A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE POETRY OF NTSANE AND KHAKETLA

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Submitted to satisfy the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Bantu Languages of the University of South Africa.

Date submitted: December, 1968.

DECLARATION.

I HEREBY DECLARE THAT THIS ESSAY IS MY OWN WORK BOTH IN CONCEPTION AND EXECUTION.

FOR MY WIFE ESTHER MMA-SEIMA, MY MOTHER MITTAH MMA-BOTSHELO
AND MY LATE FATHER ALOSI JOHN.

INTRODUCTION.

The purpose of the study is:

1. Mainly to evaluate the achievement of Ntsane and Khaketla as poets, to trace the impact of the socio-political milieu and literary influences on their poetry.
2. To serve as an ice-breaker to Southern Sotho literary criticism.
3. To serve as an eye opener to the Southern Sotho literature.

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Many Southern Sotho authors have made important contributions to Southern Sotho literature. Their works cover a wide range of subjects which evince great differenees in significance and depth. We note this in the different books they have written and the themes they have treated. Unfortunately, to date, no serious evaluation of their books has been attempted. The real value of the works is still unknown to the reader. No effort has been made to unearth the gist of the artist's imaginative power and also to pin-point the weaknesses, so that they can be remedied. The critical and creative functions must be developed simultaneously if our literature is to attain great heights. At present there is, in most works, a kind of 'stagnation' and spiritual poverty which is realized in a failure to appreciate the meaning of our cultural milieu. We live, as it were, unconsciously in the present, outrooted and transported from cultural forces as if they do not impinge on our minds. There is a lack of depth and failure to recapture the essence of human feeling and thought, less ability and intellectual skill to interpret the world around, and a general incompetence to explain and unfold the very being of human sensitivity.

These weaknesses will continue as long as the artists are aware that there is no critic to scrutinize their work, sift the shallow from the more purposeful works, and fight hard to discourage poor workmanship.

Life, as unfolded and interpreted in many Southern Sotho books, is not a complexity and an entangled puzzle to be resolved, but a fairly simple riddle whose solutions may be found in dreams, wishful thinking, coincidence and intervention of the supernatural beings and magic. A problem is not always pursued to its logical conclusion. One need read books such as MEOKGO YA THABO (Khaketla), MASWABI, NNA SAJENE KOKOBELA, C.I.D. (Ntsane), MOLAHLEHI, MOPHEME, KATIBA, (Matlosa) and many others to realise

this superficial treatment of life problems. [1] There is no attempt to penetrate deeper into the meaning of life and the core of the human spirit.

The treatment of poetry has also suffered because of this absence of proper understanding and critical assessment of what has been produced thus far. More often than not Southern Sotho poetry was condemned bacause the very idiom and spirit of the [illegible] language were not understood. The critics could not penetrate the soul and nature of Sotho sentiment. Their conclusions and opinions, therefore, about Southern Sotho poetry were and still are invalid.[2] They concerned themselves with outward forms of poetry and other insignificant structural peculiarities, but they did not delve into the experiences, the music and emotional response evinced. Our poetry was immediately labelled as poverty-striken, and no second thought was ever given to the wealth of satisfaction which could be derived from intense feeling and thinking of our artists. To understand the poetry of a people, the critic must understand their language, sentiment, share their experiences and be emotionally one with them.[3]

1.) In MEOKGO YA THABO, for example, a clash between traditional values and new ideals and revised sense of values is suggested. The young school product, Moeketsi, rejects the idea of conservative relatives choosing a wife for him. The family would not give way and the young man turned his back against them when his ideal woman married another man. Therefore a deadlock remains. Then the author fails to resolve the the problem and arrive at a satisfactory and convincing solution, he arbitrarily allows Moeketsi to succumb, and, by strange coincidence, the girl chosen for him turns out to be his latest love, Fumane. Even the first meeting of these lovers is too mechanical and unconvincing. This careless treatment of real problems reduces the literary stature of the book.

However, this is not always the case. In Mofolo's TJHAKA, the conflicts and workings of the human mind are clearly unfolded. There is adequate motivation for every action suggested, hence the reality of the experience.

2.) However, we do not forget the valuable treatment of The literature of Lesotho by G.H. Franz in Bantu Studies, Vol, No. 3, September, 1930.

3.) Tucker, for instance, once made this comment on Zulu poetry: "Savage poetry is disorderly and without any formal pattern acceptable in our languages. Thought sequence is haphazard and there is usually no depth or intensity of experience."

Existing comments on Southern Sotho literature merely reiterate unfortunate statements which were made in the past about traditional literature. Reference has been made to Dr. Tucker's evaluation of Zulu poetry. Men have been conditioned to accept biased views even though learned expositions by Profs. Doke and Lestrade have exposed those views as such. Doke, in his study on THE BASIS OF BANTU LITERATURE, sums up: "They revel in smart sayings and witty turns of expression. They have the germ of literary criticism in their very blood."[4] Unfortunately nobody made a serious attempt to elicit these qualities from our literature.

There is much to be derived from Southern Sotho literature. Prof. Lestrade's evaluation, although referring to Praise-poems, can be employed to reveal the beauty and weight of modern Southern Sotho poetry, especially that of Ntsane and Khaketla. He states that:

> 'Strongly-marked dynamic stress, occurring in more or less regular positions in all words of the same language, and the fairly regular incidence of long syllables also usually in the same position, give to Bantu utterance and rhythmic quality and a measured and balanced flow not met with in languages with regular stresses and more staccato delivery. Moreover, the existence, in the Southern Bantu languages especially, of a system of intonation also gives to these languages a musical quality not possessed by less markedly, and more evenly intoned languages.'5)

Perhaps this refers to form but, as it will be demonstrated in the poetry of Ntsane and Khaketla, the content, imagery and technique are also brilliant and expressive.

In order to remedy this discouraging state of affairs and raise the standard of our poetry, indeed our literature, we must pause, reconsider and evaluate the works of Southern Sotho poets and authors. Our comments and opinions will help to eliminate pitfalls into which future artists may falter, and to break the vicious circle. No literature may develop in any cultural group unless it is accompanied by serious analysis and penetrating criticism. Readers must be emotionally alive and intellectually drawn to the works of art in order to create a healthy climate in which a reflection on our culture can be enriched. Literature must be examined and appraised to create a permanent and rich emotional and intellectual link between us and posterity. Our ex-

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4.) AFRICA, Vol XVlll, No. 4, October, 1948 (Oxford University Press), p. 284.

5.) Ibid., p. 284.

periences and thoughts can remain indelibly marked only in literature which is mature and is of a high standard.

It is my opinion that Ntsane and Khaketla have achieved much, both in story-telling and in poetry. Their influence on Southern Sotho literature is great; their style of writing and sensitivity to external stimuli have always set them apart from the other authors and poets, and have captured the imagination of the reader. It will be interesting to note their different emotional response to the same stimuli and to what extent each one of them is attached to his poetic subject matter. Their poetry deserves scholarly treatment and careful interpretation. Their achievement as individuals will be considered and an attempt will be made to grade their achievement - although it is difficult to place poets on a strict 'poetic scale.' Every poetic composition worthy of the name is an achievement in itself for it reveals merit and demerits peculiar to it. Thus in comparing the two poets this factor cannot be ignored. Their poetry gives record of their happiest thoughts and moments, and satisfaction in their imaginative experiences. 6) The differences between them lie in the significance of their message, the meaning and depth of their imagery and the overall effect and impression of their individual poems. An examination of their poetry will be necessary in order to arrive at an overall picture of their achievement. Ntsane's poetry which covers a wide field of themes and reveals varying degrees of intellectual excitement and rich experience, is contained in MMUSA-PELO 1 (Morija) and MMUSA-PELO 11 (A.P.B.), whilst Khaketla's contribution is DIPJHAMATHE (A.P.B., Bona Press). In this volume Khaketla has attempted a critical appreciation of poetry but, for reasons that will be unfolded in this study, his approach to and final pronouncement on poetry are rejected.

Brief biographies of Ntsane and Khaketla in this introduction will throw some light on certain aspects of their literature. This, however, does not imply that the quality of what they have written depends on the information that will be given about them. Factors such as personal experience, influences of the socio-political environment and emotional response may help a great deal to explain the writers attitude to life and their response to poetry. A direct analysis of their poetry is more important than a mere reference to their biographies.

6.) Compare with "Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds." - THE DEFENCE OF POETRY.

Khaketla, a prolific and successful writer of Southern Sotho books, was born in 1913 at Makhalong, Qacha district. He completed his teachers' course at Morija in 1933. He taught in Bloemfontein until 1939 when he left for Durban to take up new employment.

Khaketla was a restless mind. Conditions in Lesotho then, and in the then Union of South Africa, had a great impinge on his mind. Thus he could not stay in one place for a very long time. Between 1940 and 1955 when he joined politics, Khaketla taught, for short periods, at schools such as Heilbron in the Free State, Qacha, Botjhabelo (Transvaal) and Basutoland High School. His autobiography, DIKENKENG, accounts for his restlessness.

In his interview with Radio Bantu in 1964 (Tapes are available at Radio Bantu, Johannesburg), Khaketla stated that he was greatly inspired by Shakespeare, hence his speciality is drama. He revealed further that his nation and language came uppermost in his mind. He writes for the Sothos (Basotho.) He began writing in 1940, and he has tried his hand at Drama, Poetry and Novels. The following are his books:

1. Drama: Moshweshwe le Baruti, APB., 1954.
   Tholwana tsa sethepu, Morija, 1954.
   Bulane (APB).

The first drama is a historical play about the coming of the first missionaries to Lesotho. The latter books deal with social problems - brought about by polygamy.

2. Novels:

   Meokgo ya Thabo, APB., 1951
   Mosadi a nkgola, APB, 1960.

The former novel outlines, though unsatisfactorily, a clash between traditional values or custom with modern ideals. The latter book exposes a cruel custom of Lesotho, namely, ritual murder. The author frowns at it and he does not hesitate to punish the guilty party. Khaketla has also written language books such as SEBOPEHO SA SESOTHO (1960) and THAPHODISO YA SESOTHO.

3. Poetry: DIPJHAMATHE, APB, 1954.

Dipjhamathe is an important contribution of Khaketla. The poems in this volume will be examined in the following chapters. It will be noted if his experiences had any influence on his poetry which was composed between 1937 and 1952.

Ntsane, a contemporary of Khaketla, was born at Kolojane, Leribe, in 1920. He also trained as a teacher at Morija. He taught at Hlotse until 1939 when he left to work as a clerk at the Sallies Compound in Brakpan. Conditions at the mine and the humiliating treatment of the Sothos by indonas (mine foremen) and doctors disturbed Ntsane. He writes in his Autobiography at Radio Bantu, Johannesburg, 1964:"... I got employed as a clerk after going through the heartless, cold-blooded treatment by the examining doctor of the mine. He gave me a very poor impression of how mine doctors treat my people."(Autobiography of Kem Edward Ntsane, Radio Bantu, October, 1964.)

In 1943 he joined Roma College, Lesotho, where he met the Late Jac. G. Mocoancoeng, one of the well-known Southern Sotho authors. In his autobiography, Ntsane writes:"It was while we were reading such poems as Keat's, Tennyson's, Wordsworth's Shakespeare's, Shelly's and many others which inspired us in many ways. We thought and started writing. What there is now in the way of Sotho Books, I and my late dear friend, feel is a personal contribution we cannot possible feel ashamed of. It is meagre in many ways, but not too slimy." (Ibid., p.2.)

Ntsane, whose speciality is Novel and Poetry writing,began writing in 1945. His first attempt was a novel MASOABI. His anthologies MMUSA PELO 1 and 11 were published by Afrikaanse Pers in 1961. MAKUMANE and MOHWEBI WA VENISI, a translation of Shakespear's THE MERCHANT OF VENICE, were also published in 1961. A novel NNA SAJENE KOKOBELA, C.I.D. was published by A.P.B.in 1963. Ntsane has written a collection of essays on various topics in BANA BA RONA. He is a devoted Roman Catholic who has introduced the religious element in his poetry. Unfortunately one cannot say, with certainty, when each one of his poems was composed because they are not dated.

In comparing Ntsane and Khaketla no attempt will be made to give a plain morphological analysis of their verse. Rather, the form, which embodies the poet's purposeful or otherwise use of rhyme, rhythm, word-selection, expression, imagery, and other techniques he may resort to, will be revealed indirectly to the reader by examining the poems themselves. It must be noted that the form of a poem is something more than a morphological composition of verse ---- a mere organization of morphemes and word units. An idea, mentally conceived, is given form by the poet's careful use of the above elements of poetry.

There is a false notion that rhyming is poetry and vice versa, and that rhythm is jog-trot or mechanical movement yet the truth is that, rhyme that does not fulfil any worthwhile function, is only an empty convention or an affectation. Rhyme must not be obtrusive as we find in most Sotho poems where like endings are forced together for no particular poetic purpose. In the following lines rhyme serves no useful purpose:

> Mafatsheng a mangata-ngata,
> Moo meru e leng mengata - ngata,
> Re atisa ho fumana libatana tsa naha
> Hangata tau ke morena Wa tsona,
> Motaung wa naha...
> (Bana le madinyane a tau - A.J. Selane.)
> (In many many countries where
> there are many many forests, we
> usually find wild animals, whose
> king is always the lion, the
> greatest of the lion tribe in the land.)

To illustrate that rhyme is not an essential part of poetry, Coombes says: " a poet may be distinguished and yet not use rhymes with any great significance and wealth of suggestion."[7] Memorable verse, therefore, may be produced without rhyme.

Another aspect of poetry is rhythm; but the rhythm in poetry is not the same as the beating of the heart or that of the clock. It is "the most effectual movement that comes from an interplay of real emphasis with the rate of movement, the tempo, of the word-sequence".[8] Thus tone, stress and tempo are fused in rhythm. The poet should not manufacture a fixed pulse-measure to produce verse because this betrays emptiness of feeling. Words should flow naturally without artificial forcing in order to convey the real meaning of the poet's feelings and experience. Khaketla's view about rhythm in poetry will be examined later.

In Chapter One a general appreciation of Southern Sotho poetry will be attempted. This appreciation will enable the reader to determine Ntsane's and Khaketla's position within the wide field of Southern Sotho poetry, and how they differ from other modern Southern Sotho poets in their poetic skill.

The wide fields in which Ntsane and Khaketla find their poetic subject matter, and their response to the different themes they treat, will be examined in Chapter Two. The second half of this Chapter will be a brief comment on the theme and expression in the poetry of other modern Sotho poets, preferably those whose

7.) Coombes, H.: Literature and Criticism, Penguin Books, p. 37.
8.) Coombes, H.: Ibid, p. 17.

poetry is characteristic of most of the works of Southern Sotho poets, so that we can recognize the unique position of Ntsane and Khaketla and their careful and purposeful selection of poetic themes.

The early poetry of Khaketla will be studied in the third chapter. The method will be that of direct analysis of the individual poems in this category. Khaketla's poetry will receive further attention in Chapter Four, but emphasis will be on his later and more mature poems.

Chapter Five will be devoted to a critical appreciation of Ntsane's poetry. Chapter Six will be a comparison of the poetic skill, the significance of the imagery of the two poets. This chapter embodies the assessment of their achievement.

In the conclusion observation and suggestions will be made about the possible course the poetry of these two poets may follow. It will be interesting to note what direction each one of them will follow in future compositions.

CHAPTER ONE.

Southern Sotho is a young language in the literary world because attempts to reduce its speech sounds to writing were made only when the missionaries came to Lesotho sometime in the nineteenth century. Like in all pre-literate societies the education was informal. Valuable folklore, myths, traditional law and custom were handed down from one generation to another by word of mouth. Sotho music and emotional outbursts - joy, sorrow, love, admiration - which formed his poetry depended on memory. Thus a wealth of valuable spiritual creations of the Sothos was lost to the younger generations. The few praises that have been saved from oblivion testify to the wide range of experiences of the older generation, their keen observation, clear and expressive descriptive power, strong identification with the emotions felt and objects observed; unfeigned love or admiration for the beautiful experiences. The rhythm of these praise-poems brings back the echo of the long forgotten past and the lively music and dance of those unschooled old composers.

The missionaries and the first products from their schools began to record the oral compositions around them. First, the speech sounds were to be brought in line with the new symbols, then, the subject matter presented, its spirit and movement, were to take another shape which would appeal not only to the ear as before, but also to the eye. The stanzas which help to decorate European poetry were taken over to give traditional poetry its new dress, that of the written word. It had to appear "learned" and acceptable to the school generation which kept on comparing it with the English, Latin or French texts they had managed to commit to memory. The basic structure of Southern Sotho poetry, therefore, was not examined and understood so that a method of presentation not foreign to Sotho feeling and idiom, could be devised. Until early in the twentieth century, if comments were made on the poetic structure in the Bantu languages, hasty statements such as "savage poetry is disorderly and without any formal patterns accepted in our languages. Thought sequence is haphazard and there is usually no depth intensity of experience,"[+] were often made. However, these were unfortunate and dangerous generalizations. The Sotho poet was not preaching European philosophy of life. He could not, therefore, possibly see with European eyes and interpret his world in accordance with European methods and standards. His way

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+). See footnote 3 in the Introduction.

of speaking and revealing his inner self were basic patterns of his personality woven into his language, his thoughts and his reaction to stimuli. To appreciate Southern Sotho poetry we must try to determine the relationship between the meaning and value of a poem on the one hand, and its structure and convention on the other. This structure need not be the well-known and accepted poetic structures in the European languages we are familiar with. In our attempts to improve Sotho poetry, it is necessary to decide to what extent we have to adapt Sotho traditional poetry to European poetic structures, or whether we have to make European techniques in poetry conform to the Southern Sotho language system. No poet dare deviate completely from the idiom of his language. To what extent then should the poet interfere with this idiom? Can the Southern Sotho poet make inroads into the idiom of the language as his counterparts seem to have managed in the European languages we have studied? We must also decide whether poetry is the outer form - metre and rhyme - or the inner form - the experience unfolded and the manner and style in which it is expressed; or, whether poetry is dependent on both its outer structure and content.

- Early modern poets in Southern Sotho were more of recorders than composers. They merely brought over the rich imagery and intense experience portrayed in the older poems - with the difference that they were now written. Praises of chiefs found their way to the press. Lerothodi, Bereng, Mangoaela and others have recorded many praise poems of the major chiefs of Lesotho. But some recorders of praise poems were not faithful. They interfered with the original poems in order to allow room for stanza divisions - and at times rhyming! They were giving what they thought was the correct form of these traditional praises. Instead their "revised" praises sounded hollow and monotonous. This was a clear indication that they were deviating from the original form which was based on the idiom of Southern Sotho.

- Recording could not go on for ever. The younger authors and poets, fascinated by the wide range of European poetry and its unlimited field of objects, situations and scenes to be described and praised, soon sang praises to objects and situations which were formerly not praised or expressed emotionally. Perhaps in the past the beauty of such objects was observed with silent admiration. The description of places and beautiful scenes came accidentally and sporadically in praise poems, because the central theme was always the person who was praised. The beauty of the environment where the

praised individual lived was described only in as far as it illuminated his own image.

Even though these poets continued the tradition of the missionaries to reduce Southern Sotho poetry to writing, traditional poetry remained stubborn and did not easily bend to the new tune of European poetry. The music and rhythmic patterns were still those of the untamed mountains of Lesotho. It sounded irregular and monotonous to the Westerner and those who approached it with preconceived ideas, for they did not understand the real significance of the praise poems, their form, and also they did not know the idiom of Southern Sotho.

Southern Sotho praise songs such as Lengae, Mokorotlo, Mohobelo, Mogogopelo, Ho Kgiba, and the praise poems (Dithoko) are the foundation of the Southern Sotho spiritual creation. In his doctoral thesis entitled : THE FORMS, CONTENTS AND TECHNIQUES OF TRADITIONAL LITERATURE IN SOUTHERN SOTHO, Dr. S.M. Guma has treated these songs as a valuable part of Southern Sotho poetry. We shall concern ourselves with Dithoko and their present day forms, especially Ntsane's and Khaketla's contributions. A quick survey of their themes and development of such themes, techniques and characteristic tendencies in their compositions will be attempted. The poetry of these two poets reveals present day combinations of European poetic techniques, and their influence on our poetry - its spirit, flow and depth. In their poetry one notes the direction which the form of modern Southern Sotho poetry is taking and the implications of such a gradual process of change.

These poets still employ European techniques in their poetry e.g., use of rhyme scheme, length of verses, division into stanzas, and attempts at foreign metrical patterns. They are in search of a system that will not be halting and failing in expressing inner experiences and convictions. But this technique they are evolving must take into account the structure of the Sotho language and the importance of accent which gives our language its peculiar rhythmic pattern. A combination of their techniques, and a thorough sifting and close observation of the musical flow of Southern Sotho as spoken to-day, may enable us to establish or set up a method or methods which would in time become the conventional way of writing our poetry.

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The Sothos have sensitive minds which have always enabled them to formulate images or give expressive form to the ideas which make deep impressions on them. Those immediate issues such as

tribal history - personified in the chief - custom, ritual and ceremony, which made an impinge on the mind of every Sotho, found their way into the oral compositions which were handed down from generation to generation. The Sothos saw beauty around them and appreciated it. They gave expression to their inner feelings about things beautiful. But it seems lack of formal education and absence of any form of writing limited the range of poetic subject matter. Beyond tribal life and the chief, nothing was of significance. For example, the effect of the shining silver moon on a lover's emotions - and there were lovers - never constituted poetic material.

As Dr. Guma indicates, praise poems, because of limited subject matter, can be divided into three categories according to their contents. These are praises of the young Makolwane (initiates), praises of animals and divining bones, and Dithoko about chiefs, military leaders and other important personalities of the community. The different praise poems show certain structural features which are not accidental. They are devices to make these poems more lively, dramatic and memorable. It will be demonstrated later that in Southern Sotho a definite relationship between the form and content of a poem exists. Any tampering with the words in a poem affects its attractive force.

Southern Sotho poetry has undergone many changes in its content and form over the years. Because of cultural contact between the Sothos and the West, poetic material has expanded. The Sothos' philosophy of life has been greatly changed and the world is, as it were, seen in a different light. Their poems have become somewhat "sophisticated" and they cover a wider range of experience. Personal sentiments, philosophies of life of different men, the desires and dreams of individuals have become common poetic subjects in modern Southern Sotho anthologies. Elegies, satires, odes, sonnets, etc. are composed by modern Southern Sotho poets. European poets have been emulated.

Not only the content of Southern Sotho poems has been affected over the years, but also the structure and stylistic forms have been greatly influenced to such an extent that the deeper significance of the message is also affected. Therefore, in order to appreciate Southern Sotho poetry, it is necessary to look also into such changes that have occurred in the structure of praise poems, and also determine the relationship between form and theme.

Dithoko, especially those about chiefs and military leaders, serve a purpose. They are an oral history of the nation (Basotho)

given in a figurative language from the Sotho point of view. They gave an authentic account of events of national importance in a lively style which was enhanced by the eloquence of the reciter. The names and deeds of great men in our history are recorded in them. Dr. Guma does not doubt their authenticity because "the fact that they were recited in public in the presence of a man's comrade-in-arms, ensured that their authenticity could be proved and verified." [1] Exaggerations often crept in, but the essence of the event was still protected. Therefore, Dithoko, in addition to giving expressive form to human experience, beauty, pain, admiration, could serve as valuable source - material for the writing of history - a task from which we flee by giving unconvincing reasons that, because there is no written record of the past history of the Basotho, the past should be left untouched. Lerothodi, Bereng and Mangoaela and others have recorded many poems of the major chiefs of Lesotho. [2]

Other Dithoko were centred around the animals, especially cattle. A Mosotho's keen observation of animals around him and his power of describing are clearly displayed in animal praises. Examples to illustrate this point are contained in Mapetla's volume [3] and also in some of our novels, e.g. Mofolo's MOETI OA BOCHABELA. The Southern Sotho poet was not bound by any pre-conceived pattern or scheme of writing poetry since traditional poetry had not prescribed or developed a formal pattern of composing poetry. To the Sotho poet, rhyme was of no significance. He was free to give expression to his inner feelings as they arose. But this does not imply that his poetry was confused and lacked a clearly recognisable shape. The beautiful rhythm and the rich figurative language distinguished our poetry from ordinary speech and made it something more than an ordinary attempt to impart knowledge and facts. The rhythm, a product of a regular succession of stressed and unstressed syllables, was in the melody, the poet's high pitched voice, and his peculiar arrangement of ideas. This rhythm changed with the mood of the reciter, hence the flow of the praise poem was not uniform. The form and technique of these poems were bound with what they were intented for - a listening audience and not a read-

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1.) Guma, S.M. : The Forms, Contents and Techniques of Traditional Literature in Southern Sotho, p. 251.

2.) c/f. Mangoaela, Z.D. : Dithoko tsa Marena a Basotho and also Lerothodi's Lithoko tsa Morena e Moholo Seeiso Griffith, 1959.

3.) Mapetla : Liphoofolo, Linonyana le Lithoko tsa Tsona, Morija, 1928.

ing public. Therefore thought and action were highly desirable in these compositions.

- Praises had no stanzas which are observed in European poetry since they were meant for the ear and not for the eye. But it is possible to group ideas together because every complete description is marked off by a pause. The reciter did not pause because he had run out of breath as it is generally believed. It should be remembered that because praise poems were recited in public, reciters would not afford to be slow and dull. They recited very fast and their pause would give the casual observer the impression that they were stopping because they had run out of breath. Thus there were "natural" stanzas marked off by these unsual pauses (at least to critics who want to use foreign examples as criteria for Sotho poetry). A word or words in a preceding line appear in the next line continuing the same thought. This technique served a purpose - it was not ornamental. A thought is introduced, developed, concluded, and then rapidly followed by another.

e.g.

Tau - tududu ya mohale sebata,
Ya bo Sebopane sa bo Mothuso le Ditshibane,
E sale se bopela Matolwane,
Kgara tsa dira mora Mperwane,
Wa na Kgaratsa batho Phoholo,
Wa ba buisa Phohojane nokeng.
(An unpublished praise poem)

(Great lion, the ferocious
warrior beast of Sebopane, Mothuso and
Ditshibane, that has been roaring at Matolwane,
you scattered enemies, son of Mperwane,
and drove them from Phoholo to the river
Phohojane.)

- Any interference with the structure of the praise poem affects also the sense and the feelings expressed.

- There is a false notion that European poetry has fixed pattern. Therefore some Sotho critics wish to see this supposed fixed pattern introduced in Southern Sotho. To them any composition that does not satisfy the techniques accepted in European languages is not poetry, but it is a dull haphazard arrangement of words which do not appeal to the sensibility of the younger generation or intellectuals. However, this superficial criticism merely reflects the ignorance of these men who seem to find the greatness of a poem in outer forms only and never worry themselves about the inner form of poetry which embraces the intensity of the experience expressed, the depth of emotions and ideas, or simply, the whole thought about

the felt "world." Southern Sotho traditional poetry has its own peculiar form which has to be noted and fully understood before any valid criticism can be attempted. The apparent haphazard arrangement of thought sequence is a direct result of the fact that our poetry was not for the press or the eye, but for the ear and thought. Thus an evaluation which separates these qualities from the form of Sotho praise poems, destroys not only the beauty of Sotho poetry but also its vividness, intensity and depth.

There is always a complaint that praise poems are full of archaic words and obscure references, and, that therefore, they are meaningless to the reader. This is not a strong reason for frowning upon traditional poetry since these archaic words are not many and the obscure references, i.e. to historical events we cannot recall, do not destroy the rich images, ideas and attitudes which have been successfully moulded together. Sotho poems do not merely tell stories or describe scenes, but they reveal also the experiences of the Sothos which are also common to other races. They give form to beauty, pain, conflict, shame, doubt, loyalty and love. They reveal the human soul struggling for perfection and self-realization. The greatness of Sotho traditional poetry depends on both the material presented and the manner in which it is handled.

The present generation fails to derive pleasure in traditional poetry because of the false notion that anything that is different from European poetry in form and complexity is not great. They fail to place a Sotho in his spiritual world and understand his thoughts, his spiritual creations and his achievements in their apparent simplicity. However, even those who frown upon, and have broken ties with tradition by introducing foreign techniques like rhyme and division into stanzas to their poetry, have not been successful in composing "better" poetry than the praise poems. Behind most of the works,we find men consciously trying to create sensation. The style is artificial and wanting, for it is not only contrary to the basic structure of traditional poetry, but also to that of Southern Sotho.

This is the point that singles out Ntsane and Khaketla among most of our poets such as Lesoro, Moiloa and others : they understand the basic structure of Sotho and they do not allow unbefitting decorations to obscure their real feeling and message. As far as possible, they allow themselves to be guided by the idiom of Southern Sotho. Rhyme is easily thrown overboard where it is found to be unsuitable. Ntsane is more natural in the organization of his experiences.

- One is inclined to feel that poetry can never sound artificial if the idiom of the language in it is natural and it is not consciously molested to satisfy a rule or pattern. Dr. Guma is right when he states that the mechanisms such as rhyme and metre, i.e. in as far as they are foreign to the Sotho rhythmic patterns, serve no useful purpose in our poetry, since they are "jarring as well as unbefitting to the genius of the language."[4] If the idiom of the language is adversely affected by such techniques, how can they then improve Sotho poetry?

- Our present day Southern Sotho poets try to bring their spiritual heritage in line with the patterns they have learnt in foreign languages without realizing that any arbitrary arrangement of thoughts is foreign to Southern Sotho idiom. Southern Sotho expresses ideas and emotions, and in this process, its structure must be observed strictly. Its structure differs greatly from English and Afrikaans, not to mention other European languages. Therefore we cannot expect its poetic structure to be the same as that found in these foreign languages, no matter how civilized they may be.

Present day efforts in Southern Sotho poetry are not belittled, but criticism is levelled against recent undesirable camouflages and changes that do not enhance poetry. Languages can influence one another; but it is another thing whether poetry in one language can be superimposed on the poetry of another language without altering the imagery or minimizing the intensity of the experience.

Metaphor and other figures of speech, which heighten traditional poetry, served a purpose and they came spontaneously e.g.:

> Morena ke thabahadi ya ho re sireletsa,
> Ke setshabelo ha mara a dira a hlasela,
> Lewa la bana ba Polane-Seima ha le nele,
> Ha le rothele le pula. 5)
>
> The chief is a great mountain to protect us.
> He is our fort and stronghold when
> the hordes of enemies attack.
> The kraal of Polane-Seima can withstand
> even water.

In these four lines, we observe how a king or chief is referred to as a mountain - a stronghold, and protector, someone immovable, the hope of his people and the redeemer of his flock. The word thabahadi brings about many images in the mind of the reader. It

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4.) Guma, S.M. : Op. Cit., p. 253.

5.) From an unwritten praise poem of an ancestor, Polane a Kgolokwe Prince.

suggests the complete trust which the admirer has for his prince. The earlier Baroki realized the effectiveness of metaphor when they wanted to recapture the very essence of the object, situation or emotional experience unfolded. If they could not reproduce life and life situations in their real state, then metaphor would bring them as near as possible to reality. In the example quoted above thabahadi and Lewa are charged with the poet's emotions, and his personal attachment to the chief - the fountain of tribal life.

From the above it is clear that metaphorical language serves a useful purpose of giving shape, form and life to the object of study, also revealing the poet's own feelings and ideas about it, and evoking certain reactions in the reader. This is the purpose of poetry. The complexity of the world around needs to be explained and expressed in the most vivid and effective language. Therefore, the poet in Southern Sotho had to resort to metaphor in his attempt to communicate his inner thoughts and share his experiences with his fellow beings.

In our present day poetry we find a man consciously trying to create sensation, loading his poem with meaningless artificial word-images. Thoughts and imagery in our modern Sotho poetry are not given as they come to the poet's mind, but they are subjected to certain rules or to conform to foreign patterns. [6] It should be noted that in Southern-Sotho any rearrangement of word-order to conform to any rhyme scheme and foreign metrical patterns affects the meaning of the poem. For rhyme's sake our poets allow too many of such artificial divisions:

Tloholo ke tseo di kgapela mapodi
Letswapong moo di a bitsang ka molodi
Tsatsi ha le ipata hole bophirima,
Di a hlwese maboloka di titima. 7)

(Yonder are the young fellows driving
flocks of goats towards the pass.
There they whistle to chase them
up the hillocks when the sun hides
in the far west.)

These lines give us a picture of the late afternoon when young

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6.) Refer to Lesoro's poetry; Ntsane and Khaketla, especially the latter poet, are sometimes not guiltless.

7.) Mohapeloa, J.M. : Mosikong wa Thabana ya Borata, p. 12.

shepherds bring their flocks to one spot where they will be able to find them with ease. But the description is too plain and could at best be given in prose form. However, one does come across simple but forceful compositions among poems of modern Southern Sotho poets. The reason for a poem's success is the poet's ability to say what he feels and has in mind in a vivid and suggestive manner. The following lines from Thoahlane's NOKANA YA LERATO (Morija) in MODIYA will illustrate:

Lerato la Molapo le la Matete,
Matetetso a mora Mokgatjhane,
Hase noka, Lerato ke lebitso boholo,
Le tsejwa ka mosa le ka mohau ke batho.

Lerato ke mohauhela baeti,
. . . . . .
Metsi a yona e a moma ka mpa,
A yo hlaha ha a kena Tswaing.

Lerato lena hase la mantlwane,
Le ratile Basotho ba lahlehile,
Ba fahlolotswe ke lona, ba fahlilwe,
Kajeno ba bona ba sebetsa.
(Modiya, p. 16)

(Lerato (Love, the name of a river) of Molapo and Matete, the very vein of Mokgatjhane, is but a rivulet despite its fame. Its goodness

and mercy are known to people especially to travellers. Lerato keeps its waters within her belly and vomits when it reaches Tswaing. This love is not feigned or child's play love. It loved the Sotho when they were lost. It is this love that restored their sight when they were blind. Today they see through this mighty weapon.)

These lines are characterized by the economic use of figurative expressions, yet the intensity and depth of emotions in them cannot be concealed. The poet's admiration and love for this river (Lerato), where Lesotho's seat of learning and civilization developed, are shown in simple yet forceful language. Thoahlane illustrates how a poet can employ figurative language to represent concrete situations, or, even to give form to abstractions. Ntsane also is noted for many simple poems which have become great because of the rich imagery and controlled metaphorical language.

It is not only an excessive respect for forms derived from foreign languages which causes or accounts for poor poetry in modern Southern Sotho Literature. Our poets are over-conscious of the

fact that they want to produce 'good' poetry which would appeal to their audience. It is for this reason that they elaborate their imagery to such an extent that it loses its naturalness and intensity. They resort to complex and unnatural constructions which, in most cases, spoil their works. The idiom of Southern Sotho also suffers when the poet is pre-occupied with pleasing his readers with outward appearances - which are unimportant in themselves. He is apt to forget that our idiom is bound up with the structure of the language. For example, ba lahlehelwa ke bophelo (they lost their lives), is grammatically correct, but idiomatically false. The idiom is ba ile ba eshwa (They died)

The structure of Southern Sotho cannot be interfered with in order to accommodate European techniques of writing poetry. We can do no more than expand our limited subject matter and broaden the closer horizon of our traditional poetry by praising not only the chiefs and animals, but also other beauties of nature. All these should be given in a manner that will not be contrary to the genius of the Sotho language. I shall use Dr. Guma's words : Southern Sotho mechanisms of poetry "in so far as they do not knee-halt the poet in any way, they are self-sufficient and need no external embellishment." [8] Mohapeloa too is of the opinion that European techniques of writing poetry should be natural and fit automatically in our poetry.[9] True to his observation, Mohapeloa adopts rhyme scheme and balanced length of verses where they fit in the structure of Sotho. e.g. :

Helang batho, botjha ba Lesotho bo fedile
Jwale ho itahletse boqheku, botsohatsana,
Ho bonala menepe moo ho nong ho re thelele!
Ho hlwathela le bosiu re se bile re ho qwaya,
Ho wela ka mangotswana ha ho so re kgahle,
Bophelo rea kakatlela, ha re bo lahle.

(Modumong, 1925)

(Alas! the young Lesotho is gone and destroyed.
Old age and weakness have set in.
We see wrinkles where once smoothness and beauty reigned.
Wandering at night we fear and avoid for we cling to life.
We do not want to fall into canyons.)

8.) Guma, S.M. : Op. cit., p. 254.

9.) See Mohapeloa's Preface to MOSIKONG WA THABANA YA BORATA, Morija 1954.

These lines show the poet's bitterness. The beauty of Lesotho has been destroyed and only loneliness reigns in the once-lovely country. The many ugly dongas and canyons are likened to the wrinkles which destroy the beauty and smoothness of the face in old age, and to the irrepairable damage caused by small-pox e.g. :

Naha ya Moshweshwe e senyehile sebopelo,
Motho a ngwapilwe ke sekgolopane se matla
O kgutla ka kwano papisong ya ho fatehaka.

(Modumong, 1925)

(The relief of Moshweshwe's land is destroyed.
It is worse than the face that has been dug and spoilt by small-pox.)

It is as if the whole Sotho nation is cursed because only foreigners seem to prosper in this ruined country. Thus the poet's bitterness is intensified:

Morata-Lesotho seo ha a se bona wa sarelwa,
Pelo e tetetswa ke bosoto ba moratuwa wa hae.
Ke ba ditjhabeng ka boiketlo .....
E, ho jewa sona ..... sa mpana-phatloha,
Empa ngwana Lesotho wa tlakasela, wa tseta,
O rerekela a thekesediswa ke boketa.

(Modumong, 1925)

(The lover of Lesotho is disappointed and heart-broken when he sees this pitiful sight of his beloved.
Foreigners prosper whilst the very children of Lesotho starve and suffer.)

Despite the many faults revealed in our modern Southern Sotho poetry, certain essential characteristics of traditional Southern Sotho compositions have been retained. The repetition of a word(s) in the preceding and succeeding lines comes automatically and unconsiously. Traditional Baroki found this technique effective,and our modern Southern Sotho poets somehow cannot free themselves of it completely. It has cropped up in their works either consciously or unconsciously. Perhaps this feature is to Southern Sotho poetry what rhyming is to poetry in other foreign languages. Our poets will gain more by trying to examine the use of this technique which seems to agree so much with Southern Sotho structure, instead of wasting time on outward trivialities which do not improve our poetry.

Our new Sotho poets compose poetry on a wide variety of subjects - personal experience, philosophy of life, nature and natural phenomena, etc. They differ greatly in their achievements. Some,

like Ntsane and Khaketla, have risen above the average standard of a mere description of scenes, situations and unconvincing emotions, while others like Lesoro (in most of his compositions), have created 'poetry' which otherwise consists of ordinary descriptive narratives, given the appearance and line arrangement of 'real' poetry. There is usually a lack of depth in feeling and conviction in most poems of minor poets - perhaps because of the over-consciousness of the poets to appeal to their intended audience. But often it is because of lack of understanding the extent to which Southern Sotho can be twisted to conform to European techniques, and of course, also the desire to produce something, even though there is really nothing that inspires the poet.

Poetry is not sentimentality and a vehicle for misplaced emotions; yet shallow imagination, and a lack of deeper experience to share with the readers, must be deplored in any compositions. Flattery and pretence, no matter in what figurative language they may appear, are not legitimate parts of poetry. One may venture, with modesty, to regard poetry as the matter of the heart, with the head merely providing the pattern of presentation.

The above broad appreciation of Southern Sotho poetry will help the readers to appreciate Ntsane's and Khaketla's contributions to, and their position in, Southern Sotho poetry writing;to recognize influences in their poetry, and to note differences between them in their approach to poetry. An analysis of their poetry and views about poetry will indicate to what extent traditional praise poems form the basis of their attempts, and how far they have departed from them. Both theme and expression in their poetry will be thoroughly examined.

In the next chapter we shall examine the themes chosen by these two poets, and also determine to what extent their treatment of such themes differs from the approach of other Southern Sotho poets on similar themes.

CHAPTER TWO.

In this chapter we propose to examine the wide fields in which Ntsane and Khaketla find their poetic subject matter, and their response to the different themes they treat. Such an examination will help us to determine the view of these poets on the nature and function of poetry, the relationship between art and morality; to know their personal experience and belief, in short, their world view as unfolded in their poetry. This chapter, therefore, will be a broad survey of the different fields where these two poets gather their inspiration for producing poetry. The various themes will be differentiated according to the contents of the poems. But the individual poems will be carefully analysed in the succeeding chapters. The second half of this chapter will be a brief comment on the theme and expression in the poetry of other modern Southern Sotho poets. Such a comment will help us to decide whether or not Ntsane and Khaketla differ from other contemporary Southern Sotho poets; to determine whether there are characteristic tendencies marking them in their selection of poetic themes.

Moiloa and Lesoro will serve as illustrations because their poetry is, in my opinion, a mirror through which we can observe characteristic tendencies in the poetry of most modern Southern Sotho poets, especially the minor poets.

The poetry of Ntsane and Khaketla covers a wide field: their personal experiences, their philosophy of life, response to nature and natural phenomena, social norms and values, great personalities, analysis of human nature. These poets, however, differ greatly in their interpretation of the world around them and in their response to the various themes. This will be proved in chapters 3 to 6. Even though their approaches to their subject matter differ, Ntsane and Khaketla have many points in common regarding the purpose and function of poetry. Certain themes run through their poetry. Their main pre-occupation seems to be socio-political themes, custom, culture; effects of the contact situation between the Sothos and the Europeans, political changes and human relations within the existing socio-political milieu. This choice of subject matter is quite natural when we realize these two poets' deep longing for the greatness of their nation. Their poetry is turned into an effective weapon to build and uplift the Sothos, to teach, to purify, to reveal a real sense of values, to declare their inner satisfaction or disappointment, to unfold the whisperings of the mind and longing of the heart. The main difference between these two

poets are found in their attempts to achieve these ideals - their poetic skills and the lasting effect of their experiences.

The reader finds in Ntsane's and Khaketla's poetry an attempt to assert the victory of virtue over vice and sin. Their view is that art must be moral, and to them morality is consciousness to do right, to strive for noble ends and not merely to conform to an accepted or conventional code of behaviour. Ntsane's satires such as DUMEDISA BASE, BOKGOWANATSHWANA, WENA O JWANG, HWENENE, SEBE NTLOHELE, KEITING YA DIHELE, MONNENWA KE MANG, especially, clearly show and define his concept of morality. The poet's restraint and humour - at times sarcastic humour - give these satires dignity and maturity unequalled in all satirical poetry in Southern Sotho. Khaketla's satire which quickly degenerates into mud-throwing will be analysed later.

Ntsane and Khaketla have written elegies, love poems, about sad moments when friends part; happy events in their lives and other personal experiences. The reader observes that in this type of poetry dealing with personal experiences, these poets are freer in expressing themselves. They do not allow outward structural features observed in foreign compositions to interfere with their feelings. Even Khaketla who otherwise is controlled by a rigid rhythmic scheme and a conscious attempt to write poetry or "reason out" the experience, is more open and freer when he unfolds deep-felt experiences. An appreciation of elegies such as BA ILE, SA MMOKOTSANE, BA SA KGUTLANG, LEFU LA MOTLOTLEHI MORENA GEORGE V1, LEFU LA TSHWANA-NAMANTHATA, will reveal this assertion. Other poems where these poets give vent to their feelings are:

Ntsane :	Karohano. Tsela-tshweu. Maswabi. Di-ya-banneng.
Khaketla :	Kgotsofalo. Tsatsi leo. Monyaka wa pelo.

The quality of the sentiment expressed in KAROHANO and TSELA - TSHWEU is more mature and convincing than in MASWABI and DI- YA - BANNENG. In KGOTSOFALO and MONYAKA WA PELO, Khaketla is trying to rationalize on the heart's contentment and satisfaction.

Ntsane sees God's glory and majesty, and finds pleasure and satisfaction in creation, nature and natural phenomena. Khaketla sees God's glory, but revolts against man's iniquity in making the world an unpleasant place to live in. MMOTE is the case in point. Ntsane's admiration of nature and natural phenomena is beautifully represented in :

Pokola.
Hatabutle.
Boroko.
Mohokare.
Mantsiboya.
Hoetla.

Khaketla's poem on this theme are:

Ha le dikela.
Tata la Qibi.
Mohlola - kamehla.
Botjha.
Nahathothe.
Dinako tsa Ngwaha.

NAHATHOTHE is a literal translation of Cowper's SELKIRK. It is as shallow as the original composition - shallow in the quality of sentiment expressed.

Ntsane and Khaketla have written descriptive poetry, but their descriptions are more than mere descriptions of sceneries and places. In these descriptions are also lessons aimed against moral degeneration which sets in once known values are set aside. The following poems by Ntsane illustrate this :

Maseru.
Morija.
Hyde Park.
Leribe.

His love and admiration are evident in HA ESO, BASOTHO, and MATSIENG. In LESOTHO Khaketla expresses similar sentiments.

Traditional values and custom are preserved in the poetry of Southern Sotho poems. Ntsane and Khaketla are not exceptions. The excitement, admiration, wonder, anxiety, fear, and later, disappointment, sorrow, plight, and complete destruction of the mine labourers, are ably recaptured by Ntsane in HA RE YA LEJWE- LEPUTSWA. His MMAKGUTSITSE emphasises the sanctity of marriage and the significance of cattle in binding, not only the married couple, but also the members of the two homes and their ancestors. TJHUTJHUMAKGALA and MMAMOSI, though not of the same standard, praise, among other

things, the wonders of science and man's mental powers to harness natural forces and put them at his disposal. Innovations in traditional culture are accepted by these poets if they are to the benefit of the Basotho. Those that make the Basotho poor caricatures of the white man are strongly criticised. Those individuals who have partly assimilated European culture, who have thus become arrogant and scorn what is theirs, are reduced to mockery and contempt so that they are warned against this nauseating behaviour. Note Ntsane's DUMEDISA BASE and BOKGOWANATSHWANA in particular.

The two poets hate pretence and nagging fault finding. Human nature is analysed. Those things that rob man of his happiness are pointed out and an appeal is made to the readers to shun them. Ntsane's RATO LA DIPOMPONG and MATSHEDISO are cases in point. Others with the same aim of warning and advising are WENA O JWANG, HELA MOTHO, MMANGWANE, NGWANA LONA, and Khaketla's NNETE E BONWA HO OFE.

The adopted religion of the Sothos, Christianity, has made a great impact on every Sotho. It is thus not surprising to find these two poets of note among their people choosing religious themes - and treating them so well. Known and familiar biblical events have been turned into effective poetic material by Ntsane and Khaketla. Ntsane's moving messages are in SEFAPAMONG, KEITING YA DIHELE, FATSHENG LENA, KGORONG YA LEHODIMO, MOHLANG A TLANG, BO MO HLAKOHILE BORENA and NGWANA LEHLASWA. The last two poems are narratives but this does not minimise their effectiveness. HODIMA LEBITLA reveals Ntsane's views about death and the hereafter.

Khaketla's MORENA MARENA is beautifully written and it reflects the poet's faith and trust in Christ, also his gratefulness for the valuable lessons, examples and promises from Him. The fall of Lucifer and of Man are dramatically portrayed in THOLWANA TSA BOIKAKASO.

DIKENKENG, his autobiography, gives the reader a vivid study of Khaketla because : "the motives which shape a poem spring from the root of the mind. The poet's style is the direct outcome of the way in which his interests are organized. That amazing capacity of his for ordering speech is only part of a more amazing capacity for ordering his experience."[10] The reader cannot doubt the poet's frankness and objectiveness in the above narrative.

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10). Richards, I.A : Science and Poetry, Kegan Paul French, Truber and Co., Ltd. (London), 1935, p. 44.

- World events and their influence on Lesotho or on the relations between Black Africa and Europe have not passed unnoticed by Ntsane and Khaketla. LEMO SA 1939 is Ntsane's penetrating analysis of the world situation in 1939, the war itself, and those who sacrified their lives to win peace for the world. In NTWA YA ABISINIA Khaketla does not hide which side he supports. The war in Abyssinia is projected into a struggle between White and Black - Abyssinian and Italian - with the white man as the aggressor. The same feeling is still expressed in NTWA YA JEREMANE (1914).

Ntsane and Khaketla are not the only ones who have found poetic material in the wide fields which have been examined. Other poets such as Mohapeloa, Lesoro, Moiloa, among others, have also been inspired by these themes. But Ntsane and Khaketla are unique in the treatment of the different themes, especially the socio-political themes. They want to teach the Basotho, to advise humanity, to challenge callousness, ill-treatment and arbitrary goverment. These two poets regard poetry as something more than a conscious creation of man for entertainment, but as a reviving and aesthetic experience, a powerful weapon in the hands of a reformer.

Lesoro, Moiloa and Mohapeloa, for example, compose poetry for poetry's sake. Their poetry is not as purposeful and as deep as that of Ntsane and Khaketla. The latter two poets, as it will be revealed in the succeeding chapters, differ greatly in their expression, poetic skill and treatment of their poetic subject matter in general; but they are united in their views about the purpose and function of poetry. In their poetry emphasis is more on expression than on form. The opposite seems to be true for the poetry of Lesoro, Mohapeloa and Moiloa. For example, the greater part of Lesoro's poetry is nothing more than a mere description of scenes and objects, glorification of persons, a whole succession of like endings serving no purpose. In MMITSA and MATHE MALODI, Lesoro has sacrified poetry for an impressive outward picture of verse (what Prof. Groenewald in his thesis) : DIE STRUKTUUR VAN DIE VERSSISTEEM IN ONGESKREWE LETTERKUNDE VAN NOORD- SOTHO WOORDKUNS EN DIE GESKREWE, calls "skrifbeeld". There is nothing poetic in his different 'narratives' which have been presented in verse form and twisted into a succession of like endings. His selection of poetic material does not seem to be as carefully planned and as purposeful as Ntsane's or Khaketla's selection. Pursuing rhyme scheme is Lesoro's main purpose, for in the verso of his title page he quotes Robert Lynd to defend rhyming:

> "Milton, in his attack on rhyme, denounced the 'jingling sound of like endings,' as though they were but a child's toys that a mature world lay aside. But the truth is that rhyme makes even a fact doubly a fact because it makes it memorable. Memorableness, after all, is one of the eminent qualities in literature. We judge the greatness of an author largely by his genius for writing memorable passages. He must do more, but he must incidentally pass this test."

These words stand for something more than their face value meaning. Memorable passages depend more on the heights the contents reach, the depth and intensity of the experience and the insight of the poet in presenting his inward feelings, and less on rhyme. If a poet pursues rhyming to the exclusion of other essential aspects of poetry, he is bound to fall into many difficulties, e.g. he will be forced to rearrange word order to such an extent that the meaning of the poem is affected and the experience is no longer as intense and captivating as he felt. Lesoro's respect for rhyming and outward feature of poetry led him to produce shallow, uninspiring and less intellectual compositions, e.g. :

> Basadi ba baholo ba Senzangakhona,
> Qetellong ba ba le bana le bona;
> Ba tsekella hore jwale ho kgethwe
> Bona majalefa, Chaka a lelekwe!
> (Bayede Zulu.)
>
> (The senior wives of Senzangakhona,
> soon begot their own children.
> They pressed that they must be the
> heirs and Chaka must be sent away.)

Lesoro does not go deep into his themes. He is never lost in his subject matter. The music is artificial, the sentiments expressed are shallow, the form is arbitrary because sense units are often placed in two different 'stanzas,' at times the imagery is common place, for there is nothing novel in it. In DITHOTHOKISO TSA SEJWALEJWALE, one does come across lively descriptions and the poet's close identification with his theme.

In MOHLA KE QALANG HO E PALAMA, Lesoro has created a picture of a man seeing a train for the first time. However, this poem is not as penetrating as Ntsane's TJHUTJHUMAKGALA, where an atmosphere of real wonder, fear mingled with admiration and new experience, is created. To recapture the movement of the train, Lesoro resorts to

alliteration and onomatopoeia:

Kgabareng ntswe le mohlaka
Pina la bina ya moholokwane,
Moholokwane-wa-se-omile-leleme.
Ya ema ka dinao mehompane,
Ha e kena e potlakile terene,
E tjhutjhutsaka, e tjhutjhumetsa!
(Mohla ke qalang ho e palama.)

(Thereafter a clear and sharp voice was heard. It sang a shriel song that dries up the tongue. It stood on huge wheels as it - train - moved on in a hurry, puffing and rolling rhythmically.)

The above lines eclipse even the best lines in Khaketla's MMAMOSI.

About the cold and general shivering in winter, Lesoro says :

A fihla ka moinoha, ra qhaqhasela,
Ra tswafa ho kgiba, ho qoqopela.
Batho ra sala re itshophile
Ka dikojwana re ipopile.
(Mariha.)

(It arrived with cold and we shivered. We avoided rocking and dancing. We carefully retreated into our blankets which were held close to the body.)

His alliteration is effectively employed. Note how the clicks in qhaqhasela (shiver) and qoqopela (spontaneous movement of the body as in one traditional dance), recapture the clattering of the teeth and reveal the pitiable shivering of the body as a result of the cold.

Lesoro's rhyme is better than that of most Southern Sotho poets. If his rhyme was balanced by lofty ideas, deeper experience natural and unmolested structure of the language, and selected word-images to reveal his mind, his poetry would have been great. Nevertheless, he has made a mark and has indicated that a careful poet can give an impressive appearance of his poetry by employing rhyme. But no matter how accurate rhyme can be, it is not an essential feature of Southern Sotho. The meaning and depth of the poem will be adversely affected if words are rearranged arbitrarily to suit like endings.

Moiloa's themes are not different from those of traditional animal praises. Like the earlier Basotho who observed the characteristics and behaviour of the animals around them closely,Moiloa

has sung praises to many different animals. However, in earlier times not every animal was praised. The graceful diving and swimming of the hippo and crocodile; the tiger, ostrich and above all cattle, Mosotho's very being and soul, were praised in glowing terms. The following examples form Dr. Guma's thesis will illustrate:

Hippo : "Kubu ho hlapa di potlana,
Tse kgolo di lala feela."

(Only young hippos swim,
the old and experienced
ones simply glide.)

Crocodile :"Lehlapahadi la bokubu le bokwena!
Le a hlape le a lale, Bakwena ..."

(Great swimmer of the family of
hippos and crocodiles! Swim and
glide Bakwena!)

Moiloa has gone further. In addition to the animals which usually found their way into earlier forms of praises, e.g. the animals mentioned above, he has sung praises to, or described the characteristic and peculiar behaviour of such delicate creatures as Lesetlaoka (Termite), Lerwana (Red ant), Bohlawa (white ants).

In form too, Moiloa's poetry has not deviated much from earlier characteristics of the praise poem, e.g. appearance of a word or phrase in both the preceding and succeeding lines. The significance of such a recurrence of a word or words has been explained:

Le sila le haila maharaswa
Le haila tlhokwana ka nngwe,
Mehlaleng ya lona ke diboko;
Sello ke sa mmokotsane,
Sa ba llelang ditsabona.
(Lesetlaoka.)

(It grinds everything into
fine powder, crushing every
grain. In its tracks we hear
groans and moans of those
crying sorrowfully for their
property.)

The waste and destruction caused by this creature has been revealed by stressing (repeating) simple words. About the destroyed jacket, Moiloa says :

Bakana .....
E hana mokaka a e bea mahetleng,
E ntse e nyathoha sa tata la nku,
Sa tata la nku le jelwe ke tshwele.
(Lesetlaoka.)

(The poor jacket will not even touch
the owner's shoulders! It falls apart
into bits like a sheep's skin that
has been destroyed by moth.)

The imagery is simple but effective, the flow of the words is natural for the structure is not foreign to Southern Sotho.

Rhyme is another feature Moiloa has added to the otherwise reproduction of the traditional praise poem. In poems such as LEMPETJE, TSHEPHE, BOHLWA and LERWANA, Moiloa has kept the type of rhyme scheme which involves the whole syllable. Although this is not the best scheme either, it is better than the other like endings he has used which usually involve the terminative vowels only. But Moiloa is not limited by rhyme. His main preoccupation is not to find uniform endings but to describe, portray and amuse. Therefore he has succeeded in bringing out the majestic and graceful movements of the lion (TAU) and the tiger (NKWE), the swiftness of the hare (MMUTLA), the characteristics and behaviour patterns of the many creatures forming his subject matter, and the ferocity of the tiger, e.g. :

Nala tsa nkwe hase le ka bohale,
Qeba la tsona le potisa ntjheme;
Ntjheme motoho o batla wa matekwane,
Lebese o batla ho futswellwa ka la pere.
(NKWE).

(The claws of a tiger are so sharp
and painful that they make a young man
to dream. He wants soft porridge made
from dagga. He wants to mix it with a
horse's milk.)

Moiloa, unlike Ntsane and Khaketla, is limited in his poetic subject matter. He merely gives graphic descriptions and is too detached from his subject of discourse. His admiration for, wonder at, and experience with the animals and birds he is describing, are not accompanied by intense feeling. The subjective element, which in my opinion, is part of poetry, is greatly limited in the choice of his examples. He is far from the animals and creatures he is describing. Therefore one gets the feeling that one is dealing with objective studies in a lively figurative language.

Moila, unlike Ntsane, has not made his mark as a poet. His books do not yet reveal his artistic ability, whereas with Ntsane one is able to observe his poetic strength on every page he has written. However, Moiloa's descriptions are superior to those of Lesoro because the language or sentence constructions have not been trimmed down to suit a particular pattern, namely, rhyming. Novelties in Southern Sotho poetry such as rhyme do not appear uppermost in his mind. He is natural in his expression and he watches his animals like a delighted hunter who is merely there to describe what he observes. His descriptions still lack that inner spirit and self expression which constitute poetry. Yet Moiloa's contribution cannot be ignored. If his poetry can be recast and more life and movement infused into it, the reader will be persuaded to feel and experience as the poet did. Descriptions and paintings which are as dry as dust cannot move the soul and captivate the mind. This is Moiloa's weakness, he describes animals, but does not share with his readers his personal experience with these creatures that constitute his subject matter.

Our modern Southern Sotho poets compose poetry on a wide variety of subjects. They differ greatly in their achievements. Ntsane and Khaketla have risen above the average standard of mere description of scenes, situations and unconvincing emotions. Their poetry serves a purpose - it is the medium through which they speak to their fellow Sothos. Others like Lesoro (in most of his compositions) have created 'poetry' which otherwise is ordinary descriptive narrative. The various themes are treated with no other aim than to write poetry. Moiloa's animal poems are objective studies. He is not really involved in what he describes.

Mohapeloa has composed poetry on a variety of themes, but his poems are not as embracing as Ntsane's or Khaketla's. These two poets speak through their poetry. Their poems are not merely a thing of beauty but they are well considered lessons, petitions, warnings or advice.

Khaketla's poetry will receive special attention in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER THREE.

Khaketla is one of the most interesting poets in Southern Sotho. His poetry reveals him as a sensitive, restless and quick mind pressing to reform or reshape Southern Sotho poetry - indeed Southern Sotho literature as a whole. In this attempt to reform, Khaketla followed European models, in some he imitated even the very thoughts expressed. His NAHATHOTHE is a case in point. It reminds one of William Cowper's SELKIRK. In his earlier attempts Khaketla followed European models blindly and soon found himself limited by the patterns or models he wished to emulate. It is difficult to say categorically which European poets influenced him, because even if he might have copied thoughts expressed, as in the example quoted above, the presentation was entirely his own. Further, the question of influence in a poet's work does not lead to a truly objective study, since no study of external influences can ever be conclusive. Personal factors or socio-political factors which influenced a poet can be traced, but, in themselves, they do not constitute poetry. However, factors which helped to shape Khaketla's poetry will be examined where they lend themselves to a closer study.

Khaketla's poetry is too intellectualized. He seems to believe that the poet can reason out an experience and unfold it as a passionate, intense and captivating realization. He believes that the reader can derive pleasure in a reasoned or well thought out sensation. His imagery is artificial and consciously controlled or directed. The reader gets the impression that Khaketla reasons out a mental picture and then tries to cause sensation, or to impress his readers with his emotion-packed word-images.He is too conscious of the fact that he is writing poetry, so much so that he allows his imagination to control him.

Before analysing Khaketla's poems, it is necessary to examine his ideas about poetry. In his preface to DIPJHAMATHE, Khaketla states that the three important elements of poetry are imagination, feeling and rhythm. Unfortunately, the poet does not discuss imagination and feeling further, for he takes it for granted that the reader knows what they consist in, and what their function is, in poetry. His concept of rhythm for Southern Sotho is not very clearly defined. As a result his argument on rhythmic pattern is confusing. His differentiation between the earlier Dithoko (praise poems) and modern poetic compositions is based on these three elements or pre-requisites of poetry. He notes that imagination

featured greatly in praise poems, and he alleges that feeling was sporadic and rhythm irregular or imperfect. The implication is that Dithoko did not constitute great poetry. Khaketla appears not to understand the real purpose, value and structure of praise poems. To him these are nothing more than pieces for self-glorification (Boithoriso) of chiefs, military leaders, makolwane (initiates) and praises of cattle and horses. There is, according to him, no feeling in praises and the rhythm is faulty.[11] This is however not the case.

Dr. Guma, in his doctoral thesis, THE FORMS, CONTENTS AND TECHNIQUES OF TRADITIONAL LITERATURE IN SOUTHERN SOTHO (Unisa) and the present writer, in his Article, THE GERMINATION OF SOUTHERN SOTHO (Unisa), have indicated that praise poems served a purpose among the Sothos; they had their own structural features different from those of European poetry, and their rhythm was a result of a rapid succession of accentuated (stressed) and unaccentuated (unstressed) syllables. Khaketla's ideas, especially on rhythm, are misleading. He fails to make a clear distinction between rhythm in Southern Sotho poetry, which is bound up with the structure of the language, and the metrical scheme which, in European poetry, is consciously applied by the poet. Khaketla's theory amounts to this that the poet must consciously determine the musical flow of his verses by making sure that each line consists of a certain number of syllables. The poet must interfere with the forceful images in his mind and the emotions which are evoked by such images, in order to have a particular flow of lines. The differences between Southern Sotho and any other European languages are so great that we cannot expect the poetic lines of these languages to show a uniform rhythmic pattern. Khaketla is blind to this fact. What he wants is metre - metre as understood and employed in European poetry.

Throughout his analysis of other poet's works, Khaketla complains that they have no back bone - rhythm. The truth is that there is no poem, no matter how poor it may be, without a rhythmic scheme. The nature of the poet's message, his feeling and experience at a particular time, determine the musical flow of his words. This pattern may be different from known metrical forms in European languages, but this does not mean that there is no metre in Southern Sotho poetry, be it Dithoko or modern attempts. It is

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11.) Khaketla, B.M. : Dipjhamathe, APB, 1954, p.14.

interesting to note that Khaketla realized that rhyming could not suit Southern Sotho poetry because of the morphology of the language. Tone, and not identical spelling, play an important role in rhyming. For Southern Sotho, only poor eye rhyme would be possible, because, although the words would be spelt alike, their pronunciation would differ, for the vowel phonemes differ. Note the following examples:

Dipula di na halelele,
Empane se ditlwebelele.

"Rains fall for a long
time but there is no
down fall."

. . . . . .

Ha re sa tla ya lolololo
Re boledisitse haholo.
(Dinoka tsa Ngwaha.)

"We shall not speak long
for we have praised greatly."

Again, words have to be spelt and pronounced alike before like endings could be employed. Khaketla rightly asserts that the endings would then consist of almost similar words which would make the poem monotonous and destroy the reader's interest. But it is surprising to note that he was unable to see rhythm in the same light as he saw rhyme - that Southern Sotho poetry's metrical schemes cannot be replicas of European metre. His use of the term rhythm is rather vague as is his expression 'poetic fire'. The poetic effect of a poet's stanzas is determined more by the content, images and emotions contained therein, and not by a regular pulse-measure, as Khaketla seems to suggest.

Khaketla's DIPJHAMATHE is important not only for his own compositions, but also because of his able survey of the historical development of Southern Sotho poetry from Mangoaela's DITHOKO TSA MARENA A BASOTHO to his day. Although he is consciously attempting to subdue his verse to a fixed 'pulse-measure', the form of his poems is not very different from that of other modern Sotho poems. Certain structural features of praise poems, e.g. repetition of words, still appear, although they are given colour to disguise them. Note parallelism in the following example:

Raputswe leoto le ka lebitleng,
O tshwere letsiri, o tshwere moseha,
O bile o tshwere le bona ba sekgo,
Takatso ya hae ho qala dithota
Tsa mohlamonene, dithota - boseya.
(Thakahadifele.)

(Raputswe's leg is in the grave,
i.e. he is near his end. He
holds firmly and fast to the
straw and to the spider's web.
His main wish is to return to his
youthful days and start life afresh.)

Even though Khaketla intended modernizing Southern Sotho poetry by attempting to employ metre as understood in European languages,he did not allow outward forms to govern his poetry. The experience unfolded is still intense and deep, the imagery rich and varied.

According to the poetic structure and imagery Khaketla's poetry can be divided roughly into two, namely, his earlier attempts, and his later compositions, which are more mature. In his earlier poetry Khaketla tried to enforce rhyming, European metre and other techniques that help to build European poetry. The poet was limited in the presentation of his subject matter because he was committed to external rules and outward appearances of poetry. He had to satisfy like endings and had to rearrange words arbitrarily to enforce this rhyming. For this reason he was unable to use natural and forceful word-images. Words were grouped together in verse form and given an outward appearance of poetry, but the poetic structure was foreign to the Sotho idiom. The imagery tended to be shallow and meaningless because it was too artificial and intellectualised.

The poetic experience must be felt and re-lived and not consciously created or subjected to a logical building up of word images. The moment it is reasoned or rationalized, it loses its power to attract.

However, a rigid demarcation between Khaketla's earlier and later poetry is not possible because some of the features observed in his earlier poems are still present in his later attempts. For example, one still observes the rigid, uncompromising and reasoned rhythm, poor eye rhyme and faulty division into stanzas, even in the later and more mature compositions. But it is not difficult to note gradual changes in his approach to poetry from the earlier NTWA YA ABISINIA to the very last LEFU LA MOTLOTLEHI MORENA GEORGE VI. In his preface to DIPJHAMATHE, Khaketla himself observes :

bitter feelings towards the 'enemy' are not hidden. The use of similes, parallelism, interjectives and ideophones, heighten the sufferings of the Abyssinians, and intensify the poet's hatred for the Italians whom he regards as cold-blooded murderers. However, the rhyming, which is made up almost entirely of similar words, is monotonous, and the rich imagery is weakened by the anti-climax in the last line of the second stanza. The poet began by describing how the enemy poisoned and maimed infants, women and all other defenceless people; but he fails to maintain the somber atmosphere. Even cows are suffocating. This anti-climax immediately destroys the poem.

The poet regards war as European aggression against the Black, e.g. NTWA YA ABISINIA, or as a means of exploiting the Non-European and rushing him into danger after deceiving him, e.g. NTWA YA JEREMANE (1914). As if all the white nations were against Abyssinia, Khaketla says:

> Makgowa masene! Makgowa maqiti!
> A ka o tshwarisa lefeela seriti!
> A ba o dudisa hodima mashala,
> Wa sala o berehakile dipala.
> (Ntwa ya Abisinia.)
>
> (How cunning and untrustworthy
> are the Europeans! They can deceive and let you hold on to an
> empty shadow! They will let you
> sit and burn on hot coals until
> you are roasted.)

Throughout the poem the poet does not hide his hatred for the Italians and their cowardly methods of fighting, and his contempt for the English, whom he regards as mean betrayers. In a sneering fashion Khaketla observes:

> Ke tsena tsa Manyesemane ditaba,
> Ha di lokodiswa ka bokgutshwanyane;
> O di mamedise o tle o di tsebe,
> Hobane di tletse ho thetsa le bobe!
>
> (Here is a brief account of the
> English: Listen attentively so as
> to know them for they are full of
> deceit and evil.)

But Khaketla is over critical. He drags into the poem irrelevant factors, simply because they intensify his bitterness and hatred for the 'enemy':

Ona kopano Mobuso o lonya!
Wa tla re hanela ka tsona dithunya;
Ke bo-Raletsoho le ka bo-Malane
Ha engwa lehopo, ha anwa ka Jane:

Hobane ha a ratwe, o a nenwa ke rona.

(This cruel Government of the Union flatly denied us weapons! Raletsoho (Hertzog) and Malan formed an alliance to betray and sacrifice Jan (the black man) for he is hated and discriminated against.)

In Ntwa ya Jeremane (1914) the poet is angry especially when he remembers the empty promises made:

Ho jwang kajeno? E timile hlaha.
Ya tingwa ke mang? ke madi a Basotho.
Tshepiso di kae tsa bolokolohi?
O tsebe, ngwaneso, setsweng ho hole!

(What has happened today? The fire has been extinguished. Who did it? The blood of the Sothos. Where are the promises for independence? Brother, know, the answer is never!)

The greater part of the poem is mild and ineffective when compared with the same war motif by Ntsane. The confusion, fear, anxiety, danger and uncertainty of 1914 are poorly reflected in:

Ke ofe ya sa kang a utlwa modumo?
Modumo wa dithunya le wa dikanono?
. . . . . .
. . ho ruthuthwana, ho lla dikanono?
. . . . . .
Dipoho di a kweba, di fata makwatsi.
(Ntwa ya Jeremane (1914).

(Who did not hear the roar and explosions of guns and canons when men destroyed one another? The Bulls are bellowing and raising storms.)

These lines cannot match Ntsane's very vivid and expressive lines:

Ha thwasa lemo sa ditsietsi,
Lemo sa ho kgaba ka ditlokotsi;
Lefatshe kaofela la hwasa, la duma,
Matshwafo a batho a phahama, a uba;
Tau tsa hotetsa hlaha mawatleng,
Tsa hloka kutlwano makgotleng.
(Lemo sa 1939).

(A year of anxiety and hardships
came to pass. A year when the
world was clothed in bitterness,
sorrow and uneasiness. The world
was confused and unsettled. Men
were in constant fear and were
restless. Lions had set oceans
ablaze and they disagreed in
world councils.)

In LEMO SA 1939 the atmosphere of anxiety, hostility, fear and insecurity is captured in the most exciting language and effective metaphor .

According to form Khaketla's elegies may be classified with his earlier compositions. But these elegies are more serious intense and more penetrating. The experience is natural, and the imagery is rich since the poet expresses his genuine feelings. However, these elegies are not all of the same high standard. BA SA KGUTLANG and SA MMOKOTSANE are more mature than BA ILE. Other compositions of this category are LEFU LA TSHWANAMANTHATA and LEFU LA MOTLOTLEHI MORENA GEORGE V1; but these will receive further attention later. The pain and finality of death are fully realized by Khaketla in SA MMOKOTSANE, BA ILE and BA SA KGUTLANG. To him death is darkness after sunset, the cold that accompanies the moon on a chilly night, the painful and numbing sting of wild bees. Within a week Khaketla had lost his sister and his mother. In this dark hour of death he could not find consolation, for his sorrow was beyond explanation.

Bohloko ba pelo, mahlohlwa-mahlwele,
Bo tsejwa ke mang hara basotlehi?
Bohloko ba lefu, mantswa-haholo,
Bo loma ka motsu wa motshi-semana,
Matshwafo a ube le pelo e tshere,
Motujwa e be ke a ka ba sa tswalwa!
(Ba ile.)

(Who knows utter distress and severe
heart pain among all sufferers? Sorrow
and pain caused by death pierce and
sting like the sting of wild bees un-
til the lungs are inflated and the
heart is numb. The sufferer will even
wish that he had not been born.)

Note the despair in the last three lines quoted above. The sorrow increases as the poet uses simile and metaphor to explain his circumstances. Death struck like lighting and crushed the spirit. Sorrow and pain increased as the orphans compared themselves with other children who still enjoy a warm home and their parents love:

Tsena ditaba tsa tla sa letolo,
Tsa otla pelong, tsa sutla masapo;
Nyene, bosiu keledi tsa qhitsa,
Ka lela sa hase ya konyana
E bona tse ding di ntse di anya,
E batla ho anya mma yona a shwele.

(This news came like lightning,
struck and crushed the bones. Day
and night tears oozed (flowed). I
cried like a lamb wishing to suck
from its dead mother when it sees
others sucking.)

The word qhitsa (to ooze) suggests the sorrow and severe pain caused by these deaths. Tears were uncontrollable.

The greater part of this poem is everyday language presented in verse form. There is nothing poetic in the following stanza except for the poet's pursuit of rhyming:-

Selemo e ne le sena sa sekete,
Makgolo a sona a roba bonngwe;
Mashome a sona a be a le mane,
Kgwedi athe e be le Hlakola,
Matsatsi e qetile mashome mabedi.
Metso ya ona e phetha boraro
(Ba ile.)
(It was in the year Nineteen forty
on the twenty-third of February.)

Occasionally the poet rises above ordinary description. For instance, when the poem switches over to his mother's death, Khaketla says:

Ha boela ha hlaha masetla-dibete,
Manyamisa-pelo, maomisamoko
A hlatha leqeba le eso hwame.

(Again shocking, disheartening
and painful news struck before
the wound had healed.)

The poet's sorrow is captured in the following lines. Their deep tone create a somber atmosphere, their slow movement echoes the poet's moaning and weeping:

Ba ile, ba ile, re boMolahlehi,
Ba ile, ba ile, jo motso qhalane;
E ruri ba ile ho ya re lokisetsa
Bodulo, koa pele, Kganyeng ya Hae,
Moo yohle merafe e phuthehelang,
Moo re tla kopana le bona ka thabo.
(Ba ile.)

(They are gone; gone they are and
we are the lost ones. Alas! they
are gone and our home is destroyed.
Indeed they are gone to prepare a
a place for us in His Glory, where
all nations shall gather in joy and
peace.)

Khaketla rises to great heights in the last stanza although his attempt at rhyming is faulty. The imagery or ideas may be borrowed, but their presentation is unique to this poet. There is hope and comfort in the last lines of the poem.

Lefu, leshodu, o se itsokotse!
Le hoja makwala a o bitsa Ramatla,
O mafefohane sesitahloohwana!
O tlisa boroko bo bo kgutshwanyane,
Re tsohe kapele, motsohela ruri -
Tsenenya hao e se thithibane!
(Ba ile.)

(Death, you thieve! be not proud
even though cowards call you the
all powerful master. You are but
a weakling blown about by the wind.
Your sleep is only temporary, for
we shall rise for ever when your
sword is blunt.)

In SA MMOKOTSANE khaketla becomes so bitter against the world that he wishes to follow the dead. The death of his younger brother was too much for him.

Senohe ke mang a ka tle ho noha?
A nohe ekaba Hodimo le kae?
Tshupane ke mang a ka ntshupise?
A supe ka pele ke bone mokgotho?
Mokgotho a kgorula ya leso lesafo -
Sello, sekwala sa bana ba kwena;
Ke bone mathwao a menyabuketso,
Ke sale mohlala sa ntja lekesi
Lephoko la hlolo le e hula ka nko,
E fohla maphao, e bala diqhobo,
Mangope kaofela e a hlwela kgafetsa.
(Sa Mmokotsane.)

(Who is a diviner to smell out the
way to heaven? Who can be guide
to point out the way to our last
born, the very stopper of our clan,
Sello, the last born of the Croc-
odile tribe?Let me see the multi-
tudes and learn to track like the
terrier following a rock-rabbit in
big rocks and caves, examining
dongas at short intervals.)

This poem is better written than BA ILE. Khaketla's stanza technique, although not perfect, is controlled by his ability to group together related ideas. Where his imagery is one sense unit, this poet avoids too many stanzas. The oneness of the experience and images in this poem cannot be doubted. Where Khaketla unfolds his feelings, he is less bound by artificial rules he usually sets for himself.

The poem reveals the picture of a heart-broken person who has lost something precious to him. But the poet does not allow sorrow to engulf his mind. He finds consolation in Tennyson's words, which he translates but only to explain his own thoughts and belief:

Tshwarelo bowatla ba pelo tsa rona
Ho llela palesa ya rapa sa hao;
Re rute re kgolwe dinnete tsa hao!
Ho swetsa bara le baradi ba hao
Ha ho yo Hodimo, morero o mong:
Palesa ya hao ya motetengwane
E kgile ho phema a sera maraba,
E metse fubeng sa hao, Morena,
Mophoko wa yona ke madi a hao;
Totisa la rona lerato ho yona,
Hobane e metse pelong ya konyana,
Mohlola-lerato le bona bophelo.
(SA MMOKOTSANE)

("Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.")
- Alfred Tennyson.

The sinking of the Erinpura in 1943, in which six hundred and twenty-four Basotho were lost, moved Khaketla to compose the touching elegy below. The eerie atmosphere is recaptured by the tone of the poem after the Germans had sunk the ship. The silence which is broken by the sporadic hooting of the owl intensifies this eerie atmosphere. Everything, nature and animals of the veld seemed to portend this disaster. Read the following lines to feel the uneasiness and anxiety:

Naledi di qala ho re bonesetsa,
Empane le tsona ke ka lekgonono;
Esita le kgwedi e hana ho hlaka
Le hoja hodimo ho se mararana.

(The stars begin to give us light
but even then reluctantly. The
moon also refuses to be bright al-
though there are no clouds above.)

Ho kgutsa ha naha ho ya sisimosa,
Ha ho na lerukgu, ha ho mohlwathatsa,
Ha ho na dipina haese sephooko,
Lentswe la sona le tletse kgauho;
Ekaba bopuwa di laola eng?
Ekare taola di wa mohlakola!
(Ba sa kgutlang.)

(The silence of the land creates an
eerie atmosphere for there is hardly
any life except the hooting of the
owl whose voice is sorrowful. What
do all these portend? Something
terrible is going to befall us.)

In a lively and figurative language the poet describes the sadness over the land, especially in the homes of the victims, when the sad news was received. Despite this sadness, the poet is proud of these noble heroes who died for their land:

Ba shwetse dikano ha ba re swabisa,
Ba qwetse ba thotse ba sa rebesele,
. . . . . .
Ba ile ha ho na le mohlakodiso,
. . . . . .
Empane la bona lebitso le setse,
Re tla le tsebisa ditlolo tsa rona,
Di tle di ba rate, di ba hlomphe.
(Ba sa kgutlang.)

(They did not disgrace us for they
honoured their oath of allegiance
to the end. They sank in silence
without screams. All are gone, not
even one remained. Yet their name
remains. We shall pass it on to
their grand children to love and
to honour them.)

Like in the previously discussed elegies, Khaketla echoes the melancholy image that seems to run though his elegies:

Ba ile, ba ile ha re sa ba bona,
Ba metswa ke diba bo lonya, lewatle,
La tsosa maqhubu a kgema ka bona,
Dimpa tsa bona ya ba mapatlelo,
Ho tsona maqhubu a retha sealolo,
A tjhalametsaka, a tsudubutlana!

(Alas! They are gone for ever.
They were shallowed by the cruel
deep ocean. It raised waves to
torse them about. Their bellies
became the playground where these
waves danced, rolled and scattered.)

In the last stanza the reader can feel and hear the voice of Gray's Elegy.[12])

Ho bona kajeno ha ho mahadima,
Ho bona letsatsi ha le sa tla tjhesa
Ho bona sekoko ke tshomo ya maobane,

12.) It does not necessarily mean that Khaketla has taken over Gray's ideas. He might have arrived at these words and thoughts independently. Other poets whose works have been emulated by Khaketla are Browning and Milton.

Ho bona koboto ha se satla tsejwa -
Monyaka le thabo ke lefa la bona,
Hobane ba shwetse tsa bona dikano.
(Ba sa kgutlang.)

(For them there is no longer lightning. The sun will not smite them again, the cold is but a lost tale. Real joy is their heritage, for they died honourably.)

The characteristics marking Khaketla's earlier poetry are evident in NNETE E BONWA HOOFE. Thought is placed above feeling. The poet is more interested in the logical flow of ideas, overloading his poem with brilliant symbols, analogies and contrasts. In this poem Khaketla stresses the temporary nature of all things around him and lack of sincerity. Change is the inherent quality of all things. There is a note of sadness when he pronounces his emotional disappointment at this lack of permanence:

Kajeno lerato le buswa ke wena,
Ka moso le se le hlothilwe ho wena.
. . . . . .
Kajeno katleho, menyaka, teboho,
Ka moso tlholeho, maswabi, tshenyeho.
(Nnete e Bonwa ho ofe.)
(Today love is owned and controlled by you. Tomorrow it will be taken away from you. Today you are prosperous, happy and grateful, tomorrow there will be distress, defeat and destruction.)

Throughout the poem Khaketla reveals his dissatisfaction with this lack of real substance, meaning and truth. Any trust in the concrete world is full of disappointment and is therefore blasphemy to life and happiness. But the reader is left with the picture of a man who reasons himself into sadness and hopelessness. The poet's sadness can be 'reasoned' and not felt. The experience must be felt and not rationalized.

This note of sadness changes in Mohlolakamehla because the poet finds consolation in the fact that, although everything around him is transitory, the human spirit lives for ever. It is indestructible. However, the language employed is common-place. There are no forceful images because the words employed are consciously controlled and rearranged:

Bopuwa ka moka tsa fatshe la rona,
Dibuswa ke lefu, makgethula - tsohle;
Mohlola-kamehla o mong ho tsohle;
Ke moya wa motho, mohloka-sekodi.

(All creatures of the earth are governed by death, the reaper of all. Yet there is one immortal being, the human soul without blemish.)

Note, that compound words, a characteristic of praise poem, cannot be left out completely in modern Southern Sotho poetry.

Khaketla appears to be a pessimist in Mariha a kene. He still emphasises the disappointment expressed in NNETE E BONWA HO OFE. The world with all its beauty is but temporary. There is a grain of bitterness and emotional let-down in life and all things cherished most by us. Youth writhes in pain; his beauty and life are reduced to nothing - just as winter destroys the lively green trees and scented flowers. Joy and liveliness are frozen in the shrinking body, as snow shatters all the green leaves and dries their sap:

Menyako ya pele ha ke sa e bona,
Bo botle bophelo ha ke sa bo bona,
Le botle ba naha ha sa bo bona,
Le tsona dithaka ha ke sa di bona:
Ekaba kajeno molato ke ofe?
. . . . . .

(My earlier joys, successful life,
the beauty of the land and even
comrades are gone. What can be the
cause?)

Ke tshwana le tsona tsa hwetla difate,
Kajeno ba tsona bophelo bo matla,
Ka moso di se di fedile bonatla:
(Mariha a kene.)

(I am like trees in autumn. Once their
life was powerful but today their
strength and beauty are sapped.)

The poet is exaggerating his sadness and the poem loses its emotional appeal once the reader notes that the cause for this disappointment is obscure. His sentimental attachment to the "ignorant" days of childhood, when sorrow and pain were not intense or were unknown, destroys the very image of sorrow the poet wants to portray. Although the rhythm in the above lines is attractive and regular, rhyming is monotonous.

Ho ba me bongwana ke ne ke iketla,
Ho se kutlwisiso ya hore le tla tla,
Le leng letsatsi, ho ba me bophelo,
Le tlisa tlokotsi, mapalesa-pelo:
Empane kajeno molato ke ofe?
(Mariha a kene.)

(I enjoyed my youth for then I did
not know that one day a day of
sorrow, moaning and difficulties
will dawn. What has happened?)

This play on emotions does not enhance the poem because it destroys the poet himself. He appears to be standing aloof, witnessing changes around him, commenting on their nature, yet remaining emotionally undisturbed by their result.

In a poem of this nature the reader must experience and feel the joys of life and the very meaning of life destroyed by physical change. The very tempo of exciting life must be observed gradually slowing down to disintegration and disappointment or utter destruction. Misplaced sentimentality, unbalanced by convincing situations, facts and thoughts, cannot lift up the poem above the concrete world. In this poem there is no real attachment between the poet and his subject of discourse. There is undue pessimism. The different poetic images do not combine into a coherent whole of feelings and attitudes to be responded to by the reader.

Khaketla can employ analogy effectively in his pursuit of the symbol, the image to unfold his thoughts:

Bo jwalo bophelo ba lefatshe lena,
Ho motho, phoofolo, le yona nonyana,
Sebata, lerutle, le yona kokwana,
Ka moka di na le mariha a tsona:
Ekaba kajeno molato ke ofe?

(For man, animal, bird, beasts,
locust and even insect, life is
the same. They all have their
winter. What is the matter today?)

Boseya ke selemo sa motho,
Mme botjha e tlo ba hlabula la hae;
Bokwatla ke lona lehwetla la hae,
Boqheku e tlo ba mariha a hae:
Ekaba o sa re molato ke ofe?
(Mariha a kene.)

(Infancy is man's spring, youth
his Summer, middle age his autumn,
and senility his winter. Do you
still ask what is the matter?)

KGOTSOFALO reveals another characteristic of Khaketla. Among his many doubts about human nature, he resigns himself to the will of the Creator. He expresses undying faith in the Almighty, despite the turmoil in which he finds himself. Man is dissatisfied with almost everything, but "let thy will be done."

Ho ka tla motjheso, ho ka tla maruru,
Ho ka tla medupe, ho ka tla ditlala,
Ha ho na lebote ke kgotso e tshweu,
Takatso ho phethwa ya Radibupuwa.
(Kgotsofalo.)

(Heat, cold, down pours or hunger may come, it does not matter. We are satisfied, the creator's will is done.)

The poem is not well written but the use of alliteration beautifies some of the 'stanzas.'

Ka tsona ka kgitla ka kgetjha lehola,
Mosala a sala a monya ditshifa;
Kotulo ya fihla ka tjhaya sekete,
Sekgoba a ba re ke filwe tjalaba.

(With them I struck and hoed the weeds. Mosala remained draining drags. When harvest came I gained a thousand. Sekgoba received plenty.)

Sunset unfolds the glory of God and the beauty of nature. In HA LE DIKELA Khaketla is absorbed by the brilliance of the setting sun, the shining glory of the stars, the beauty of the mighty, rugged mountains. A vivid image of the atmosphere at sunset is presented. The rays of the sun are described as the spread tail feathers of a turkey:

Ka le tadimisa ke dutse kantle,
Ha le tetebela ka nko mobung,
Le le mahlasedi a kang tsenene,
A tshwana le sa kalakune setono.
(Ha le dikela.)

(I stared at it as I sat outside whilst it sank its nose in the earth. Its rays were sharp like the spread tail feathers of a turkey.)

The effective use of simile and personification reveals the poet's temporary suspense and satisfaction. The wondering of the mind indicates temporary upliftment from the concrete world, beyond human struggle and confusion.

The poem is not arbitrarily sub-divided for, in Khaketla's mind, this is a single sense unit, a single experience. Khaketla is fond of relating natural phenomena and happenings to human life and daily occurrences:

Ka di tadimisa ka ngwaya phuwana,
Ka bua ka pelo ka qeta ka hore:
"Batho le rona re ka dinaledi;
Ba bang ke maralla, ba bang ke dithaba;
Le hola kamoka re ile ra tswalwa,
Wa rona Mohlodi ha a tswa dimpho,
Seatla ha se a ba mohlohlo ho bohle,
Ha re ke tshwana ka kganya ke hona,
Leleme le filwe le tsipa-sehole,
Kgeleke ba lona bo kgetha masafo."
(Ha le dikela.)

(I stared at them and scratched my head. I thought: "Even we people are like stars. Some are hillocks, others are mountains. Although we were all born, our Creator did not give His grace evenly. His hand was not smooth with everybody. It is for this reason that we do not shine alike. A smooth tongue may be given to a fool. His fluency may shock many.)

Khaketla admires youth, its fire, spirit, pride, strength and beauty. He becomes a symbolist - if he is not one already - when he describes the brilliance of youth. Concrete and direct comparisons are given to create a perfect symbol of youth and its characteristics.

Hlabula masimo a tlala botala,
Dinoka di kgabe ka metsi-matshwana,
Mephoko, dithota, ka mehaladitwe;
Ba batjha le bona le na le mokgabo:
Wa lona mokgabo ke botjha ba lona.
(Botjha.)

(In Summer the fields are green. Rivers are decorated with shining water. Hills and plains are covered with beautiful flowers. Youths have their beauty. Your beauty is your youth.)

In his pursuit for the image, Khaketla selects apt examples. He notes that beauty is surrounded by many dangers. Youth must be aware of them in order to avoid them. Butterflies, even beatles and green flies, flock to the sweet smelling and bright flowers; the worms, weavils and stalk-borers find their way into the stem or stalk and suck the life-giving sap and juice until the flower whithers and dies. So it is with youth: Many pitfalls, traps and evils are lurking in the air to besmirch and destroy it. Although the lines of this poem are uneven and the rhyme scheme is imperfect, the image is forceful and illuminating.

Botjha, palesa sebitsa-diboka,
E bitsa dinotshi, e bitse diboba,
E bitse le tsona dikgolabolokwe;
Sesedi se kena mothapo ka fatshe,
Se fure mokong, dishweshwe di pone.

(Youth, the flower that gathers crowds. It attracts bees, dragon-flies, as well as beatles. The weevil penetrates the root, sucks the sap until the flowers shrink.)

Itlhokomeleng le se ke la tshwaswa,
Maraba-mehlahlwe a rarile hohle;
Mautla sepheo ke ho silafatsa,
Ho robokelaka tlokola ya lona:
Ya lona tlokola ke botjha ba lona.
(Botjha.)

(Beware and guard against falling into traps that have been set all around you. Lucifer's aim is one: to be-smirch and break your wonderful crown which is your youth.)

Other compositions of Khaketla lack the life and spirit of poetry. They are ordinary narratives given in verse form. Examples are DIKENKENG, his autobiography, MORENA O LE HLOKA KAMEHLA and THOLWANA TSA BOIKAKASO. Rhyming is enforced in MORENA O LE HLOKA KAMEHLA, but the contents still remain a religious message, delivered in the most unemotional language :

Bofelo o ke ke wa ba bo qatsoha,
Akofa ke hona se ka ririhleha,
Kgahlola letheka, o lahle bonapa,
Meketso e etswa ho se mahahapa:
Moreňa o le hloka kamehla.
(Morena o le hloka kamehla.)

(You will not avoid the last day. Arise, therefore, and leave your sluggishness. Shake yourself and be busy. Voices are ringing to invite you. The Lord needs you always.)

THOLWANA TSA BOIKAKASO is an interesting composition by Khaketla. Begun on the 25th May, 1950 and completed in December, 1961, this poem shows clearly how the poet gradually revised his opinions about poetry over the years. The poet moved gradually from stiff conventionalism characterized by an attempt to emulate European poetic techniques, to free expression marked by a complete disregard for rhyme and other devices observed by European poets. If any semblance of rhyming remains in the later verses of this poem,

this is accidental. Compare the less poetic opening stanzas of the poem with the illuminating image created in:

Mautla a ema, a ikokotlela
Ka rumo la tshepe, bofihla-marung,
Mangola rereka, lentswe tlakatlaka,
Kaofela matona a ba nyemotsana,
A bona sa jwetswe, a bala diketso!
Kajeno ditaba di thipolohile,
Bokgosi ba mehla le kganya maloba,
Di shwidifaditswe sa setsokotsane..
. . . . . .

(Lucifer rose and supported himself
on a staff, an iron spear reaching
the heavens. His knees were shaky
and his voice was shivering. All his
generals glanced at each other, and
learnt from their master's action
that things had gone wrong. Their
reign and former glory had been
swept aside like a whirl wind.)

Moqhaka wa hae wa pele, wa kganya,
Wa fetoha hang dinaka tsa poho,
Aparo tshepe, tsa tshwana le tlapi;
A mela dikgola, a mela mapheo
Yaka mmankgane, mohloka-tshobotsi;
Phetoho ya bonwa le ho mafapaka,
Kotlo ya sera ya thomeha jwalo.
(Tholwana tsa Boikakaso.)

(His crown of glory turned into
a bull's horns. His armour became
the scales of a fish. The whole
body was covered with rough
scales and he developed wings.
He became a bat without form.
Change was evident even among
his followers. Thus began the
enemy's punishment.)

The above poem reminds the reader of Milton's PARADISE LOST.

Even where Khaketla curbed his freedom by clinging to borrowed poetic techniques, memorable verses still crop up. This is evidenced by one stanza from the above poem and two others in the otherwise poor DINAKO TSA NGWAHA. Note how the poet represents the swiftness and destruction of the angels of hell, and the confusion and misery caused by them among men.

Ba hana ho utlwa ha thesemetseha,
Ba tlola dinoka, ha tlola marako,
Ba feferetseha dithota tsa tlala,
Ba feferetseha maswalabahlana,
Hara mehlanapa ba tlala pobodi,
Pobodi ya bashwi ba tseka kepelo,

Ba nyaka Masisi a sa ba theletse,
A kwetse monyako, a tinkeditse.
(Tholwana tsa Boikakaso.)

(At once they lunged forward, crossed, rivers and jumped over high walls. They scattered to fill plains. They caused confusion and sorrowful cries and moans were heard among multitudes as they were invaded. They looked for Masisi who had turned against them and had securely closed the doors.)

In DINAKO TSA NGWAHA - at least in two stanzas - Khaketla has employed rhyming more effectively. In one stanza he has created a living image of the torrents of water after rain and destructive erosion by unguided streams. This was achieved by skilfully playing on the like or almost like endings.

Melapo le melatswana,
Dikgohlo le dikgohlwanyana,
Di hwasiswa ke diphororo,
Kahohle ho tletse meroro.

(Rivers and rivulets, Canyons and dongas are in flood. In all directions there are torrents of water and loud roars.)

The echo of the flowing water is captured by Diphororo (torrents) and meroro (roaring or confused sounds.)

The youth, liveliness and health of nature and animals during summer are described as follows:

Majwang dimela - di tala,
Marole a qala ho thala;
Dipula di etsa qhafutso,
Kahohle ho tletse kgotso.
(Dinako tsa Ngwaha.)
(Grass and all plants are green, calves begin to jump about. Heavy rains cause mud all over. There is peace and satisfaction throughout.)

Note the significance of tala (green), thala (to jump about), qhafutso (sound when wading through mud) and kgotso (peace.)

Other attempts where Khaketla struggles to 'think' himself into the poetic experience are MORATUWA, MONYAKA WA PELO and THOMAS MOKOPU MOFOLO.

In Khaketla's early attempts there is a tendency to elevate thought above feeling. The poet was more interested in creating

sensation by overloading his poems with obscure or meaningless images, the logical flow of ideas and sophisticated reasoning. However, his imaginative expression, rhythmic skill, deep thinking and arrangement of ideas, indicated that Khaketla had the gifts of a great poet. This potentiality could be developed to its fullest.

Khaketla's poetry - his later poetry - will receive further attention in the following Chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR.

It has been demonstrated that in his early stages of development as a poet Khaketla emulated European poetry and the poetic techniques employed without due regard for their effect on Southern Sotho structure and idiom. There was a tendency towards too much intellectualism in his poems and less feeling and real identification with the subject matter. The imagery was at times meaningless because of the poet's over-consciousness to appeal to his readers by 'sophisticated' symbols, contrasts and analogies. This, however, did not continue indefinitely. Gradually a change became evident in his poems. Khaketla began to realize that poetry does not depend on aesthetic arrangement of lines on a page, or a uniform set of like endings or sophisticated metre; but poetry is found in deep and intense feelings, lofty and unstained ideas - revelation of the inner self, an 'upliftment' from the concrete world. It is something more than a mere description of scenes, objects and imagination.

In his preface to DIPJHAMATHE his revised opinion is clearly outlined.

Khaketla's later poems are superior to his early analytic poetry where the experience was dissected until it had lost all its significance. He changed from a thinker who tried to describe or philosophise about his experience to a sensitive and passionate poet. He became a careful poet who could combine artistic language with a thorough understanding of the morphology of the language to create illuminating images - at least when compared with the earlier compositions. It cannot be said with certainty when the transition period came, but it appears that his direct imitation of William Cowper's SELKIRK entitled NAHATHOTHE, is one of the last poems where Khaketla tried to emulate European poetry, both in outward appearance and imagery. This imitation did not enhance his poetry.

NAHATHOTHE'S opening stanza echoes Cowper's "I am the monarch of all I survey/My right there is none to dispute ...." Khaketla tried to create the image of a stranded person in the wilderness who made an effort to forget his misery by resigning himself to fate.

Ke kgosi ya tsohle tse mona pela ka,
Nonyana, phoofolo, le tsona ke tsa ka,
Ke etsa kahohle kamoo ke ratang,
Ke kgosi ka mokgwa o phethehileng.

(I am the monarch of all I survey.
Bird, animal and all, are also mine.
I do as I please for I am sovereign.)

In the second and third stanzas the poet tries to present the desparate position of this person and his bitterness.

Ke sitwa ho bona monate a bomong,
Oo ba bangata ba o boledisang;
Ke rata marata, haholo a batho,
Ho feta hwatata le hole le batho.

(I fail to derive pleasure from
solitude which is often praised by many.
I love noises, especially from human
beings more than the wilderness which
is far from people.)

Ke tshwana le mokgu, ha ke na le thotho,
Ke phela ka noosi e se le mathetho,
Ha ho na mantswe, bo sa ke lolame,
Ke bile ke tshaba ho utlwa le lame.
(Nahathothe.)

(I am like the lonely moon without
baggage. I am for ever a lonely person.
I hear no voices except mine which I
have begun to fear.)

However, the quality of the sentiment is immature. The play on emotions does not evoke any feeling in the reader. If it does, it is merely short lived, for it evaporates before even the next stanza is begun. The poverty of this poem is evident. The ideas and imagery are borrowed, rhyming is enforced, the feeling is childish sentimentality:

Kgopolo ya motho la yona lebelo
Ekaba le tshwana le sefe ho dilo?
Ha re le bapisa le dilo tse ding
Le feta hadima le thwathwaretsang!

(How fast is a person's mind! With
what does its speed compare? When
compared with other things, it is
faster than the flash of lightening.)

Ha nka nahana moo ke tswaletsweng,
Ke bona kapele ke se ke le teng;
Empa kgopolo le tjhebo kapele
Di tlise maswabi, ke phake ke tele!

(Once I think of my birth place, I
immediately find myself there. How-
ever, memory and vision soon bring
sorrow and disappointment to dis-
courage me.)

Nonyana ka moka di ya dihlaheng,
Le diphofotswana di ya diqhobong:
Le lehwatateng e teng phomolo -
Ke sa ya phomola ke ya me tokelo.
(Nahathothe.)

(Birds are all flying to their
nests. The animals too are going
to their resting place. Even here
in the wilderness there is rest.
I am going to relax for it is my
right.)

A new Khaketla appears in MORENA MARENA. In poetic technique there is no radical change from the earlier approach, but in sentiment and feeling there is a definite change. In this poem Khaketla begins on a sad note - the crufixion of Christ. But the poet states it in straight-forward words and does not brood over it. Christ's death was not in vain. The poet admires, and is grateful for the great lesson Christ taught humanity - patience, humility, love and kindness.[13] Christ washed away man's sins without discriminating against race, creed or colour. The poet, therefore, fails to understand why man has disregarded these noble lessons:

Di kae kajeno dithuto tsa hae?
Tshowana wa nyonyana, o nena Tshwanyane,
O sena moedi lebaka kahohle.
(Where have all His lessons gone to? The
white man is nauseated by the Black man.
He hates and discriminates against him.)

There is a note of bitterness and disappointment in the above lines, but the poet soon finds consolation in Christ's love and he becomes very proud of his colour and racial identity:

Lebala la hao hoja le nenwa,
Le ratwa ke Jesu Moholo wa hao,
Se ka le nyedisa le rate haholo,
. . . . . .
Le wena Tshwanyane, o kgobe matshwafo,
. . . . . .
O jare fapano sa hao ka sebete.
(Morena Marena.)

13.) It is interesting to note the similarities between this poem and Vilakazi's NgePhasika. However, Vilakazi's poem is more mature and expressive than Morena Marena, because he has dominion over his subject matter and does not allow emotional utterances to efface the purpose of this poem.

(Although your colour is hated,
Jesus, your Parent, loves it.
Do not dispise it; love it more.
You black one, be patient. Be
courageous in the face of all
your hardships.)

The poem loses its poetic effect as soon as the poet dwells on his own sufferings and humiliation. There is an exaggerated and unnecessary comparison between Christ's victory over sin and death on the one hand, and the Black man's emancipation from the White man's rule on the other:

O hlotse lebitla, a hlola mautla,
A hlola ka kgutso batabi ba swaba;
Le wena kgothala o haufi phenyo,
Sebete ke sona sebetsa-seholo,
Lerato ke sona qhamane sa tlholo.

(He conquered death and the Devil.
In silence He conquered, and his
persecutors were disappointed.
Courage is the key weapon, and love
the very explosive of victory.)

The effect of the poem is further reduced when intense feeling degenerates into hatred, a feeling for revenge, mud-throwing and nagging fault finding. In the last stanza the poet wishes to see his tormentors severely punished. His hatred for oppression and discrimination are undisquised.

Ba kalakatisi kaofela ba hao,
Ba tla manakiswa . . . .
Ba tla ja lehala la nyooko le phiri.
Ba phele ka photo ya dikokotane,
O phele ka mafi le tsona dinotshi.
(Morena Marena.)
(Your tormentors will be crushed.
They will swallow their own bitter
pill, and all the evils which were di-
rected against you. You will live
on milk and honey.)

The poem is however better planned. Metaphor is effectively employed. Mere comparisons are felt as real and concrete situations. Note the effect of the line:

"Ba tla ja lehala la nyooko le phiri."
(They will eat the bitterness of gall
and wolves.)

One feels the bitter pill or medicine being forced down the throat of the unwilling plotter. The poet finds consolation, satisfaction and complete redress for the many wrongs in this punishment. Further, one finds in Khaketla's use of metaphor an

interesting feature. There is a tendecy to keep the two symbols of comparison apart in the stanza, but in the mind image, they form one powerful unit.[14] One object reinforces the other e.g.:

Sebete ke sona sebetsa-seholo,
Lerato ke sona qhomane sa tlholo.

(Courage is the greatest weapon,
love the bomb of victory.)

Note the relationship between sebete (courage, literally liver) and sebetsa-seholo (great weapon) on the one hand, and Lerato (charity, love) and (se) qhomane (explosive, dynamite) on the other. One can respond to this vivid image of feeling and attitude but its beauty will be destroyed once an attempt is made to dissect it and explain it in terms of appeal to the mind.

In MMOTE Khaketla admires the beauty of the bird MMOTE, its music, freedom and majestic flight. Its beauty, the poet feels, is so perfect that it is an indicator or the image of the glory, perfection and being of the Maker. This is the symbol, as it will be realized later, that runs throughout Khaketla's poetry. MMOTE is the sign for hope, courage, freedom and ideal life to yearn for.

O ngwana wa Mmopi, ngeloi la lehodimo,
O tshwana le Moahlodi, le hola ke sa mo tsebe,
. . . . . .
Monate wa ntswe la hao ke Mmopi ho qeta.
(Mmote.)

(You are the child of the Creator, and you
are the angel of heaven. You resemble
the Great Judge although I do not know
Him. The sweetness of your voice is
the Creator Himself.)

The brilliant summer day, the beautiful fauna and flora on this day, and the powerful strides of the bird, are portrayed in the opening lines of the poem:

Hodimo ha le hlakile le le nyooko ya tlhapi,
Fatshe ho le ho tala - botala ba bolele,
Kgwedi e le ya Tshitwe, rurubele di fofa,
Mmote wa ikopa . . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . o nyolohela marung,
O bile o thecha, o thathalatsa mapheo.

(When the sky is as clear as the gall
of fish, the grass being as green as
spirogyra, during December when butter-
flies flutter around, the lark rose to
heaven. She dived and fluttered her wings
gracefully.)

14.) This nearly resembles Oviads Metamorphosis where two seperate objects of comparison ultimately become one because one has changed during the process of comparison, into the other.

The bird's playing antics, swift diving and rising, are recaptured in the beautiful alliterative sounds in theoha and thathalatsa. The similes in nyooko ya tlhapi and botala ba bolele are so rich, novel and effective, that they arrest the reader's mind. They create a living image of this attractive bird and express fully the poet's feelings.

The poet cannot reconcile the freedom and beauty of the bird with his own limited freedom of movement and speech or his hardships. He becomes bitter and summons MMOTE to report to the Creator, about the Black man's sorry plight:-

Re hlotswe le wena . . . . . .
A hlola Rantsho, a hlola Mmote,
A hlola Lekula, a hlola Lekgowa;
Dinotshe di jewa ke Tsheu ya mawatle,
Rantsho o nyofa maratha dilepe.
(Mmote.)

(We were created together. He created the black man and created the lark. He created the Indian and he created the White man. Honey is the prerogative of the whites of the ocean, and the black man eats and feeds on crums.)

The poet's anger and dissatisfaction are clearly portrayed by balancing the different parts and the contrast in the last two lines. The slow movement of the preceding lines and strong words help to concentrate the poet's anger.

Pain and humiliation can no longer be tolerated:

Ikope o ye hodimo, o fete le dinaledi,
. . . . . .
Hlahisa sello sa Rantsho ho E Moholo,
Se lobe letho, bua feela o phatlalatsa.
(Mmote.)

(Rise and go beyond the stars. Bring forward the Black man's plight before the Great One. Hide nothing, talk openly.)

In this poem Khaketla combines metaphor, simile, metonomy, personification, and alliteration to create a vivid image of his pitiable state, and cause for his intense bitterness. In the following lines he indicates his helplessness, utter humiliation and pain he is subjected to:

Ke rwetse dipetja tsa mahlanhlela,
Ke ngwanabo kgudu . . . . . .
Ke hloka thathana, ke nwa menyepetsi.

(I carry chains of bondage. I am a
brother to the tortoise. I own
nothing; I drink bitter tears.)

Khaketla feels strongly about his people. He cannot tolerate any arbitrary power over them, so much that, at times he allows himself to be possessed by his subject matter. Thus his emotional utterances are effective only for a while. MMOTE is beautifully composed but here and there emotions and attitudes resulting from his statements mar its beauty. In it one perceives Khaketla's conviction: the beauty of nature is the symbol of ultimate goodness beyond human struggle, confusion and understanding. The suppression of brotherly love is evil and monstrous. Men must live together and respect one another as God's creatures. What he cannot accept is oppression :

Ke ntsho-lekgoba, ke hahaba fatshe,
Ke beleswa joko ke Tsheu ya mawatle.
Pina ke sello, ke paka-mahlomola.
(Mmote.)

(I am a black slave that crawls on
his belly. A yoke is placed on my
neck by the white of the ocean. My
song is a heart - rending weeping.)

Khaketla is a national poet. He sings praises to the greatness of his people, pokes fun at his tormentors and 'expose' injustices directed against Sothos. His love and admiration for Lesotho, her rivers, mountains and valleys are revealed in the poem LESOTHO. The effectiveness of metaphor and personification employed, the, musical flow of the lines and the spirit in the following lines, create a beautiful image and unfold the poet's sentiment.[15)]

Mosetsana setota wa ho rata Thesele,
O ikentse sekgopi pelong ya Rakonyana;
Nyooko o rwetse Phofung, kokolahadi
Ya re kgapha ya mo phatsa maamohelo,
Se tshwana a sala e se le ka ho rateha,
Poho tsa kwebana tsa kgopholaka marole!
(Lesotho.)

(Beautiful lady that loved Thesele, you
have become a knot in the heart of
Rakonyana (Free Staters). Your rich water
sources are at Phofung, They have start-
ed streams all over your body, thus in-
creasing your beauty. Bulls fight over
you.)

15.) Compare with Ntsane's LESOTHO and note differences in expression of the same feeling, love, loyalty and sentimental attachment.

Throughout this poem one finds a racial idiom expressing the love for one's country and unqualified hatred for one's enemies.[16] There is almost blind attachment to the mother country but the poet does not fail to indicate the limitations and wants at home:

> Kgomomofu e tswele le-mohasula,
> Le noja tjhaba di o soma di o nyedisa,
> Di re ha o mmofu o kakatjhelana,
> Rona beng re ka se phetse ho roka:
> O thatehatsi ya rona, Mmadihlofana,
> Re o hama re o puputaka kgafetsa.
> (Lesotho.)
>
> (Friesland with a rich udder, although
> foreigners despise and ridicule you,
> we, your people, will always praise you.
> You are our beloved. We milk and drain
> you constantly.)

The concept kgomo in the above lines is as meaningful and as rich as when embodied in traditional praises. LESOTHO is likened to the healthy cow whose udder supplies plenty milk - kgomo, the very life of every Mosotho, the symbol of his wealth, prestige and social standing and his effective communication with the ancestors. Lesotho is regarded by Khaketla as the only link with the gods, the only place where he can find peace of mind.

Man's invention also appealed to Khaketla's mind. In MMAMOSI the poet describes the train - steam engine - in the most vivid and expressive terms. The fear, wonder, and admiration mingled with anxiety, are clearly portrayed in this poem, but the poet's imagery and expressive form are not as effective and illuminating as those on Ntsane's TJHUTJHUMAKGALA. It will be demonstrated later that Ttsane's technical skill is superior to that of Khaketla. Here in this poem it will be necessary to indicate an interesting point in which these poets differ.

In high class modern jazz a theme is always developed and is left half-way incomplete; then the second theme is tackled, and, it in turn, is left half-way. In the third period the first theme is taken over again and so on, until in the final musical phrase all the different themes are woven into one compact and

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16.) When one reads most of Khaketla's poems, one does think of Burn's poetry. Burn's poetry is great when it treats of Scottish folk-lore, influences on it, and when it is composed in the Scottish idiom. The rhythm is tribal (in fact) racial. The poet is absorbed in his subject matter. Just as Burn's poetry is reduced in effect when he writes or translates into English, Khaketla's poetry suffers when he tries to write poetry according to European rules.

harmonious whole. The musical expression thus becomes great.

Such a development is evident in TJHUTJHUMAKGALA but MMAMOSI does not reach this level. The latter poem is not as powerful and moving as the former, because Khaketla fails to weave the different poetic images into one compact whole of feeling, experience and attitude. One can easily detach three "poetic scenes" in this poem, namely, admiration for the train, its service and longing for a lover. This affects the whole poetic experience. There is no unity in the poem. The sentiments expressed are common-place, the imagery worn out:-

Sebaka- mehodi hodimo le sele,
Sefehla-maru meya e kgutsitse,
Re sale re se re aperwe ke botsho;
Mosi o tlole ditlhase di qhome,
E be ke tetema e jeswa ditlhaka,
Sekaja sa yona, paka-mahlomola
Setsosa difefo, tsukutla-diema,
Majwang, difate, di ekeselake,
Di kgise ka kaja e ke di a baleha
(Mmamosi.)

(The cause of mist on a clear day,
stirer of clouds on a calm day
until we are clothed in black.
Smoke rises and sparks explode as
if dry stalks are fed to a furnace.
Its speed is shocking. It raises
great storms that move the immovable.
Grass and trees shake and move fast
as if they were retreating.)

Khaketla's LERATO is more original and captivating than Ntsane's LERATO. Throughout the poem Khaketla describes the symptoms and fruits of love. It cannot be distributed among people. Its magnetic force cannot be withstood:

Lerato, bolwetse, mohloka-dipheko,
Pheko ho phekola ya "ngwaneso nkake;
Ngwaneso nkake pelo e bone madulo."
Ntjheme le wena Ntshadi, setshwanahadi
Tsebang shweshwe ya lerato e nngwe,
Ha e ke e ajwa le morui e mong.
(Lerato.)

(Love, illness without remedy. The
remedy is :"Darling, kiss me so that
my heart may rest." Young man and
you young lady, know that love has
only one flower that cannot be giv-
en to another person.)

The poet resorts to the praise-poem technique of using compound words. The old Baroki found this technique effective and Khaketla also employs it effectively to describe love as palesa sethunyahanngwe (a flower that blossoms once), mmitsa-dihole/mahosi (attraction/caller of the lowly and kings alike), bolwetse, mohloka-dipheko (incurable disease), schola-mahalaopeng(crop/grower among difficulties/troubles/unpleasant situations), senwesetswa-ka-menyepetsi (delicate flower watered with tears/bitterness). The reader is left with a vivid image or concept of love because, the poet, like many symbolists, work hard to reduce the image to a visual symbol. It must not just be perceived but it must also be felt as a concrete symbol.

Motsu wa lerato ekare bobi,
Bohloko ba oona bo tshwana le ba semana,
Bo tjhatjhametsaka le ditshika kahohle,
Bo qala ka bohato bo kene ka sefubeng,
Bo fetse ka ho thaphola mothapo wa hlooho.
(Lerato.)

(The thrust of love is like the sting of the wasp. Its pain severe like that of wild bees. It penetrates the whole body, beginning from toes to the chest, ending in the veins of the head.)

Metaphors and similes here, mould a real image of misery and untold sorrow suffered by a person in love.

The deaths of Seeiso Griffith (Tshwanamantata) and King George Vl moved Khaketla to compose LEFU LA TSHWANAMANTATA and LEFU LA MOTLOTLEHI MORENA GEORGE Vl (la 6 Hlakola, 152) respectively. The death of Tshwanamantata left Lesotho without a leader. The anxiety of the poet can be felt when he compares the Basotho with a flock without a shepherd. Those who may wish to possess Lesotho and absorb her inhabitants (a shepherdless flock) are referred to as white jackals waiting in readiness to attack the defenceless country. Note the sneer and contempt in Phokojwe tse tshweu. (white jackals).

A tlama thotwana a siya bokgosi,
A hulwa ke kgole ya badimo Hodimo,
A ikopa sa Mmote 17) o phaphela marung,
Ra sala bolahlwa nthwana tsa batho.

17.) This image of Mmote is fixed in Khaketla's mind. The significance of the poet's identification with this bird has been discussed in the preceding pages. See the poem MMOTE.

(He took his luggage and left his kingdom. A cord drew him to the gods above. He rose like the lark towards heaven, and we, poor creatures, were left alone.)

Motjodi wa kgutlo tsa Lesotho Seeiso,
Mokatli wa mehlape ya Thesele le Rasekopo,
Meraka e setse e ahlame menyako,
Phokojwe tse tshweu di a phura di a kgohosa!
(Lefu la Tshwanamantata.)

(Inhabitant of Lesotho, Seeiso, shepherd of the flock of Thesele and Rasekopo. Your ranch is wide open and white jackels are ready to crush and destroy.)

The image becomes clearer when the reader notes the significance of referring to Lesotho as an open ranch (moraka) where the flock (the Basotho) graze, and the defenceless borders as open doors (menyako e ahlameng) through which the enemy may enter. Although the poet is trying to scorn and ridicule his "enemies", the reader does not fail to trace his anxiety behind every word in the above stanzas.

In LEFU LA MOTLOTLEHI MORENA GEORGE V1 the same feeling as in the above poem is expressed. Lesotho would easily be absorbed by her more powerful neighbour since her protector was no more. A rather sinister and callous picture of the supposed enemy is given in the following stanza:-

Ho Radikonyana ha hlaha le a dihaka
A keketeha leotwana a le thakginya,
Haha la Fitori kajeno ke maphutlela,
Kgutsana kamehla di setse sekolonyane,
"Di sa tla be di tshabele hafing la me,
Ke rialo ke bososella naha ho qaphaka!"
(Lefu la Motlotlehi Morena George V1.)

(Wisdom teeth of Radikonyana—rearer of lambs - were exposed as he laughed wildly and kicked about. Victoria's cave has collapsed and orphans are exposed."They will run to me for protection. I say this smiling at the abundance of land.")

It is suggested that the neighbours were waiting for such a moment. The death of King George V1 would give them a free hand in Lesotho. It has been stated that Khaketla is jealous of his country, his nation and independence. He is outspoken in voicing his bitterness and hatred. His foes, real and imagined, are completely evil. There is no good in them. They are hawks with

sharp claws to tear apart the Basotho. Khaketla is anxious to be protected against their 'evil' intention.

Kopanya Letlama le yena Nkgono Fitori,
Taba tsa Lesotho ba di rere ba le hodimo,
Hlomela le hole le re fetohele nthethe,
Mekgwabane ena ya naha ya Mokgatjhane,
E fumane matshediso, e fumane setshabelo,
Ntsu, Radikonyana, o tjhotjhisitse dinala!
(Lefu la Motlotlehi Morena George Vl.)

(Bring Letlama and Grandmother Victoria to settle the affairs of Lesotho from above. The new shoot should grow and become our comfort and fort in this land of Mokgatjhane. The hawk, Radikonyana, is sharpening his claws.)

Khaketla has given expressive form to the many thoughts that arise in his mind - about phases of life, the glory of youth, men's dissatisfaction with almost everything, about the immortality of the soul. His experiences, wisdom and attitude to life are embodied in his poetry which gives him satisfaction:

Monyaka wa pelo, moqhaka maseya,
Ke thalabodiba, seqhela-maraba,
Ke norokapere, semetsa-dilope;
Ha o na thekiso, ha o na kananyo,
O tliswa ke moya-monwabolohisi!
(Monyaka wa pelo.)

(Satisfaction of the heart, crown of the infants, is the slippery water fly that avoids traps. It spreads to swallow all. It cannot be bought, neither can it be given away. It is brought by peace of mind.)

His thoughts have also been turned onto nature and natural phenomena. Life and man's behaviour can be explained by observing nature and the universe. The brightness after a great storm, the brilliant stars and moon at night, the multi-coloured flowers of the veld, all give him a living memory of his loved one:

Ke maru a matle, a nwabolohang,
Le kiriatshwana e thwathwaretsang;
Ke dikgakgamatso, mahloka-tekanyo.
Ke shweshwe tse ntle, mebala mookodi
Tse fupuhileng hara mehlanapa,
Jwaleka kgwayane ka mora sefako.
Le ba me bophelo bo kgaba ka Tshedi,
Ho nna ke kgwedi, naledi, letsatsi
Ke mohaladitwe ke shweshwe ya naha;
Ha a le sebaka monyaka ha o yo,
Tlhonamo ya hae ke phifalo ya letsatsi,
Bosiyo ba hae ke lefu ho nna,
Boteng ba hae ke ba me bophelo.
(Moratuwa.)

(The beautiful clouds that float
gracefully and the roar of thunder
are great wonders without any match.
The beautiful multi-coloured flowers
have sprung up in the veld like mush-
rooms after a hail storm. So it is
with my life. Tshedi is my pride. To
me she is the moon, the star, the sun,
and the beautiful flower of the veld.
When she is away my heart aches. Her
sadness is an eclipse of the sun. Her
absence is death to me, while her pre-
ence is my life.)

One Southern Sotho riddle about night and darkness has been successfully given in verse form, e.g. TATA LA QIBI. In Khaketla's mind night is a mystery, a riddle to be solved.

Tata la qibi-ntsho, kapara-matjhaba,
Boya ekare ke ba monokwana;
Masoto ke a tshepe, molelengwane,
A kopa bo-nkgono ka dikgutlo bongata.
(Tata le Qibi.)

(Black blanket, cover of nations.
Your wool is like the beautiful
fleece. Edges are like long irons
to cover old women in many directions.)

Apt comparisons intensify the all-embracing darkness.

Much can be learnt from Khaketla's poetry. But his contribution will even be greater if he could concentrate more on the relationship between Southern Sotho morphology and poetry writing instead of theorizing on the possibility of using 'perfect' metre and other innovations. His verses will not sound artificial if European metrical patterns are not forced on them. He is on the right path because he is conscious of the essential aspects of poetry. His awareness of the existence and importance of these aspects of poetry will enable him to improve on other poet's faults and his own. His stanza technique, although not perfect, is controlled by his ability to group together related ideas. Where his imagery is one sense unit, this poet avoids too many stanzas. MMAMOSI and HA LE DIKELA are correctly punctuated and the oneness of the image is maintained in each case. But in other poems the division into stanzas is faulty and arbitrary. Khaketla is aware that Southern Sotho poetry cannot be completely identical with European poetry in structure.

CHAPTER FIVE.

The form and expression in Ntsane's poetry will be treated in this Chapter. We shall examine the individual poems to reveal their literary value and the poet's techniques. The emphasis will be more on the poems themselves than on the general themes outlined in Chapter Two. Ntsane's emotive language and its general effects on the reader will be examined. It will be our task to indicate how he visualises his poetic subject matter, how he selects words and word images to elicit the same experience in the reader; the depth of his feelings, imagination, and his appreciation of beauty. We shall examine the manner in which he organizes his feelings, attitudes and mental occurences into one meaningful unit - the poetic experience. We shall note the structure of his poetry, although emphasis will be more on expression.

In this critical analysis no attempt will be made to work out or ponder over the possibility of any experience unfolded or historical truth on any subject. It is outside the poem, and, therefore, beyond literary criticism. The individual compositions will be analysed as they are to select the best attempts in which Ntsane's poetic strength can be examplified and observed. The criterion for selecting the best poems will be this consideration: the best poems are those in which the different images, experiences, attitudes and feelings are woven into a neat coherent whole which can elicit a response or a certain state of mind in the reader. The reason for this choice is that we regard poetry as a complex of imagination, feeling, experience, a matter of the heart, with the mental processes providing the organization scheme and presentation. Poetry, however, is not sentimentality and a vehicle for misplaced emotions. "It is the supreme form of emotive language." [18] The reader's sensory, emotional and intellectual response to the poem will indicate the effect of the poet's technical skill, his expressiveness, in short, his mastery as a poet.

Ntsane's development as a poet is very interesting. In him the reader finds the master who combines European techniques of writing poetry - division into stanzas, rhyming, sophisticated metre - with a thorough knowledge of, and insight into, the structure and idiom of Southern Sotho.

18.) Richards, I.A.: Principles of Literary Criticism, p.273.

Rhyming and division into stanzas are regarded as a means to an end and not the end itself. Unlike Lesoro and other modern Southern Sotho poets, Ntsane is aware that the Sotho poet cannot divorce himself completely from traditional verse and its unique structural features such as the striking unity of thought and line arrangement brought about by a repetition of a word or word-groups within one thought development, stressed and unstressed syllables which maintain a balanced rhythmic scheme and the music of the poem. When it is necessary, Ntsane disregards those external features which disturb Southern Sotho poetry. He takes great pains to retain what is good, in fact basic, in poetry and mix it with a good modification of borrowed ideas. It is for this reason that the music of his lines flows naturally and does not sound strange to the ear. There is always a definite balance between content and form in his poetry, i.e. the contents seem to control the tone of the poem, its rhythmic pattern, the length of the verses and general grouping of sense units:

> Ha thwasa lemo sa ditsietsi,
> Lemo sa ho kgaba ka ditlokotsi;
> Lefatshe kaofela la hwasa la duma,
> Matshwafo a batho a phahama a uba;
> Tau tsa hotetsa hlaha mawatleng,
> Tsa hloka kutlwana makgotleng.
> (Lemo sa 1939).
>
> (A year of anxiety and hardships
> came to pass. A year when the
> world was clothed in bitterness,
> sorrow and uneasiness. The world
> was confused and in turmoil. Men
> were in constant fear and were
> restless. Lions had set oceans
> ablaze and they disagreed in world
> councils.)

Ntsane's imagery is rich varied and meaningful because figures of speech have been employed to bring, as nearest as possible to the reader, the essential qualities of his subject matter. The reader always feels that Ntsane has some experience or some exciting idea, thought or feeling to share with him. The lines quoted above support this assertion. In this opening stanza the poet has revealed in the most vivid and exciting language the anxiety, hostility and fear which characterized the world in 1939. The weight of the words create an intense atmosphere of uncertainty and imminent danger. The movement and flow of these first lines is slow and deliberate to intensify the anxiety and unbearable suspense. Metaphor is effectively employed in these lines.

The reader can feel the anxiety developing into unbearable fear, uncertainty and then panic. The creeping danger is captured in the following lines:

> Tau tsa hotetsa hlaha mawatleng,
> Tsa hloka kutlwano makgotleng.
>
> (Lions set oceans ablaze and disagreed in world councils.)

The Great Powers are referred to as lions ((di) Tau) and their jealousies which caused the Second World War are likened to a wild fire that destroys the veld. Note the force in the line "Tau tsa hotetsa hlaha mawatleng."

In the second stanza Ntsane impressed on the reader the imminence and inevitability of the 1939 war by employing analogy and metaphor. In a lively language the poet states that great lions were sharing their prey and soon the greedy one began eating the shares of others. A bitter quarrel ensued, and bloodshed could not be avoided:

> Tau, mose, tsa qhwedisana,
> Tau tsa hloka ho buisana,
> Ba re ho no inangwe, di ja sebata:
> E meharo ya phaka, ya nka hangata,
> Ya qetella e ngwathile ha dibatana;
> A qhwelwa he a mang mabewana.
>
> (Lions across the oceans quarrelled one another, and could not meet in Councils. We learn that they were sharing a prey, and the greedy one ate fast and began to eat the share of others. Then the other bulls were offended.)

Here metaphor is employed to represent the concrete object i.e. the object of comparison immediately becomes the real symbol. Tau is employed not merely to represent the ferocity, jealousies, might and greed of the great powers, but to symbolize them. They became real lions because the smaller nations (animals) are at their mercy. One great power grabs colonies, then her greed is not satisfied and she begins to take land of the weaker nations by force. Note the effect of the analogy: lions share their prey; the greedy one takes more than its share and begins to take by force the shares of the weaker ones. Only Ntsane's poetic skill enables him to present this lasting, effective and graphic image of the world situation in 1939.

As the poem develops, Ntsane creates an intense atmosphere. There is no hope for peace as attempts to restore it

fail one after the other. There is confusion and restlessness all over and a traffic in arms increases:

A o baka moferere Switlane,
A bua le ntja tse thata, Majeremane:
Ntho tsa thatafatsa dipelo,
Tsa tela tsohle, tsa tela bophelo,
Tsa laba-labela madi a motho,
Tsa nyorelwa ho fedisa batho.

(Switzerland caused a row. She talked with hard and cruel German dogs. These things hardened their hearts, sacrificed all and sacrificed their lives. They longed for human blood and became thirsty i.e. wished, to destroy humanity.)

Hodimo ha tsoha setsokotsane,
Tsokotsane hodimo ke sa difofane.
(Lemo sa 1939.)

(A whirl-wind started in the clouds, a whirlwind of aeroplanes above.)

Events developed rapidly and soon the whole world was affected. The poet has the ability to maintain the somber atmosphere throughout. The nations are ready for self-destruction:

Engelane le Forą tsa e dumela ntwa,
Tsa romela Poland fofane tsa ntwa.
Le rona ba le hole ra sisinyeha,
Ho thiba lefatshe ha le senyeha.

(England and France accepted the challenge and send war planes to Poland. Even we so far away began to move, to save the world from destruction.)

The power of these lines lies in the words <u>dumela</u> (employed figuratively to mean: readily took over or accepted the challenge), <u>senyeha</u> and <u>sisinyeha</u>. The quivering and violent shaking of the world (sisinyeha) is intensified by <u>senyeha</u> (to be destroyed or spoilt.) This careful selection of words enhances the message of the poet.

In the last stanzas the poet unfolds the gloom, suffering and sorry plight after the war. Immediately his national pride is hurt and he revolts against the deceit and ungratefulness of the English whom the Basotho trusted and sacrificed everything to go and help conquer the enemy. Promises are unfulfilled and they are now treated with scorn, humiliation and discrimination.

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Lemo sa fela e le morusu kahohle,
Pelo di ntshofetse tsa bohle.
Ra robeha melala ke ho lelala.
Ke lefeela, re sebeleditse ntata selala.
Mesebetsi ya rona homme e ne rateha,
Empa kajeno e mebe, e a nyonyeha!

(The year ended with turmoil all over
and people's hearts were heavy. Our
necks were strained by looking up
all the time.
This has been invain for we have
worked hard for nothing. Our ser-
vice was highly regarded then,
but today our work is ugly and
nauseating.)

The underlined verses express the same feeling as in Khaketla's last stanza in NTWA YA JEREMANE (1914), but Ntsane's lines are more forceful, carefully selected and emotionally more balanced than Khaketla's outbursts, which lose their effect as soon as the sneering tone is realized. The whole poem NTWA YA JEREMANE (1914) is not as effective and as captivating as Ntsane's LEMO SA 1939:

Ho jwang kajeno? E timile hlaha.
Ya tingwa ke eng? Ka madi a Basotho.
Tshepiso di kae tsa bolokolohi?
O tsebe, ngwaneso, setsweng ho hole!
(Ntwa ya Jeremane (1914).

(What has happened today? The fire
has been extinguished. Who did it?
The blood of the Sothos. Where are
the promises for independence?
Brother, know, the answer is NEVER!)

In LEMO SA 1939 Ntsane's poetic skill cannot be questioned. The forceful images capture the reader's imagination to such an extent that like endings, whether consciously planned or not, are easily forgotten. But Ntsane is not always careful in other poems. His rhyming is not always applied effectively. He goes out of his way to look for suitable endings and as a result his message sounds artificial. The division of the poem into stanzas is at times faulty and arbitrary. Perhaps this cannot be avoided since the morphology of Southern Sotho words does not easily cater for like endings. It is seldom that like endings are perfect in tone because the syllable consists of a consonant and vowel. These vowels are not easy to match. The divisions into stanzas, each with its own particular feeling, is also faulty at times. MASWABI is a case in point, although many other examples are found.

Stanzas one, two and three; four and five; six, seven and eight; nine and ten, in MASWABI, form single sense units respectively. Therefore, the poet's arbitrary divisions were unnecessary, e.g.:

> Botle ba lefatshe ho nna ke sesomo,
> Mahlong a ka bo dutlisa meokgo;
> Kganya ya letsatsi ho nna ke lefifi,
> Botho ba ka bo aparetswe ke bofifi,
> Thabo ya mehla kajeno e fetile,
> Tshiu tse sehloho tsa lefu di fihlile;
> O na fanne e le ka ho rata,
> Thabo ho nna e fetohile bothata.
> (Maswabi.)
>
> (The beauty of the earth is a disgrace to me for it brings sorrow and tears to my eyes. The brilliance of the sun is to me intense darkness. My whole personality is clothed in darkness and misfortune. My daily happiness has passed. Sad days of death have come. He (God) had given in good faith. Today my happiness has turned into hardships.)

The above mentioned lines still consititute good poetry despite the apparent faults in structural features. This is the essence of Ntsane's poetry, that, as outward features and technical skill may appear incorrect and imperfect, the imagery and poetic experience remain intact. It is not denied that it is very essential that the poet should consider carefully the subdivisions of his poem; but it can be argued that in Southern Sotho poetry, especially Ntsane's, the conventional ideas about the arrangement and other foreign poetic techniques, are not valid. The imaginative experience still remains effective even when his divisions are followed in this poem.

The poet's sadness, pain, sorrow and somber atmosphere are graphically represented and captured in this poem. Doubt and the poet's pessimism are clearly indicated in the following lines:

> Ka beha matsoho phatleng, ka lla,
> Ka tshwara pitsi ya ditsietsi, ka kalla.
> (Maswabi.)
>
> (I raised my hands to the forehead and cried. I caught a horse of sorrows and rode.)

The metaphor in the last line is effective. Immediately, the reader realizes the bitterness of the poet because he holds that he is specially selected to suffer; he is wholly surrounded by

misfortune. His sorrow is intensified by the rhyme in lla and kalla. Words are carefully selected to indicate the bitterness of the poet and the fact that he feels he is past consolation. He can no longer bear the pain and sorrow. Sadness is a solid rock, a lump that chokes his very being:

Pelong ya ka ho dutse lefika,
Le metse, le entse methapo ke masika.

(A rock has settled in my heart.
It has grown and formed a net-work
of roots.)

Ke imetswe maikutlo, ke jere boima,
Ke kene ka setopo hanong la bodiba.
(Maswabi.)

(I am depressed and heavily laden.
My whole body has sunk in the depths.)

Words such as lefika (granite/rock) and masika (entangled mesh/roots), boima and bodiba, reinforce each other respectively. They indicate utter helplessness and suffering because sorrow and pain hold tenaciously on the poet.

The poet misses the company of his beloved - death has robbed him. He found rest, comfort, cool shade and satisfaction in his beloved's company. But her death exposes him, as it were, to the hazards of this world. Worry, torture, pain and loneliness burn and torse him about, as the sun burns and flattens a rich green crop during a draught. The comparison is vivid:

Moriting wa sefate kala le kgepohile,
Tsatsi le a mpesa, ke sotlehile.

(In the shade of the tree a branch
has fallen off. The sun is burning
and I am greatly worried.)

In the last stanzas the poet finds consolation in the Almighty. This world, he reasons, is full of thorns, bitterness, sorrow, disappointment and deep moans: but in heaven there is real comfort.

Llo sa ka se hlaba mahodimong,
Se phunya maru se kokota ha Modimo.

(My cry pierces the heavens. It
penetrates the clouds and knocks
in God's home.)

Matshediso ha a yo lefatsheng,
Matshediso a hodimo, Moreneng.
(Maswabi.)

(There is no consolation on
earth. Consolation is with the
Lord above.)

Ntsane finds poetry an effective weapon for delivering moral lessons, stressing his hatred for evil practices among his people or poking fun at the powers that be. In HWENENE, the poet captures his contempt for a riotous living and hatred for drunkeness. He portrays the most vivid image of a drunk and his mind:

Ka hlaha ka ntle ka ema meemo,
Ka thula lebota ka hlooho ka utlwa monate,
Ka re, Mmao, ka o jwetsa re tla teana!
Ka qetella ke entse dikgoba leboteng,
Senqu le Mohokare tsa utlwahala ho hwasa,
Tsa theosa tsa leba lewatleng,
Tsa kgangwa ke tang-tang tsa sitwa ho feta.
(Hwenene.)

(I went out and stood in great style.
I hit the wall with my head and en-
joyed it. I said:"There, I told you
we shall meet". I ended with marks
on the wall - as I vomited - and
Senqu and Mohokare flowed down to
the sea. They were blocked by the
drags and could not pass.)

The poet combines euphemism and humour in the above mentioned lines. He sneers at the drunk's loss of control over his mental powers, and his irresponsible behaviour. The poet's hatred for over-drinking is clearly shown by his reference to vomiting which, according to him, is as voluminous as the combined Senqu (Orange) and Mohokare (Caledon) Rivers. He cannot tolerate the nasty odour of this filthy vomit. Note the last three lines in the above quotations.

In the opening stanza the reader discovers the low and cheap living in the shebeens and contempt for human dignity. There is a touch of sarcastic humour in this poem, but this is aimed at those practices among his people which embitter human relations and make life to be unpleasant. He scorns the woman who sells concoctions to people without caring for their well-being.

Ka ntsha soka ka bitsa sekala,
Ka bitsa serapa ke sa qala.
Mosadi, tshela hiki o tlatse sekala,
O tshele le ba maobane o etse motswako,
Nna ha ke ngwana ha ke tshware mahleu,
Mmetsong ho nna ho entse diforo,
Foro tsa bodila mangope-ngope,
E ka re tsa terekere dithoteng.
(Hwenene.)

(I took out a sixpence and called
for a scale. I bought a big tin -
syrup - at an early stage. Woman,
pour concoction and fill the scale.
Fill up even yesterday's mixture.
I am no child to drink weak stuff.
My throat is full of furrows.
Furrows caused by this sour stuff
are like deep dongas formed by a
tractor in the field.)

Throughout the poem Ntsane emphasises this waste of human life and money at the shebeens; the degeneration of morals, founding of undesirable and false friendships, family break ups and carelessness. The poet's irritation is evident in the following lines:

Le tla re le boneng le sa bona mehlolo,
Le sa bona hloho sa hiki baneng ba batho,
Le sa bona re thuba ponto re nwa leshome,
Re nwa tjhelete re nwa madi bophelong,
Bana lapeng boko se hlaba hodimo,
Boko se bakwa ke mala ho korotla,
Bana lapeng ba robala ba itsosa.
(Hwenene.)

(What wonders have you seen if you
have not seen the cruelty of con-
coctions on people? Have you seen
us changing a pound to drink the
whole ten shillings and draining
our life giving blood? Children
at home are crying for their
stomachs are empty. They cannot
even sleep.)

Structural features of the praise poem crop up every now and then. The different lines are bound together by a repetition of the same words such as Le sa bona, in lines one, two and three; (se) boko and lapeng, in lines five, six and seven. As indicated previously, a thought is developed in the preceding line, then emphasised in the next line and lastly, it is rapidly followed by another thought.

The last lines of this poem indicate the poet's unqualified hatred for dangerous concoctions and for the brewers of such dangerous poisons.

Ketso tsa letahwa hase ho nyonyeha!
(A drunk's behaviour is disgrace-
ful.)

Ka re ha o tshaba o tshabe hwenene,
O tshabe le mosadi wa hiki, Mmanyeo.
(If there is anything to fear,
fear hwenene and fear the woman
who brews concoctions.)

Ra bolawa ke dijo e le tjhefo sebele,
Ra bolawa ke dijo ntho lebitso ke HWENENE.

(We are destroyed by food which is
real poison. We are killed by the so-
called food HWENENE.)

KEITING YA DIHELE is composed in the same vein as HWENENE. The poet reveals human vanity, lust, pretence, envy, bitterness, hatred, treachery, pride and sinfulness. But his message: the wages of sin is death and hell.

Wa horeng a bua ka utlwa disono,
Ka utlwa dihlong ka ba ka makala,
Ka utlwa a bolela makunutu dihaeya,
Taba di tsejwang hodimo mona di sa tsejwe,
A bolela pelo ya motho bolotsana,
Merero makati-kati bongata ho makatsa.

(Somebody from somewhere began to
talk wonders. I heard disgraceful
things and was puzzled. He revealed
shocking secrets, things known
above and not on earth. He re-
vealed the evil of man's heart
and its dangerous plots.)

Kgabareng mabalane a phetla buka patanta,
A phetla buka batho ra bala;
Mohlang oo ra bala le sekolo re sa ka ra se kena,
Tsa rona tsa totobala ra hlollwa,
Makunutu buka e tletse ho phenama,
Motho a bokolla le mollo a so o utlwe.
(Keiting ya dihele.)

(After some time the clerk opened
a big book. We read the book
although some had never been
to school. Our deeds were re-
corded and we were shocked.
Our many secrets filled the
book. A person screamed even
before the fire touched him.)

Throughout the poem the reader suppresses laughter, although the subject is treated in a serious and dignified manner. Ntsane gives a humorous description of pretenders. The repetition of some words in the following stanza heighten the humour but the seriousness of this episode cannot be lost sight of:

Ka bona sono ka bona sehloho,
Ka bona aparo se mebala se kgaoha,
Se kgaoha dikoto motho a ferella,
A ferella fereko e feletse mahetleng,
Ke mang ya etswang hampe hakaalo?
Ba re enwa o jelwe ke tsa hae bohata.

(I saw heart-rending sights, I
saw sorrows. I saw a multi-

coloured attire torn apart into
pieces and a person sprawling
on the ground. He sprawled with
a fork in his shoulders. Who
is this sufferer? They say this
one is suffering because of hy-
pocracy.)

The alliteration of the F's recaptures the sound of the sharp fork as it plunges mercilessly into the shoulders of the frightened sinner. There is clear evidence of the poet's contempt for false outward appearance in the following lines:

Hloho ke sang aparo se benya?
Aparo ha se pake botle pelo bokahare,
Enwa motho boholo ke seaparo,
Ntho e le matheba-theba ditshila,
E mobe pelo, e mobe mehopolo!

(Why this cruelty when your attire
shines? Your dress does not symbo-
lise a pure heart. His faith was
in his dress although he was evil -
an evil heart and corrupt thoughts.)

The poet dreams awake but he does not allow his subject to absorb him. In a humorous tone he frightens mankind from danger and warns them about the hereafter, whether one believe in it or not:

Batho tereseng ra thothomela,

. . . .

Boko sa kgabola batho ra ferekana,
Mangeloi a dihele a utlwa monate a phethesela,
A eketsa mafura lakabe la tlola haholo -
Jo mollwa dihele bohloko!
(Keiting ya dihele.)

(In the queque people began to
shiver. Moans and groans were
heard and everybody panicked.
Angels of hell enjoyed the
scene and moved faster. They
increased the fat and flames
rose high. Alas! How painful
is hell's furnace!)

In his poetry Ntsane expresses his intense love for his country and people, the rugged mountains, rivers and villages. Yet Ntsane's love for his country is not blind.[19]) In LESOTHO

19.) Khaketla's poem LESOTHO unfolds his great love for Lesotho, her people and relief features. But the poem is not as penetrating as Ntsane's graphic description in the poem of the same title.

he reveals his unfeigned love. He condemns the oppressor where necesary, and displays his contempt and hatred for traitors among his people. Their conceit he cannot tolerate and their artificiality nauseates him:

> Ofising ya Mmuso ho dutse Mosotho,
> Mabalane e motsho, kgowa la Aforika,
> Mabalane a ja batho mesifa
> A phoka kofi a fahla badimo,
> A nwa madi a Mosotho Moshweshwe a swaba;
> Thelefone ya kgabola ra koba melala.
> (Lesotho.)
>
> (In the government office there sits a Mosotho, a black clerk, the European of Africa. The clerk sold his people. He drank coffee - his price - and the gods were offended. He drank the blood of his people and Moshweshwe was disgraced and disappointed. Telephones rang and we bowed our heads in shame.)

The poet's disappointment and humiliation are embodied in the last four lines of the stanza quoted above.

In this poem Ntsane relates the history of Lesotho in a lively expressive language. He looks at the past deeds of heroes with pride and his nation's victory over a great world power pleases him:

> Hlabeng sa Berea Kgowa la bua Sesotho,
> Sotho ke sang o le leja-hlapi?
> Ngwana Mmuswa mose a utlwa bohloko,
> Hloko ba rumo la Mosotho kgopong tsa hae:
> Mosotho rakalla o thusetse Lesotho -
> Jo nna Lesotho we-e!
> (Lesotho.)
>
> (On Berea plains a white man spoke Sotho. Why Sotho when you are a fish-eater - Englishman? The child of overseas government felt the pain of the Sotho assegai in his ribs. Sothos, stand firm and defend Lesotho. Bravo! Lesotho.)

He scorns paper treaties that were often not understood. The poet alleges that Moshweshwe and the Sothos were betrayed by England. He is embittered to find the Sothos suffering and poor, whilst foreigners prosper. The following lines reveal Ntsane's bitterness and suspicions:

> Tumellano tsa mangolo bohata,
> Moshweshwe o ngotse mangolo a sa tsebe Sekgowa,
> A sa bone le yena Fitoria sefahleho.
> Tlisang mangolo ao le rona re bone,

Tlisang tumellano tsa Fitoria le Moshweshwe,
Kgwasollang patanta tseo re bale,
E se be le ngotse tjhomi le ngotse maqheka.

(How deceitful are written agreements!
Moshweshwe wrote letters when he knew
no English and did not even see Vic-
toria's face. Bring those letters for
us to see; bring Moshweshwe's and
Victoria's agreement. Open those vol-
umes for us to examine, lest you have
forged and falsified everything.)

Bang pelo tsa thulana ra sheba Berea,
Ra hopola hlabeng tsa Berea le Thaba-Bosiu;
Bang ra ala mahlo ra eketsa ho hlollwa,
Ra bona ba habo Filipi ho nama;
Faatsheng la Lesotho Fitoria o entse methapo,
Tloholo tsa teng di hafa ka nkatana.
(Lesotho.)

(Some of us united and thought of Berea
and remembered Thaba-Bosiu. Some of
us surveyed the country and wondered
when we saw Philip's people increas-
ing. In Lesotho Victoria has struck
roots. Her grandchildren are very
comfortable and rich.)

Ntsane cares less for British protection, for, according to him, it is disguised colonization and conquest:

Ya se nang sekaja mmae a tele,
Ngwana Fitoria rena o bo hapile,
Kgoka tsa Morwa hase hoba di tena,
Moshweshwe eba a tseba a hana ho ngola,
A hana ho saena pampiri di tletse Mamenemene.
Jo nna Lesotho we-e!

(Survival of the fittest! Victoria
has conquered your land. If only
Moshweshwe had waited and refused
to sign tricky and deceitful
papers! Alas! Lesotho!)

The last Jo nna Lesotho we-e! is not expressing admiration, wonder and excitement as in the previous stanza, but it denotes regret, self-pity and disappointment. Under a skilful hand as Ntsane's every day language can be elevated to the level of figurative emotive language. The sentiments expressed are not commonplace and the thoughts are conveyed by carefully selected and forceful words.

Ntsane's satires are effective because he does not allow them to degenerate into mud-throwing. He sneers at the men who have no backbone, those who cannot maintain their dignity when they are exposed to outside forces. He hates the proud but also he displays his disgust for pretenders and

timid characters. The reader is persuaded to share the same feelings but also to laugh at the caricature before him:

Rola katiba, o dumedise Base,
O siye dieta keiting,
O hahabe ka mpa se-ka-noha,
O pate mohwasa, Base a kgahlwe,
Mmisisi a tshehe a utlwe monate,
Le botlelembase ba tlo bona.
(Dumedisa Base.)

(Remove your hat and greet the boss. Leave your shoes at the gate and crawl on your belly like a snake. Make no noise and please the boss. Let the Mistress laugh and enjoy it; let the young bosses come up and watch.)

But in this stanza the poet is contemptous of the man who accepts falttery and pretended humility as signs for respect. The man is so vainglorious and poverty stricken in spirit that he becomes easily satisfied when he sees this crinching belly crawling creature.

Ntsane's mockery of arbitrary powers is captured in:

Dumedisa Base, o' tlo pheme ditsietse,
O pheme tsetse la toronkong, tshitshidi,
Hoba e a shapa tsweu ya Kapa,
E shapa ka katse ya Sekgowa.

(Greet the boss and avoid troubles. Avoid the flea of the prison cell - the bug. Do not forget the white of the Cape can beat. He uses a European cat - a whip.)

Iphapanye, o kobe mangole,
Esere wa fahla Mmuso ka lehlabathe.
(Dumedisa Base.)

(Make yourself a fool and bow low, lest you irritate the powers that be.)

Behind the poet's smile and carefree expression, the reader can feel Ntsane's hatred for ill-treatment and humiliation of his people. He exorts his fellowmen to patience despite their hardships. Note the tone and supressed laughter in:

Dumedisa Base, o tshwase masokotso,
Base o hama e tswele le mokeletla;
Empa ha e rahe, e a pekgenya!
E shobe ka dinaka, thaka Mpai,
Leha e ka o phunya mpa hase lebaka,
E phuntse ba o fetang ka dimpa.
(Dumedisa Base.)

(Greet the boss and gain something
for the boss milks the one with a
rich udder. Yet it kicks hard!
Handle it brother,comrade of Mpai!
Even if it can pierce your stomach
it does not matter. It has already
pierced bigger stomachs than yours.)

Ntsane's belief is: rather remain a beggar and a fool than become a traitor:

Dumedisa Base, o lese ho loma,
O lese ho ja ba heno dikobo;

(Greet the boss and leave alone
back biting. Leave selling your
people.)

Morena a na thela ka mofo bothateng,
A rekisa ka mofo, Base a thaba.

(A chief once paid his tax by selling
his subject's labour and the boss
was happy.)

The poet's pessimism is rounded off in a proverb "Dumela o folofetse leraha metsi a pjhele o a bona." In the last stanza he states that all is lost; his fore-fathers slept when they would have protected that which was theirs.

In BOKGOWANATSHWANA Ntsane satirizes the conceited "Black" Europeans who have partly assimilated European customs and tend to look down upon their native customs and fellow men. The poet cannot stomach their forwardness and cheap pride which are disgusting:

Bokgowanatshwana ba bang hase bophoqo,
Ngata bo nyonya sehahabo bona se ba hodisitse,
Se ba hodisitse ka bese la tauhadi,
Bese la nkwetolodi, bata sa Afrika,
Ba jele tlwae, ba tlwaetse Sekgowa,
Ba mpa ba hana ho nona melala.

(How stupid are some Black-whitemen!
They despise the... very custom that
brought them up, the very Africa
that nurtured them! They have im-
itated and they are used, to Euro-
pean customs. A pity they do not
prosper.)

The poet sneers at their pretended riches and comfort:

Foranteng tsa lona ntsintsi di entse mmoka,
Di ntse di le ja dikobo maaparo,
Di le ja sedutse, le hloka bodulo,
Di jele makgomo, manku a nyametse.

(At your verandahs flies do not give
you rest. They pester you in all
what you do. They have eaten your
cattle and sheep, you <u>have nothing</u>.)

Kitjhining, ha Kgowanatshwana ho phehwa mamina.
Jo di ile kae, Kgowa la Afrika?
Jo di fella bokakalopeng ba hao;
O ratile semate o sena matla,
Mate sa diterateng se tla o phoqa,
O kgantshe sona mokotla o kgwehle.
(Bokgowanatshwana.)

(In the Black European's kitchen
there is no food. Where is food
European of Africa? It has been
eaten by your bragging. You
loved beautiful things when you
cannot afford them. Outward ap-
pearances will disappoint you when
you cannot afford it.)

The irony in the question part of the above stanza strengthens the mocking tone of the poet. This mocking tone is maintained by the deliberate use of Sothoized word such as <u>semate</u> which in this context, means cheap and deceiving outward beauty.

Bosiu ho alwa mekotla,
Motshehare ho a ikinwa ke dithena,
Ho aparwa tsa Makgowa maholo diaparo;
Motshehare re kgantshetswa Bokgowa.

(At night they sleep on sacks; during
the day fellows are well dressed.
Clothes are those of great and rich
Europeans. During the day we are
shown off European styles.)

The above lines show the pitiable state of <u>Bokgowanatshwana</u> (the play-whites among the Sothos); humiliation and suffering into which they put themselves in an attempt to show off. Ntsane attacks, without reserve, all those evil and worthless practices which make life difficult for these people. He cannot understand why they should degrade themselves and make themselves the laughing stock of the world. There is nothing valuable in pretence and imitation or perhaps, mimicry:

Puo e se le Afrika se Tshwephohileng,
Se lapilweng <u>se-ka-mmethe-wa-kgale</u>.
Mekgwa le yona ha se ho makatsa,
Ho thwe ho etswa sona sewatleng,
Athe ke modubadube wa hlakantsutsu:
<u>Se-ka-Sekgowa</u>, <u>se-ka-se-Afrika</u>.
(Bokgowanatshwana.)

(Their language is polluted African,
patched up like an old sack. Their
manners are shocking! They think

they are doing customs of Europe,
yet they are doing funny things!
Half European half African!)

The poet's contempt is given expressive form in the above stanza. Note the force behind the similes underlined, and the effective use of negation for emphasis:

"Mekgwa le yona hase ho makatsa."
(Mannerisms are shocking.)

Ntsane is a keen observer of mankind, especially his nation. All evils are exposed without nagging fault-finding. His sarcastic humour, irony and straight forward presentation of facts are effective weapons against those who make life unpleasant for themselves by making themselves slaves of worthless desires. RATO LA DIPOMPONG and NGWANA LONA are also based on human nature - the unpleasant side of the otherwise noble spirit. In the former poem the poet portrays the falsehood in women who have lost their sense of values. The pitiable state of the victim remains vivid in the mind of the reader because of the sad tone and mocking:

Ka thuba ponto ka reka haholo,
Ka rekela ngwane motle ka thela -
Jo rato la dipompong bohata!
Rato la mphoqa ka utlwa bohloko.

(I changed a pound note and bought
again. I bought for the beautiful
one and secrificed. Oh, how de-
ceitful is love bought of sweets.
My love disappointed me and I
was grieved.)

Sekesepentshe pokothong tsa tswa lenyele-nyele.
Ha tswa mahafokarone le ona mateke;
Phasele tsa dipompong mokoloko,
Ngwana a ja dithofi dilekereguti.
(Rato la dipompong.)

(Sixpences came out of my pocket,
one after the other. Half-crowns
and tickeys also disappeared.
Sweet parcels followed one another.
The girl ate chocolates, nice
things.)

The interesting feature in this poem is the use of borrowed words such as sekesepentshe,(sixpence), mahafokorone (half-crowns), dithofi (toffees), dilekereguti (nice things), not in their literal meanings but express the triviality of certain things because of a reduced sense of values. People tend

to disregard more important things and cling to valueless ones. This technique of infusing Sothoized words with new meanings seems to be mastered by Ntsane alone.

Like most poets, Ntsane admires beauty in the man-made objects. He is gifted with the art of unfolding his inner experiences, and persuading the reader to share similar feelings and ideas. TJHUTJHUMAKGALA is one of Ntsane's best poems. In the opening stanza he portrays the excitement, admiration, fear mingled with wonder, of a man seeing a steam engine for the first time. Genuine admiration and excitement are clearly revealed:

Ntho tsa Makgowa ha se ho tshabeha!

. . . .

Nna ke a le tshaba Makgowa;

. . . .

Ke le tshaba hoba le etsa dihaeya,
Le etsa ntho di hana ho fela.
Ruri ntho di etswa ka bohlale,
Ka dikgoka nkabe ke iteketse.
(Tjhutjhumakgala.)

(How frightening European things are!
I fear you, Europeans. I fear you because you do wonders, strange things without end. Certainly things are done through intelligence. If muscles played an important role, I would also try my strength.)

His wonder and admiration increases in the second stanza. Metaphor and personification are used to this effect. The frightening sound is likened to snorting, roaring and violent coughing.

Pele, la na la etsa ntho e le mabidi,
La etsa sebata se topo se seholo.
Morwa, mohla a qalang ho se bona,
A tshola tlhako morung, kamorao a tetemisa.
A hetla a utlwa ntho e hona,
Ya hona, ya rora, ya tloha ya thimola;
Le teng ya thimola e lokela ho kgohlola;
Athe ho kgohlola hoo ho e baka materebe.
(Tjhutjhumakgala.)

(First, you invented a thing with wheels,
a monster with a large carcass. When the bushman first saw it he ran for his life, then he reduced his speed to look back.
It sneezed when it was supposed to cough.
The coughing made it wild.)

The rhythm in the last three lines of the above stanza recaptures the consistant speed and movement of the train. One can hear the beatings of the wheels on the rail links throughout. The train is regarded as a monster. The poet admires the many

wheels that glide smoothly on the rails. These remind him of the beautiful soft and tiny legs of the millipedes that glide on soft sand:

Yare re sa bone, la etsa se seng sebata;
Mmalo! ke re sebata, nka re sebatahadi,
Nka o roka ka reng, tjhutjhumakgala?
Na ha ke bolele ha ke re : O motlehadi,
O fokolodi la dithota, mahlabe?
Mohala ke wa tshepe,
Ha e le wa kgwele o ka o kgaola!

(Whilst we wondered, you invented another monster. Jove! I should say great monster. How can I praise you burner-in-passes? Is it not enough to say you are handsome, a millipede of the plains. The rail is made of iron; a rope you will crush!)

The imposing size of the train and its speed cause anxiety and fear. The comparison with the devil is apt:

Ha ke re : O lebelo, o ka Satane,
O ka wa Mautla a bona wa hae?

(Are you not as fast as the Devil,
Lucifer himself when he sees his own?)

In the fourth stanza the poet, by careful use of personification, onomatopoiea and alliteration has recaptured the sound, the movement and frightening appearance of the train. The impressions in the mind of an unsophisticated country boy when he sees a train are vividly portrayed:

Mohla ke qalang ho o bona, Sootho,
Ka fosa, ka fihla ha hao o etile;
Athe o tla fihla hona tsatsing leo,
Nna le ba heso re neng re o emetse.
Wa fihla o halefile kgalefo ya mahlanya;
Ka tshoha, ka mpeng ha tetema,
Ka bona o tshabeha, ngwana Mmuso,
O omana, o re o tswa Kapa, o kgathetse;
O tshwehletse, makweba a entse mohodi,
Batho ra thothomela ha re bona o ntsha metsi.
(Tjhutjhumakgala.)

(When I saw you for the first time brown one, I blundered and visited your home in your absence. You arrived on that very day. My fellow men and I were waiting for you. You arrived in great anger like a mad man. I was scared until my stomach shook. I found you frightening, child of the government. You were scolding that you were from the Cape and you were tired. You fumed and foams formed mist. We people shivered when we saw you passing water.)

There is a note of relief in the fifth stanza for the poet is used to the train. He admires its helpfulness. A beautiful image is created by comparison with the mythical kgodumodumo which swallowed nations.

Kajeno ke o tlwaetse, o motswalle,
Hoba ke bone o phakisetsa baeti;
Ba ditsietsing ba a o roka, ntshotala,

(Today I am used to you; you are a friend for I saw you helping travellers quickly. Those in trouble hail you, "Dark-green One.").

Mpeng ho wena ho kene mehlobo;
Nka e bolela ka mabitso, o ka haroha letswalo,
Hoja ekere ha o re kgefu
O hetle, o bone thoto ya hao morwalo,
O no tla re ha o motho,o mmamahohoretsane!
(Tjhutjhumakgala.)

(Many tribes have gone into your stomach. You will be shocked if I enumerate them. If you could, when resting, turn back and see your load,you would realize that you are no person, but a gatherer of all.)

Ntsane, more than Khaketla and Lesoro in the poems on the same subject, brings the real sensation and experience in this state of mind. One really feels it is a new and exciting experience when confronted with the monster - the train. Its puffing, shaking, rhythmic movement and hooting, now and again, fills the unsophisticated mind with awe and wonder:

Ka hlahisa hloho ho boha moeka,
Ka fumana a thukgubeditse, pelo e le ntsho,
Pele mane a omana habohloko,
Morao mane eka o kgitlwa ke thaabe,
Hare mona eka o jele dikgobe, a kofella ka metsi!
(Tjhutjhumakgala.)

(I peeped to see the fellow and found him raising dust, working hard like an angry man. There in front he was complaining bitterly. At the back, he was hitting like one hiccuping; inside he appeared to be constipated.)

The rich imagery in the above lines is unparalled in any other descriptions of the train in Southern Sotho. The alliteration in the last line. O tjhutjhu, o a tjha, o a tjhutjhusela, (you are a firebrand, you burn, you emit fire) sums up the living image of the train in the minds of the poet and the reader.

Recruiting for the South African mines is a common happening in Lesotho. In HA RE YALEJWE-LEPUTSWA, Ntsane has, in

the most expressive and rich language, revealed the fascination, fear, wonder, anxiety, puzzle, admiration, and excitement of the mine recruits in strange and large cities; the sacrifices they make to go to the mines, humiliations they suffer at the hands of the proud indonas (foremen); dangers and possible death awaiting them in the mineshafts; moral degeneration as a result of being removed from known traditional values and customs.

The very first stanza of this poem reveals the excitement and anxiety on the last evening of preparations before the departure of the miners. This feeling develops right up to the second stanza:

> Ra lala re phehile mefaho,
> Re phehile mefaho ka la maobane,
> Merwalo re e tlamme; ntja tsa batho,
> Ntja tsa moreneng, ma-lala-a-laotse.
> Laola, morena, re lokile,
> Re loketse ho kena mekoting ya ditadi;
> Tadi tsena di maoto-mane, di a bua,
> Di bua tjhomi, di bua Sekgowa.
> (Ha re ya Lejwe-Leputswa.)
>
> (We prepared our provision the previous day. Our luggages were strapped, we ready dogs of our chief. Examine us, Sir, we are ready; ready to enter small rat holes. These rats are four-footed and they talk. They speak lingua franca, they speak a European language.)

The different lines are closely knit together by a repetition of leading words which develop and strengthen the ideas and experience. The reader cannot miss the sadness of the recruits as they leave home to expose themselves to unknown dangers in foreign lands:

> Mmate a tela mmae, ka tela nkgona,
> Ra tela beng ra siya badimo;
> Le pele di na le baji,
> Badimo ba ja ba mekoting,
> Ba ja ngwana mmae a mo rata,
> A mo rata e le ngwana ho fela;
> Ngwana ho fela ke sebabatso,
> O hlatswa sebae mokete o fele.
> (Ha re ya Lejwe-Leputswa.)
>
> (My compeer left his mother and I left my granny. We sacrified our people and our gods. Even in strange lands there are those to demand offerings. They sacrificed a child loved by his mother - the only child, the

last born, comforter of his family.)

In ordinary language the poet describes the rugged, bewildered and raw mob queueing to sign contracts. Their mobbing like a flock of sheep, noise making and scolding, are echoed in famotse dinko (which suggests real bewilderment and restlessness), kwata (suggesting rawness and less sophistication); ntja and manong (which suggest the "don't care attitude.") The language is simple. It describes simple folk:

Ra kena kampong re famotse dinko,
Teng ra fihlela ntja di fotse tsa metseng,
Ho fotse manong, bana ba diotlwana.
Utlwang mabalane o sehloho, banna,
O re bomma rona re ba siile morao,
O rohaka kwata ka mma yona,
Mma yona le ho e tseba a sa e tsebe.
Ka pelo kwata e ntse re: "Le wena!"
(Ha re ya Lejwe-Leputswa.)

(We entered the camp with our nostrils expanded. There we found dogs from other villages queueing - vultures and underdogs. Listen how cruel this clerk is! He says we have left our mothers behind, and he insults a recruit's mother without knowing her. Inwardly the recruit say:"and you too!")

Moral degeneration sets in fast once removed from known ways of life. Note the graphic description in the following lines:

Ra tshela Mohokare Satane a tsheha,
A phutha mohatla a rakalla,
A re puo tsa bona di ntle di a kgahleha,
Di kgahla Satane le mangeloi a hae.
Ra ngolwa bukeng ya dihele, ra amohelwa;
Re tshetse Mohokare re siile bohlale morao,
Re siile naka la Moshweshwe morao,
Naka la botho le la kgotso ditjhabeng.
(Ha re ya Lejwe-Leputswa.)

(We crossed the Caledon and the devil laughed. He folded his tail and enjoyed our talks which pleased him and his angels. Our names were written and accepted in hell. We crossed the Caledon and left wisdom behind. Moshweshwe's strength and customs, the symbol of peace abroad, were left behind.)

Danger and death are imminent. The poet cannot overlook these for they prick his soul:

Ke siile tseso metebong,
Ka lata tse metswele e thata,
Tse hangwang ka madi a motho,
Tse tlangwang maotong ka tshepe.

(We left ours grazing in the pasture
plains and came for those with a
hard udder. They are milked with
human blood and their legs are bound
with irons.)

The simple folk view digging and spade work in the same light as their traditional occupation, rearing cattle. Note the comparison above. Figurative language embodying metaphor, euphemism and alliteration, is employed to describe the darkness, rackling of machines, humidity, the frightening hanging rocks and gaping caves underground:

Tetebela, Kwata, o itse o tla kopa;
Tebetebe ha e a iketsa, e entswe,
Ke mohohomela, haha la madimo,
Kgatampi botsho kgohlong,
Kgatampi e nkga kgotodia tsa Makgowa,
Dikokopane ke metjhini ya kese,
Di hwasa mpeng ya lefatshe koting sa gauta,
Lejwe-Leputswa, pududu-putswa, petshoha.
(Ha re ya Lejwe-Leputswa.)

(Go down raw recruit, you said you will
make it! You called for this! It is a
dungeon, a deep cave of cannibals, a
hole smelling of European chemicals.
Cocopans, electric machines, whisper
right in the centre of the earth, in
the gold mine. Grey stone, crack!)

Other poems in which Ntsane demonstrates how content and form can blend under a skilful hand are HA ESO, HOETLA, MASOLE A BASOTHO, etc.; but one still feels the halting of the lines because rhyming is not part of our folk speech, and therefore, our idiom. There is a conscious tampering with the lines to accommodate like endings. However, innovations in Ntsane's poetry are not too glaring as to make his compositions poor caricatures of European poetry.

Ntsane's love and admiration for animals and nature is revealed in HATABUTLE, POKOLA and MOHOKARE. He admires the dignity, power and majesty of the Caledon River (Mohakare). By employing and combining in the most efficient manner, metaphor, euphemism, personification and other figures of speech, the poet creates an image of a dangerous, destructive yet beautiful and useful river:

Mmamahohoretsane towe, Mohokare!
O tsamayang o hohola mididima difate,
O tlosa tlhapi tulong tsa yona,
O nka Mosotho a tshelela Frei Stata,
O mo hlabise hlohlodingwane;
Buru o le hlobodise dijase, le kgolokgothehe!

O shwele pelo keng o le motsamai,
O ratang ho inea leona ka bana ba batho?
(Mohokare.)

(Gatherer of all, you Caledon! You sweep big trees in your way and remove fish from their places. You capture a Sotho whilst crossing to the Free State and turn him upside down. You remove a Boer's overcoat and rock him. Why are you so callous? Why do you make yourself unpopular among men?)

Mohokare is described as Mophekapheka (the wide one), mololloپi (long one), Ntsho-Tala (dark green, because of depth), moraparapa (the broad unwieldy one), ramethinya (father of many turns, curves, bends and windings), ramelato-ha-e-fele (maker of endless troubles) and Mmamahohoretsane (indiscriminate gatherer of all). All these descriptions intensify the force, might, greatness and indestructibility of the Caledon. The poet's attachment to the river cannot be disguised. The rich source of this river is compared to the mother who suckles her baby from a full breast:

. . . . . molopolle o mpa di kgolo,
Ha ho mohla o robalang o itsosa,
Hoba mmao ke mosadi a Letebele, o a sisa,
Fubeng sa hae ho nyantse banna,
Tsona kwankwetla tsena: Senqu,
Bo Lethuela le ba bang . . .
(Mohokare.)

(You long thing with a large belly. There is no day when you are ever dry for your Zulu mother's milk is rich. Her breast has given suck to great men like the Orange and the Tugela.)

Throughout the poem there is an economic use of metaphorical language, hence the sentiments expressed do not sound exaggerated, artificial and common place. The imagery is functional and not ornamental. Thus the poet's description of the Caledon River is lively and attractive.

HATABUTLE is a praise to a well-fed, strong and fast horse. The poet feels strongly about this race horse. In the most fascinating and emotional language he portrays his satisfaction and pride because of the horse's galloping, trotting, wonderful deeds, physique and power:

Tswelang kantle basadi le bone,
Banana rolang dinkgo le ope;
Le opeleng pitsi sebata diatla,
Ntho ena e tswa hole sebakanyana.
Didietsang basadi le kgahlwe,
Le bone tsebe tsa pitsi ho bebelaka -
Hatabutle!

(Women, come out and watch.Girls remove calabashes from your heads and applaud the great beast, my horse. This thing has travelled far. Women cheer up and admire the movements of its ears - Hatabutle!)

Pitsi ya matha ya mpakela mahlomola,
Pitsi ya siya dipere beng ba tshepile,
Ba tshepile ba so bone kanyane le matha.
Ya di kokomala kgomeso e hlaba,
Mahlabe pitsi e matha seka moloi,
Moloi a baleha kganya letsatsi mmanana -
Hatabutle!

(The horse ran until my heart was moved. It beat favourite horses for their owners were hopeful even before they saw my fox. My grey one ran like a wizard and beat them - a wizard running away from light. Hatabutle! (Trot gently).)

This poem is as lively, action-packed and dramatic as the traditional praise poems. It evinces many characteristics of traditional compositions such as those already discussed in the preceding chapters. Ntsane seems to find these techniques effective, for they come automatically and unconsciously. This may suggest that certain structural features which are observed in the praise poems are basic to Southern Sotho, because even modern Southern Sotho poets have inherited them without any conscious effort. A repetition of words remains part and parcel of our songs and declamations. The tone and a succession of stressed and unstressed syllables maintain a uniform rhythm which makes Southern Sotho poetry dramatic and musical.

Another animal admired by Ntsane is the Donkey. To him the donkey is not as useless as other people think. It bears the greatest sign of victory, the cross. He appeals thatthe donkey should be treated with patience and humility.[20]).

20.) The same image is portrayed in Stevenson's THE DONKEY and Raditladi's SELELO SA TONKI. It is interesting to note that these three poets express the same sentiment and treat this subject in almost the same manner - First the donkey is praised, then man's ungratefulness and cruelty towards this animal are criticised severely.

Ke tshaba ho bua hampe ho nyefola,
Ke tshaba ho tlontlolla borena,
Ho ba o moholo Tonki o ya tshabeha,
Tsa hao di babatswa le ke maseya.

(I am reluctant to criticize and
belittle your lordship, for you are
great, Donkey, and awe inspiring.
Your fame is known even by infants.)

Wa na pepa ngwana Modimo wa pholosa batho,
Wa baleha ka yena Heroda a swaba.
(Pokola.)

(You carried God's child on your back
and saved huminity. You fled with
him and Herod was disappointed.)

Some of Ntsane's thoughts are discussed in satires such as WENA O JWANG, SEBE NTLOHELE and MONNENWA KE MANG, and in his other poems such as MATSHEDISO, MATSIENG and KGORONG YA LEHODIMO. In these poems Ntsane examines life around him and gives advices. In them the reader finds the prayer of one who seeks great things for his nation, and asserts the victory of virtue over vice and sin. Part of his satire is directed to this end.

Ntsane does not forget the builders and civilizers of his homeland. BANNA BA BARARO is his epitaph of the three missionaries of the Paris Mission, Arbousset, Gosselin and Casalis, who brought christianity to Lesotho:

Ha re le tjee, ke ka natla tsela tse tharo,
Baruti ba bararo ba Moshweshwe,
Bo-Arbousset, Gosselin le Casalis,
Ba tetse mahahabo bona, ba tlile Lesotho,
Fifing le letsho la bo-nka-ntjana;
Ba itahlela hara lona, ba etsa mmane,
Yaba ke ho kgaoha ha sona sa maratswana,
Satane a theoha tulo sa borena a swaba.
(Bana ba bararo.)

(We are what we are through those three
great heroes, Moshweshwe's missionaries,
Arbousset, Gosselin and Casalis. They
sacrificed their own people and came
to Lesotho, in the heart of darkness.
They threw themselves in like a flash
of lightning, and overthrew the dark
kingdom of Satan.)

In this stanza the reader discovers the poet's gratitude for the wonderful deeds of the missionaries. The power of the Gospel is likened to lightning (mmane) which tears apart a solid rock or flashes in the darkness (ignorance and darkness in Lesotho then.)

Ntsane has the ability to turn familiar Biblical and religious sermon into poetic material. SEFAPANONG is a dignified and touching religious message. He reaches his climax in the following lines:

> Fapanong sa lefu ho hlahile kgotso
> Fateng sa dihele ho hlahile bophelo,
> Jesu a timela batho ra pholoha,
> Morwalo wa dibe ke oo o theteha,
> Wa mo hata seholoholo a namalla.
> (Sefapanong.)
>
> (At the Cross of death peace came
> forth; at the tree of hell life was
> given. Jesus died and man was saved.
> The load of sins rolled and crushed his -
> Satan's - back and flattened him.)

Ntsane is nearest to the traditional <u>baroki</u>. His love for repetition proves that a repetition of a word(s) in the preceding and succeeding lines appear to be to Southern Sotho what rhyme is to European poetry. Where Ntsane is natural and is expressing his thoughts and emotions, this feature crops up almost automatically and unconsciously:

> Thoteng ya Lehata, Golgotha sebakanyana,
> Thoteng hare ho tsepame difate,
> Fate tsena hase le ka ho tshabeha!
> Fate di nkga madi lefu bohloko,
> Lefu sefapanong ho nyarosa,
> Lefu sefapanong ho tlontlolla.
> (Sefapanong.)
>
> (At the plain of Skulls, in Golgotha,
> fearful trees are planted. They smell
> the blood of painful death. The death
> of the Cross is frightening and humiliating.)

Compare the structure of the above lines with the following verse from DITHOKO TSA MORENA E MOHOLO SEEISO GRIFFITH (by George Lerothodi):

> Ngwana tladi ya lehodimo, Seeiso,
> Ngwana tladi ya ho laola setjhaba.
> Moshweshwe kgale a ba tswala bahale,
> Letsie le yena a tswala ba hae,
> Lekena le yena a tswala ba hae;
> Mohale ya tswetsweng ke Letlama
> O ka mo rata ha dithunya di lla;
> Ha di lla eba di a mmitsa.
> (Ha e le Morena wa Mokhotlong.)
>
> (Child of lighting, Seeiso, lightning,
> that rules the nation! Moshweshwe has
> always given us heroes. Letsie begot
> his; Lekena also. A hero begotten by
> Letlama will be admired when the guns
> roar, for then they call him.)

This technique appears to be the basis of forceful and emotive language of our Southern Sotho poets. Note the following address from one of Lerothodi's compositions:

> Dumela, Ngwana Morena, selomo sa Basotho,
> Selomo sa mara a Raletshabisa!
> Seeiso, se kgese batho, o morena;
> Seeiso, Ramosa, o tletse matsoho.
> (Ha a ya bona Mohlomphehi Leqosa le
> Phahameng Pretoria.)
>
> (Hail our prince! Mouthpiece of the
> Basotho! Mouthpiece of the forces of
> Raletshabisa! Seeiso, do not scold.
> people since you are a king. Seeiso
> father of mercy, has plenty.)

Undiluted praises are still found in Ntsane's anthology, e.g. MAKGABANE PEETE.

SEBE NTLOHELE portrays the conflict between good and evil, virtue and vice. Only one with Ntsane's keen mind could combine moral lesson with humour as illustrated in this satire. Sin (sebe) is personified and is treated as a tireless antagonist:

> Ka nyorwa ka nyorelwa kgotso,
> Ka lapa ka lapela botle;
> Nthoa mmanama nthoa mmamarela,
> Nthoa ntsukutla ya nna ntsokotsa.
> Sebe sa nketsetsa moferefere -
> Sebe, jo sebe we-e!
> Sebe ntlohele!
>
> (I became thirsty for peace, and hungry
> for virtue. But the thing stuck to me
> and held me tight. It shook and rocked
> me. Sin caused trouble for me. Alas!
> sin leave me alone!)
>
> Ka re ke kgumama ka rapela,
> Ke buisana le badimo,
> Sebe sa nna sa itshunya-tshunya;
> Ka jewa ke mangole ka holofala mokokotlo,
> Leme la ntshita, leme la raretseha
> La tlala lehano ka sitwa ho bua,
> La tshwarwa ke sebe ka ba semumu -
> Sebe ntlohele!
>
> (I tried to kneel and pray to my gods but
> sin always pushed itself on me. My knees
> became painful and my back was aching.
> My tongue became heavy, numb and filled
> the mouth so that I became dumb. Sin
> held it and made me dumb.)

As the conflict between virtue and vice develops, the poet becomes more and more humorous, but this does not lower the seriousness of the subject. Ntsane does not allow his satire to lose its effect:

Tshepe hoseng tsa lla lekete-kete,
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
Sebe sa futuha ka makgotla e se ho tshabeha.
Ka nka dibuka ka ya thapelong,
Athe sebe se rakaletse monyako
Se ntse se panya-panya difesetereng.

(In the morning the bell was rung. Then sin attacked in great forces. I took my books to go to pray, but found sin blocking the door and winking at me through the windows.)

Ka re ke bina sefela sebe sa nkgama,
Molomo wa dumela ka tlerola,
Ka mpa ka tlerola bohata pelong;
Pelo ya farasa maikutlo a hola,
A hola le moya a tswa lekoteng,
Moruti thiba ka shwa ka timela -
Jo nna sebe we-e!
Sebe ntlohele!

(I tried to sing a hymn but sin chocked me. My mouth sang but my heart was pretending. The heart ached and my feelings changed. Minister, help, I am dying from sin! Please sin, leave me alone!)

Ka rutwa mano ka rutwa bohlale,
Ka thetsa metswalle, ka thetsa setjhaba,
Ka kena tseleng ya sebe Satane a thaba,
Pelo ya lapa sebe sa e fepa,
Metso wa omella ka nyorolla ka sebe.

(I learnt tricks and wisdom. I deceived friends and also my nation. I entered the road of sin and Satan was pleased. My hungry heart was fed by sin. Sin quenched my thirsty throat.)

Ka feta tshimong ya motho ka utswa lehapu,
Ka re ha ke utswe ke ya inkela,
Ka feta lapeng ha motho ka hlaba kgoho,
. . . . . .
Ka re hase boshodu e ntse e le bohlale,
Sebe sa utlwa monate ra ratana,
Tswalle sa tiya sebe ra utlwana.
(Sebe ntlohele.)

(I passed one's field and stole a watermelon.I thought that I was merely taking and not stealing. I passed a house and slaughtered a fowl. This I regarded as wisdom and not theft. Sin was pleased and we became friends. Our friendship was strengthened.)

Ntsane does not say: "do this or do not do that." He explains human behaviour in all situations and leaves the reader to choose what is good. In the most indirect manner, he teaches a moral lesson. It is for this reason that the reader is amused instead of frowning at cut and dried moral drillings

and threats.

Pelong tsa rona sebe se renne,
Se rakaletse se ikutlwa monate -
Sebe ntlohele!

(Sin is reigning in our hearts. It is relaxing and enjoying itself. Sin, leave me alone!)

NGWANA LEHLASWA also reveals Ntsane's ability to turn known Biblical stories into modern poetic material. In verse and lively language the poet has portrayed the prodical son - to suit even changed conditions and circumstances:

Metswalle e ile kae le jele mmoho,
Le nwele sheri le nwele biri,
La qetella ka kgoho mahe e le mokoloko?
Ntele sa dikgwana se ranthane,
Ngwana di phasa-phasitse le motjha bophara,
Mmiti o tjhele tweba di faletse.

(Where are your friends because you were always eating together? You drank together sherry and beer. Eggs were always abundant. Food has scattered, they too are hidding in the long grass. Rats have run away from a burning sack.)

The poet creates a humorous scene when he describes the fall and humiliation of the Prodigal Son. Note the effect of the alliterative sounds:

La bone le tjhabile a le tjhankaneng,
A le junifomo e kgwadi a le semate,
Mate sa pantiti la Mmuso ho haulana!
Ka mona ka kgotla ho entswe mmoka,
Mmoka ke wang ha Mmaseterata?
Mmaseterata o fantisa disuti o ya rekisa.
(Ngwana Lehlaswa.)

(On Thursday he was in jail, in khakhi uniform. How beautiful is your uniform! The beauty of a prisoner's uniform is pitiful. There is a crowd in Court because the magistrate is selling suits.)

The poem is more dramatic and clear than the story. The poet has relived and reconstructed the experience for the reader. It is as if the reader is accompanying the Prodigal Son from situation to another. His state of mind when he is restored to his former position at home is summed up in the last stanza:

Kajeno kgorula e dutse hape mofuthung,
E boetse madulong ha e na ho sutha,
E ka sutha e ya kae hele di tjhesa,
E tswile naleng tsa lefu e sa tsebe?
Ngwana dula kgotsong o thabetswe,
Lena lefatshe le ya ja, le ya phophotha.
(Ngwana Lehlaswa.)

(Today the last born has returned to
his former warmth. He can no longer
move away from his rightful place. How
can he move when he knows the fire of
hell, when he narrowly escaped death?
Child, stay in peace for you have been
welcome. This world eats up and des-
troys.)

In KAROHANO and TSELA-TSHWEU the reader is reminded of the sadness and loneliness accompanying the parting of friends, especially lovers. In carefully selected words, Ntsane expresses his experiences, emotions and images in his mind. The reader is captured by his descriptive power and clear expressive spiritual creations. The reader feels and experiences as the poet did. Figures of speech used ure appropriate and vivid:

Morao o siya dillo mahlomola,
O siya batho pelo di thulane,
Di thulametse tlaase madi a dutla,
Re mpa re re tsela-tshweu, Mokwena.

(Behind you, you leave sorrows and people
with heavy hearts. Farewell, although
our hearts are aching.)

Re lahlehetswe ke wa rona pelo lerato,
Pelo lerato, Mokwena kgotso,
Re mpa re re tsela-tshweu, ngwana kgotso.
(Tsela-Tshweu.)

(We are missing our own love. Let there be
peace, Mokwena. Farewell, child of peace.)

In carefully selected words and forceful images, Ntsane defines his experiences and emotions. Figures of speech used are apt. The poet manifests his penetrating analysis of the world around him. There is always, in his poetry, that emotional touch, illusion and pleasant dreaming which, in my opinion, characterize the poetic effect. He is, therefore, able to describe, evaluate and judge.

This poet, more than any other poet in Southern Sotho, has employed abbreviations meaningfully and effectively, and has made them a permanent feature of Southern Sotho poetry. The abbreviations are not exaggerated and the abbreviated form still retains the basic meaning of the full word, e.g.:

lemo	from selemo.
kanyane	from lekanyane.
boko	from seboko.
ratu	from moratuwa.
fapano	from sefapano.
rumo	from lerumo, etc.

CHAPTER SIX.

In the preceding Chapters roots of Ntsane's and Khaketla's poetry have been traced; their individual poems have been analysed; their development as poets noted, and the way in which they employ words to unfold their experiences observed. We have studied and observed how they respond to the different themes they treat and to external stimuli in general. In this Chapter we wish to draw attention to important features and characteristic tendencies in their poetry. Observations and statements made, will be based on the arguments presented and analysed in the preceding chapters. Such an examination will enable us to pronounce the greater poet.

Both Ntsane and Khaketla are, like Burns, national if not tribal poets. It does not imply that the sentiments and experiences expressed are peculiar to a particular tribe. Poetry is the universal language with roots in the heart; it reflects common sentiments and experiences of man, although the intensity may differ from one man to another and at different places and time. A poet expresses himself better in his native idiom. So it is with Ntsane and Khaketla. Their poetry is great when they use their native idiom and keep to the syntax of their language. Once they drift away and adopt foreign structural features and conventions, they do not produce great poetry. Things that affect them most - personal as well as tribal - are always conveyed in natural unsophisticated idiom which defies any attempt to reduce it to rhyming, foreign metrical schemes or arbitrary stanza divisions. John Spiers's evaluation of Burns as a poet applies even to these two Sotho poets:

> "The folk speech cannot be separated from folk life, of centuries of which it is the product. It is a speech which is itself almost poetry, in that it is close down to the life of sensation and saturated with concrete wisdom of folk experience connected with the soul."21)

Despite modifications here and there, both poets have kept strictly to the idiom of Southern Sotho. The dramatic language of the old Baroki is preserved. The most important

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21.) SCRUTINY VOLUME 11, Revaluations (111) - Burns, by John Spiers, p. 335.

features of traditional poetry such as repetition of words - a technique which helped to continue, develop, emphasize, unite and round off related thoughts; the use of simile, metaphor, personification and compound words - to heighten the sensations felt and dramatize their experience - are still found in Ntsane's and Khaketla's works.

It has been indicated in their poetry that both these poets feel strongly about their culture and people. However, Ntsane is more appealing in his emotional outbursts because these are, as demonstrated in his poems, in line with the way in which his interests and motives are organized. More mature sentiments are expressed and the poet has control over his feelings. Khaketla's passionate utterances are effective only for a while because at times he allows his feelings to cloud his judgement. There is a marked immaturity in the feelings expressed in most of Khaketla's poems. However, exceptions are found among his elegies, and poems such as MMOTE and MORENA MARENA. Bitterness, extravagant hatred, and wild utterances merely reduce the quality of the poem. The feelings and attitudes expressed in a poem must be balanced. This we note in Ntsane's LEMO SA 1939, other poems on socio-political themes, and in his satires. Khaketla is more outspoken than Ntsane in voicing his bitterness against discrimination or any form of exploitation of the Sothos. A struggle between a Sotho and a White man is projected into a broader Black versus White struggle. One need read MMOTE, NTWA YA ABISINIA, NTWA YA JEREMANE (1914). and poems on related and similar themes, to realize this.

The two poets have been influenced by their socio-political environment, although both have been influenced differently. The haughtiness and arrogance of the administrators and their Sotho clerks, arbitrary rule and exploitation of the illiterates, prompted Ntsane to compose his penetrating satires. These reasons brewed hatred in Khaketla's heart and prompted him to expose the guilty party, and, in unequivocal terms, declare his dissatisfaction and bitterness. World events influenced them differently. Khaketla saw a broader White versus Black struggle during the War years. He believed that the black man had been tricked and forced into wars he did not know. Note his NTWA YA JEREMANE (1914). Ntsane thought differently as his LEMO SA 1939 reveals. He himself says this: "War between Germany and the Commonwealth was on .... frankly, that war,

like many others before or to come, did not interest me. I had the greatest, deepest love and admiration for Basotho soldiers even though I did not understand why they meddled with affairs that did not concern them. Chamberlain and Hitler quarrelled, Smuts and Hertzog wondered if they should join in; they joined."[22] The attitude of these two men towards the World Wars explains the different tones in their respective poems on these wars.

Ntsane is profound in the analysis of human behaviour. His satire is superior. He pokes fun at those things that make life bitter, and therefore reduce man's happiness; but he does not forget to recognize the good in the other man. His satire, therefore, is more penetrating and effective than that of Khaketla, whose attempt quickly degenerates into fault finding, shear hatred for, bitterness towards, and besmirching of, the opponent. Such mud-slinging forces the poet to lose sight of his subject matter. His message, therefore, is not as deep in significance as Ntsane's. Ntsane's satires teach, warn, chastise, indirectly edify the Sotho, air their grievances, seek a better deal for them, and ridicule the proud, haughty, arrogant, stubborn and mean culprits. They achieve their intended purpose because of his cool and diplomatic mind as well as his remarkable restraint.

Both poets find pleasure in creation and nature's beauty. It was demonstrated how Ntsane praised the grandeur and majesty of the Caledon River(Mohokare), the strength and swiftness of his horse, HATABUTLE, the dignity of the donkey (POKOLA.)

Khaketla fully appreciates beauty in nature, but in such themes he finds occasion to drag in his disappointment at man's evil nature as well as his disregard for human dignity and respect. He seizes this moment to demonstrate the injustice, callousness or evil intentions of his adversaries. MMOTE AND MARIHA A KENE, among others, have been analysed to support this observation.

Both writers make much use of the imagery. Images in their poetry are functional and not ornamental. They are intended to reveal man's weakness and to suggest remedies. The image represents the real object in discussion. Both poets have a rare ability to imitate the world they describe. In their music and in the flow of their poems one can hear, feel or touch, see or

22). Essay: Autobiography of Ken Edward Ntsane, Radio Bantu, 26th October, 1964.

taste the fluttering flowers in a soft breeze, the rhythmic movement of the train, the clapping wings of birds, falling leaves in autumn or the heavy irregular breathing of a frightened person or the despair of a particular individual. Analogy is used to this effect. Ntsane's representation, however, is more powerful and effective, for the sensory and emotional aspects of the poetic experience are never sacrificed. The poem is balanced throughout. LEMO SA 1939 is a case in point. Thus despite Ntsane's symbolist inclination, he does not lose sight of his subject matter in pursuit of the symbol. His images, therefore, are employed to intensify, clarify and enrich the experience.

Their imagery is effective when they write naturally, that is, when they compose national poetry which describes familiar situations and circumstances. The sentiments expressed are noble and deeply felt. The language is natural and no preconceived scheme of work make it irregular. Their poetry is weakened when less known European techniques of writing poetry are forced upon Southern Sotho idiom or language structure. The poet's sentiments, once foreign elements crop in, are reduced to trivial outbursts which soon fade away. In matters that concern them most, such as traditional life, custom, ritual and ceremony, innovations in their culture, and personal affairs, Ntsane's and Khaketla's imagery is rich and experience is intense. It is the latter poet who tends to dwell too much on the experience and over elaborate on one image. Khaketla consciously attempts to keep a regular rhythm which makes his poetry too mechanical and artificial. Ntsane's unelaborate expression gives him superiority over Khaketla. In most of his poems there is usually no conscious loading of the poem with meaningless images or attempts to cause sensation.

There is one thread that seems to run through Khaketla's poetry. He has a strong feeling for melancholy which he exaggerates, over-draws and over-describes until it becomes hollow. This note of sadness is experienced in almost all his poems. Unqualified hatred and bitterness that accompany this melancholy disable him from penetrating human relationships or situations. His elegies are touching, but the moaning and weeping are over done. They degenerate into the affected grief of "hired mourners" of old England.[23] Ntsane, on the other hand, has the

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23). In England "professional mourners" were hired at Funerals and they wept violently to show their "sorrow". Charles Dickens portrays one such funeral in OLIVER TWIST. Part of his satire is aimed against such pretence and weeping.

ability to make a common place experience unique. This unique quality of experience survives in the mind of the reader, inducing him to repeat the experience. For example, one never wants to stop readirg LEMO SA 1939. The poem quoted, like his other poems, gives the reader "a response which is as passionate, noble and serene as the experience of the poet."[24] This is true of only a few of Khaketla's poems.

Ntsane and Khaketla are easily the best poets in Southern Sotho. They have a good command of the language. Their imagery is rich and varied, but it is often spoilt by their over-consciousness to please the readers. Hence there is a tendency, especially in the latter poet's work, to elaborate too much or one image until it sounds common place and usual. Some of his compositions are nothing more than ordinary pictures with no inner spirit or deeper significance to captivate the reader. But Khaketla, like Ntsane, sometimes reaches great heights. He becomes 'lively' and destroys the 'aloftness' which one sometimes observes in most of his poems.

These poets' compositions, as indicated, are good when they write naturally without attempting to follow to the letter, the works of their European models. They would still be better if these poets realized that the emotions and experience which the poet wishes to impart produce the word-images to be employed, and determine the division into different 'scenes,' and the length of verses in any good poem. The use of figures of speech reveal to what extent the poet can represent the concrete world and situations around him. Ntsane and Khaketla do capture the essence of their poetic material. For example, in the following stanza the poet's desire and longing for freedom are captured by the similes employed. The music of the lark is compared to the song of angels, and its sweetness, to the imagined beauty and power of poetry-inner satisfaction which it brings:

24.) Richards, I.A. : Science and Poetry, Kegan Paul, French, Truner and Co., Ltd. (London), 1935, p.46.

Hoja wa nkadima mapheo ka ka ka rura,
Ka rurela hodimo, sepakapakeng, ho Mmopi;
Hoja wa nkadima lentswe ka tsanyaolaka,
Ka bina sa mangeloi kgutlong tsa lehodimo,
Pina ya ba molodi - molodi wa lekodilo.
(MMOTE.)
(If only you could lend me your wings to fly; to rise into heaven through space to the Creator. If only you could lend me your voice to shout; to sing like angels in heaven - a melodious song, a song of praise.)

Both poets, like other Southern Sotho poets, attempt to employ foreign techniques though not always successfully. However, they must aim at something more than producing verses that display outward appearances of poetry but lack the power to move the spirit. Their poetic subject matter should be carefully selected. It must concern their intense feeling about the world around them, their identification with their object of analysis since this will lead to a careful selection of images - to excellence in diction. Rhyming or any other outward techniques of adorning poems should not be the ultimate goal. A stanza should be regarded in the same sense as a paragraph in a good novel. It must be a sense unit embodying the poet's experience. Thus one is inclined to believe that a series of stanzas in any good poem will produce a complete image of the poet's whole experience, built up by his sensibility and a good selection of appropriate words.

An almost similar response will be evoked in the reader if the language employed is not common place, if feelings and sentiments expressed are not shallow and immature, if the rhythmic scheme is not foreign to, and forced on, the music of the language, and if the subject of discourse is given intellectual depth. These can be achieved. A good command of the language - which Ntsane and Khaketla have - the ability to say what is required in the most concise manner, awareness of the difference between literal and figurative expressive and suggestive language, and the ability to group together experiences and images that form a sense unit, can enhance the standard of our Southern Sotho poetry. Already the two poets treated in this study can capture and prolong the exciting moments of life. Their poetry does arrest, even if it is for a moment, the thrill of the passing experience.

These two poets are, more than any other Southern Sotho poet, fully aware that there is a definite relationship between form and theme. They are more pre-occupied with communicating their inner feelings than with finding impressive outward features (which in themselves do not matter). It is the contents that determine the outward form of a poem. If rhyming affects adversely the spirit of the poet's message, he must disregard it; if the whole meaning of the poem does not allow room for a division into stanzas, the Southern Sotho poet has the right to pour out his inner feelings and imagination without due regard for any form of 'conventional' division into parts. Poetic language has its unique force that sets it apart from everyday dialogue. Its characteristics are intense and deep feeling, conviction, understanding and penetrating analysis of images and situations. Ntsane's imagery is forceful. Khaketla has occasional successes.

The length of a poet's verses will depend on his message. His experience directs the rhythmic flow of the poem and the form(s) it will assume. Arguments such as those that the appearance of a poem must be such that it will be easily memorised do not hold water. What is to be remembered is not the arrangement of the lines, one after the other, but the quality of the experience. How deep does it go? What makes it so arresting, inspiring and refreshing? Lofty ideas, melodious words and word-images unfolding the heart do. Ntsane and Khaketla, but especially Ntsane, have demonstrated this in their poetry.

Khaketla's weakness, especially in his earlier attempts and in pseudo-psychological compositions such as MONYAKA WA PELO, is that he assumed he could reason himself into the poetic experience, whereas "the business of the poet .... is to give order and coherence, and so freedom to a body of experience. To do so through words which act as its skeleton, as a structure by which the impulses which make up the experience are adjusted to one another and act together. The means by which words do this are many and varied."[25.)]

When this statement and what has been revealed in the preceding chapters, are considered, one is inclined to accept Ntsane as greater than Khaketla. The greater part of his poetry shows that in the creative moment Ntsane is "the master of experience itself."[26)] The reader is also persuaded to accompany

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25.) Richards, I.A. : Op. cit., p. 61.
26.) Richards, I.A. : Op. cit., p. 46.

the poet in his fantasy and imaginery flights. Khaketla allows himself to be engulfed by the experience, and thus fails to appeal to his readers. His conscious control of the words and their subjection to a rigid rhythm - consciously worked out - reduce the intensity of the experience and the general effect of the poem. Unlike in Ntsane's best poetry, the images are loosely bound together. They do not always combine into a meaningful coherent whole of experiences to which the reader can respond. What gives Ntsane rank as a poet is his skill to employ words in such a manner that they persuade the reader to recreate or relive experiences.

It was suggested in Chapter 11 that Ntsane and Khaketla teach, advise, warn, defend the Sothos through their poetry. Through their poems, these poets sing praises to nature and creation, they preserve the most exciting moments of their lives. The thrill of the experience is prolonged.

Poetry is their effective weapon against social evil and unjustified aggression. Khaketla's poetry on socio-political themes is a long melancholy song, a record of injustices, exploitation and discrimination against the Sothos. Their purpose is achieved because these poets' themes are well articulated. Complexity of meaning is not their criterion of poetic value. Ntsane and Khaketla are very clear about what they want to communicate.

> "A well articulated theme alone can
> give poetic meaning to experience and thus
> communicate a unique state of mind."27)

The satisfaction derived from their poetry always leaves the reader with the feeling that the experience is unique. The present is, for a moment, limited to the here and now.

Perhaps Ntsane's and Khaketla's greatest achievement is the fact that their poems prove that poetry is universal. The sentiments and feelings expressed in their poetry are universal. There is nothing like "inferior" Southern Sotho poetry for the Sothos are as sensitive as all other nations, and they are also impressed by things beautiful - they appreciated beauty. Our poetry suffers from the inevitiable comparison with European poetry which enjoys a longer tradition of writing and literary development. It is judged according to outward features and not

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27.) Lewis, C. Day : The poet's way of knowledge, Cambridge Press, 1957, p. 20.

the quality of experience unfolded. If the Southern Sotho poetic structure is haphazard and unusual, it is because it is in accordance with the basic structure of Southern Sotho which remains a closed book to an untrained ear. It is in this basic structure of the language that Southern poetry will survive and not in superimposed techniques borrowed from other languages. These two poets, especially Khaketla, have tried to enrich Sotho poetry by emulating poets such as Milton, Browning and others e.g. THOLWANA TSA BOIKAKASO. They have demonstrated, though unconsciously, that techniques such as rhyming are insignificant in Southern Sotho poetry. Where they employ such borrowed techniques, their works become poor caricatures of European poetry. But where they are natural, close to their native idiom, their expression is superior and they provoke thought and imagination. Ntsane's satires are superior for they are not ordinary copies of Pope's or any other European poet's verse.

Despite criticism levelled against the apparent haphazard arrangement of lines in Southern Sotho poetry, Ntsane and Khaketla have succeeded in preserving the experience, repeatable in the mind of a sensitive reader. One may venture to say Southern Sotho is moving in the direction where rhyming will be disregarded and our poets will return to the free and natural recitation of the old Baroki. The contents have expanded but the form to be assumed by Southern Sotho poetry is that of the old praise poem. There are basic features such as a repetition of words, the use of parallelism, simile and metaphor, from which the modern Southern Sotho poet cannot free himself. They are deeply rooted in the language. Our poetic structure must be found in this direction and not in rhyming. Attempts such as those of Lesoro and others who believe in techniques of rhyming and arbitrary divisions, are a temporary craze which will soon be discarded and forgotten.

CONCLUSION.

We set out to evaluate the poetry of Ntsane and Khaketla, to determine the basis of their poetry, to understand their poetic skill in revealing their inner self, and to consider their relative achievement. It was observed that traditional praise poems are the foundation of modern Southern Sotho poetry. The subject matter has been expanded, but structural features of the older compositions are still deep rooted even in modern attempts. These features are not accidental. They are founded on the genius of Southern Sotho. They make our poetry more lively, dramatic and memorable. Southern Sotho poets are more articulate when they keep to the well-known Southern Sotho poetic language than when they resort to external embellishment from other languages.

Ntsane and Khaketla have experimented with rhyming, but both of them have found it to be an insignificant feature - at least in Southern Sotho. Both have attempted a 'conscious' composition of poetry. They have tried to "reason" themselves into the poetic experience, but it has always become evident that artificiality and intellectualism are not basic in poetry. Khaketla, more than Ntsane, is guilty of this arbitrariness in poetry. Ntsane's experiments are often accompanied by profound thoughts presented in the most fascinating language. Both poets are in search of a way of writing poetry that will give full expression to their conviction, feeling and imagination. Ntsane and Khaketla are aware that this poetic technique cannot be found outside their own language. They always return to praise poems to seek inspiration. Ntsane is more successful in his attempt because no rigid rules guide him when composing his verses. His carefree expression is a legacy from the traditional baroki (public reciters of praise poems.) Khaketla's blind belief in rigid and controlled rhythm makes his poems to sound artificial and light.

Their poetry is functional : it is their weapon in their

struggle for reform, upliftment of the Sothos, the freedom of the human spirit, and desire to make life as pleasant as possible. Socio-political themes predominate in their poetry.It has been demonstrated that Ntsane is more successful than Khaketla in his pursuit to achieve these ideals. Ntsane specializes in satires, Khaketla in elegies. Their themes are carefully and purposefully selected. Poetry is the medium through which they communicate with mankind - with the Sothos in particular.

An interesting development is noted in their poetry. At first they were young men who had been impressed by foreign examples and who sought to impose the forms they had observed in other languages on their verses. However, they realized quickly that Southern Sotho poetry became artificial and shallow once foreign constructions were adopted. Their views about poetry, were then modified. Thus there is, in their poetry, a gradual return to the natural idiom and construction followed in traditional praises. Ntsane, more than Khaketla, is likely to pursue this new trend in his future attempts. His recent poetry is already strongly bent towards the structural features of praise poems. His expression is as simple, dramatic and effective as that of the earlier baroki. His modernization of Southern Sotho poetry does not involve tampering with the natural idiom. Clumsy constructions and unbalanced verses are avoided. Foreign techniques are adopted where and when they do not disturb the nature of his message and expression.

Khaketla is committed to "reforming" Southern Sotho poetry. A rigid pulse-measure, although it makes the musical flow of his verse monotonous, will not leave his poetry for some time because Khaketla is convinced that the rhythmic pattern must be thoroughly checked and directed by the poet. Rhythm, according to him, is the back-bone of poetry. Free expression and effective use of words, not obscurity and ambiguity, must be sought after.

Ntsane and Khaketla have made their mark as poets. They are potentially great poets and much is still expected from them in future. Ntsane's unaffected expression and forceful imagery place him above Khaketla who has, in his attempt to modernize Southern Sotho poetry, imposed too many unnatural limitations in his poetry.

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The apparent round-about and long-winded form of Sotho praise poem is , in fact, in keeping with the temperament of the people. A short stanza, say of four lines - arbitrarily kept thus - is jerky and does not allow for free expression, which is a characteristic of Sotho speech. To illustrate : when two Sothos greet each other, they will go into minute details to explain their lives at home, health, conditions of the weather and livestock. This is a valuable part of their lives - their culture. It cannot be outrooted even by the sophisticated Urban Sotho. Such details are, in Western society, but trivialities not worthy to be mentioned.

An experiment will have to be attempted to compose poems on a variety of subjects but using the techniques of traditional poetry. At first the features of praise poems may have to be applied consciously to our modern attempts, but this will not be a retrograde step. It will be a worthy attempt to go back to the Sotho language itself to find the "laws" of our poetry. Radio Bantu's (S.Sotho Service) experiment in this direction is applauded.

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