot listen to your parents
instructions,
You will hear those of the vultures).

The poet, in trying to differentiate between the olden and the modern times, contrasts the proverbs "fa o sa utlwe molao wa batsadi, o tla utlwa wa manong". Those who cannot or would not listen to their parents' advice(modern kids) will always end up in trouble. Parents as our living ancestors, our guiding light have to direct, advise and tell us what to do. If we do not obey their instructions and advise we end up hurt or in deep waters. In traditional times, children used to listen to their parents' advice and orders, no matter the type of order. These days things have changed, children don't listen to their parents anymore, in fact it is the other way round, children instruct their parents. Hence most of us end up without any future.

In alluding to oral traditional art-forms, the poet indicates that he has a base, roots on which he will always rely in his writing of poetry. Jones (1979:45) says David Rubadin was saying in 1966,

And so I begin to write
more like ... myself as an
African who's got roots
or beginning to get them,
as opposed to the young

student who had to live between two worlds, as it were, two values of life.

3.2 Western influences

This part will treat influence which is of Western origin. There are a number of Western influences in Thobega's works. In this section we chose to focus our attention on Christianity as a source of influence. Christianity has been part of Thobega's family for a very long period (even now), hence it finds its way into his poetry. Thobega like most of the Setswana writers, could not escape the influence of Christianity as introduced to us by the Missionaries, centuries ago.

3.2.1 Christianity as source of influence

In the first chapter, we have indicated how Thobega became associated with Christianity. As such his contact with the Word of God has surely left a mark, a mark we will observe in his work. Stallknecht, quoted by Ntuli (1984:47) says,

Perhaps the most frequently recurring literary influence on the Western world has been that of the Old and New Testament

3.2.1.1 Biblical Allusion

The following discussion and abstract are an indication of Thobega's Christian upbringing from childhood. A brief discussion will follow:

15. Maloba jale sefofane sa mokoti
 se tukile sa ba sa wela lefatsheng,
 Mokgwetsi wa sona a le segaulasegolo
 A buisana le ba gagwe ka mogala
 A re, 'Bathong re a tuka, re a gadikega!
 (Molodi wa lošalaba: 61).

(Some time back a mine plane
 burnt and crashed to the ground,
 The pilot was a big and brave man,
 He talked with others by phone
 He said, "People we are burning, we are being
 roasted).

This is a direct reference to a biblical story found in the book of Luke 16:19-28, where a rich man never took notice of Lazarus, a poor man, covered with sores. But when he later noticed Lazarus sitting next to Abraham, he called out at him, "Father Abraham! Take pity on me, and send Lazarus to dip his finger in some water and cool my tongue because I am in great pain in this fire".

Like the rich man, the brave pilot never thought that one day he will find himself in such a horrifying state of burning after a plane crash. He felt that as a pilot and as a brave pilot, he was in control of everything, the plane and his life. Like everyone, he forgot that there is someone who controls everything on earth, God, the Almighty (see also 3.2.1.2 no.19).

16. Ka welwa ke kotlhao e e sa natetsheng;
 Bolwetsi ba ntsena ka bololela gae,
 Ka mogologolo a re lapeng ga go lebalwe,
 Ke bothobogolo ka se ka ka laela.

(Molodi wa lošalaba: 38).

(I was befallen by bad punishment;
 I was attacked by illness
 As our forefathers say home will always be home,
 That is human, I did not say a word).

The four lines, from the last stanza of the poem, "Goo-rramotho go thebe-phatshwa", (Home will always be home) reminds us of the story of the Prodigal Son, who requested his inheritance from his father and left to go and spend it somewhere with friends. After spending everything he had, poverty, sickness visited him and forced him to go back home and ask for forgiveness. This reference to a biblical story tells us that irrespective of whatever circumstances one finds oneself in at a strange place,

home will always be home. This teaches us not to forget our roots as many people tend to do.

17. Motlha o tla goroga fa tsheko e tla;
 Diapara-mesese di tla atlholwa go feta,
 Ka di sa tsalelwa yona tlhapedi,
 (Molodi wa lošalaba: 16).

(The time will come when a court-case will come,
 Women will be judged more severely,
 As they are not born to drink liquor).

These three lines from a poem titled "Tlhapedi" allude to the day of judgement as indicated in the Bible. Those who sin and not repent, are the ones who will be severely punished. In the poem, when the day of judgement comes, women, who do things not meant for them (drink liquor) are going to be punished for that because after drinking, they do things which cannot be tolerated in society. Therefore the poet in using women, liquor and judgement, tries to tell or teach us that liquor is not meant for women, and they must by all means keep away from it. The same lines, also allude to our traditional or cultural life, where women are forbidden to do certain things, which are meant for men.

18. Khasino e agilwe ya phatlatsa batho,
 Botsala jwa fela ka ntlha ya one madi,
 Ditulo tsa tlhoka go itumedisa ditšhaba ...
 Mošate o robatsa batho godimo ga ditlhare
 Ba lala ba butse matlho jaaka marubise
 Ao! Mošate Gaborone, o tletse manyabise -
 (Dikeledi tsa Lefatshe: 40).

(A casino was built to disperse people,
 Friendship ended because of money;
 Payments never brought happiness in nations, ...
 The capital city you let people sleep on trees,
 They sleep with their eyes open like owls,
 Oh! The Capital city Gaborone, you are
 disgraceful).

The above lines relate to Psalm 55: 10-12;

I see violence and riots in the city,
 surrounding it day and night, filling
 it with crime and trouble. There is
 destruction everywhere, the streets are
 full of oppression and fraud ...

The poet tries to portray the capital city of Botswana the same way Psalm 55 presents the cities. The modern times have actually brought a lot of change to Botswana. It is no more like before,

a place which used to nurse its people, a place which used to be full of life. The contrast comes as soon as it starts to knock its people, it starts to be authoritative. People now lack places to stay in, people don't trust others any more, as they sleep with their eyes wide open. People live in fear of one another.

We can also see this poem as a protest by the poet against the uncaring nature of those at the top. An indication that as soon as one gets to the top he forgets about those below.

3.2.1.2 Biblical stories

19. Boikhutsong jwa gago ke dithata tsa Rara.

Modimo o ne o file jaanong o tsere.

(Dikeledi tsa Lefatshe: 94).

(Your rest is the will of the Lord

God had given and now He has taken).

This refers to a situation where God is the sole controller of everything on earth. He gives and takes as he wishes. The two lines taken from a poem 'Tsamaya Sentle' Martinas-Kala-a-Seboni: Molepolole, 1967 (Go well Martinas-Kala-a-Seboni: Molepolole, 1967) is written to the poet's uncle who has passed away. The poem indicates that as he has no power to bring back his uncle, he has to accept what has happened.

20. Tlhabologo e tsenya legawagawa;
 Badumedi ba itirela boithatelo,
 Ga ba sa rapela digomela dilelo -
 Dikereke di phatlaletse boferereng,
 Boferereng jwa ipatlelo-madi.
 (Dikeledi tsa Lefatshe: 118).

(Civilization has brought misery
 Believers do as they please,
 They no more pray
 Churches are full of corruption,
 The corruption of seeking money for themselves).

The poet protests against the way in which churches and priests handle church affairs. Everyone is now enriching himself instead of concentrating on the Lord's duty, that is to preach the Gospel, pray and administer pastoral care. This is echoed by what is said in the book of Ezekiel (44:28):

The priests have the priesthood as
 Their share of what I have given
 Israel to be handed down from
 one generation to another. They
 are not to hold property in Israel,
 I am all they need. The Grain -
 offerings, the sin-offering and the
 repayment-offerings will be the

priests' food, and they are to
 receive everything in Israel
 that is set apart for me.

All the secular things, like owning business, stealing from the church stems from the times which we find ourselves in. Civilization has come and greed just as in politics has set in among the men of God.

21. Monongwaga o intatotse jaaka Petero
 Jaaka Petero ka tlelwa ke toro:
 Wa intatola jaaka go latotswe Morena Jeso,
 (Dikeledi tsa Lefatshe: 75).

(This current year, you denounced me like Peter,
 Like Peter I had a dream;
 You denounced me like Jesus Christ was denounced).

There is a remarkable resemblance between the above lines and Jesus Christ's prediction that Peter will deny him three times before the cock crows and the actual occurrence when Peter does it, (Mathews, 26:31-55 and verses 69-74). The current year is a very bad year for the poet. The year in which nothing is ever good for him. It is as if it never favoured the poet (like Peter did to Jesus Christ). The poet sees the year as denying him all the good things he wants. Now that the year which denies him good things is ending, he feels very good and happy.

22. Atlarela dithapelo tsa rona
 Re dibehe, o re buse. Letsholathebe;
 O re dibehe gareng ga matlhokotlhoko,
 (Masa a sele: 26).

(Hear our prayers shield-holder;
 Protect and lead us.
 Protect us against hardships.)

A direct call to God the Saviour is being made, to protect and be with us all the time. If we are alone and unguarded, we always get lost. This reminds us of Luke 11:25-26, where Jesus reminds Martha that He is the Resurrection and the Life. Those who believe in Him will live, even though they die, and those who believe in Him will never die. People are told that the only brave and the one who can save us from all our sins and dangers is Jesus Christ. As people, Christianity is the only hope which can save us. Not even the dangerous weapons we always carry along will save us. This is the message the poet is bringing forth to us.

23. Go kwadilwe ga twe ditselana di tla nna pedi
 Go tla tsewa e tshesane, le e kima mo
 motshegareng.

Ga go na go nna le maitshwarelo
 Yo o leofileng o tla itsiwe ka seleofi
 kwa Aletareng.

(Masa a sele: 62).

(It is written that roads will be two
 There will be a narrow and a wide one
 There won't be any forgiveness
 The one who has sinned will be
 known at the Altar).

This reminds us of the book of Mathews (7:13-14), which reads as follows:

Go in through the narrow gate,
 because the gate to hell is
 wide and the road that leads
 to it is easy, and there are
 many who travel it. But the
 gate to life is narrow and the
 way that leads to it is hard,
 and there are few people who find it.

The poet teaches us that we are the ones who have control over our own destinies. In life we become what we want to be, it is like choosing a career, one will normally choose the easy road where everyone who needs shortcuts goes through. It is only

those who persevere who end up victorious and enjoy the fruit of their labour. The suffering at the end of impatience, is the punishment we endure just like those who are judged at the Altar.

Finally, we can say that Thobega's handling of proverbs goes hand in hand with the way they (proverbs) were used by our forefathers; to give weight and authority to arguments, teachings or other forms of discourse; his use of religious aspects is a sign to show how strong he believes in the word of God.

CHAPTER 4

This chapter looks at imagery in Thobega's poetry. Of significance is that, the poet finding himself within both the traditional and modern environments at the same time, ingests aspect of both worlds in his poetry. Emphasis in the previous chapter has been **WHAT** had influenced Thobega. Here the focus is on **HOW** this influence is realized in his poetry.

4. IMAGERY

Imagery is one of the most widely used device. It is found in both written and oral compositions. Okpewho (1984:98) has this to say about imagery:

While it is true that oral literature and written literature differ fundamentally from one another in their methods of presentation - the one by word of mouth and the other through the printed word - they are both united, fundamentally also, in the use of words and the ways in which

they employ words to paint mental pictures that appeal to our feeling and our understanding. These mental pictures are what we know as images.

Imagery as such, is the use of powerful mental pictures to invoke in us shock, admiration, envy or delight. Imagery is seen as the use of mental pictures, conveyed by figurative language, as in metaphor, simile, personification, symbolism and others. Abrams (1993:86) says,

Imagery (that is, "images" taken collectively) is used to signify all the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to in a poem or other work of literature, whether by literary description, by allusion or in the vehicles (the secondary references) of its similes and metaphors.

The term imagery in this chapter will embrace the following figures: metaphor, simile, personification and symbolism.

4.1 Metaphor

Metaphor is regarded by many scholars as the basic figure in poetry, while others see it as the commonest and most beautiful. Aristotle claims that metaphor is the best gift of the poet, the ability to find resemblance in seemingly desperate things. Holman and Harmon (1986:298) see metaphor as,

An implied ANALOGY imaginatively identifying one object with another and ascribing to the first object one or more of the qualities of the second or investing the first with emotional or imaginative qualities associated with the second.

Metaphor is the most important and widespread figure of speech. In metaphor, an idea, action or thing is called or referred to a word or phrase or expression normally denoting another thing, idea or action, in suggesting some common qualities shared by the two dissimilar things/objects. A point we have to note in terms of metaphor is that our everyday conversation is full of metaphors even though we do not intend to be so metaphorical. Myers and Simms (1985:178) say metaphor is,

a rhetorical figurative expression of similarity or dissimilarity in which a direct, non-literal substitution or identity is made between one thing and another: similarity, as in "Johnny's belly is a pink balloon" or dissimilarity, as in "the President's proposed budget is an overinflated balloon".

We can further say that metaphor is achieved by direct reference as in, (a is b). This is more like replacing or substituting one thing by the other.

4.1.1 Metaphor in Thobega's poetry

24. Nnare selo se motho ke phologolo?
Ke ne ke namile setulong, ntlo ya bulega.
Mophato wa banna wa nkeleka motshegare.
(Molodi wa Lošalaba: 09).

(Is this thing called man an animal?
I was sitting on a chair, when the door opened
A group of men looked at me during the day).

Life has changed drastically these days, in that man has no respect for mankind and for life. We now live and behave like animals. This is brought in a form of a metaphor, where the poet

is not sure any more whether we are people or animals because we are now equal to animals. We live in a world where man's action is no more comparable to living human beings, because we are no more safe wherever we are. We live in fear because everyone is hungry and the nearest or slightest opening we get we take advantage to rob or kill others. This makes the poet not to hesitate to call us animals. In essence, the poet is making us aware that we must be ashamed of ourselves and requests us to go back to our original way of life, because we will be better off that way and life will be much better.

25. Ga go na yo ka bolelang ntlo ya lone,
Mo go mongwe le mongwe ke lone lobone.

(Masa a sele: 11).

(There is no one to say its home,
To everyone, love is light).

In the above image, the poet indicates to us that love is the most precious light. Everywhere love is seen and taken as light to us. Every individual who has love starts to live a better life. No matter what type of house man owns, it will be a shining and sweet home if there is love in it. Light again might also mean the cleanliness we get in one's house because of the love which exists in it. It may also mean that as soon as one has a loved one, he makes sure that his loved one is a clean and presentable person. What the poet stresses here is that we

cannot tell where this love stays, we cannot point its house, because we can have real love which is associated with sacrifice and happiness, and unreal love which is unhealthy.

26. O bodutung seka-ngwedi,
 Ngwedi e se na dinaledi,
 Lorato ke magomogomo.

(Ditlhase tsa marumo: 3).

(You, semi-moon, you are in loneliness
 A moon without stars
 Love is a problem).

Love is the most precious thing ever, the feeling of affection and tenderness toward a person or thing. Love can be both sweet and bitter. When one loves someone, one feels lonely when that person is not there. One experiences all sorts of emotional problems. The poet compares a lonely person to a half-moon which is not surrounded by stars in the dark. Its loneliness is revealed by its light which is not enough to brighten the whole world. The significance here is that without our loved ones, we are nothing as this lonely moon indicates. Compared to the previous image, loneliness (without love) is represented by darkness. This darkness is overpowered by light as soon as one knows that he has found love. If one finds light one always wears a big smile in his face, he is always bright and happy.

27. Lorato o tšhaka e e rebetlang -
 Fa o rata o iphetole tšhaka ka bogale
 O molelo o o se nang le go ka tingwa,
 (Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 15).

(Love you are a very sharp sword
 You can even turn yourself into a
 sword if your like
 You are fire which cannot be extinguished).

Most people on earth are killed by the pains of the love they experience, others are killed over it. The poet, in trying to relate the power and the control love has over people, rightly compares it to 'tšhaka' and 'molelo'. Love is so painful, it troubles the heart to an extent that its sharpness pierces through one's heart like a dagger tearing through one's flesh. Like a conflagration it burns one's heart to death. The message we get in these images is that love is the most popular, and treasured gift of all. It further says that with or without love we will always suffer, because of the magnitude of its power. Therefore the poet tells us that the pain we get from love is part and parcel of it, because love without pain is not love.

28. Pelo ke moloi yo o tlabang pelo,
 Fa dikgaba di go tsena o a fafasela.
 (Masa a sele: 47).

(A heart is a witch which pierces the heart;
When misfortunes visit you, you become nervous).

Traditionally(culturally) misfortune will always follow one if others wish so. In reality only an evil person, or a witch will always wish that bad things should happen to others. It is one's heart which will do that, hence the heart is said to be a witch. It pierces one's heart, so that one must fail in his endeavours. This is a simple way of saying life is full of contradictions, love and hate. Life will always have those who spend their time in a very unproductive way, that of doing others down and wishing them all sorts of misfortunes and calamities.

The poet in using this image, tells us that we have to do away with evil deeds as one good deed deserves another. This metaphor teaches us that the world is indeed a stage for a duet between good and evil which Irele (1990:202-3) sees as a stage between,

positive and negative values,
but individuals are rarely
endowed with an active sense of
values sufficient to maintain under
all circumstances the line between
good and evil. In such a situation,
the exacting demands of the good
yield ground and advantage to the
forces of evil; ...

29. Thaba tsa gago tsa tlholego,
 O ka re mawelana a mmogo
 (Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 11).

(Your natural mountains,
 Are as if the twins are together).

This is a metaphoric description of a young and beautiful girl, who has never been 'touched', has two natural mountains on her chest. The poet expresses his appreciation and sense of beauty of this girl by associating her breasts with two mountains which are just like twins, both in size and structure. This is also to tell us that a girl who is still a virgin will always be beautiful. For young girls, this comes as advice that they should wait until they are big enough to know what is good and bad, because by doing this, they would be saving themselves. It is also another way of telling us to return to the olden days where young girls indulged in sexual pleasures after getting married.

30. "Thuto kgomo, e a ikgamelwa"
 "Thuto kgomo, e a itsomelwa"
 Ke thebe e bosisi tlhabanong,
 Ke tšhaka e ntshang matlhokong -
 (Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 70).

("Education is a cow, you milk it yourself"

"Education is a cow, you hunt it yourself"

It is a strong shield in war,

It is a sword which keeps you out of trouble-).

If one wants to be educated, one cannot get someone else to do it for him/her. Education('thuto') is our future and key to success. It is the best weapon we have at our disposal, which does not need a licence like the guns we carry everyday. It only requests hard work, patience, perseverance and the right choice of a coercer, one has to follow in life. Life is a competition, it is war, a fight which we can only win provided we use the right weapon which is education. It is a battle against poverty, for a better and decent life for ourselves and our families. This war can only be fought and won when we use a sharp and powerful instrument an educational 'tšhaka'.

The poet by using such war images is telling us that going through life, is the same as being in war. For this reason one needs the right kind of weaponry. Therefore he encourages us as adults to gently push and encourage our children to go out and milk their own cows, because if they don't do this they will end up in the streets without food and shelter. This call is very relevant at the present moment because the culture of learning in our land has been pushed to the back seat. The poet is also making a call to all nations, leaders, politicians and others to stop using weapons to fight and sit around the table and

negotiate. That will stop a lot of physical fighting and people will start to realise the essence and importance of education.

31. Ga' rotlhe madi, ga' bitsa ope.

Ke mooka mogolo, moraedi 'a 'fatshe.

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 31).

(To all of us money does not call anyone.

It is a comforter, a great tempter on earth).

It is often said that money is the root of all evil, because if we do not have it, we use all means (bad or good) especially crooked ways to get it. Those who have it, do not get comfort in it as the poet suggests; but will do everything to increase what they have. Money tempts everyone, a king, priest, a nun, you name it, to have it, no matter the cost and pains of getting it. Nations, brothers, sisters have fought over money, life ends/stops because of it, but strange enough, money will always remain. The poet through this image, says that if people can worry less about money and be content with what they have, lives would be saved, jails would have less than what they have now. We can further extend this by stating that, money does not invite anyone but it is man who is greedy, who will always be in search of it day and night. People spend years working hard for money but die before they could lay their hands on it. In short, this image teaches us to be happy with what we have, because the more you want the more you put yourself into trouble.

32. Leitlho o mothusi, leitlho o mogolegi;
 Leitlho o tsaletswe boferere ...
 Leitlho ke wena o ka kgwabofatsang
 Bogale jwa tau jwa fetoga jwa ntsi,
 (Ditlhare tsa Marumo: 5).

(The eye you are a helper, a detainer
 The eye you were born to deceive ...
 The eye you can weaken
 The lion's strength to become that of a fly).

One of the most important parts of one's body is the eye, as it is the one which directs, helps and forces one to act in terms of what one sees. Despite being one's helper, the poet refers to it as a detainer and a deceiver. For instance, if one sees something beautiful, his/her attention is surely going to be detracted for a while and even detained for some time. Therefore it is the eye, especially, in what it sees that one ends up being the prisoner. We judge something in terms of what the eye tells us. One's interpretation of an object rests entirely on its physical appearance than on its actions and inside. In this case the eye is deceiving us because we turn to be slaves of what we see. The eye can even tame a lion to such an extent that its strength becomes equal to that of a fly, because of what it (lion) sees.

Even if we are in danger, we can misjudge the situation because of what the eye tells us. The poet uses this image to tell us that we have to rely on all our "six senses" to survive and to make reasonable and good judgements.

33. Leitlho la motshegare lefatsheng ...

Morena wa motshegare, re otle! ...

Leitlho la motshegare, morweetsana,

(Ditlhase tsa Marumo: 43).

(The day's eye on earth ...

The Lord of the day, feed us! ...

The day's eye is a beautiful girl).

In the above example, the poet refers to the sun as "Leitlho la motshegare". Just like in the previous example where the eye is seen as the most important part of the body, the sun is also seen as the most important part of the day. It is the one which keeps people out of darkness. Darkness in this case can mean a number of things, it can mean real darkness which is associated with danger, death and other things which make us frightened during the night, and therefore we feel safe during the day. Darkness can also mean poverty, as when we are in darkness some cannot get anything for our own survival. During the day we can work and do all we are supposed to do to make a living("re otle"). The sun can mean a provider(morena), as it provides everyone with warmth, something we do not get at night. The poet has compared

"leitlho la motshegare", to "morweetsana", a beautiful girl, which means that as long as you have such a girl you always feel happy, comfortable and very warm. Therefore the love people have for the sun is the same as the one, one has for a beautiful young lady. We can observe that as soon as clouds gather, approach and cover the sun, or when you feel frightened, you feel as if your loved one has been taken away from you. We start to be worried and feel pain. The message we get here is that we must always appreciate and care for what we have at our disposal as nothing is here on earth to last forever.

34. Toro, o leferere ditšhabeng,
 Ditšhabeng o tsenya magomogomo.
 (Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 55).

(Dreams, you are a deceiver in nations,
 In nations you cause problems).

Dreams bring promises and good things to some people, whilst other dreams bring misery. One would wake up very happy because in one's dream everything was in one's favour, and some people would wake up very unhappy because of the bad dreams they had. If dreams were real, all of us would be rich, highly educated people because some of our dreams contain some of our best wishes. It is true that in most cases our wishes or repressed desires are revealed or externalised in dreams.

To this, Ellman (1994:7) says,

In the Interpretation of Dreams,
 Freud insists upon the principle
 that the dream is a fulfilment
 of a wish, and leaves no loophole
 for dissension: even when a patient
 presents him with a dream that seem
 to contradict this axiom, ...

The poet calls dreams a deceiver, because one sees himself a rich person in a dream, but all this turns out to be untrue when he wakes up.

35. Dumela, kwena e kgolo ya madiba.
 Ke wena o ka kurutlang mo Kweneng ...
 O Rramokonopi wa go konopa le Poulwe,
 Poulwe a lapa, wena wa sala o gaketse.
 (Masa a sele: 23).

(Greetings the big crocodile of the deep.
 You are the one to make noise in Kweneng ...
 You are Rramokonopi who fought with Paul,
 Paul became tired and you remained very strong).

In praising King Setšhele, the poet uses metaphorical eulogues which can be well understood from an oral traditional way of

praising the heroes. As such we can say that the poet as indicated earlier is very much at home with traditional artforms. He refers to the King as a crocodile which is both metaphorical and totemic. The praised-one is as brave and strong as a crocodile, because in wars he always wins his battles. This feature of the praised-one is also emphasised when he refers to him as 'Rramokonopi' (one who can throw a spear well) who fought with Paul and defeated him. The praised-one is perceived as a very brave king, the one who can protect his nation through thick and thin.

This and the following five examples, are an indication of the influence oral traditional literature has on new writers, a point supported by Irele (1990:20) when he says:

The interests of the formal approach to the study of oral literature resides in the possibility it offers of establishing a valid typology of African oral literature, derived from the internal evidence gathered from representative texts across the continent, so that through such evidence we may arrive at some conception of an African literature aesthetic which not only informs the traditional literature but also exerts an influence either directly or indirectly, on new writing. In some African literature, there has been a direct

development from the oral to the written within the indigenous language itself, ...

36. Tswang lo bone pitse ya ditšhaba;

Ditšhaba tswang lo bone manyedinyedi

(Ditlhare tsa Marumo: 1).

(Come out and see a nation's horse,

Nations come out and see the most shining).

and

Tswang lo boneng tau e' mariri,

Tswang lo boneng nkwe setilong;

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 5).

(Come out and see a hairy lion,

Come out and see a leopard in a seat).

One feature of oral literature, is the use of metaphorical eulogues to praise the kings and heroes. In the above examples, Tautona Seretse Khama is referred to as 'pitse ya ditšhaba (a nation's horse) simply because the King has travelled widely (internationally), he has gone tirelessly to many countries to seek help and good things for his country(nation). The call is made not only to the Batswana of Botswana, but also to different nations and countries as he worked day and night to improve the

lives of his people. Such an image as reflected here also sees the King as someone strong, the journeys he has undertaken, are compared to an ever energetic horse which does not get tired.

Besides being compared to a horse, the King is also compared to a lion, because he is fearless. He never hesitated to get to the throne with a white woman as his wife despite objections from his own people. Because of his lack of fear, his brevity and strength he is said to be "tau ya mariri", a real fearless lion.

The poet in praising the King gives an indication to other people and King/leaders to be very strong, fearless and tireless in executing the duties of their nations. Kings and heroes are loved and liked only if they spend sleepless nights in pursuit of that which will better the life of their people. He also calls upon us as people to do more than we are doing in order to achieve maximum success in our lives. We have to toil and labour tirelessly all the time to reap better and more in our life-span and have enough for our children.

37. A ba a lwa jaaka leruarua lewatleng
 Ka bašapi ba tla komediwa ke kwena.
 Lo boneng koo, ke kwena e meno a bogale.

(Ditlhase tsa marumo: 47).

(He even fought like a whale in the ocean
 The swimmers will be swallowed by a crocodile.
 Watch out there, he is a sharptoothed crocodile).

In praising Ketumile-a-Nthateng, the poet still alludes to a feature of oral literature i.e. metaphorical eulogues, as the praised-one is referred to as 'Kwena' (Crocodile), which lives in the deep of a river. This metaphor/totem is used to indicate that the praised-one never goes around to invite or to cause problems to others, but if others invade his territories, like getting deeper and deeper into the river to test his strength, that person will be dealt with very severely.

What the poet tells us in the above image is that, we have to be very careful with our lives. We do not have to go out seeking or causing trouble and problems to other people. If we do, we end up in hot water or having being swallowed by fearful animals like crocodiles. Again, the King as a crocodile, a brave person, is very protective of his people(nation) - indicated by "lewatleng", as his own village. There is no one to attack his nation without getting hurt. This is a sign that everyone is bound to protect his own homestead.

38. Lentswetshipi le le senang mothibedi!
 Fa loso lo tla go busa fela dikeledi ..
 More-o-botlhoko sa kakeng wa thijwa,
 (Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 1).

(A rock which cannot be blocked!

When death comes, only tears govern ...

A bitter-medicine which cannot be blocked,)

Through this image, the poet is eulogising something which cannot be praised, something fearful, hated and never to be desired; viz. 'loso'. He sees it, because of its destructive nature as a brave, strong, hard and cruel thing. It is destructive because as soon as it comes, it affects everyone; we walk wounded like the same corpse we are mourning. Hence he calls it "Lentswetshipi", as if he is praising a hero or a King. He goes further to call it "more-o-botlhoko". A bitter medicine, which cannot be stopped by anything or anyone. If it decides to visit you, it does so without fear, without invitation because it knows that it is feared.

Finnegan (1983:403) says,

'There is no hillside without a grave'.

There is no ragwort that blooms and does not wither and 'Death has the key to open the miser's chest' - and resignation and the fact that no one after all is indispensable and are also brought out:

The message we get from the above example is that the poet wants to indicate to us that there is nothing we can do if death has visited our homes. The best we can do is to try our best to be

strong and accept what has occurred to our families. We can also take cues from the Bible, namely, that the Lord had given and He has taken.

39. E rile o bua ba re go duma tladi
 Ba re o tladi ya motshegare,
 O tladi motshegare, sekgokgoma.
 Kwena ya madiba e meno a bogale,
 (Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 157).

(When you talked people said a thunderbolt
 is roaring
 They said you a day's thunderbolt ...
 You are a great day's thunderbolt.
 A sharp-toothed crocodile of the deep).

One of the most prominent features of Thobega's poetry is his reference to oral literature and manner of praising the praised-one by using eulogues. The poet like in oral literature does not use lengthy descriptions to tell us about one's qualities and features. For instance, he says, King Dithole is "tladi ya motshegare" (a day's thunder) . Why use a day's thunder, not a night one? Culturally there is a belief that thunder is the work of witches, which strikes one because someone hates him/her and wants to kill one to repossess one's property. The reference to the King as thunder(day) indicates that he is feared a lot. It also suggests that his nation respects him very much, and to

rumble during the day, tells us that when he talks to his nation; it keeps quiet and listens attentively for fear of being struck by lightning (being punished). By using this image, the poet tells us that we must by all means respect and listen to our leaders, especially the youths who are out of control. It tells us that (culturally,) it is very wrong to go against our leaders or disobey them as that is an indication of going against the instructions of our ancestors. Again culturally the King is anointed by the ancestors, and by disobeying him, we are calling for 'the wrath of the ancestors'. We can use Monyaise's text 'Bogosi Kupe' (Kingship is sacred) to supplement this image and to gain more clarity, as all those who disobeyed and wronged the King ended up dead.

4.2 Simile

A simile is a more explicit or indirect type of comparison between two dissimilar things, actions or feelings because the two share something in common. Simile is announced by the words 'as' or 'like' and 'as if' and in Setswana it is announced by "jaaka", "tshwana le", "e kete" and other formatives. An indirect reference can be observed in the following:

(a is like b).

Montgomery (1992:129) say simile differs from metaphor in that

Simile is a category of metaphor in that, as its name suggests, it draws attention to a similarity between two terms. But whereas in metaphor the link between the terms is implied, in simile it is made through an explicit textual signals (like, as, etc.).

In a construction like, a is like b, one is unsure and uncertain about this comparison and the construction is a bit extended as compared to a is b (metaphor), which has definiteness or directness in the given construction.

4.2.1 Simile in Thobega's poetry

40. Malatsi ano, re tshela re sa itsholofela,
Re etsa mebutla, re motlhofo jaaka boboa ...

(Masa a sele: 17)

(These days we are not sure of ourselves
We are like hares, we are as weak as fur ...)

The image of death reflected in the above lines alludes and refers to the present type of life we are leading in the world over. It is as though the earth possesses something to blow life easily and swiftly away. It is also indicative of the dangers

we always encounter and walk alongside with in our daily life. The simile also reflects the changes we go through, where we are not sure whether the sun will find us alive when it rises, since life is no more valuable; as it has become lighter than fur. One can simply collapse and die without being knocked down by anything. The worthlessness of our life is caused by a whole range of problems, especially the sporadic killings which occur everyday in our land. People do not fear death as we used to do in the past. This non-respect for the dead is caused by the new culture we have adopted and the frequency with which people are dying. This image as used by the poet, is a reminder that there is a lot we are forgetting, culturally and a lot we are assimilating from other cultures; particularly the animal world of the jungle.

41. Ba goa jaaka dipodi mebileng,
 Ba lela jaaka magakabe nageng:
 Ba jaaka dintsi dirameng -
 Maboko a bone a gatiwa jaaka maloko -
 (Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 17)

(They scream like goats in the streets,
 They cry like owls in the bush
 They die like flies in the cold -
 Their brains are trampled over like dung -).

By way of parasiting, reflecting and referring to the present times in a number of countries, South Africa included, the poet presents a very sad and real picture. It is yet a picture which portrays our suffering towards our own freedom during the apartheid era in our country; remember Sharpeville day (as we shall witness in the next chapter), remember June 16 1976, Rwanda, Bosnia and others. Just like the previous image, this one is not different in any way. It still reiterates the point we made earlier, that life is very cheap. People are murdered and slaughtered like goats at their own homes, streets, and everywhere. As such they die in multitudes day and night. How can children fear the dead when they see corpses lining the streets like bags of oranges every day. The significance of these lines is that, the poet is making a call to whoever is up there (government and even God), to stop these killings and truly liberate the people of this world from such cruelties.

42. Lo gatelelwa jaaka dikgetsi;
 Dikgetsi tsa mabele dipuleng,
 A lo tla fitlhwa jaaka dikatse?
 (Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 25).

(You are as compressed like bags;
 Bags of sorghum in the rain,
 Are you going to be buried like cats?)

Emphasis of life not being taken very seriously is reflected in the above image. People in the mines who have left their families behind, are tossed and treated like slaves. They are not regarded as human beings and as soon as they die, they will be buried like cats; uncovered and dumped in a hole. This world has no regard for human life according to the poet. It has forgotten human values, since what matters now is the profit the mine workers make. The above image can also be placed in context of Peter Abrahams' book Mine Boy, which presents life at the mines. Other texts like Ezikomponi by Vilakazi and Ha re ya Lejweleputswa by Ntsane also come to mind. The poet is making a call to the mine workers to organize themselves so as to fight for their own rights as no one can do this for them. The call is also indirectly directed to other labourers to group themselves and start to fight for their own rights, lest they remain slaves, die and be buried like cats.

43. Go fetanwa fela jaaka diphologolo
 Go sentse boipuso, tshenyego ya Mahalapye,
 (Molodi wa lošalaba: 22).

(People just pass each day like animals
 Independence destroyed Mahalapye,).

Life has changed so badly that we now act and behave like animals (see also 4.1.1 example no.24). Animals in the forest carry on with their daily activities without bothering each other. They

do not speak to each other, they just pass each other without saying a word. People, just like animals do not trust each other, seeing a new figure, we think of an enemy. No one opens his doors to a stranger, we do not greet each other for fear of losing what we have in our pockets. This is the life we experience, the life which teaches us not to trust anyone even our own next of kin. The poet's observation reflects the changed world and the behaviour of people who live in it.

44. Ke raya mafifing o re tsenya matsadi;
 Matsadi mafifing, madi a elela,
 A elela jaaka noka 'a maphatšhapatšha
 (Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 90).

(I mean in the dark, you causing us bruises
 Bruises in the dark, blood flows,
 It flows like an overflowing river).

This is an allusion to darkness, especially in the townships where it is very dangerous. It is in the dark that a number of deaths are caused, it is where people are maimed. Blood flows like a river in flood. This is how most of the townships are mirrored. The scars, and bruises we see in people's faces, are a result of this darkness. The message we make from this, is that evil is upon us, darkness and evil are synonymous in this sense.

45. O tla fela jaaka tladimothwana godimong
 O podimole motho, go goroge ditelo fela,
 (Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 1).

(You only appear like a lightning above,
 You strike someone and only cries follow).

In everything we experience in life, the most well-known regular occurrence is death, yet we do not get used to it. It occurs everyday, but when it visits us, we are overcome by sorrow and we lament the dead. Its visits to different homes is just as swift as lightning, because it never knocks, greets or asks questions. It just strikes and leaves with whoever it wants to take away. The comparison to a lightning is so fitting because it has to be swift so as not to be late, as the culprit might run away. The message here is that, one has to do whatever he wishes to do in life as we do not know when this monster will strike or visit our homes.

46. Fa madi a nyamela jaaka mosi
 O phaphatha kgetsi e go itatole ...
 Ba lale ba gotolotse matlho,
 Ba a gotolotse jaaka mebutla.
 (Ditlhase tsa marumo: 26).

(When money disappears like smoke
 You pat your pocket and it denies you ...
 Others sleep with their eyes wide open,
 Having opened them wide like hares).

47. Ka fa a dirisitswe a iketse,
 A tshwana le maši a wetse mmung,
 Ga 'a apololwe jaaka letlapa mmung,
 Kgotsa a besywa jaaka segwapa isong,
 (Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 31).

(When it is spent it is gone,
 It is like milk spilt on earth,
 It cannot be dug like stone on earth,
 Or fried like biltong on fire).

One cannot spend his money and thereafter get it back. The above image(s) tell(s) people to be hard workers, because if we are not, we cannot have it, as it cannot be picked on trees like apples, it is not cultivated. Through this image, we are encouraged to use money carefully, because after using it, we cannot get it back; "Ka a dirisitswe a iketse". This image tells us that the world would be a better place if money was not at all around. We can observe that the poet says for people to be happy, they must forget about money because only time will tell when they will have it.

48. Dikolo jaanong di tshwana le mabele,
 Dikolo jaanong ke tsone matswakabele,
 (Masa a sele: 33)

(Schools now are like sorghum,
 Schools now are money).

Here is a realisation that education is the only weapon available to us, as indicated earlier in (4.1 no. 30). Education can also come as a solution to the problems highlighted in the above example (no. 46), because through learning we can earn money and lead a better life. Therefore the availability of schools to all nations is the remedy to promote education. Schools are as many as mielie-crops now, everyone has the opportunity to learn. We can also see this as a way of telling us that each and every place and community has a school which like sorghum, is a common thing to all of us. With the multitudes of schools now available, the poet encourages education to go on, the culture of learning has to take off everywhere. There is no better way of defeating the complexities of life without having the proper tools. The best, permanent and powerful tool is the one we obtain from school education.

49. O nyelela jaaka mouwane
 Fa o bona batsadi ba gago.
 (Ditlhase tsa marumo: 23).

(You disappear like mist
When you see your parents).

The above image reminds us of the differences between the present and the olden times. In the past people used to live a normal, happy and long life, because they were very united. Children were not ashamed of their own parents, they did not deny their parents like Peter did to Jesus Christ. Today life has changed, we have false-friendships, we envy so and so because s/he has "good", rich and beautiful parents. We only respect our elders if they have what makes our friends respect us. This is the reason why today's children are always befallen by misfortunes. Their parents' hearts are not well disposed towards them. One is even ashamed to tell his friends that this is my mother, this is my father, we would rather disappear as soon as one of them emerges. We do not want to be seen with our parents. We have to reverse and go back to our own roots and traditions for us to be a better and respectful nation. The modern ways, culture and deeds have destroyed our humanity(botho). This is also confirmed by the next example.

50. Kgarebe, o lebala a go godisitse

A go godisitse jaaka sethunya?

Jaaka sethunya a se noseditse?

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 157).

(Lady, you forget that he has brought you up

They brought you up like a flower?

Like a flower they watered you?)

We have to use this example in relation to the previous example (no. 50), because both compliment each other and each traces what the other does not have. They both allude and refer to a Setswana proverb; "Ka tlhagolela mookana ya re o gola wa ntlhaba", (I took care of a mimosa tree, but as soon as it grew up it pricked me), meaning that one takes care of someone, helps him in different ways but as soon as he becomes someone in life he thinks that he is a better person than his/her mentor. It is surprising to note that our parents treat us as flowers, but as soon as we are grown-ups we deny them let alone care for them. Like anyone, the poet is surprised and disappointed by modern children who do not care a damn about their parents. He makes a call to all of us to go back to our culture of respecting our adults.

51. Ngwana wa batho ga a tlhaloganye,

O didimetse fela magomogomong:

O atlhame jaaka lemphorwane.

(Ditlhase tsa marumo: 18).

(The poor kid does not understand,

He is just quiet in this confusion:

His mouth is wide open like a nestling).

This image of a poor child reminds us of a proverb in Setswana, which says, "ngwana, lemphorwana le atlhamela babolai" (a child, is a nestling which opens its mouth to enemies). This reflects the innocence of children. Their lack of knowledge, thinking abilities and understanding makes them vulnerable. As adults, the poet says that we do not have to let our differences affect the most innocent, the children. We are also warned to take extreme care of our children.

52. Lenyalo la sešwa le tla ka matsorotsoro,
 Le tshwana le pula ya sephai ya tshoganyetso;
 Le tshwana le tlhaga e tala ya letlhabula,
 Tlhaga ya go nyelela ka leuba go re setlhe!
 (Masa a sele: 72).

(Modern marriage comes with torrents,
 It is like the first sudden rain of the year
 It is like green grass in autumn
 Which disappears in drought).

Using this image, the poet indicates that the youths are getting married in large numbers. He indicates this by associating these marriages with the first rains of the year whose time we are not certain about (i.e. when it will rain), because it falls 'suddenly'. He further says that, at first such marriages become happy (marriages) that is, as 'green as grass' but as soon as there is drought (problems) happiness goes and the

green becomes brown, the marriage is controlled by conflict and fights. This is an indication that such marriages are short-lived, because the youths get divorced very quickly. The idea we get here is that we do not have to be in a hurry for marriage as we have to know each other better before we commit ourselves and before we get proper advice from our elders.

Okpewho (1992:137-8) says:

When the adult gets married, songs mark the occasion-ranging from good-humoured taunts at the young man or woman surrendering a long-cherished freedom for the "prison" of the marital home to sincere advice to the young wife on how to ensure a happy home for herself and new family.

(Emphasis mine).

Schapera (1984:125) described a properly arranged marriage (traditional one) as the one characterised by:

- (a) mutual agreement between the two families concerned, as reflected in the formalities of betrothal; and
- (b) the transfer of certain livestock, generally cattle, to the bride's family by the family of the bridegroom.

Even though there are a number of changes to the traditional marriage, because of the introduction of the European civil marriage, the essential thing, is the involvement and the knowledge of the parents. The parents have to give blessing to the marriage, a belief which will make the marriage to last.

4.3 Personification

Myers and Simms (1985:230) say personification as a poetic device,

lends human qualities to abstractions
and animate or inanimate objects, and
is designed to evoke emotions.

Objects, especially animals in this figure of speech, are addressed as human beings. They are even talked to as if they could hear and they are endowed with human sensibilities, intelligence and emotions. In his poetry, Thobega personifies objects' actions and feelings by using apostrophe (addressing absent things/ objects as if they are present and as if they are human beings).

4.3.1 Personification in Thobega's poetry

53. Morwadia batho a utlwa lentswe,
Lentswe le feta tsebeng jaaka sefefe,
(Ditlhase tsa marumo: 27).

(The peoples' daughter heard a voice,
The voice passed like a whirlwind).

The poet gives human movement to 'lentswe', an inanimate thing. It is as if the voice has feet to walk and go past one's ear. He actually elevates this object (voice) to go past a lady, as a way of telling us about her beloved's death. To break such devastating news is not an easy task, especially after some days' absence from home. As such personifying the voice is to release and report this painful news. It also means that the news brought to the lady can be perceived as unreal as she does not see the bearer of the sad tidings. It is as if she is dreaming. She could not believe it, she could not take what she was told, as we always do when we hear such news.

54. Maru o botala, bosweu, bohibidu,
Ga o na nnete, o tshwana le mosi,
Mosi o nyelela matlhong re lebile.
(Ditlhare tsa marumo: 36).

(Clouds you are blue, white, red,
 You do not have the truth you, are like smoke,
 Smoke disappear before our eyes while we are watching).

The poet compares the clouds, a natural phenomenon, with smoke. He addresses these with contempt, simply because the clouds are not truthful. They assume too many colours, and as soon as they have gathered, we are deceived that it is going to rain. In some cases we think that the smaller clouds would not bring any rain but at the end it pours. The clouds are addressed as a living human being because they deny us the warmth of the sun. He compares them to 'smoke' because the dark clouds are expected to bring rain but disappear just like smoke. The poet is disillusioned because of the preparations we make when we see rain clouds gather, because in Setswana we say, 'dithulaganyo tsa pula di dirwa go sa le gale' (preparations for rain are made in good time). As soon as we have made these preparations the clouds disappear like smoke.

55. Yunibesiti ya Botswana gola,
 O gole jaaka dithaba tsa Afrika,
 O gole go feta Kilimanjaro.
 (Ditlhase tsa marumo: 38).

(The University of Botswana grow
 Grow and become huge like the mountains of Africa,
 Grow more than Kilimanjaro).

It is remarkable that an inanimate object like the University of Botswana, can be addressed like a human being, to grow and be big, not just big, but to be as huge as a mountain. It is certain that physical growing is associated with animate objects. The poet elevates this further by talking to it and giving it instructions as if it will take his instructions and grow. In essence the object has taken his instructions as it has grown in terms of size and student numbers. There are a lot of students from within and without the borders of Botswana. In addressing the university, the poet is looking at it as a young institution. We may view this apostrophe as a direct address to those at the top to improve it, to expand it and get qualified staff so as to make it one of the best in the world. The poet is also making a call to those who have not noticed this new institution to open their eyes and see it, have interest in seeing themselves as students and possibly staff in it. The growing of this institution, is an encouragement for a culture of learning nationwide.

56. Garankuwa, re seka ra go tshaba,
 Ra go boifa jaaka tau e e bogale,
 (Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 90).

(Garankuwa we do not have to fear you,
 And fear you like we fear a fearful lion).

Garankuwa like one of the well-known townships in South Africa is addressed like a human being. The poet, looks at this township and realises that it has people of different languages and yet it is one of the safest townships. He tells this township not to change and become one of the notorious. He requests it to remain cool and accommodative especially to strangers. Addressing Garankuwa as a human being, the poet, is indirectly talking to its people, because a township cannot change but people can. He tells its people to remain as they are and advises them not to get involved in meaningless battles, where death and the flowing of blood will be the order of the day. Indirectly, the poet foregrounds the other townships, where death is the order of the day.

57. Maru lesa ngwedi a rene

Ke go ila jaaka sebody -

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 9).

(Clouds, leave the moon to govern

I hate you like a rotten thing).

Two natural phenomena have been personified and are being addressed like human beings. The poet does not like clouds, so, he requests them to stop detaining the moon and further says he hates them. He addresses them as someone who is afraid of the dark, but the presence of the moon makes him feel better. He says the moon must be released to rule and govern as it is the

only object which lightens the earth at night. A further interpretation of this image is that, there is an oppressor and an oppressed, where the oppressed are not given the opportunity to utilise their potentials, like some of our leaders who were detained for years for shining bright like the moon (i.e. expressing themselves). If we come to think of those who were in jail for having done nothing wrong, we feel sad. Like the moon they need this freedom to give us light.

58. Kapari ya sešwa ke matlhokotlhoko
 E tsere bontsi ya ba dubakanya,
 (Masa a sele: 52).

(Modern dress is disgusting
 It has taken many and destroyed them,)

In condemning today's type of dressing, the poet personifies it first. By so doing, he feels it will listen better or attentively. It has destroyed and changed many people. How many people have been raped because of the way they dress. This is a sign of how things have changed. A signal is being given here that as people we need to watch out. We are warned to be very careful of adopting foreign cultures at the expense of our own. It is also a way of telling us that going back to our own culture and tradition is not a bad idea. The lines given in 60 above are supported by a poem in Molodi wa lošalaba titled 'Segompieno' (modern times). A line from this poem which sums up all this is;

Kaparo ya senna le sesadi go tshwana fela (Men and women's, dressing is just the same). This condemns our way of doing things these days. This never happened in the past.

59. Ngwedi, a o mo mahutsaneng?

(Ditlhars tsa Marumo: 11).

(Moon, are you in sorrow, poverty?)

The moon is addressed as someone who is in hardships and lonely; someone whose partner is away. A lonely heart and mind present a very gloomy and pale face; as loneliness is mirrored in one's face. The moon is not very bright (or it is quiet), because it does not have its "loved ones", the stars, who always surround it, (in contrast), it avoids a number of problems (by being done). What this tells us, is that if only the world/people can live like the moon, alone and avoiding problems, shouts, cries, and fights, this can be a better place for all to live in. We can also see this image of a sad and solitary woman without her husband; like so many others he is gone away many hundreds of miles to work, say in the mines. Unfortunately, man was not born to be quiet and alone like the moon and as such we will always make noise, crying and shouting. We will always admire and envy those who live without noise and fights.

60. Bosigo a ke ka go botsa potso?

Ka re, "A o Morena lefatsheng?

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 16).

(Night, can I ask you a question?

And say, "Are you the Lord in this world?)

The poet addresses the night as a living being. Like anyone, he is worried about the night and what happens in it. There are a number of sounds at night. Some (people), do not witness the dawning of the morning as they are killed at night. These nightly occurrences worry the poet because the night according to him, condones the bad and dark deeds. The sense we get from this image, is an indirect address to those who roam the streets at night to kill, to stop doing this. It is also a request to those innocent people who get killed, murdered and slaughtered to stop roaming the streets at night. This is also a revelation of what actually goes on during the night when most people are fast asleep. The next example will shed more light and supplement this one.

61. O letse o ile kae, Morena Tsatsi

Ke kile ka go tlhwafalela ruri,

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 4).

(Where have you been King sun

I truly missed you,)

To those who are afraid of the dark or the night like the poet, the break of day will always be appreciated. This is observed in the above image, where the poet says he missed the sun very much. This indicates that those who do not like the night because they do not know what it has in store for them, will always get worried when the sun sets. To address the sun as a King is to recall its protective nature. The King protects his subjects; darkness does the reverse.

62. Mogala wa mpitsa ke le kwa morakeng.

(Masa a sele: 45).

(A phone called me from the cattle post).

In this humanisation, 'mogala' is given human action, of calling someone. He takes this object, and make it superior to man, because of the task it performs. The purpose of this, is firstly to shorten a long explanation. The personification employed signifies the urgency of the matter at stake, that his uncle has passed away. Therefore the image indicates that the phone as a human being, is a very important object and should be used only to convey essential information.

63. Loso o ama mongwe le mongwe lefatsheng

Loso o lere matlhoko a' tlabang.

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 1).

(Death you touch everyone on earth

Death you bring hardships which pierce the heart).

Death is personified in order to bring it closer to human beings and make it belong to the class of human beings so that they share the same spatial and temporal qualities. Whenever it visits anyone, it brings misery, sorrow and sadness. The poet by using death as a human being is saying, we might be different in life, as there are rich people, poor, lords and others but in death, we are the same, we are equals. This image is better understood in the context of Raditladi's poem 'Loso' (death) in Sefalana sa Menate. We shall not discuss the poem.

64. Madi a batla morati fela ...

O rena o sa gadime morago.

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 31).

(Money seeks one who likes you

You govern without turning back).

'Madi' (money) is given human features and actions, to indicate the control and power it has over people. The poet says, money likes only those who like it. Like an evil spirit, it controls and possesses people. People get killed over the money they have laboured very hard for. It further says we should rather have control over it so that it does not manipulate us.

65. Boipuso bo sireleditse Botswana,
 Jwa sireletsa Botswana jaaka sekhukhu, ...
 Jwa tla jaaka pula ya kgogolammoko -
 Botswana le ene a ijela maboko.

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 164).

(Independence protected Botswana
 It protected Botswana like an umbrella, ...
 It came like the first rain after threshing -
 Botswana enjoyed praises.)

In personifying 'Boipuso' (independence) in Botswana, the poet shows that independence was very significant and important to the people of Botswana. It came to the people of Botswana, as a protector against stormy rains (and other oppressive nations). The freedom gained from independence is signified by the freedom of expression, "*Botswana le ena a ijela maboko*". People can express themselves as they wish and in any manner they like.

4.4 Symbolism

Symbolism is the use of symbols to express public or private values, in a very meaningful way. Symbolism is used especially in poetry to carry and express a hidden reality. Okpewho (1992:101) says, symbolism is,

a particularly useful means of conveying certain important truths and lessons about human life and the problems of existence.

Okpewho further states that symbolism occurs much in oral literature than in written literature, as they (symbols) are a mark of high artistic sophistication in oral culture.

4.4.1 Symbols

Most people argue that a symbol is a concrete or familiar object that is used in reference to, or as an explanation of an abstract idea or a less familiar object or event. Myers and Simms (1985:297) say a symbol is,

a trope in which a word phrase, or image represents something literal and concrete and yet maintains a complex set of abstract ideas and values that are usually interpreted according to the surrounding context but which may mean a number of things, depending upon who is interpreting it.

The interpretation of a symbol depends entirely on the nation and its culture. Different nations have their own symbols, but there are general ones. We can further state that a literal symbol

stands for some idea as if it were just a convenient substitute for a fixed meaning.

4.4.1.1 Symbolism in Thobega's poetry

The poet uses a variety of symbols which stem from cultural and modern influences. This is an indication that the poet owes his allegiance to cultural nationalism on the one hand and to modern culture on the other.

66. Molaleng dinoga di lelemela,
 Tlhogong go palame digwagwana.
 Digwagwana masekeseke mmeleng
 O ka re bontsi jwa dikgobe pitseng.

(Ditlhase tsa Marumo: 12)

(On the neck snakes are hanging
 On his head there are frogs.
 Many crabs are on the body
 It is like a lot of boiled beans in a pot).

The given description alludes to a traditional symbol of a traditional healer. Traditionally a healer is symbolised by such a look, a fearful and undesirable figure as a sign of one who knows his art. This is the only work he does to help heal those who are sick.

Hence the above is a good and appropriate symbol for a traditional healer as opposed to the healers we have these days. This might be a sign of showing that even what is supposed to be done has changed.

67. Ga a na le rona motlha ono, Mpitseng,
Lekolwane la nko e e letsime, segati.
Itshwae sefapano, Morongwa, Morwadiaka!

(Ditlhase tsa Marumo: 27).

(Mpitseng is not with us this time,
The gentleman with a sharp nose,
Make a cross on yourself, Morongwa my daughter!)

and

Ngwaga-pedi-tharo a bo a apere
Bohibidu le bosweu bo le mmeleng,
Sefapaano se rapaletse mokwatleng,

(Molodi wa Lošalaba: 7).

(One-two-three years he wore
Red and white in his body
A cross placed along his back).

A cross is a biblical symbol which can be understood from a religious context. "Sefapano"(cross) is a symbol of Jesus

Christ's crucifixion and suffering. It symbolises death and the pain felt by Jesus Christ. In the two examples, it symbolises pain and suffering the bereaved feel after losing their loved ones. It also tells us that the lady has to mourn the loss of her husband. In the second example, "sefaapano" symbolises a Christian call to one to become a priest. With a cross on one's back the symbolism is that one is going to carry a heavy burden; and one must be prepared and ready to be burdened.

68. Madi ga a na tsala ruri

Losea, mogolo, matshwanedi.

(Ditlhase tsa Marumo: 26).

(Money does not have a friend

A kid, a grown-up, are the same).

These days, unlike in the olden days, 'madi' (money) is a symbol of a number of things, it symbolises evil, wealth, cruelty and death. Money, whether one is a child, an adult or whoever, is in demand, as people can die in pursuit of money. It is truly a symbol of evil.

69. Fa o itlhonegile ga o bone tsala;

O nna le mmuisiwa fela fa o reka,

O reka seno-segolwane sa go tseisa sedidi.

Ke gone o tla bonwang fa o le motho.

O tla nna le tsala ya nnete,

(Masa a sele: 31).

(When you are sober you don't have a friend
 You have a friend only when you buy,
 When you buy liquor to make you drunk,
 It is then that you can be seen as a person
 You will have a true friend).

In today's life, drinking and shebeens are a symbol of civilization, change and a new order. People choose only those who drink liquor as friends. You are only regarded as someone noteworthy if you go to the shebeen to buy and drink. We even forget that the liquor, we regard as honourable and praiseworthy is bad and harmful to the body and mind. Ironically, this substance is enjoyed by millions across the world. The poet through this image is telling us to ignore and keep away from it and not to over-indulge in it.

70. Ngwana a tlhoka go tshela jwa mabobe,
 A sa itse fa pelo tsa batsadi di dutla,
 Di dutla madi, a elela jaaka metsi,

(Masa a sele: 47).

(A child is denied to live a better life,
 Not knowing that his parents' heart are bleeding,
 Bleeding blood, and flowing like water).

"Madi" (blood), flowing like water is used to symbolise the flow of pain, hatred and cruelty through one's veins and heart. It is the pain one feels which cannot be measured by any means available. The misfortune the children experience is a result of them listening or taking orders from their parents. We have to take note of the proverbs discussed in chapter 3, for more clarity on this.

71. Melao ya bo-rraetsho e ile kae?
 Lenyalo la bo-rraetsho le nyeletse ...
 Dithulaganyo di dirwa go se na bagakolodi,
 Bagakolodi, ke raya bagodisa-bana ...
 Le tshwana le tlhaga e tala ya letlhabula,
 Tlhaga ya go nyelela ka leuba go re setlhe!
 (Masa a sele: 72).

(Where have the norms and values of our forefather gone to?
 The marriage of our forefather has disappeared ...
 Preparation are made without advisers
 Advisers, I mean the parents ...
 It is like green grass in early summer
 The grass which disappear in drought).

The above lines symbolise two different cultures in our societies. As a symbol of modern times, children get married without the advice of their parents. They live together as

husband and wife without the knowledge and consent of parents. The second culture is symbolised by that which the youths do not do in arranging their marriage. Culturally, parents are the ones who arrange and finalise marriages in consultation with the children who are involved. The parents of both families will come together after being informed by those getting married that they want to get married.

72. Go kwadilwe ga twe ditselana di tla nna pedi
 Go tla tsewa e tshesane le e kima mo motshegareng.
 (Masa a sele: 62).

(It was written that roads will be two
 There will be a narrow and a wide one during the day).

The two roads mentioned above, symbolise a point in one's life of making a crucial decision. A decision which will determine the way and manner one will make his living. When one reaches the cross-roads, one (he) has to decide which road to take, and in deciding, (one) he makes sure that he is not getting lost. We can also say that by using two roads, the poet is echoing D.P.S. Monyaise, who portrays a point of making a decision in life or where one gets into trouble or danger by using "Marakanelo a ditsela" (Cross-roads). To understand Thobega's symbolism, we use Monyaise's texts most of which use the cross-roads. By so doing we say, Thobega by alluding to Monyaise wittingly or unwittingly, is parasiting in Monyaise the host.

As already said Monyaise is regarded as the host (precursor) and Thobega is referred to as the parasite (influenced); because Thobega's text traces that which is absent (Monyaise's texts). We can further say Monyaise's texts supplement the parasite's text and give us more clarity in as far as the above example is concerned. If one wants to be a better person in life, one will have to decide wisely when reaching the cross-roads, and normally the road to take the one to a better life is the one full of obstacles.

73. Fa o tsetsweng teng o lohuto,
 Lesedi la metlha, o a tlhokomela,
 Ngwedi e bonesang digole, difofu,
 (Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 71).

(Where you have been born, you are a knot,
 The usual light, you care for us,
 The moon you light for the cripples and blinds),

and

Go tlhoka lesedi ga ntsenya bolwetsi,
 Bankane ba me ba bolaya madi,
 (Molodi wa lošalaba: 37).

(To live without light made me sick,
 My friends were getting a lot of money).

'Lesedi' (light) symbolises education and the knowledge we need in the world. The light we possess is the one which helps us get through difficult times, whether one is blind or crippled. In short, we can also say that if we have the light, we have life. Through this image of light, the poet is telling us that we have to get educated so that more and more people can see the light.

CHAPTER 5

When the poet exposes the evils of irregularities he notes around him, he wants to arouse in his readers a state of disquietude which will lead to some kind of reform, (Ntuli, 1984: 134).

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss different themes discernible in Thobega's poetry. The poet (Thobega) having been influenced by a variety of environments, alludes to these environments in his themes. Gordimer (1973:15) says Black writers choose their characters and settings, but their themes choose them. Thobega writes about what he sees, feels, experiences and about his immediate environments because,

if he does not project himself
into what his fellowmen feel, he
would be failing in his task to
make them aware of what is taking
place around them, (Milubi, 1984:33).

Surely, it is the duty of 'every poet' to let his fellow countrymen see, hear and observe things around them. By doing so, the poet is also fulfilling one of those tasks performed by poets of being the ear and eye of society. Traditional praise poets' task,

... was to act as custodians of
society's moral values. This

they did by including in their praises condemnation of unbecoming behaviour among certain individuals in the community, or youth, and even on the part of the chief, or people in other positions of leadership, (Zotwana, 1993:141).

5.1 Themes

Abrams (1988:111) states that the term theme is,

... more usefully applied to a general claim, or doctrine, whether implicit or asserted, which an imaginative work is designed to incorporate and make persuasive to the reader.

According to Holman and Harmon (1986:502), theme is a central dominating idea in a work. In line with the above definitions of theme, we can readily accept Makaryk (1993:642), who says,

The term theme originally means the subject around which an orator

proposed to construct
a speech ...

Makaryk further sees theme as the subject-matter, topic or idea on which a poet/writer bases his/her poem/text.

The concept theme is viewed as a work's central idea which a poet or writer can directly or indirectly state. Guerin (1992:14) states that theme is,

often rich and valued
underlying idea of
the action ...

To add to the above definition, we can further say that the theme of a text is the "paraphrasable" main thought of an artform, or what the text is all about. It is like a thread which runs through, covers and unifies the whole text.

Discussions about theme, must try to separate the main idea of a text (theme) and the message(s) we infer from the text. A text can have one theme (main idea) and various messages. A message is the lesson we get from a text. For instance in a poem, 'Tlhapedi' (drunkenness) from Molodi wa Lošalaba, the theme of this poem is the unacceptable behaviour of youth and women. From this poem, the poet condemns the behaviour of women and youths who drink liquor (a product which is not meant for them). From the same poem, we can extract/infer the following messages;

- (i) Liquor is harmful to the youth and women, as it causes them to do bad things like the killing of unborn babies,
- (ii) Wrong doers are severely punished,
- (iii) Young men must look around/first before they choose marriage partners.

Therefore this distinction(which in most cases is not made) is very essential and important. We will look into some of the themes as revealed in Thobega's poetry.

5.1.1 The theme of death

Death is an occurrence which lives and rubs shoulders with us always, but despite its familiarity, we never get used to it. People live in fear of death than any other fearful monster. Serudu (1993:285) says,

In a traditional society
 death is held as a sacred
 occasion. It is an incident
 which instils fear in the
 hearts of the people.

The fear of death to most people is because of the knowledge that after dying they do not have another life. But to some, "death is merely a transition, like birth, from one kind of life to another", (Kattray, 1927:107). Hence Thobega describes death as an evil thing, as something which strikes quicker than lightning.

He says that when death visits our families, it does not knock at the door, it takes anyone, young, old, rich, poor, kings and whoever it wishes to take. He says,

Loso o ama mongwe le mongwe ...
 E re a phaphama go bonwe serepa
 (Dikeledi tsa Lefatshe: 1).

(Death you visit everyone
 When he wakes up we see a corpse).

The portrayal of death is indicative of its unmeasurable strength and cruelty. It is common knowledge that death is among us every hour but we cannot get used to it.

In referring to death, Thobega adopts both traditional and modern ways of language usage. Traditional praise-poems use highly descriptive language in poems about death. The one eulogising, will have heroism as the main theme and the one about death would have death as a main theme and heroism a sub-theme.

On the other hand, there are cases where the bard/poet employs the modern style of talking about death; pure lamentation. The language in this case is not rich but dull, and dark, resembling the theme of the poem (death). For instance in a poem titled "Phitlho diphupung" (A funeral at grave-site), is an example of such a poem. It is a poem of five stanza (a modern poem). The

poem itself resembles its theme (dead) as the language is that of pure lamentation. The only aspect which draws our attention to this poem is the use of imagery (metaphor and simile)

5.1.1.1 The father's death

In a poem titled 'Abele-A-Thobega-A-Mosega', the poet starts by praising his father (a priest) as a brave person. This aspect of bravery is engulfed in the refrain, 'Senatla ... Senatla' (the brave ... the brave), which occurs at the end of all nine of the ten stanzas of this poem. He traces all places his father has stayed at, and what he has done during his life-time. In the last stanza, the poet says,

Tsamaya sentle, o ikhutse Masega.

Ga o bolo go nna o go tlhoafaletse,

Ke tsela ya rona lefatsheng ...

(Molodi wa Lošalaba: 31).

(Go well, and have a rest Masega.

You have been longing for this day

It is our route in this world ...).

It is extremely painful for one to lose a father, the terror of death will always be mirrored in one's writing. The death of the poet's father, is an indication that the (death of the beloved) is inescapable. The contrast here is that the poet, showing

traces of his and his father's religious belief accepts God's will, firstly, by wishing him well wherever he is heading to. Secondly the second line indicates a sense of relief and satisfaction to both the poet and his father since his father has been expecting this day. Therefore acceptance of such a deed, symbolises the love the poet has for his father. We can add by stating what Van der Geest (1980:157) has to say,

However much one loves
 someone, however hard
 one works, however good
 and famous one is, death
 comes one day.

5.1.1.2 The death of the uncle

Thobega is a poet of magnitude, a poet who has taken over from his uncle, M.O.M. Seboni as one of the greatest poets(writers) in Setswana. Seboni is one of the influences and encouragement to CLS Thobega. The death of Seboni, has actually left a 'sad' mark in him as his uncle was a 'back-up system' in his writing. In expressing the passing away of his uncle and wishing him well, he resorts to the traditional way of praise by adopting oral traditional forms of praise-poems. The lament is one long poem of ±58 lines without stanzas. He heaps praises on his uncle by using metaphorical eulogues.

All the eulogues present the late poet (Seboni) as a hero, hence the theme of heroism is a sub-theme to the main theme of death. In expressing his feelings, the poet says,

O re latlhile re le maibing, Martinus.
 Re le maibing wa re tlogela fela,
 Wa re latlha jaaka mapai a se na mong
 Wa re latlha jaaka leselo le se na mabele.

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 94).

(You left us while we were still unconscious,
 Martinus.

While still unconscious you left us,
 You throw us away like blankets which have no owner
 You left us like 'leselo' (granary) without sorghum.

As a man who has been of great help to the people, a writer and teacher, he disappeared like a whirlwind and left everyone amazed. The idea that Seboni just "threw us away like blankets", suggests that his death was not awaited, hence people will miss him a lot. Despite this loss, the poet accepts and does not regret this and he says,

Thebe 'a gooSeboni e wetse ka lekadiba,
 Ga e a wela ka lekadiba badimo ba e biditse.

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 95).

(The shield of Seboni has fallen into a semidam
It has not fallen into a semidam but the ancestors
have called it).

The above lines which are in contrast indicate the reason why
Seboni departed suddenly. He has not died as the poet says, but
has been called by our ancestors on our behalf,

Ba e biditse go tsaya nayo 'kgang.

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 95).

(They have called it to talk to it).

In life, all those who are good and honest die first and the evil
ones, the ones we wish they could die anytime do not die quickly.
One gets an impression (traditionally and even religiously) that
the ancestors and God do not need useless people. He promises
his uncle that he will take over as one of the greatest writers
in Setswana and he has done so.

5.1.1.3 The death of Kgama

Allusion to oral traditional poetry surfaces in the poem titled
'ROBALA KA KAGISO TAUTONA SERETSE-A-SEKGOMA-A-KHAMA: 25 PHUKWI,
1980; (REST IN PEACE TAUTONA SERETSE-A-SEKGOMA-A-KHAMA: 25
AUGUST, 1980). The poet uses metaphorical eulogues in showering
praises on the King. He is referred to by all different praise-

names we can think of. Besides these eulogues, the poet uses repetition to emphasise the rhythmic quality in this long poem;

Ya ladiwa iketlong ya borre gooKhama
 Ya ladiwa diphuphung go sa solofelwa -
 Ya ladiwa 'naong, tsa badimo gooMmabesi;
 Ya ba ya ladiwa bokhutlong ka lefoko la Modimo.

(Tautona Seretse-Sekgoma-A-Kgama: 1921-1980:96).

(It was laid to rest at a place of rest of his fathers
 Khama.

It was laid to rest unexpectedly -

It was laid to rest at the foot of his ancestors
 Mmabesi.

It was also laid to rest with a word of God).

The initial linking 'ya ladiwa' emphasises the thought of how Seretse was laid to rest. He unexpectedly died as indicated in the second line. The repetition helps to bring contrasting ideas in 3 and 4 (above). He has been laid to rest to join his ancestors, to symbolise that he has gone down to be one of the Batswana ancestors. But contrary to this, he has been called "up by God" to join all Christians who have been called before him. This shows that, Seretse as a Christian, never forgot his own ancestors. Further, Thobega like all of us, is bicultural. As Chaphole would say, we slaughter a goat for the ancestors on

Saturday and sing Rock of Ages in praise of God the following day.

The passing away of Seretse, has affected a number of people in his country;

Mono Botswana re itshwara ditlhaa -
 Ra itshwara ditlhogo go lela selosea -
 Re bona fa Botswana a le losea;
 Ra bona fa Botswana a latlhegetswe
 Ra bona fa Botswana a se wa botswalo

(Tautona Seretse-Sekgoma: 98).

(Here in Botswana we held our chicks
 We held our heads and cried like babies,
 And observed Botswana being empty;
 And realised that Botswana has lost
 And realised that Botswana is in trouble).

The love, the people have for Seretse is mirrored in the weeping of the whole country. People, old and young are crying like babies because they have lost a father and a leader. The employment of repetition helps to bring forth the sadness and the hardship in his nation, but most importantly the bravery of Seretse. In the same poem, the poet says;

Seromamowa sa mo latola, a iketse Seretse Khama,
 Ga sala go gwasagwasa mewa ya babosi
 Lentswetshipi la tlogela 'fatshe la ditšhaba.
 Lentswetshipi la tlogela 'fatshe la Dikwena.
 Lentswetshipi la tlogela 'fatshe la Bangwato.
 Lentswetshipi la tlogela 'fatshe la Bahurutshe.
 Lentswetshipi la tlogela 'fatshe la Bangwaketse.
 Lentswetshipi la tlogela 'fatshe la Barolong.
 Lentswetshipi la tlogela 'fatshe la Balete.
 Lentswetshipi la tlogela 'fatshe la Bakgatla.)

(The radio announced the death of Seretse Khama
 What remained was the mourning of the leaders.
 The diabase left the land of nations.
 The diabase left the land of Crocodiles.
 The diabase left the land of Bangwato.
 The diabase left the land of Bahurutshe.
 The diabase left the land of Bangwaketse.
 The diabase left the land of Barolong.
 The diabase left the land of Balete.
 The diabase left the land of Bakgatla.)

The use of the metaphorical eulogues 'ntswetshipi', tells us about Khama's strength. The brave man has left a lot of people and nations weeping. We can also notice the rhythm rendered by the repetition in all these lines. The loss of Seretse is really a

painful thing to the nation. The poet as a religious person, accepts his death by stating that all this is God's wish;

Ga go na sepe se re ka se dirang -
 Gotlhe mo- "Ke dithata tsa Modimo".

(There is nothing we can do -
 All this is "God's will").

5.1.2 The theme of the ancestors

Thobega's poetry, despite having a strong religious influence, because of his Christian inclination, is genuinely more African. He expresses genuine African attitudes on a variety of topics and themes. Here we are specifically referring to his treatment of the theme of the ancestors in his poetry. Senghor in Beier (1979:105) says, for instance,

The African attitude to death is fundamentally different from the European one. The European has almost lost his belief in survival after death altogether ... In African, on the other hand, the idea of death is not associated with

horror. The living and the dead are in continuous contact and a large part of the religious life of the African is devoted to establishing a harmonious contact with the dead. The ancestors are the guardians of morality among the living community; they are guides and protectors.

Even to Thobega, life and death are connected, they flow into each other. To us, this act symbolises the influence of culture, of traditional life on the poet Thobega. We will look at a few examples to show the role the ancestors have on us and the connection the ancestors have with us.

In the poem titled 'Dingwao tsa Setswana' (The Setswana Customs), the poet is worried and very sad about the Setswana customs which have been thrown away in favour of the new Western ones. He says young men do not even know how to hunt, an event/act which used to be a norm in the olden days. In the past, children were not allowed to whistle, but now it has become a habit, as they even whistle at night (this used to be taboo). The only salvation, which comes as a wish is reflected in the following:

Fa baswi ba ka bo ba etelwa,
Mabitla, ke ne ke tla epolola;

Baswi ke re ba tle go re thusa ...

(Masa a sele: 77).

(If it was possible for the dead to be visited,

I would dig out (exhume) the graves,

And request our ancestors to come and help us ...)

The poet is fully aware that the only people who can help us in the mess we are in are only our ancestors. We can only obtain, the values, secrets and customs of life from our ancestors, because it seems there is no one left with the knowledge of our past. Without our ancestors we are just a lost nation.

He also uses the poem titled 'Dikgaba tsa Batswana', (The Batswana misfortune) to show our connection with our ancestors.

In life, when everything is not going right for us; some pray and others perform rituals for their ancestors. Mankind has realised that the dead are always near us and he is very much conscious of their presence, especially in time of need, of misfortune and calamity.

Fa o di latlhelela di a tla.

Fa o le Motswana, phutha diatla,

O rapele badimo go go golola,

(Masa a sele: 46).

(When misfortune is directed at you it come,
 If you are a Motswana, fold your arms,
 And pray/call your ancestors to free your).

These lines show the closeness of the black people to their ancestors. Calling on them, or performing African rituals for them, gives us luck and frees us from all the trouble we find ourselves in.

In Setswana there is a proverb called 'Bogosi Kupe' (Kingship is sacred). This proverb tells us that a King is a holy cow, an ancestral cow, which is only found in the veld, it is not looked after, not even killed. If anyone does anything to it, he and his family will die. Just like this cow, kingship is sacred. Firstly, a king is annointed by the ancestors and if anyone ascends the thrown without the knowledge of the ancestors he won't last in his thrown. The above ideas are well captured in the following lines from 'Bogosi jwa Segompieno', (The Modern Kingship).

Bo tšharasela ka kgabo e khibidu!
 Bogosi bono bo tsidifetse jaaka marapo,
 Marapo a moswi a re latlhile!

(It is full of red flames!
 This Kingship is as cold as bones,
 Bones of the dead who have deserted us!)

This is the type of Kingship which even the ancestors could not waste their time to look at/after. The last line, is symbolic of the anger of the ancestors. If they desert us, it means there would be a number of incidents which will go wrong. Hence their lack of interest in such a Kingship.

5.1.3 The theme of love

The poet reveals different aspects of the theme of love. See the following lines:

O ntiela nako ke iponetse Thanana
 Ene kana ga a ntshenke madi;
 Ga se yo o ikaelelang go nthukutha
 Lorato la gagwe le tlhamaletse.

(Molodi was Lošalaba: 42)

(You are wasting my time, I now love Thanana
 She does not only need money from me
 She does not aim at robbing me
 Her love is real).

This is the portrayal of love today, where young girls do not know the meaning and essence of true love. What they are interested in, are material things, money, beautiful cars and what one wears as compared to love itself. This is a contribu-

tory factor to the many different 'lovers' a girl has as her boyfriends.

The above idea is also contained in a poem titled 'O rata mang', (Who do you love). The poem reflects a situation in this era, where a girl will fall in love with more than one man and see nothing wrong with that. The reason to have more than one man as boyfriends is because of material things (the love for money) as mentioned above.

O nketela motsing o se nang ledi
 O kokota kgorong o rothisa dikeledi,
 Dipelo tsa rona makau di a uba,
 (Ditlhase tsa Marumo: 45).

(You only visit me when you don't have money,
 You knock at my door with eyes filled with tears,
 Our hearts as men beat faster).

Despite our knowledge as men that we are being deceived, we still feel pity for these ladies who cry and pretend to be our 'lovers'. This is an indication that men are weaker people and can easily be cheated.

A different sense of love is portrayed in the following example, where the poet shows the theme of true love, the undecipherable love a man/woman has for a lady/man.

Lorato lo lotlhanya boidiidi -
 Kgogedi e e se nang bothijo,
 Lorato lo paletse batlhoanyi,
 Lorato lone ga lo senke papadi,
 Lwa nnete, ga lo batle madi,
 Lwa nnete, ee, lo ka itumedisa ...

(Masa a sele: 05).

(Love causes many to fight -
 It is an attraction without an obstruction,
 Love has defeated enemies,
 Love does not need a chancer,
 Real love does not need money,
 Real love, yes, makes one happy ...)

This type of love, is the one which is blessed by the ancestors; the one which cannot be easily destroyed. This statement, will remind us of the theme of love - 'Lorato Kupe' (Love is sacred) in the novel 'Bogosi Kupe' (Kingship is sacred) by D.P.S. Monyaise. This is the love which cannot be destroyed by anybody except the ancestors.

Thobega also sees real love as a contrast between good and bad. He says,

Lorato o maswe, o montle,

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 15).

(Love you are ugly, you are beautiful).

The oxymoron expressed above is a depiction of what those who are in love go through. They experience all sorts of pains and pleasures. One feels good and on top of the world by being in love, but the pain one feels when the partner is away is unbearable.

5.1.4 The theme of heroism

Kunene (1971:1) says,

The heroic poems of the Basotho name, as their subject matter mainly the heroic deeds of warriors and Kings. The chief's purpose is to praise - to extol the virtues of manly prowess, of courage, of valour and of fighting skill.

Jordan (1974:21) on the other hand states that:

The subject of a praise-poem may be a nation, a tribe, a clan, a person, an animal, or a lifeless object. The poem may be partly narrative, or partly or wholly descriptive. It abounds in epithets, very much like the Homeric ones, and the language in general is highly figurative.

These poems of praise do not only have praise as their main theme/subject, but also point out the wrongs the praised-one is doing. Among the many modern poets in Setswana, Thobega is the one who stands out to celebrate heroic deeds of individuals who are Kings and prominent people. His praise-poems, show a lot of influence from Seboni (his uncle) and Schapera, two prominent praise poets in Setswana. This influence and intertextual relationship will be evident in the examples to follow.

In praising Seretse Khama who had just arrived from China, the poet says,

Tswang lo bone pitse ya ditšhaba
 Ditšhaba tswang lo bone manyedinyedi,
 Manyedinyedi ke raya Seretse-a-Sekgoma

Khunwana ya Botswana e tswa Tšhaena.

(Ditlhase tsa Marumo: 1).

(Come out and see the horse of nations
Nations come out to witness the shining King,
By the shining King I am referring to Seretse-a-Sekgoma
A rufous cow of Botswana comes from China).

There is a lot of excitement, not only to the poet, but to the whole nation because of the chief's arrival. The language used in the above lines is very hyperbolic, and 'pitse' in this case, refers to the chief who cannot get tired of travelling (to far away places) and also his attitude of working like a horse to improve living conditions of his people. He is also referred to as a shining chief as he comes back with precious things for his nation. He is seen as a star(light) in his nation. The nation loves him, because he provides it with food, jobs and protection. Therefore it is not surprising when the poet refers to him as 'Khunwana' (a lovely rufous (female)) cow which is capable of providing people with milk, meat and protection (hide) during rainy, windy and cold days.

Within the same poem, there is an element of advice to the chief. He is advised not to ignore his nation by travelling a lot.

Tautona Seretse-a-Sekgoma-a-Khama

Tshwara ditomo o se ke wa nyafala,

O se ke wa nyafala, thokwana,
 Ka go leseletsa re tla komediwa,
 Re tla komediwa ke maruarua,
 Maruarua ke raya malatswathipana.

(Chief Seretse-a-Sekgoma-a-Khama
 Hold your reigns very tight,
 Do not loosen, you lovely brown animal
 By loosening we will be swallowed
 We will be swallowed by whales
 By whales I mean those our enemies).

Compare with

Molefi feela motse matlakala
 O kate mesima o e hupelele,
 Le matlapa a thujwe a a re kgopa
 (Boka sentle: 40).

(Molefi sweep all the dirt in the nation
 Fill up all the holes to the brim
 And all the stones must be broken for we
 stumble on them).

The lines from the poem by Thobega and Seboni, act as advice to both people (praised one) to take care of their nations; Thobega (parasite) is echoing the precursor poet (Seboni).

In praising Chief Bonewamang-A-Padi-Setšhele, Thobega says,

O Rramokonopi wa go konopana le Poulwe
 Poulwe a lapa, wena wa sala o gaketse
 Sedibetsa-morafe wa Kweneng se se masisi;

(Masa a sele: 23).

(You fought with Paul
 Paul got tired, you remained strong
 The strong protector of the Kweneng tribe).

Compare with

Rramokonopi waboKgosidintsi
 Otlhotse akonopana lePoulwe;
 Erile motshegare Poulwe alapa
 gasala gokonopa Rramokonopi

(Schapera: 132).

(The spear-thrower of Kgosidintsi
 You spend the day fighting Paul,
 When Paul got tired.
 You remained fighting).

In both instances, the poet refers to the praised-ones as 'Rramokonopi', a praise-name derived from a verb stem 'konopa' (throw). It refers to the ability of using/throwing a spear (in

war). One of the main features of praise-poems is the use of praise-names/eulogues. The hyperbole found here might not specifically be referring to the war between the Batswana people and the 'boers' as such, but can mean the war/battle at tables (negotiations) between the Batswana (blacks) and the colonists before most of the African states became independent.

Kgomo e gamilwe ke bagami,
 E rile go e gama ya ba raga,
 Erile go e gama ya ba thula,
 Maši a yone a nowa ke morafe,

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 27).

(The cow was milked by the people,
 After milking it kicked them,
 After milking it, it knocked them,
 Its milk is drunk by the nations).

Compare with

Kgomo etsaletse nageng tubana ...
 Bagami bayone rentse bothhale,
 Ka rebona ephatlalatsa bakotedi
 e ragile Joni lebomonnawe.

(Schapera: 230).

(A cow has given birth in the forest ...
 Its milkers are cleverer,
 As we saw it dispersing others
 it kicked John and his brothers).

Both poems are praising Tshekedi Khama. Khama as a cow in both cases, hates outsiders who always meddle in other people's affairs. He does not want foreign people to come and feel comfortable in his country when his own people are not. All those who come to try their luck in his country (baegami and John and his brothers) were kicked and thrown out of Khama's country in both poems. The use of the praise-name 'kgomo', is to show how strong Khama is. The cow with its calves is very dangerous. The calves represents Khama's nation (people), hence tempering with Khama's people is like playing with fire or like teasing King Kong.

Thobega echoing Seboni portrays Tshekedi Khama, as someone who hates, abhors and prohibits evil deeds. This aspect of him is revealed by the poet in a poem titled, 'Kgosi Tshekedi Kgama', says,

Ramailetsa-a-Kgama, Tshekedi,
 Ramailetsa wa ga morwa Kgama
 (Masa a sele: 24).

(The one who prohibits of Kgama, Tshekedi,
The one who prohibits son of Kgama).

Compare with

Ramailetsa was gaboRaditladi,
(Boka sentle: 42).

(The one who prohibits son of Raditladi).

In both cases 'Kgosi Kgama', is referred to as 'Ramailetsa' (one who forbids his people/nation from doing wrong things). The praised-name 'Ramailetsa' is derived from a verb stem 'iletsa' (forbid). Wrong doers in Botswana are heavily punished by the King. The allusion/reference to Seboni by Thobega, shows the parasitic relationship between a parent-poem(host) - here we are referring to the poet's uncle M.O.M. Seboni and Thobega the parasite. Both poets praise Kgama as a well-loved King in Botswana and the world alike.

In another poem, Thobega praises Khama, he also gives him advice;

Mmuso o o bobebe ke one mmankgakga,
O se lebale ba ba leng kwa Lophephe,
Ke ba utlwile ba bua kwa Lehututu,
Ba re wena, o itse mmuso o o Lehututu ...

(Masa a sele: 16)

(A caring government is the right one,
 Do not forget those who are at Lophephe,
 I heard them talking at Lehututu,
 They were saying, you know an oppressing government).

Compare with

Batla matimela Morena Molefi,
 Matimela a batho o a gorose ...
 Ba bangwe ba utlwala kwa Dikapa,
 Ba bangwe ba utlwala ka kwa Natala,
 (Boka Sentle: 40)

(Trace all those who are lost King Molefi,
 All those who are lost must be brought back
 Others we hear are in the Cape
 Others we hear are in Natal).

Thobega's lines are a direct echo of the above lines by M.O.M. Seboni, where the Kings (Khama - by Thobega and Molefi - by Seboni) are advised to listen to all the complaints from their respective nations/countries. Kings must always do their best in bringing everyone to come back home to help and develop their own country than to develop other people's countries. Despite all the praises bestowed on the praised-ones: it is our tradition(culture) that heroic poems, will always have aspects of advice to the King. Kgama and Molefi are alerted to some of

the people who say they are ignoring their own people, because poets as spokes-persons of their own communities have to reflect society as it is.

This is a clear indication of the relationship between texts - where a poet like a parasite (Thobega) feeds on other poets' poems (Seboni). Of this intertextual relationship, Riddel in Leich (1983:98), says:

merges intertextuality with
textuality that is, he presents
the literary text, as irreducibly
infiltrated by previous texts ...

The resident earlier texts
open out the present text
to an uncontrollable play
of historical predecessors.

The predecessor - texts themselves
operate intertextuality, meaning
that no first, pure or original text
ever can or did rule one or delimit
the historical oscillations at play
in texts. Thus all texts appear
doubles: they are uncontrollably
permeated with previous texts.

(Emphasis mine).

5.1.5 The theme of protest

Goodwin quoted by Moleleki (1988:122) states that,

It is often asserted that African poetry by contrast with European, is spoken not by an individual but by the representation of a community, that its scale of values is community-centred, and that it gives symbolic expression to the community, and that it manifests a continuity of tradition from the past through the present, to the future.

By the above quotation, Goodwin refers to the duty of the 'bard' who turns out to be the spokes-person of the community in which he is found. He acts and highlights his observation, both in the community and its leaders. The spokes-person of the society has to convince the community to see and view things the way he sees them. The poet expresses his dissatisfaction over what is happening in his community. Mphahlele in Beier (1979:viii) say,

... all these were concerned with the predicament of man in a hostile environment and

with the sickness that we all see in highly developed societies.

Of late (many years before the 1994 national elections in South Africa), poets have been concerned about the socio-political conditions of black people. They wrote poems to protest about such conditions, hence the theme of protest in their poetry. Patel in Daymond (1984:84) in referring to the duty of a black poet says,

Throughout the course of history, there has been an intense black struggle; resistance, protest, defiance, national consciousness and recently the escalating of the revolutionary thrust. It is against this background that the black poets are writing. The black poets share a common experience with the people.

It is only someone who is associated with a certain situation who can easily and readily express himself about what is found in that situation. By black poet we refer to someone who identifies with the black people. As such it is not only black people who write about such conditions, there are people of other races

like, Nadine Gordimer, Alan Paton and others. Commenting about protest in Daymond (1984:35) says,

The corrupt Christianity in Gaborone

For myself, protest at this
state of affairs is not a
gesture, but a system of belief,
a quite and tenacious one, which
is situated at the point where
the way things are diverged into
the way they could be or could
have been. An act of memory in
a society which has lost an
international dynamic of
renewal can be allied to an
act of provocation. (Can be).

Writing of a past that was
different implies a future
that will be, also.

We will look at protest and its aspects in Thobega's poetry.

Gompieno bodumedi ke jwa magasigasi,
Tumelo ya segompieno ke papadi,
Tshenyego ya bodumedi, Gaborone!

(Ditlhase tsa Marumo: 39).

(Today's Christianity is that which shines,
 Today's Christianity is a game,
 The corrupt Christianity in Gaborone!).

The poet criticises Christianity and also protests against 'Christian Priests', who have turned Christianity into business. They seem to have forgotten the real essence and importance of being priests and Christians. He criticises them for taking Church monies in the name of Christianity to buy themselves 'magasigasi a ntlo' (big beautiful houses) and beautiful cars. This shows the collapse of Christianity, especially if such corruption is practised by priests. This can also be protest against an unfair distribution of wealth by those at the top (priests). Instead of using such money to feed the needy, hungry and homeless, they take it for themselves.

Basetsana ba bolaya bana ba ise ba bonwe:
 Ba ba itatole, ba re ga se ba bone.

(Molodi was Lošalaba: 16).

(Girls commits abortions:
 They deny their kids saying they are not theirs).

The above lines of protest, allude to a well known, poem by Oswald Mtshali titled, 'An Abandoned bundle' where girls give birth and throw their babies in dustbins, an unforgiven act committed by mankind, an act which also shows our disregard to

human life as people. Thobega echoing this poem, protests strongly against those who take the decision to make babies and later commit abortion and others deciding to abandon them. Such acts of making babies is also prompted by another aspect (i.e. drinking liquor as women/girls), something the poet strongly objects to. After being drunk, they get raped and become pregnant. As such Thobega advises these girls to take care of their beautiful bodies and to look around before they choose marriage partners.

5.1.5.1 Injustices

Thobega's protest is also about unjust practices by human beings against others. The poet feels very deeply about some of the acts committed against people. This sub-heading will be treated under three headings:

5.1.5.1.1 Oppression

Gugelberger (1985:203-204) states that,

The implication is that the system of oppression in South Africa is a very radical one indeed. Oppression takes the form of a constant and dangerous harassment. The system is not

only out to impoverish you,
 to exploit you, its aim ultimately,
 is to kill you. To survive,
 you have to break the law;
 it is illegal to survive.

On the other side, Mphahlele in Egejuru (1980:44), says,

... if you are writing about
 your people's experiences,
 you are writing primarily
 and initially in response
 to oppression.

The oppressed masses, have been taught to cheat so as to evade the pains and hardships of oppression. For us to survive in such horrifying conditions, we had to be cunning, clever and intelligent, something reflected in a Setswana proverb, 'Phokoje go tshela yo o dithetsenyana', (the cunning jackal is the one which survives). After all where would our leader be today if it was not because of their cunningness?

Wa kolokotisa bagaeno.
 Aferika o kgomo eno -
 Khunwana 'a 'fatshe leno.
 Keng o kgarakgatsha betsho?
 Betsho o ba tlhokisa boroko.

Golola bana ba Aferika yo montsho!

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 17).

(You harass our people

Africa you are our own -

A rufous cow of our land.

Why do you oppress your people?

You deny our people sleep

Free the children of Africa!).

The above lines indicate the type of oppression the people of Africa are experiencing. The speaker is reacting to this oppression which occurs in different states of Africa under the Colonists. People do not fall asleep at night for fear of being arrested, as they are always wanted by the police for their outspokenness. They do not sleep at the same place for successive nights. The words 'Kolokotisa', 'Kgarakgatsha' and 'golola', are indications of the very basis of oppression. This is also reflected in the same poem by the following lines:

Ba gatakwa jaaka dinotshe.

Kgotso dithunya di gatwa ke maroo.

Maroo magolo a botlou, bokubu.

Ba bidibe kaPiel le boPael.

(They are stamped over like bees.

Or flowers stamped by big feet.

Big feet of elephants and hippopotamus).

The sons and daughters of Africa who are oppressed are always treated like thieves and foreigners in their places of birth. The poet uses words like 'dinotshe', very small insects which one can stamp over easily without using force and 'dithunya', beautiful plants which must be handled with great care. The association/ symbolism indicates that these oppressed people are very innocent, peaceful, soft not troublesome and extremely beautiful. Let's consider the function of bees - they make honey, a very delicious and tasteful thing one can ever come across, the flowers are meant for beauty i.e to beautify places. The other impression one has is that denying these 'dinotshe' and 'dithunya' honey and water respectively, is like killing them. Therefore the oppression the sons and daughter of Africa are experiencing, is also the denial of basic things (food) and human rights. It becomes worse if those delicate things (bees and flowers - Africans) are stamped over by 'maroo magolo a botlou, bokubu; something symbolising oppressive laws, prisons, death, police raids and others. They are not free, and just like flowers they can be stamped over anytime and die anytime.

Bangwe maina a bone ga 'a itsiwe,

Ba itsiwe ka dinomoro ditshiping,

Ditshiping go kwadilwe ditšhaba -

Ba bidiwa boPiet le boJan,

Ditshipi tsa maina RT/789/TY

Matlosane, e le kwa ga gaabo.

Maina a bo - TJ/567/000

A maina o ka reng a dintšwa!

Dintšwa le tsone di na le maina,

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 24-25).

(Others' names are not known,

They are only known by numbers on irons,

Nations are written on irons -

They are called names like Piet and Jan

Irons with names RT/789/TY

Klerksdorp being their home.

Names like TJ/567/000

Names like those of dogs!

Dogs are better as they have names).

The poet in protesting against oppression, uses repetition throughout the poem, he uses the word 'bangwe' (others). The word is used repeatedly as these oppressed people are not called by their real names. He criticises their employers for treating people like dogs. They are not called by their real names but by numbers and others are given European names like Piet and Jan just because their names are too difficult to pronounce by their employers. These are the problems almost all miners experience at their work places.

Mmuso o o se nang baganetsi

Ga o ka ke wa tswelela sentle.

Sa one ke go panyeletsa megopolo,

Megopolo ya setšhaba e tsofadiwe,
 Ntswa e lemosa go thusa mmuso
 Mmuso o o se nang kganetso manyabise!

(Ditlhase tsa Marumo: 8).

(The government without opposition
 Does not progress smoothly.
 What it knows is to oppress thoughts,
 The nation's thoughts are caused to rust
 Whilst it is there to help the government.
 The government without opposition is rubbish!).

The poet points to a familiar picture in our own lives. This suggests that the opposing parties or people are crushed because their thinking is always suppressed. The same situation happened for a long period in our own country, South Africa. Alvarez-Pereyre (1979:11) says,

At the same time, the government
 provided itself with yet new means
 for dealing with opposition. In 1955,
 at the time of the Congress of the
 People, the Criminal Procedure and
 Evidence Act was passed, authorizing
 the police to search without a warrant.
 The following year, the Riotous Assemblies
 Act, which defined the word 'riotous' in

very broad terms, allowed the police to arrest and prosecute anyone suspected of organizing 'stay-at-home' campaigns among the workers ...

People who were voicing their dissatisfaction and dislikes were either locked in jail or 'killed' by whatever means. This continued for a long period until recently (after the 1994 national elections). The reason for all this, was for the government not to be questioned and criticised. In the same poem, the poet says,

Morafe ke one o o tlhophang,
Politiki e tshela ka batho.

(The nation is the one which elect the government,
Politics survives by its people).

The denial of the government to opposition, is a sign of the corruptions which occur behind closed doors. The people who elect it to power are the ones who have to point its wrongs. This comes also as advice to any government that opposition is the one which strengthens the government.

5.1.5.1.2 Discrimination

Fowler (1991:93) states that,

Discrimination is a practice which affects individual subjects, providing unequal chances of jobs, higher education, money, attention by the police and punishment by the courts, bestowing esteem unequally.

Let us observe what Thobega says about discrimination in his poetry;

Motse 'a Bokone, Francistown o kae?

O kae, o diretswe'ng boipusong ...

Tsholofetso e r'e filweng e kae?

E kae, ke sa e bone Francistown:

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 105).

The town in the north of Botswana, Francistown, where are you?

Where are you, what did they do for you after independence?

Where are promises we were given?

Where is it, I can't see it, Francistown:)

The above lines from the poem 'Francistown o sotlelwang'? (Francistown why are you being scorned?), show the poet's complaint or protest after Botswana got independent. As usual, before independence, people would be promised different things (good things) like jobs, improved roads, electricity and others. But after independence, these things normally do not happen. Those who promised people such things before independence are nowhere to be found. Francistown, one of the main towns in Botswana is apostrophied. The reason for this, is that the poet knows that by addressing this town as a person is in a way addressing everyone in this ignored and discriminated town, as it was the people who were promised these things. The poet's protest is much justified as nothing has been done for it and its people. He expresses anger at those in power for ignoring this town (especially its people).

The protest in this poem is so general that it also touches on our own experience in South Africa. A number of promises were made before we went to the polls, but very little is done, but for few people and places.

5.1.5.1.3 Repression - Sharpeville

Alvarez-Pereyre (1984:17) states that,

The nineteen-sixties
began with Langa-Sharpeville,
deepened to the State of

Emergency that before long was written in to the ordinary laws and permanent practices of the land, and that saw the outlawing and virtual destruction of most of the broad liberatory movement and the imprisonment, banning, gagging, pegging, banishment and exile of members and supporters of this movement. The sixties was a period of brutal repression, of imprisonment without trial, of death in detention. It was a time of glim-lipped silence; but it was also a time of rumours, persistent rumours, dark rumours of torture, persecutions and victimization. It was a time of political trials.

Political movements and people, began a process of resistance (which started as passive resistance). They began to demonstrate and march against this brutal repression. When organisations intensely reacted against the law and government of the day, the government intensified its repressive measures, a Sabotage Act was introduced in 1962. This Act made it possible to place the regime's opponent under house arrest. Sharpeville day marks one of the resistance act against apartheid laws.

In a poem titled 'Masaikategang a Sharpeville', (The uncovered cruelties of Sharpeville), the poet mirrors what happened at Sharpeville on the 21st March 1960. It portrays/alludes to the march to demonstrate the killings of 72 people and the injury of more than 200 people. The march was a passive resistance campaign against the pass laws organised by the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC). Alvarez-Pereyre (1984:11) further says that,

Everywhere violent demonstrations followed, in the south of the country, the demonstrations were met with gunfire. A few days later, the government banned the PAC and the ANC, declared a state of emergency and arrested hundreds of whites and 'non-whites', holding them in prison without trial for several months.

Such arrests were aided by repressive laws introduced by the Nationalist government. There was the denial of everyone voicing his opinion against the violation of human rights.

A Sharpeville o lerileng matlhamutlhamu!
 Matlhamutlhamu a tletseng magogotho
 A Sharpeville o ba bolaileng jaaka dikgomo.

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 112).

(Oh Sharpeville you brought miseries to mankind!
 You brought sad miseries and hardship to people
 Oh Sharpeville you killed them like cattle -)

During this day, people were killed and slaughtered like cattle, as they were slaughtered without any good reason. This is reflected in the rhetorical question 'Nnaare Sharpeville o ba bolaelang ...?'. Many people lost their sisters, sons, mothers, wives etc. because of this barbaric and senseless killing. The killings were orchestrated by the need to protect the pass-laws introduced by the government of the day, the very same people we are requested to live and govern with today. Those who died seem not to matter, those who lost their relatives seem not to matter, what matters now is reconciliation. If the government through its police and soldiers can slaughter 200 people in minutes, how many people were slaughtered in the past thirty years. To the above, Aiyejina quoted by Nwachuku-Agbada in Jones (1991:165) says,

In such season of anomy'
 The poet would no longer
 afford to speak in inaccessible
 riddles and occultic tongues.
 New and strident voices were
 needed for the immediate and
 unambiguous expression of our
 tortured and fragmented psyche ...

In addition to the pervading
of death, especially in 'Sharpeville',
made directness and immediate delivery
the sine qua non of the poetry of this
period.

(Emphasis mine - Sharpeville
replaces Biafra).

The defiance by the black masses, which resulted in the Sharpeville day, June 16th 1976 and the important days in the history of the struggle, culminated in the lack of fear in us, and the courage we had as the oppressed masses. Kunene, in Jones (1991:38) responds to this(above) statement by saying,

When the struggle has progressed
to a certain point, the demon of
fear is conquered. The politics
of fear are replaced by the politics
of confrontation, for the oppressed
can now speak to his oppressor
from a position of equality.

One has only to witness and observe, the retaliation of the masses' leaders when talking to the commanders of the police/soldiers. This was symbolic of the power and courage we had despite our lack of weapons, police forces and soldiers. This was also symbolic of the freedom to come some years later. Hence

the Codesas, World Trade Centre's negotiations and finally the 1994 national elections.

CHAPTER 6

6.1 Introduction

Poetry has always been a major component of African imaginative activity. The range of poetry extends from the single phrase filled with grunts, composed and performed to ritual; through the most sophisticated phrasing of language; to the development through exploration of images relevant to a theme. The occasion for poetry extends from pure entertainment; through the expression of emotion about the various universally shared aspects of life - sickness, marriage, love, death, to ritual incantations made to bring about changes in life or between man or between man and the supernatural. In all this activity, one thing that is most common is the factor

of poetry being a communal event, something performed before the audience, aimed at persuading and entertaining, enlightening the people who are there before the poet and reacting to his words and to his general performance

(Nwoga, 1979:32).

(Emphasis mine)

The above quotation indicates to us the nature, the importance and function of poetry, especially oral traditional poetry. The poet (Thobega) who is a spokesperson of his own society, entertains his society through poetry, but most significantly he is moved to express his feelings towards whatever is happening in his society - if it is good, he voices his appreciation about the beauties/good, being done for the people, if it is bad, he voices his dissatisfaction about such a bad situation, hoping to change whatever is bad in his society. These are some of the issues we highlighted in Thobega's poetry. The discussion in this chapter is two-fold. The first section looks at what we have done in this study and the second section presents concluding remarks.

6.2 Looking back

The main aim of this section, is to look back at what we have done in this study thus far.

We have, in line with what we have set out to do in the first chapter, discussed the theory, deconstruction, as an approach which tells us that,

... in isolation, texts cannot possess meaning. Since all meaning and knowledge is now based on differences, no text can simply mean one thing. Texts become intertextual. Meaning evolves from the interrelatedness of one text to many other texts. Like language itself, texts are caught in a dynamic, context-related interchange. Never can we state a text definitive meaning, for it has none. No longer can we declare one interpretation to be right and another wrong, for meaning in a text is always elusive, always

dynamic, always transitory,

(Bressler, 1994: 79-80)

Therefore, it is very significant to realise the importance of the relationship between texts. This intertextual relationship, helps link different texts of different authors and of different times, as we indicated in chapter two. We have also indicated that by the term text, we are not only referring to the written text, we also allude to the environment (cultural, political, religious and others), hence Thobega's reference to various aspects in his poetry (as we have discussed earlier).

We have shown that Thobega's poetry bears intertextual relationships with other writers like Schapera, Monyaise, Seboni and others (precursors). These intertextual relations show that before a writer becomes an author, he must be a reader of texts. Let us observe this example:

Ba re, "O segakatsa-kgwanyape, o more-o-botlhoko",

(Masa a sele: 23).

(They say, "You are a tornado, a medicine which worsens a running stomach").

Compare with

Motšhatšha mogakatsa mala,
 More mojewa obotlhoko,
 Mokgalo obotlhoko, monna Rapholotšhega,

(Praise-poems of Tswana Chiefs: 137)

(A bitter herb to worsen a running stomach
 A bitter medicine to one if taken (eaten)
 You Rapholotšhega, you are a painful hook thorn)

In both cases, Thobega (1970) and Schapera (1965) in praising, "Bonewamang-a-Padi-Setšhele" and "Sebele" respectively, refer to the praised-ones as 'more-o-botlhoko' (a bitter herb/medicine). This is to show how feared the praised-ones are. When their tribes/ people think of them (praised-ones), fear suddenly strikes them, as one becomes so frightened that even his/her stomach runs continuously. This praise also has an effect on their enemies/other tribes, who are warned that they must never dream of attacking or fighting them (praised-ones). In such a case, Thobega, by alluding to Schapera's poem, shows that there will always be a link between writers and texts. Again both poets express a shared reliance on oral traditional poetry. To this, Ongusanwo (1955:46) states that,

But it is only intertextuality as part
 of prior discourse that any
 text derives meaning and
 significance. The African oral tradition,

from time immemorial, expresses a sense of a shared phenomenal world, both ordinary and extraordinary, to which there has always been a communication claim.

We feel that, intertextuality is an area which need further investigation, especially in poetry. There are a number of new poets, who have fed like parasites on the works of their precursors(hosts). As such the concepts host and parasite will serve as important tools for intertextuality (cf. Moleleki; 1988 and Manyaka; 1992).

Alongside intertextuality, we discussed an aspect of influence. Influence helps us in establishing a bond between the writer (Thobega) and his environment - religion, politics, culture and others.

Okonkwo (1979:88) says;

Elden Jones sees the influence of external factors as contributory to the quickening in thought, attitude, and imaginative response of a people to their environmental phenomena.

The influences which played a role in his (Thobega's) writing, are found ingested in his poetry. In as far as influence is concerned, its discussion is aided by the poet's (Thobega's) biography, because we detected that he was influenced by Christianity - as he was brought up in a Christian family, political environment, because of his father's political involvement as a member of the ANC and oral tradition, because as he indicated, his grandmother used to tell him tales (folktales), hence, it is not strange that such sources of influence find a place in his works. Thomas Mann quoted by Jabbi (1979:106) says;

The bond with the father,
 the imitation of the father,
 the game of being the father
 and the transference to
 father - substitute pictures
 of a higher and more
 developed type - how these
 infantile traits work upon
 the life of the individual to
 mark and shape it.

It has always been our understanding that influence is not 'to cause' one to write but just factors which happen to force themselves in one's work. These are factors which are

inescapable because the poet (Thobega) has lived and rubbed shoulders with them for a long period.

This aspect of influence is another aspect which needs a thorough investigation especially in Setswana. We need to look at influence, to cover all genres, for instance, we can have studies like,

- * The influence of Folklore/folktales on Setswana novels,
- * The influence of English Poetry on Setswana Poetry and others.

We further looked at types of influences in Thobega's poetry. Under this, we discussed indigenous influences, the use of proverbs in his poetry. We observed that the poet uses proverbs to shorten long ideas and thoughts. Such a usage of proverbs, corresponds with what Achebe in Irele (1984:38) says when he states that,

A proverb is the palm
oil with which words
are eaten.

On the other side Okpewho (1984:249) states that,

In proverbs, the metaphorical language helps achieve a certain economy of expression by squeezing an entire area of human experience within a few well-chosen words.

We also come to realise that the poet uses proverbs to teach, judge, and warn in his poetry. In the same chapter, the poet as stated shows that he has been influenced by Christianity/religion. His use of Christian/religious stories and phrases is an indication of a believer, one who was born in an extremely religious family. He uses religious phrases, stories and references to relate to an actual way of life(reality) so that as readers, we become warned, educated and see things slightly different from the way we used to view them. Therefore in such instances the poet(Thobega) is reflecting or revealing society/the environment as he experienced it. Ojaide (1995:9) says,

Poets tend to reflect the prevailing reality of their times; they live the reality which is imposed on them from outside by time and space. Thus, they do not invent

their own reality, and if
 Africa of the past one and a
 half decades is in a miserable
 plight, their response
 to reality will show this
 unpleasant state.

We have also managed to discuss imagery and its aspects in Thobega's poetry. We looked at metaphor, which is regarded as the most prominent and widely used image in oral traditional poetry, simile, personification and symbolism. Through the use of these images, we have taught ourselves that an interpretation of each image needs to be done under its proper context and period, simply because the same image used in both oral traditional context and also in the modern context, will surely present different meanings or interpretation. We found the poet's handling of imagery very convincing.

Lastly, we managed to evaluate a number of themes discernible in Thobega's poetry. Through these (themes), we realised that the poet has clear knowledge of both the traditional and modern worlds. The influence of both worlds can be observed from what Dennis Brutus in Nwoga (1979:36) says:

The echoes of the African
 tradition come to me
 subconsciously. I hear them,

and perhaps that is the only African part - or influence - that I can confess to; otherwise I think the technical part of it is certainly conditioned by my experience with reading European literature.

In this section we treated different themes, both traditional and modern. We know that oral traditional poetry will always have a theme of heroism/praise. But as we indicated in chapter five, heroism does not necessarily mean that the praised-one is heaped with praises only; there are cases where he is criticised for the wrongs he might not be aware of. In modern poetry we come across a variety of themes as we have observed in the preceding chapter.

- * Thobega as we have said has a number of themes in his poetry, and this study managed to look at:

- death- The theme of heroism as we have stated above.

- The poet has the theme of death, where he laments the death of his father, his uncle M.O.M. Seboni and Kgosi Kgama of Botswana.

The poet does not only laments their death as such, but also heaps them with praises. For instance the use of the refrain;

Senatla ... senatla ...,
 (Molodi wa lošalaba)

(The brave one ... the brave one ...),

in the poem about his father's death; the line,

nkwe e e mebalabala e robetse phupung,

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 15),

(A multi-coloured leopard is fast asleep in its grave),

referring to his dead uncle, and the line,

Tshukudu 'a Mokwena e robetse mmung,

(Dikeledi tsa lefatshe: 94)

(A Mokwena rhinoceros is asleep in a grave)

about the death of his uncle, are an indication of the praises extolled to the three dead heroes.

- the poet also wrote poems about love, both unfaithful and true love. He skillfully resembles one who has been jilted in his love affairs, or one who has been bitterly betrayed in

relationships and at the same time, he writes about real and enjoyable, love. Hence his poems reveal both experiences felt by those hurt because of love and those happy in it.

- As an African who knows his roots despite his Christian upbringing, he refers to our ancestors. He shows the connection/relationship the ancestors have with us. This is a sign to show that as Africans we need to be very much proud of our culture and tradition.

We have also discussed the theme of protest in Thobega's poetry. His protest is confined to socio-political situations and the universal dilemma facing every human being. Nkosi (1981:76) says,

Strangely enough, the majority of South African writers have always written, as it were in direct response to such hopes or needs. Consequently, one way or another, whether liberal or illiberal, South African literature has

always been a literature
 of protest and social
 commitment in whose
 mirror the nation hopes
 to catch a glimpse of
 its face even if only
 to later reject or
 denounce what it
 sees there as an
 outraged or falsification.

The poet objects to the injustices, repression and discrimination practised by those who wield power. Thus his poetry establishes a link between himself as a poet and those he feels he is representing, thereby becoming a source of inspiration to his people or those who are suffering. Rightly so, his poetry also becomes a stern warning to the wrong doers, the oppressors. Ojaide (1975:7) states that,

The poets are now using their
 art as a means of attempting
 to reverse the negative socio-economic
 order in their societies, so that
 economic equality and justice
 will prevail. Theirs is a new
 kind of humanism arising from

the human suffering resulting from African debt-lagged economies.

Despite a number of weaknesses or flaws which we did not highlight in his poetry, we hope that this study will make a valuable contribution to literary criticism in African languages.

6.3 Concluding Remarks

This study must be seen or viewed as an analysis of Thobega's poetry through the Deconstructive framework, where we employ intertextuality and influence as tools of our analysis. The chosen framework presents the means available to us to check the extent to which the poet is linked to other environments and writers. The chosen framework is also the only framework available to check the aspects which played a role in influencing Thobega in his poetry. We have come to realise that the best way to discuss intertextuality and influence in one's work, is to check the writer's biography. For instance, as stated earlier, Thobega writes about things he has experienced, seen, observed and also about places he has lived in. As someone who grew up in a religious family, we find a lot of religious influence ingested in his poems. As a poet who has lived in a traditional or cultural setting, his poems reflect the cultural influence, hence for instance his reference to 'badimo' (ancestors). His belief in his 'gods' or ancestors must not be seen as contrast

to his Christian inclination, but must be seen as a reflection of a Christian who has not forgotten his culture or his roots.

The poet also addresses the suffering of his people because of the repressive laws introduced by the ruling parties. Therefore, Derrida's theory made our task (research) possible because as Norris (1985:114) puts it,

Any talk of uncaring or
structure is ineluctably
caught up in a process
which it does not control;
which for Derrida signals
the total dissolution of
those boundaries that
mark off one text from
another, or that try to
interpose between poem
and commentary.

In writing the poetry which fits well in both worlds, the modern and the traditional, we realise that Thobega is someone who oscillates between different worlds, truly so, because Deconstruction tells us that one world will always contain glimpses of other worlds. Our personal feeling about reading and researching Thobega's poetry is in fact to recall our own cultural background which has been forgotten, to recall Setswana

great writers like Monyaise, Seboni, Raditladi and others.

Finally the importance of influence and intertextuality in aiding literary analysis warrants more research in African Languages literature.

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