

**THE VOICE OF SESOTHO CREATIVE WRITERS  
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO FOUR POETS**

**by**

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**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of**



**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**In the Subject**

**AFRICAN LANGUAGES**

**at**

**VISTA UNIVERSITY**

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

**SUBMITTED: FEBRUARY 2004**

**DECLARATION**

I declare that this thesis entitled:

**THE VOICE OF SESOTHO CREATIVE WRITERS WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO FOUR POETS,**

is my own work, that all the resources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references and that this thesis was not previously submitted by me for a degree at another University.



.....

Signature

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my late father, Thomas Dungizwe Seema, my mother Santie Salamina Seema, my brothers and sisters, my wife Nora Seema and my children.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the Almighty who has made this study possible.

Many people were instrumental and indispensable in making this thesis possible, however my sincere thanks go to Professor R.S. Chaphole my supervisor, for the invaluable help he has given me at various stages in the preparation of this thesis. His guidance, comments and suggestions were very important to my work. His inspiration and helpful information made the completion of this thesis possible. Therefore it is with great pleasure that I thank him for his unflagging enthusiasm and help with many aspects of this thesis. To him whose gentle advice is always timely, I express my respect and gratitude. **Mahlohonolo a o atele “Tshwene”.**

My warmest thanks are due to Norah, the girl behind the scenes, the wife and mother whose constant companionship has been my mainstay throughout my studies. **Ke a leboha “Tlhantlhane”.**

No words are adequate to describe the debt I owe to the following creative writers:

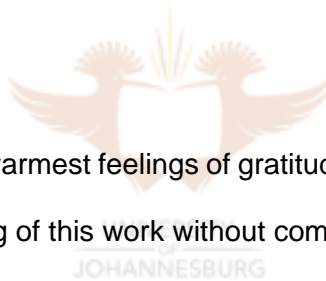
Selepe T.J., Booysen L.S., Mophethe C.L.J., Litabe N.S., Maboea P.T.P.K, Sefatsa S., Mokhomo, M.A., Mahanke M. and Maphalla K.P.D., who without hesitation, responded to my request to meet and interview them and were totally receptive to my project. Each one accommodated me into his/her schedule for the interviews, discussions and selections of pieces of creative works. To them, I extend my gratitude and affection for the courtesies and cooperation that allowed this thesis to materialize.

To my colleagues at the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, I owe my thanks for their moral support during my studies. I am especially pleased to thank the thesis editor Mr Brent Record, for his care with my thesis.

The researcher for this project was supported in part by a grant from Vista University and the NRF, which I acknowledge with thanks.

Additionally, I am also indebted to the Dean of Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education Vaal Triangle Campus, for his enthusiastic support of this project and also for helping with a grant for editing this thesis.

Finally, I would like to express my warmest feelings of gratitude to Mrs Dikeledi Margaret Mhlongo who has been involved in the typing of this work without complaint.



## SUMMARY

The poet is the key to the hidden mysteries of the heart

The poet is a man who gives life its meaning.

The poet is the unacknowledged legislator of the world.

The writing of this thesis has been stimulated by the clear understanding of the poet's resources are vitally important for those who intend to train others in Poetry Creative Writing. We suppose we think euphemistically that all creative writers write because they have something to say that is truthful and honest and pointed and important.

This thesis is informed by creative voices of L.S. Booysen; C.L.J. Mophethe; N.S. Litabe and P.T.P.K. Maboea. During the interview each one of them was asked questions based on creativity and art as well as questions based on their poetry. Chapter one introduces the study and looks at the key concepts. Chapter two is the literary framework and focuses on the deconstructional approach and multiplicity of meaning in poetry. Chapter three looks at the creativity and art in the poetry of L.S. Booysen; C.L.J. Mophethe; N.S. Litabe and P.T.P.K. Maboea. In chapter four we discuss style in relation to Litabe. Chapter five looks at theme in Maboea's poetry. In chapter six we focus on intertextuality in relation to Booysen and influence in relation to Mophethe. Chapter seven is a concluding statement that looks back into the first six chapters and also gives suggestions for future research.

Our review of this thesis on creative writing has identified a number of factors that seem to foster people to write. But no one can influence people to become creative writers or poets or make them write well. The best one can do is to suggest to them some guidelines for creative writing.

(vii)

Many people wish to be proficient in poetry creative writing but to achieve this, one should be able to breathe into his work the true poetic spirit that pulses in the composition. This life cannot be created to order because it flows from the mind and soul of the poet and always without his being aware of what is happening, inspires and directs his art. Poetry is also a language that has been condensed, compacted, and trimmed to spark the lightning flash of insight.

Poets are more attuned to the connection between language and things, existence and experience. Words have the capacity for poets to change reality, to deepen it, to make it more meaningful. For poets composition is a form of ritual magic.



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## CHAPTER 1

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study is not an analysis of Sesotho poetry texts per se. It focuses on the views of different creative writers or poets about their literary art. Interviews will be conducted to establish perceptions about creative writing held by these creative writers. Such a study is needed because of the scarcity of creative writing skills in Sesotho. Very little attention has been given to creative writing skills in Sesotho perhaps because many scholars have been preoccupied with other fields of literature and linguistics. This is an attempt to correct the oversight and also to set up guidelines for creative writing in Sesotho.

Creative writing itself is within a wider context. For the purpose of this study creative writers or poets talk about creative writing, their own and creative writing in general. Through the interviews, each creative writer is made to express himself/herself about creativity as well as literary art. Their message is the flavour that remains in the printed text and offers a general representation for the field of creative writing in the past, in the present and in the future.

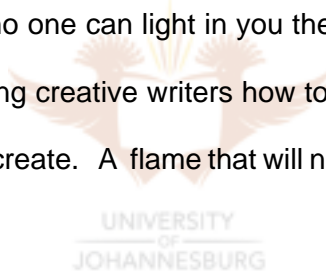
A strong foundation has been laid for a permanent Sesotho creative writing by creative writers such as Mofolo, Segoete, Ntsane and Motsamai just to mention a few. The creative writing road was hard and steep since these creative writers had no literary masters who guided them on creative writing skills. The development of Mofolo as an outstanding Sesotho creative writer, provides us with a picture of the development of creative writing in Sesotho. Then later creative writers such as

Khaketla, Moephuli and Maphalla developed the art of writing further.

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Today we have people who have a talent for writing as there are people who are born with a gift for music. We are not all moulded after one pattern, otherwise life would be monotonous. We sometimes read of men who at an early age produced prose that is considered classic e.g. Mafata and Moephuli. There are also others who seem to have no innate ability to create at all. They say they cannot do it because they do not know how to start and arrange their thoughts. Many who have imagined that they had no literary ability, have come to realize that with practice, it is possible to achieve a reasonable facility in composition or creative writing.

Sometimes you have a spark but no one can light in you the spark that will make you a creative writer. This study will help beginning creative writers how to turn that spark into a flame that will burn brightly in the literature they'll create. A flame that will not only warm themselves but will also warm their readers.



This study is intended to be a treasure of creative writing skills in Sesotho for us to enjoy and appreciate literature. This treasure gives us a means to knowledge, inspiration and awareness. It recounts the doings of our fellow men throughout the world. Books are to us familiar and simple things. Yet they are one of the greatest miracles man has created in his search for happiness and power. Through this, Sesotho creative writers will outgrow the influence of Mofolo and become more realistic and creative. If this does not happen, we foresee a bleak future for Sesotho literature.

## **1.2 AIMS OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this study is to gather information from different Sesotho creative writers, concerning their works of art as well as their creativity in Sesotho. This study intends to stimulate interest in and

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appreciation of creative writing in Sesotho. We hope that the views of Sesotho creative writers incorporated in this study will motivate scholars wishing to create literary works in Sesotho.

It will help to guide aspiring creative writers so that a healthy climate for the development and enrichment of creative writing skills in Sesotho could be created. We hope that this study will produce many more Sesotho creative writers who will improve the quality of literature. This is an important task which is necessary and desirable because little has been done in the area of Sesotho literary studies to gather data from Sesotho creative writers about their writing. Therefore this study aims to break new ground in Sesotho.



### **1.3 MOTIVATION**

This study is prompted by the following reasons. Having read the literary works (texts) of creative writers such as T. Mofolo, T. Mafata, K.E. Ntsane, B.M. Khaketla, C.L.J. Mophethe, K.D.P. Maphalla and others, we find that these writers have produced fascinating works.

Today we see the light that has come to us through these creative writers. We even understand the beauty of our language through them. It is considered indisputable that such good creative writers have not been interviewed about their creative writing.

We deem it imperative to compile information about these creative writers in Sesotho relating to their informative conditions, where they come from and their long journey that has brought them

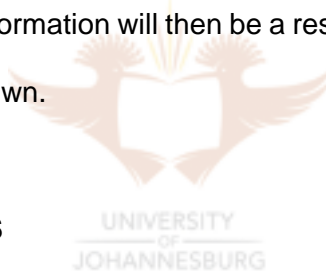
this far in the field of creative writing.

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The state of Sesotho creative writing in South Africa is below the level of Afrikaans and English. This implies that Sesotho literature has not yet, qualitatively and perhaps quantitatively achieved the standard of Afrikaans and English. The standard of books that are produced by young writers cannot be compared with the standard of Mofolo's works.

We hope that the information gathered from these creative writers will lead to better works in Sesotho writing in general. This information will then be a reservoir for young creative writers and writing in Sesotho will come to its own.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS**



According to Wilkinson et al. (1996:58) a hypothesis is a declarative statement about problem solution and predicted outcomes. Research questions and hypothesis differ on two dimensions. One is a grammatical difference. Research questions end in question marks, while hypothesis are declarative statements. The other difference is that research questions are general while hypotheses are more specific.

Neuman (1999:108) says that a hypothesis is a proposition to be tested or a tentative statement of a relationship between two variables. It is a powerful tool for the advancement of knowledge, because

although formulated by man, it can be tested and shown to be correct or incorrect apart from man's



values and beliefs.

For Mertens and McLaughlin (1995:12), once a research question has been identified and literature reviewed, the research question must be constructed in a way that facilitates further research in a

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specific situation. This means that the research question should be measurable. This involves moving from a broad vague obstruct question to a specific question.

For this researcher, a hypothesis should provide direction and it must be clearly stated. After completing a research question and hypothesis, the researcher shall have achieved a significant amount of direction and focus.

Our hypothesis in this study is as follows:



Creative art of Sesotho poetry is a complex activity in which all the powers of the poet's mind are working together to one end. To experience what was conceived by the poet's imagination is possible and at the same time to have a full awareness of all the powers of the poet's words to express those experiences.

## **1.5 METHODOLOGY**

It is useful for the researcher to consider the method for data collection and analysis. The method should be associated with the paradigm of choice. There is a distinction which should be considered between method and methodology. For Blaxter et al. (1996:59) "method" can be understood to relate to the tools of data collection such as interviews and questionnaires.

“Methodology” can be interpreted as having a more general and philosophical meaning.

The method used in this study is field research approach which is qualitative in nature. This method involves the process of binding the researcher to go out to collect information from the creative

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writers. The researcher regards the data collected during field research as original because he shall have collected them directly from the primary sources.

This is supported by Burgers (1992:15) when he says that field research involves the study of real-life situations.



#### 1.5.1 Data collection

According to Mertens and McLaughlin (1995:50), qualitative researchers normally use three main methods for collecting data: participant observation, interviews and document and records review.

Research demands that each piece of data collected has a reason and purpose related to the goal.

Once the data-collection phase is stopped, the phase of data analysis and interpretation begins.

For the purpose of this study, the methodology is data based in the first place because data is gathered through interviews. The researcher decided to use the structured interview, since the responses are easy to interpret and analyse (De Wet, 1982:163). Structured interviews are almost appropriate when factual information is desired. The instrument used for data collection in a structured interview is the interview schedule.

The methods for data collecting was that of observing and interviewing. Brink (1995:150) sees observation as a technique for collecting descriptive data on behaviour, events and situations. Example here is creative writer's willingness to interact with and listen to the researcher. The importance of these methods is that researchers are concerned with the process of an activity rather

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than only the outcomes of an activity. Describing the on-going interactions occurring during the interview, is important rather than only noting the end results. The tape recorder assisted us to collect all the information that writers provided us with. The consequence of this method is that the information from these creative writers is the primary one. The tapped cassette is also regarded as a primary source.



### 1.5.2 Analysis of data

For Blaxter et al. (1995:173), the process of data analysis is determined by the research approach that is taken, a survey, an action, an experiment study will produce different types and amounts of data. Before the data is processed, the researcher should make sure that such data is accurate. The researcher must further organise the data in order that relationships can be discerned. In analysing quantitative data, the researcher works much with numbers. Qualitative data analysis involves the synthesis of narrative non-numeric data.

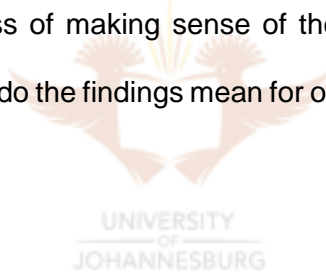
For our study, the researcher examined the data to make sure that every-thing is accurate before the data could be processed. The data is orderly organised, information gathered from dramatists is

placed on one side, information from prose creative writers is placed on one side and the information gathered from poets is also placed on one side. Our analysis techniques are conducted in qualitative research but they are not exclusively quantitative. Numbers were included when we were counting the number of responses we received from dramatists, novelists, short story writers, essayists and poets. Most analysis in this study was performed by computer.

### 1.5.3 Interpret the results

For Brink (1995:61), the results obtained from data analysis require interpretation to be meaningful.

Interpretation refers to the process of making sense of the results. What did the researcher actually learn from the data? What do the findings mean for others? What is the value of the study for them?



In this study, we interpret the results by summarising the aims of this study and compare them with the findings of the research we undertook. Attention was paid to the extent to which the hypothesis has been confirmed.

We managed to gather information from different Sesotho creative writers concerning their works of art as well as their creativity in Sesotho.

The view of Sesotho creative writers incorporated in this study motivates scholars wishing to create literary works of art in Sesotho.

### 1.5.4 Communicate research findings

In the previous phase the researcher's questions posed in the first phase of the project are answered. The researcher's job is not completed until the results of the study are communicated to others who may find it useful.

#### 1.5.5 Development of the research project

For Pilot and Hungler (1993:49), the research report must communicate each step. It should be well

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organised and in enough detail to inform. In writing the report the researcher should keep the goals of the research in mind.

In conclusion we emphasise the point that research process is a powerful force for advancing knowledge.



In this thesis, findings are presented in terms of the themes or chapters which emerged from the data and by way of substantiation, examples of raw data will be given, for example, direct quotes from an interview or transcription of the poet's poetry.

## 1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study comprises seven chapters. The first chapter introduces the study and looks at key concepts:

Poetry

Research

Creative writer

Theme

Style

Chapter two provides a theoretical base that will inform discussion in subsequent chapters. The theoretical base is informed from deconstructional approach with specific attention to multiplicity of meaning in poetry.

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Chapter three discusses the creative art embedded in Booyesen's poetry volume "Phathe ya ntate"; Maboea's poetry volume "Tlhaka ya Basotho"; Litabe's poetry volume "Wa lla Molodi" and Mophethe's poetry volume "Menyabuketso".

Chapter four focuses on Litabe's style in his poetic creativity. It will be illustrated how Litabe reveals the relationship between his style and his subject-matter. The illustration will be from his poetry volume "Wa lla molodi".

Chapter five deals with themes as reflected in Maboea's poetry volume "Tlhaka ya Basotho". These themes reveal some experiences that the poet has gone through.

Chapter six presents intertextuality and influence as literary approaches having links with the deconstructional approach. The aim of this chapter is to illustrate the interrelationship between Booyesen's poems from the poetry volume "Phate ya Ntate" and the Bible. The role of traditional influences in Mophethe's poetry will also be looked at.

Chapter seven provides a concluding statement and a clear outline framework of the whole research project.

## 1.7 VIEWS ON CONCEPTS

### 1.7.1 Creative writer

Different views or definitions on the creative writer have been expounded. Therefore it will be unacceptable to align oneself with one view.

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For New Book of Knowledge Vol.20 (1980:319) the term creative writer is usually reserved for a person whose work involves a special use of the imagination. He takes his own ideas and tries to develop them into a work of art, with a style and content that set forth his thoughts and feelings as perfectly as possible.



The World Book Dictionary, Vol.1 (1981:486) defines a creative writer as a person having the power to create new ideas and develops them into a work of art. The writing of poems, stories or plays is often called creative writing. The single most important element in the creative process, however is believed to be originality or uniqueness.

A creative writer is a person with the ability to transcend ideas resulting from originality of thought. A person engaged in writing books having the ability to see things in a new and unusual light (Reader's Digest Family Word Finder, (1975:93).

We conclude by stating that a creative writer is a person who constantly comes up with original ideas in his literary works of art. Creative writing involves more than just divergent thinking,

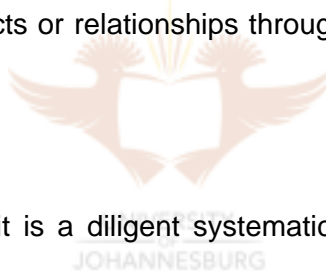
motivation, knowledge, training independence of spirit, all seem to play a part in creative work. In creative writing, the creative writer comes up with new, unusual and effective solutions to problems that no one else may even recognise their existence.

### 1.7.2 Research

Research is a broad field of study and there are different views about research which are cited by different scholars.

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According to Clark and Hockey (1989:4) research is an attempt to increase the sum of what is known by the discovery of new facts or relationships through a process of systematic scientific enquiry.



For Burns and Grové (1993:16), it is a diligent systematic enquiry to validate and refine old knowledge and generate new knowledge.

Reader's Digest Oxford Complete Word Finder (1993:1306), takes research as the systematic investigation into the study of materials, sources, etc. in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions.

From the above views, one may conclude by stating that research is an activity that involves gathering, analysing and interpreting data to answer the research question. It is a process meaning that there must be a purpose and a goal. The end results that research is an increase in knowledge which contributes to the existing knowledge.



### 1.7.3 Poetry

It will be unfruitful to align ourselves with one view of poetry because different views have been expounded about poetry.

Poetry is a deeply moving language written or spoken in a special form. The rhythm of a poem is what sets it apart from prose, which usually has a tempo slower and more varied. Rhythm is what gives poetry a fistful life. Although some poems are divided into parts, the rhythm is not destroyed. It is the overall rhythm that the poet wishes us to hear. Every good poem comes to the reader as a

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surprise. Robert Frost called it “the surprise of remembering something I didn’t know I knew”. The English poet A.E. Housman said that he could not think about poetry while shaving, because his skin would bristle and the razor refuse to act (The New Book of Knowledge Vol.15, 1984:349).

For Reeves (1970:3-5) poetry is an affair of the heart, and no writer can make you fall in love. The love of poetry is an infection to which no one is permanently immune. Poetry can never be fully explained. It can be felt, and it can be talked about with profit.

The Macmillan Encyclopaedia (1993:971) sees poetry as a form of literature distinguished from prose by the use of metre, rhythm, rhyme, sound and figurative language. Poetry probably originated as a form of language distinct from ordinary speech in religious rituals. It is a language used in a special way. Its words form patterns of verse or sound and of thought that appeal strongly to the imagination.

In conclusion, we may say poetry is not only the right way but the free way, the perfect way of saying something good. To speak Sesotho well, to write it well, is one of the golden assets in this

world. A

knowledge and love is the best guarantee for acquiring it. In creative writing, a poet creates something with his imagination that did not exist before, and gives it permanent form. The poet works with language, he expresses his ideas through the medium of verse.

#### 1.7.4 Theme

Closely related to purpose is the message you hope to convey. That message is called the story's theme ... but the theme is not always a neatly stated moral ... Usually this message is an insight into life or human nature (Sorenson, 1994:9).

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Heese and Robin define theme in the following way:



“Theme is a central idea or ideas which may be stated directly or indirectly.

For Abrams (1988:111) theme is sometimes used interchangeably with “motif”, but the term is more useful applied to a general claim, or doctrine, whether implicit or asserted, which an imaginative work is designed to incorporate and make persuasive to the reader.

For the researcher theme is not the title or the story in poetry. It can be regarded as the nucleus of the contents of a poem. Theme is what gives a poem its unity and the function of a poet is not to state a theme but to vivify it. Poets deliver it not simply to our imaginations but to our emotions, our senses and our imaginations.

#### 1.7.5 Style

According to Abrams (1988:181), style is the manner of linguistic expression in prose or verse - it is

how speakers or writers say whatever it is that they say. The style of a particular work or writer may be analysed in terms of the characteristic modes of its diction, or choice of words; its sentence structure and syntax, the density and types of its figurative language; the patterns of its rhythm, component, sounds and other formal features; and its rhetorical aims and devices.

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

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For "Family Word Finder" (1975:771) Style and Stylish come from Latin "stilus", stylus, an iron-pointed peg or other instrument for writing on wax tablets, later one's individual manner of writing, hence manner, appearance, fashion.



For the researcher style is the creative writer's use of language, to produce an effect for his readers. It is an expression of individuality. If a poem possesses style, that is, if it is the expression of a well-defined individuality, it will always afford a certain amount of pleasure to the readers, no matter how remotely in time it was created.

## **1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW**

A researcher must have a specific purpose in mind when undertaking a research project. The main objective or research is to generate information which will increase knowledge and understanding about an identified problem. When the researcher starts the research trip, he/she does not start from an unknown point, because there is possibly a prior knowledge base which has been

established by other researchers.

For Mertens and McLaughlin (1995:9), it is impossible that there is a field of study that has not been researched in some research endeavour. There must be a major resource of researchers as they report their research results. This major resource is literature and such literature should be viewed because it has a purpose.

When a researcher conducts his research project; he does not start from ground zero. Literature review plays an important role in the formulation of a research question. What is literature review?

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Literature review is a process that include findings, reading, understanding and forming conclusions about the published and theory on a particular topic (Brink, 1996:76).

For the researcher to conceive the research topic, some background information is necessary. The process of reading whatever has been published that appears relevant to the research topic, is called literature review (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995:22).

For Mertens and McLaughlin (1995:14), literature review often begins with reading secondary sources that is a synthesis of research findings on a particular topic. Secondary sources are those in which the reporter of information is not the person who obtained the data. Textbooks and reference books are considered secondary sources. Primary sources are those in which the data are reported and written by the person actually gathering the information. Literature review should depend much on primary sources.

To sum up, we take literature review as the foundation for the formulation of the research problem

and hypotheses. It is an ongoing process of reading sources that have been published that seem relevant to the research topic in order to have the background information about the research topic.

#### 1.8.1 The purpose of literature review

There are numerous reasons for conducting a literature review, but we wish to mention a few.

The purpose of literature review is to determine what is already known about the topic to be studied, so that a comprehensive knowledge on the topic can be obtained. In other words we can say that it establishes a historical perspective on the intended research and provides a vision of the need for

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additional research. This will minimise the unintentional duplication and increase the probability that the new study may make a distinctive contribution (Brink, 1996:75).

For Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:23), it serves as a foundation for forming the hypothesis and to obtain clues to methodology. This aspect provides the researcher with information on what has and has not been tried in regard to methods and what types of data collecting instruments exist and work or do not work.

It assists the researcher in refining certain parts of the study especially the problem statement, design and data analysis process. The findings from previous studies form the basis for comparison when interpreting the findings from a current study. For Crombie and Davies (1995:53), in qualitative research, the review of literature serves to inform the study especially in conjunction with the collection and analysis of data.

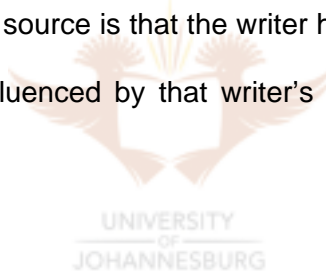
#### 1.8.2 Report on literature review

For this study, we reviewed literature in some depth and detail, but we will not report on the whole of the literature review. We felt that it is not appropriate to include everything but only the portions of the review which are presumed to be relevant, should be reported on.

We made an intensive and thorough investigation into relevant literature. Here with relevant literature we refer to those sources that are important in providing the in-depth knowledge needed to study a selected problem. The relevant literature we reviewed is from secondary sources. Secondary sources are those in which the reporter of information is not the person who obtain the

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data. The problem of a secondary source is that the writer has interpreted the work of someone and his interpretation may be influenced by that writer's perception and bias (Bailey, et al., 1995:193).



This study will be informed by primary sources. Primary sources are those in which the data are reported and written by the person actually gathering the information.

#### 1.8.2.1 Poetry

Sesotho has not produced much research in as far as poetry is concerned, but some studies have been written on poetry.

Lenake (1984) in The Poetry of K.E. Ntsane describes and evaluates the poetry of K.E. Ntsane. Lenake classifies Ntsane's poems in terms of their subject matter and themes. Satire is conspicuous in Ntsane's poetry - invective, condemnatory and light hearted. He further looks at the whole spectrum of communicative devices, such as parallelism, paradox, pun etc. He also

discusses the two basic poetic forms namely, the prototype and the transitional. The prototype resemble in form the traditional Sesotho praise poems. The transitional poems relate to the written poetry which followed on the "dithoko" tradition.

Manyaka (1995) in The Poetry of C.L.S. Thobega, discusses traditional influence and western influence. He skilfully discusses imagery in Thobega's poems. He further looks at different themes in Thobega's poems - the theme of death, ancestors, love, heroism and lastly the theme of protest and oppression.

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Moleleki (1988) in Some Aspects of Imagery in Maphalla's Poetry discusses influence in Maphalla's poetry. He shows how different aspects viz. indigenous influences, religious influences and conflicting influences have a role in decorating a poet's work. Exotic influences - under this category all forms of influences which are evidently of western origin are included. As part of indigenous influences, he uses images in their various types viz. images associated with human experience - images associated with nature.

Ntuli (1984) in The Poetry of B.W. Vilakazi, discusses the influence of traditional poetry, prose narrative, English poetry and Biblical influence in Vilakazi's poetry. He further looks at Vilakazi's poetry based on different themes. In investigating these themes, he uses imagery, simile and metaphor.

Nkumane (1995) in "A Study of L.B.Z. Buthelezi's Poetry" presents a deconstructive analysis of Buthelezi's poetry. The study also shows how African poets in general are influenced by their own

culture, while at the same time they are involved with the Western Styles of creating poetry. Nkumane reveals that Buthelezi's poetry is a poetry of specific meaning. The poet communicates tradition as well as culture through his poetry. Through his poems he reminds Africans to maintain authentic language, culture and their customs. Nkumane illustrates that meaning and culture form the basis of Buthelezi's poetry.

Makobane (2000) in "Difela-tsa-Diparola-Thota": A case for Field Research, has made an intensive research on Difela-tsa-Diparola-Thota, which is a form of poetry that emerged in the context of immigrant labour. In discussing "difela", the researcher looks at the theme which give readers a clear picture of the factors that facilitate their emergence within the mine workers. Through "difela"

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mine workers vent their state of poverty and also condemn their oppression by mine authorities. Through their style readers are able to see "difela" as a type of poetry in its own right.



In short the researcher would like to state that all these works that form the literature review are outstanding. They contributed a lot in discussing and analysing poetry. This literature review paves the path for the researcher because no researcher starts in a vacuum. For the purpose of this thesis, this literature review fits like a glove covering the hand.

## **1.9 FIELD RESEARCH**

For Emerson (1983) as quoted by Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1995:281) field research is the study of people acting in the natural courses of their every day lives. The researcher ventures into the worlds of other people in order to learn first-hand information about how they live, how to talk and behave and what captivates and distresses them.



Burgess (1984:7) maintains that doing field research is not merely the use of a set of uniform techniques but depends on a complex interaction between the research problems, the researcher and those who are researched.

For the researcher, field research is the central strategy of data collection which is associated with qualitative methodology which is also carried out in natural settings. Field research is sometimes referred to as fieldwork, because the researcher's project does not consist literally of those things which can be done in a room or sitting at a desk. Here the researcher is not analysing the data collected by others.

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Field research simply implies that the researcher goes away from his/her place to some other places. The researcher engages himself/herself in different forms of behaviour he/she would not normally engage in elsewhere.



Blaxter et al. (1995:62) seem to support the above statement by stating that field research refers to the process of going out to collect research data. The data collected by the researcher may be described as original and cannot be accessed without the engaging in some kind of expedition.

In field research, the researcher is involved in observing and analysing real life situations. He/she studies the actions and activities as they occur. In field research the researcher is much involved more than merely knowing what to observe and how to record and present the information he/she gathered. The researcher must also explain his/her presence and purpose to others or community in which he/she finds himself/herself in. The researcher must endeavour to gain their cooperation and develop trust and maintain mutual relationship.

For Babbie (1995:280) one of the key strengths of field research is the comprehensiveness of perspective it gives the researcher. By going directly to the social phenomenon under study and observing it as completely as possible, a researcher can develop a deeper and fuller understanding of it. A field researcher can learn a lot merely by being attentive to what is going on. It involves more active enquiry, and it is appropriate for the researcher to ask questions and record the answers. Unstructured interviews are more appropriate to field research. The interviewer has a general plan of inquiry but not a specific set of questions that must be asked in particular words and in a particular order.

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## 1.10 THE THEORY OF FIELD RESEARCH

According to Frankfort-Nachmias Nachmias (1996:294), when a researcher engages in quantitative research, his goal is either to falsify, modify or provide support for existing theory. The quantitative researcher accomplishes his goal deductively by deriving hypotheses from theory and using the data he collected to statistically test the hypotheses. The qualitative researcher moves in the opposite direction because he uses an analytic induction. The researcher collect data, formulate hypotheses based on the data, tests their hypotheses using the data. He develops the grounded theory because it is directly relevant to the particular setting under study.

### 1.10.1 The grounded theory approach

For Burgess (1984:180) grounded theory in its simplest form means theory which emerges out of the data grounded in the observation and interpretation of phenomenon. In order for the researcher

to use the grounded theory approach, he must develop conceptual categories from the data grounded in the observation. It identifies concepts and the relationship between these concepts in an inductive manner. Its main purpose is to build a theory that is reliable to and illuminates the area under study.

Glazer (1978:39) says:

While in the field, the researcher continually asks questions as to fit relevance and workability about the emerging categories and relationships between them. By raising

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questions at this point in time, the researcher checks those issues while she still has access to the data. As a result, she continually fits her analysis to the data by checking as she proceeds.

The researcher using grounded theory procedures, takes the responsibility for his interpretive roles. He is not interested in merely reporting the viewpoints of the people or organisations studied. Grounded theory evolves during actual research, and this is through continuous interplay between analysis and data collection. This simply means that grounded theory involves generating theory and doing social research as two parts of the same process. With the grounded theory approach, concepts and hypotheses are developed from the data.

Strauss and Corbin (1990:24) support the above statement when they state that the grounded theory approach is a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to

develop an inductively devised grounded theory about a phenomenon. The grounded theory begins in social and cultural environment in which people live and work. In grounded theory the researcher immerses himself/herself in a social environment.

For Glaser and Strauss (1986:62) the techniques of data collection are participation observation and unstructured interviews. Observations are made about the structure and patterns noted in the social environment. Interactions are studied through interviews and observations in the field.

Strauss and Corbin (1990:25) further say that once concepts have been identified and their relationship specified, the researcher consult the literature to determine if any similar associations

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have already been uncovered. Despite the great diversity of the data that are gathered. The grounded theory approach presumes that it is possible to discover fundamental patterns in all social life. The constant comparative process is a very rigorous process in that the researcher has to reflect on categories and he/she must test emerging concepts and relationships many times before firm theoretical propositions can be made.

#### 1.10.2 Analytical induction

Analytical induction is an alternative theoretical approach to field research. For Frankfort-Nachmias Nachmias (1996:295) theory building in analytical, consists of finding relationships between categories of observation. Researchers attempt to distinguish a core category and explain how various sub-categories influence the core category.

By applying this theory, the researcher begins with the hypotheses and explains the phenomena

observed and try to verify the hypotheses. Researchers operate inductively, which means that they begin with an individual case and then proceed to a general theory (Huysamen, 1994:15). Researchers are more inclined to study an individual case carefully rather than to study the average tendencies of large groups. If the hypothesis does not fit these groups, it is either rejected or reformulated, so that the cases account for it.

To our understanding, grounded theory is a form of field methodology requiring the collection, coding and categorizing of empirical observations and the formulation of concepts and the relationships based on the data obtained. Grounded theory also employs deductive approaches to examine propositions of a theory induced. However it is initially an inductive method. Ways of

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observing reality include interviewing or questioning individuals about what they remember or how they respond to certain situations.



For the purpose of our study both grounded theory and approach and analytic induction method have been used. The grounded theory approach was used because the researcher was in the field collecting data through interviews, the researcher developed concepts while he was still in the field. During the interviews, the researcher asked creative writers questions based on creative writing. What the researcher realised during the interviews was that the answers he got from the different creative writers based on one question were not the same. This implies that four creative writers answer one question differently.

The researcher was eager to know why they are providing him with different answers for the same question. So this made him develop some questions from their answers which he needed explanation. The analytic inductive method was also used because the researcher went into the

field already having a hypothesis. The idea was that there are major contributions in Sesotho literature but creative writing has been neglected by many researchers. It is important to get enough information about how creative writers create a world in fictional terms.

## 1.11 THE PRACTICE OF FIELD RESEARCH

According to Burgess (1984:31) the practice of field research can be divided into the following stages: selecting, choosing research site and obtaining access, establishing relations with members of the group, finally leaving the field and analysing the data. Now let us focus on some of the important stages of field research.

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### 1.11.1 Selecting a research topic

For Frankfort-Nachmias Nachmias (1996:286) the first step in doing field research is to select a topic for investigation. The selection of a research topic is often influenced by personal interest or concerns.

The researcher decided to conduct research on **“THE VOICE OF SESOTHO CREATIVE WRITERS WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO FOUR POETS”**. We felt that this study is needed because of a scarcity in creative writing skills in Sesotho. It focuses on the views of different Sesotho creative writers about creativity and their literary art. Interviews were conducted to establish perceptions about creative writing held by these creative writers. It is our hope that this study will help and guide beginning creative writers to the works of art so that a healthy climate for the development of creative writing skills in Sesotho will be created.

### 1.11.2 Choosing a site and gaining access

Once a research topic has been chosen, it is of great importance to choose the area where the

research could be conducted. The next stage of field research is to select and gain access to an appropriate research site. For Frankfort-Nachmias Nachmias (1996:287), it is tempting to choose a site that is easily accessible, where a researcher has an influential contact. Researchers who are outsiders to the research setting may have more difficulty gaining access and need to determine how much to reduce distance after entering the research site.

For Burgess (1984:45), gaining access is an essential phase in the research process. The activities that occur during this key phase of the research process influence the ways in which those who are to be researched define the research and the activities of the researcher. The key issues involved

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in this phase of the research concern initial contacts, ethical considerations, gatekeepers, the presentation of the study and the research bargain all of which are considered in turn.



For this study the researcher decided to focus on three main areas namely Gauteng, Free State and Lesotho. The key data instrument is the researcher himself. The researcher collects data within the natural setting of the information he seeks. This means that the researcher collects relevant information at the data source through direct observation and personal interviews. The researcher understands through looking closely at people's words, actions and records.

In order to gain access at the respective areas of research, the researcher had to make appointments with the samples. Fortunately the request was accepted. After explaining as a researcher and the information the researcher wish to get from them the researcher then arranged an interview with them. This implies that the researcher made arrangement for an interview with an individual creative writer.

After selecting and defining the research problem, the researcher had to decide on the approach he wants to use to investigate the problem. The researcher further chose an appropriate way, the objects and persons from which the actual information needs to be drawn. They had to define their population and sample. It would generally take too long and be too impractical and costly to study each element in the population. The researcher therefore worked with samples rather than with populations. Further, sampling may provide a more accurate picture of the phenomenon under investigation than will measuring all the population elements since it is easier to control sampling than it is to control census.

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### 1.11.3 Establishing relations with members

For Neuman (1996:353) a field researcher is conscious of the presentation of self in the field. The best guide is to respect both oneself and those being studied. A researcher must be aware that self-presentation will influence field relations to some degree.

For Frankfort-Nachmias Nachmias (1996:288), the way a researcher establishes relations with members of a group depends to a large extent on the nature of the group and the skills of the researcher.

It is not easy to get the information you need from creative writers. Most of them believe that critics are hush on their works of art. In order to get the information the researcher needed from them, he made it clear that he is not a critic and that he is not for the idea to banish what they created. The researcher told them that they are the only reliable sources of information and they are the inspiration to beginning creative writers. To ensure that the researcher is not against their work, he



made it clear to them that he intends to ask them general and text based questions. Questions based on their text were more important to beginning creative writers because they can read such text for more information.

#### 1.11.4 Leaving the field

Work in the field can last for weeks or years but at some point work in the field ends. Some researchers suggest that the end comes naturally when theory building reaches a closure. For Neuman (1996:375) once the researcher decides to leave, because the project reaches a natural end, he or she chooses a method of exiting.

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The researcher left the field by a slow exit because he let members know a short period ahead of time. Before the researcher could leave the field, he gave his informants a token "Creative writing is hard, exacting work, a field that is taken by brave lions and lionesses". This was a big thanks to them. The researcher felt that this was the correct way of leaving the field of research because he might go back for some more information and if this be the case, he will be accepted.

Lastly the researcher fulfilled commitments that were built up and left with a clean slate. The researcher acknowledges the assistance of his informants by giving them a hand shake to thank them for allowing him to conduct research. The researcher experienced the emotional pain of breaking intimate friendships when leaving the field. The researcher felt guilty and depressed immediately before and after leaving.

Data analysis in qualitative field research is an ongoing process. The researcher found it useful to prepare data for analysis by making a running summary of field notes. The researcher coded the

data into separate chapters.



## CHAPTER 2

### DECONSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Over the years, literary scholars have been confronted with many questions about literature. They have attempted to answer those questions in many ways. Their answers led to the development of what is known as contemporary literary theories. Contemporary literary theories have developed systematic and organised ways of understanding and dealing with literature.

The important question that we need to ask ourselves is: What is a literary theory, why do we have to study it?

According to Mc Arthur (1992:615) literary theory is the formal study, evaluation and discussion of literary texts, like any other subject the critical analysis of literature requires a set of terms and usages through which discussion and instruction can proceed.

As students of literature we will encounter scholarly journals, encyclopaedia and books dealing with literature in a specialized way.

We will need the background to literary theories in order to relate to such scholastic information.

Literary theories can be divided into two categories. There are those theories that use the text as the base of their study, these text-centred theories are also known as intrinsic approaches. There

are also those that study literature in relation to the society or in relation to other disciplines, and those theories are also known as the extrinsic approaches to literature.

These days it has become a habit in the academic spheres to apply a particular literary theory when analysing a literary work of art. This chapter focuses on the development of deconstructional framework that will inform the following chapters. Deconstruction like any other literary theory is very wide, but for the purpose of this research project, the researcher intends focussing on: The question of sign and symbol, multiplicity of meaning and intertextuality will be dealt with in chapter three to chapter six.

This supplemental introduction introduces deconstruction with a question. Is there some “thing” called deconstruction? This is a crude question, crudely asked and the researcher has certain answers in mind, which is the purpose of this chapter to spell out. The researcher might ask the question in other ways. For instance: is there a practice called deconstruction, is there a form of critical interpretation known as deconstruction, or is there a literary theory defined as deconstruction?

Some people might answer yes to all of the above mentioned questions. Once more, we will challenge such notions at literary conferences or seminars. For now the researcher wants to suggest that for the remainder of the introduction be a continuation of the strategic gestures in which

this introduction partakes, what deconstruction might be, if it is not a method, not a theory, not a school or movement. This is at least a provisional introduction.

Wolfreys (1998:50) quotes Derrida responding to the question being asked directly, whether “deconstruction” can serve as a method of literary criticism:

“I am not sure that deconstruction can function as a literary method as such. I am wary of the idea of methods of reading. The laws of reading are determined by that particular text that is being read. This does not mean that we should simply abandon ourselves to the text, or represent and repeat it in a purely passive manner. It means that we must remain faithful, even if it implies a certain violence, to the injunctions of the text. These injunctions will differ from one text to the next so that one cannot prescribe one general method of reading. In this sense deconstruction is not a method.

Here Derrida resist to the idea of a deconstructive methodology. This still leaves us with a question concerning deconstruction, whether there is a methodology to it, whether we can assert that there is an “it” for which we can assume a methodology, is still open to question.

The above comment of Derrida on what deconstruction might be, these acts of resistance on Derrida’s part have emerged as specific, strategically located resistance to the idea of a decons-

tructive methodology. If we are to acknowledge what Derrida had said on the subject of deconstruction, then it has to be said, after such a comment, that there is no programme to deconstruction.

It is true that the word “deconstruction” is used by Jacques Derrida. It is certainly true that for a time, particularly in the 1970s and early 1980s. There were those who claimed to practice a form of critique methodology known as deconstruction while there are others who claim that there is an approach to interpretation known as deconstruction. In fact one can find deconstruction taught in most language departments as a subject on courses in literary theory. Deconstruction is a wide literary theory, so for the purpose of this research project the attention will be paid strictly to those deconstructional aspects such as meaning, multiplicity of meaning as well as paradox of signifier and signified.



## **2.2 ATTEMPTED DEFINITIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS OF DECONSTRUCTION**

It is generally known or accepted that deconstruction is a post-structuralist theory. It is in fact a mode of reading a text which subverts the implicit claim of a text to possess adequate grounds to establish its own culture, unity and determined meaning.

For Eagleton (1983:132)

Deconstruction is the name given to the  
critical operation by which ... [binary]

oppositions can be partly undermined or  
by which they can be shown partly to

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undermine each other in the process of  
textual meaning.

Here Eagleton reduces Derrida's thought to a game of deconstruction by numbers, an operation whereby deconstruction is the hunt for the binary opposition such as husband/wife, black/white and the subsequent inversion of that binarism for the purpose of showing how a particular text is undermined in its logic according to its reliance of such paired oppositions both of which suppose a truth value, but which truth value is dependant for its meaning on the operation of the opposition term.



This inversion of pair of terms reveals mutual dependency in the structural relationship by deconstructing how meaning is context-dependent and the product of the structure rather than a discrete unit and rather than there being any full meaning inherent in any one term.

Eagleton (1983:133) further says:

Deconstruction ... has grasped the point  
that the binary oppositions with which  
classical structuralism tends to work  
represent a way of seeing typical of  
ideologies.

In understanding deconstruction as a methodology based on the critique and exposure of the hierarchically distorted power relations which binary oppositions signify as they are deployed in

Western thought and culture, Eagleton sees such a method belonging to post-structuralism as having a political potential.

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Lechte (1994:107) describes deconstruction as:

a process which investigates the  
fundamentals of Western thought  
... one way or another, the whole of  
Derrida's "oeuvre" is an exploration  
of the nature of writing in the broadest  
sense as difference.

Lechte's definition remains true to Derrida's insistence on writing and difference to a degree even though he (Lechte) retains the idea of writing in its narrow, conventionally understood sense, rather than in the broader sense given to it by Derrida. Lechte's choice of the word "process" is an attempt to avoid some of the problems of comprehension around the status of the concept "deconstruction". Process describes an activity which may or may not be internal to the act of writing in the narrow sense of that which one inscribes. For argument sake, the writing of a sentence, deconstruction may be said to be a process which inhabits or contaminates the structure of the conceptual work behind that act of writing.

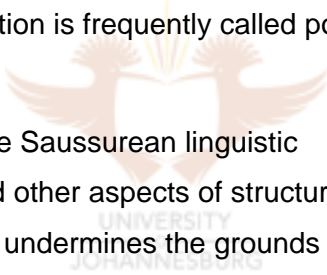
Lechte (1994:8) further argues that:

One may indeed wonder about  
the extent to which such a strategy  
[with reference to deconstruction]  
can be under the (conscious) control  
of the critic.



Here Lechte points out that if we attempt to read Derrida carefully enough, we might begin to doubt the possibility of transforming deconstruction into a methodology or reading practice. This is because of all that Derrida has to say about the workings and movements of deconstruction as one of many elements in the condition of writing. Deconstruction is not a new word, but a very old French word, the fortunes of which underwent particular changes when arriving in the English speaking world.

For Abrams (1988:208) deconstruction is frequently called post-structuralism because:



it employs the Saussurean linguistic concepts and other aspects of structuralism in a way that undermines the grounds both of Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic system and of structuralism itself and results in the claim that the meaning of any text remains radically open to contradictory readings.

For the researcher this new critical movement originated in the United States of America during the presentation by Jacques Derrida of a paper on structure, sign.

Deconstruction emphasises a different approach from the approaches suggested by the pre-post-structuralist theories. According to this theory there is no truth that is capable of representing the truth about any subject and there is nothing outside the text or alternatively. To understand the

contributions of the deconstruction theory it is crucial to study its relationship with structuralism. This is because Derrida uses the Saussurean terminology to develop his own notions especially when he

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uses the concepts signifier and signified. We might say that structuralism is a stepping stone of deconstruction because Derrida uses the basic framework of Saussurean theory as well as his terminology to develop his own idea.

For Jefferson (1986:112) Derrida's quarrel with structuralism is not concerning its Saussurean inspiration but the way in which it has betrayed the very principle on which the Saussurean revolution was founded. Derrida is against Saussurean claim that in language there are only differences without positive terms. This led him to question the key concepts of structuralism, in particular sign and structure and its methodology. In order to appreciate Derrida's critique of these issues, it is also crucial to know something of the position from which he makes it. Derrida uses the concept "logo-centrism" and "difference" in conducting his argument. He uses logo-centrism to describe all forms of thought which are some of external point of reference like the notion of truth.

Derrida in his theory deconstruction is against the promotion of logo-centrism thoughts and presentation of a text by structuralists as a meaningful whole. This implies that structuralism concentrates on the structure of the text. Structuralists emphasises the interrelationship between the constituent structures which form a whole. This shows the opposition because deconstruction is a more text centred theory. Selden (1987:87) says the following:

The notion of "structure" even in 'structuralist' theory has always presupposed a "centre" of

meaning of some sort.

Here Selden emphasizes the fact that for structuralists, the “centre” is regarded as a starting point but in deconstruction this is not the case. Derrida does not only promote the concentration on the

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centre when he analyses a literary work, but promotes concentration even on the most important features of literary work.

The following is a summary of Saussure’s concept of the linguistic sign.

He views language as systems constituted by signs that are arbitrary and differential. Derrida endorses this formulation, but points out that the principle of arbitrariness and differences as against the notion of the sign itself, since it risks degenerating into an entity and the reverting to a metaphysical concept.



Saussure’s linguistic sign consists of the union of two elements; which is a sound image which he terms signifier and the concept which he calls signified.

For Saussure, the sound “**kgomo**” (cow) is a signifier to which corresponds a signified “**kgomo**” in the sense of the concept that the sound evokes in a person’s mind. The sign made up of these two elements is arbitrary in two respects. Firstly, the association of a signifier with a signified is basically the product of a linguistic convention. Secondly there is no link between the sign as a whole and the reality to which it refers.

This simply shows that instead of things determining the meaning of words, words determine the

meaning of things. The evidence of this is that when we look at the word “**kgomo**” is not a reflection of a four-legged animal species but it is by virtue of the sign in question that we distinguish a member of the animal class “**kgomo**” which is the concept we distinguished from other members of the same class such as ‘**pere**’ (horse), ‘**nku**’ (sheep), ‘**podi**’ (goat).

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Derrida takes a different stand from Saussure’s notion of sign. He argues that marks on a page are not just random markings, but signs and that a sign has a double aspect as signifier and signified. According to Derrida a language is a system of signs with each sign consisting both of signifier and signified. This simply means that a sign is both a signifier and signified. Derrida equates language and a system of signifiers and according to Saussure’s principle, this is an error.

Ellis (1989:432) says:



The notion of difference is readily available to Derrida, because inspection of the printed page shows that some marks and sets of marks repeat each other, but that others differ from each other.

For Derrida the use of Saussure’s notion that the identity, either of the sound or of the signification of a sign, does not consist in a positive attribute, but in a negative one that is difference or differentiability from other sounds and other significations, within a particular linguistic system. Before Saussure the sign was regarded as a substitute for something. Signs were by definition signs for things. What Derrida points out is that this view can creep back into the definition of the sign itself once it has been broken down into a signifier and signified.

Jefferson (1986:115) says the following about signifier and signified:

The traditional concept of the sign  
as a vehicle or substitute for an  
idea or a thing can fairly easily be

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transposed to the structure of the sign  
itself, with the signifier being regarded  
as a substitute for the signified.

Derrida points out that Saussure does say that the two namely signifier and signified are inseparable as the two sides of a single sheet of paper, but the very existence of the terms themselves implies the possibility of an independent signified existing prior to its signifier.

The Swiss Linguist Ferdinand de Saussure came up with the theory of the sign, but his definition is not of the sign as such, but of a linguistic sign. One of the most insistent interests in Derrida's writings is the subject of identity. Derrida repeatedly argues about the identity and the structures which inform and perform an identity whether these are the structures of what readers describe as a literary text or the human subject. For Derrida the structure draws on concepts and philosophers which are themselves articulated and structured, while hiding their structurality. Derrida points out that every concept belongs to a systematic chain yet he never raises the issue of identity to the level of a concept itself. Derrida further points out that identity is never known until perceived in a particular form. This means that identity is never identical with itself. Here the question of identity is always shown to be fraught with paradoxes, contradictions and other disjointing movements which make the unity of identity impossible. That which is named deconstruction within the field of forces is the location of the paradoxical or contradictory.

Derrida is not merely opposing writing to speech in the process of reversing a binary opposition, so as to give precedence to a term which is traditionally considered in our thought to have a secondary role, while speech is then relegated from its important role to a secondary position. In Derrida's

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writings there is discerned a process of identifying binary oppositions as the following given by Wolfreys (1998:65) such as Good/Bad, Day/Night, Man/Woman, Speech/Writing, Truth/False-hood.

For Derrida, the reason for identifying such apparent oppositions is to show how despite the fact that the terms are supposed to be equal pairs in our thought, the first word is always given greater value or priority than the second word, which is assumed inferior. In our thought, all the prior terms are used as substitutes for one another in the proof of some absolute truth. According to Wolfreys (1998:65) this privileging and substitution Derrida terms "logo-centrism", Derrida also noticed that the first term was always related to the natural, origin, source and so on. All such terms hide the fact that they are structured by other thoughts, ideas, concepts, structures. For Derrida there is no original term which is not in turn constructed by other ideas because there is no original term which does not in fact operate as a metaphor which can be substituted for other similar terms.

Derrida points out that it is impossible to reduce the couple outside or inside as a simple structure of opposition. Wolfreys (1998:114) quotes Derrida saying:

... the effects or structure of a text  
are not reducible to its truth, to the  
intended meaning of its presumed author,  
or even its supposedly unique and  
identifiable signatory.

For Derrida all concepts perform as writing, as writing effects or structures, their meanings articulated on the basis of their difference from other concepts. Once readers recognize these ideas, they can see how all concepts are part of structures and how all terms prove the structure of

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structure. One of Derrida's suggestions is that the reader might invert the binary opposition, placing the secondary term in the place of the primary term and vice versa and in so doing, see how such an initial displacement reveal structure and relationship showing how the meaning of any term is only produced by its difference from other terms and how there was no absolute centre which was not also already, a supplement itself. It is this process, of first identifying binary oppositions and then inverting them in order to reveal how a text is structured through the privileging of certain metaphors over others. What is in fact merely a passing strategy at a certain time in Derrida's acts of reading has become the basis for a certain methodology which at the extreme, has been used to suggest how, because meaning is not fixed, all textuality is infinitely interpretable and all texts are composed of an endless free play of meanings.

For Jefferson (1986:114)

The concept that Derrida uses in opposition to logocentrism of any kind is "difference" the word is of Derrida's own coinage and is deliberately ambiguous being derived from the French "differ" which means both to defer, postpone, delay and differ, be different from."

With his distinction between "differance" and "difference" Derrida illustrates the point that writing

does not copy speech. He further points out that if an element derives its meaning in opposition to other elements, there is actually no static meaning since meaning is determined in terms of its relationship with other elements. For Derrida the distinction between “differance” and “difference” does not correspond to any distinction in their spoken form.

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For the formalist-structuralist a text has a definite meaning. We hear Gräbe (1986:38) saying the following concerning this fact:

... according to the traditional formalist-structuralist criticism frequently amounted to a process of assigning meaning to words and images, and textual problems were solved by comparing and joining together passages taken from various parts of the text.

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Deconstruction theory differs from the formalist-structuralist approach to literature. It challenges the formalist-structuralist assumption that a text has a definite meaning. It also challenges the distinction between literature and criticism.

### **2.3 THE MEANING OF A TEXT**

Saussurean distinction between synchrony and diachrony supports the structuralist view concerning structures in a text. Structuralists presume that structures are synchronically organised and in this way implies that their elements are present. This view contrasts with Derrida’s view of difference. Derrida’s view is supported by Jefferson (1986:115) when he says:



... elements are seen as part of a chain of relationship which cannot be defined as either diachronic or synchronic

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and so cannot be reduced to the states of an object in the way that synchronically defined structure can.

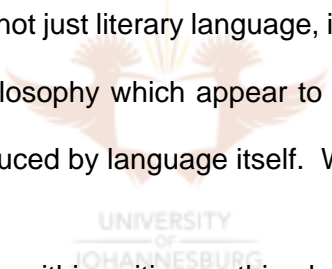
This simply means that the concept of structure is replaced in Derrida's writing by the concept of a chain of signification which avoids the dangers implicit in the nature of structure. Derrida maintains that there is nothing outside the text nothing except text. This assertion is in Derrida's thinking on language in general and may be applied to individual texts. But if language is not governed by anything outside it no more individual texts. For Selden (1985) this seems to have parallels with the Russian Formalist attempt to have a theory to literature that would exclude all factors external to the texts, such as history, culture, psychology and so on. Some of the values that have often been associated with literature would seem to conform to Derrida's anti-logo-centric approach as far as language has been presumed to exceed to a greater or lesser extent any content or message it may have. This brings us to the notion that the medium or language is not entirely transparent to its object. Derrida's notion is seen in a number of literary works, a keener sense of the principle of difference than can be found in any work of linguistics or philosophy.

Derrida has his own strategies of writing. His strategies are likely to be familiar to a person with experience of literature. As he points out that writing can never be governed by the intention and avowed aims of its authors, we find him saying of Rousseau that what he writes is different from

what he means to say because he is bound, as we all are to say more or less, or something quite other than what he would mean or would like to say, (Derrida, 1976:158).

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Deconstruction has taken this assumption as its starting point, and has presumed that a literary text is not necessarily saying what it intends to say. This is what distinguishes the reading of literature from the reading of philosophy which requires the reader to understand in full what it means. Literary work in general would seem to support Derrida's claim about the principle of difference in language. The notion of these claims means that we cannot regard literature as a special kind or use of language. All language and not just literary language, is informed by the play of difference. The discourses of science and philosophy which appear to be directed towards some external reference are simply an effect produced by language itself. We hear Derrida (1976:287) saying:



Philosophy is, within writing, nothing but  
the movement of writing as effacement  
of the signifier and the desire of presence  
restored.

According to Derrida, philosophy is just a certain type of writing in which the signifying element of language has been repressed in favour of the signified. Philosophy and science occupy the secondary position that was previously ascribed to literature, it makes no sense to speak of literature as a special kind of language. In Derrida's thinking there is no special category for literature.

According to Jefferson (1986:118)

In Derrida's writing the science of semiology is replaced by grammatology which as he says, takes the form of a question rather than of a new science. Similarly, structural analysis is replaced by deconstruction which also questions its objects rather

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than reflecting them. Grammatology is the "science" of writing in so far as writing is regarded as a generalized phenomenon, as archi-écriture.

What Derrida argues is that any discourse which conceives of itself as scientific is bound to be logocentric, it will assume that it is transparent to its object and that particular object is a stable entity. For Derrida neither language nor literature is a stable object, because neither the language of the text we read, nor the language of the discourse in which readers discuss them is exempt from differance. A deconstructive reading tries to bring out the logic of the text's language as opposed to the logic of its author's claims.

For Derrida a text is a book without meaning in its own. It will only possess meaning when a reader reads it and assigns meaning to it. Meaning is crucial into text by the reader, because when creative writers compose text, they do not create the meaning of their text. Readers are the people who create meaning of texts. What people should remember is that readers do not read alike, they do not even interpret the meaning of a text alike. The reader is actively constructing a meaning for the text and not passively deciphering the meaning because there is no single meaning in literary works. The plurality of meaning in a text is a logical consequence of the absence of any authorial intention in literature. The multiplicity of meaning in text is accentuated by Barthe's (1966:50-51)

words:

If words only had one (dictionary) meaning, there would be no literature. Literature is based on the very plurality of meanings ... a work is “eternal”, not because it imposes one meaning on different

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men, but because it suggests different meanings to one man.

Deconstructionists believe that the work of art has multiple meanings. From one text, there is a reader's meaning as well as the author's meaning. This brings us to the point that readers should be careful when they read a literary text. They should not only look for what they want from a text, but they must also be aware of the creative writer's intention. Readers are given freedom to read texts without constraints and this simply means that text can mean an infinity of meanings. This brings us to the fact that a text is liberated from its author to mean whatever the reader thinks it means.

For Ellis (1989:117), there are two steps to liberate a text. There is a liberation from the author, secondly there is liberation from the rules and conventions of the language a text is written in. A literary text means whatever any reader believes it to mean, because readers make meaning. The possible meanings that are found in a poem are infinite because they are created by readers. The reader is free to enter the text from any direction because there is no correct route to enter a text. They are free to take their pleasure of the text, they are also free to connect the text with systems of meaning and ignore the author's intention.

Bloom (1979:3) further says the following about meaning:

Freedom in a poem must mean freedom  
of meaning, the freedom to have meaning  
of one's own.

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This complements the notion that there are no rules for interpreting words and words will not interpret themselves. Readers are to interpret words and this brings us to the notion that they can never interpret words or texts alike, because there are no rules that they must follow when they interpret texts. Readers are instrumental in producing text's meanings, and they are also instrumental in discovering the text's plurality of meanings. Sometimes readers even create meanings of a text.



Jefferson (1986:98) says:

So without any authorial guarantee  
concerning meaning, the critic's job is no  
longer to retrieve the meaning of a text,  
but rather, in the full knowledge that the  
meanings of the text are plural, to produce  
an interpretation which realizes just one of the  
possibilities contained in the text.

Jefferson's comment simply means that the reader is no longer the servant of the text or the author.

It is on this point that deconstruction and reader response criticism meet. This is complemented by

Selden (1985:116) when he says:

The meaning of the text is never self-formulated,  
the reader must act upon the textual material  
in order to produce meaning ... literary texts  
always contain 'blanks' which only the reader  
can fill.

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This means that there is no readily available meaning of a text, and the reader must investigate meaning from a text. A reader must assign meaning to a text so that it can in turn be important to him. It is important for us to be familiar with the deconstructional belief that a text is a book with no meaning until a reader assigns meaning to it. Two different readers won't assign one or the same meaning from a text. This brings us to the notion that there is multiplicity of meanings from one text.

Meaning is a very crucial aspect in poetry. Deconstruction as a literary theory, believes that there is no single correct interpretation of a poem or a poetry text is possible because there is no single meaning of a poem, but these are multiplicity of meaning in a poem.

The researcher considers deconstruction theory to represent an important dominant element in post-structuralism. This literary theory emphasises a totally different approach to the study of poetry from the approaches suggested by the pre-post-structuralist theories. One thing that must be considered is that the pre-post-structuralist theories play an important role in literature, and we should not throw them out of the window just because we have new literary theories. Deconstruction brought a new light into the way we had to look into our literature but as a new theory it present itself as drawing from a distinct set of basic assumptions laid down by the traditional approaches we had earlier. This simply means that the traditional approaches form the

basis for the new approaches in the post-structuralist period.

Deconstruction can also serve to question the presumption of certain university and cultural institutions to act as privileged transmitters of meaning. Here the researcher simply means that deconstruction not only teaches us to read literature more thoroughly by attending to it as language, literature as the production of meaning through difference and dissemination, through a complex play of signifying traces, but deconstruction also enables readers to interrogate the covert

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philosophical and political presuppositions of institutionalized critical methods which in true sense govern our reading of a text.

All the same, and in spite of appearances, deconstruction is neither an analysis nor a critique. It is not an analysis in particular because the dismantling of a structure is not a regression toward a simple element, toward an in-dissolvable origin. It is also important to note that deconstruction is not even an act or an operation. Not only because there would be something passive about it, not only because it does not return to an individual or collective subject who would take initiative and apply it to an object, a text or a theme.

The word deconstruction like all other words, acquires its value from its inscription in a chain of possible substitutions in what is too blithely called a context. This challenges those who would teach deconstruction as a method or theory of criticism. The statement argues for an understanding of the highly provisional and interchangeable nature of the word. This precondition of the term deconstruction, makes it impossible to hijack the term for a particular purpose. Wolfreys (1998:53) quotes Derrida saying “all sentences of the type deconstruction is X or deconstruction is not X a priori miss the point, which is to say that they are at least false.”

The idea of methodology is difficult to conceive if one pays close attention to Derrida's statement. This idea of "reading deconstructively" is an impossibility as a proposal for a general act of reading or as an example of the application of a theory called deconstruction.

### 2.3.1 Words of a poem

Poetry is an art that differs from other arts because its building material namely words are complex

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in themselves. Words are not a means to an end. We might take the word "flower" and recognize the kind of plant, but beside being a plant there is another meaning that can be deducted from it. This is supported by Selden (1985) when he says that in his case it is merely a signifier that allows us to communicate. One may think of different plants that one knows.

Rudyard Kipling said in 1923, as quoted by Wade (1997:25):

"Words are of course the most powerful drug used by mankind."

Here Kipling was stressing the power of original uses of language. The poetic force of verbal dynamics never fails to impress the readers.

Let us take a look at Maphalla's poem Mahohodi from his poetry volume "Mahohodi".

Meduwane ya kgale e ile le dikgohola.

E lelemetse le maqhubu melapong.

Meriti ya makala re sa tla e hopola.



Ha dikoqo di se di hlatseditswe mabopong.

Ke tseo he beso tsa batjhana, mahohodi,

Maratha a dilepe tsa kgalala tsa kgale;

A ke le beseng mollo wa motona, Kganarehadi.

Sebabole se sa tlo tima ke re le kgale!

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(Old willows have been swept away by floods,

They meandered along in the waves of streams,

We will miss the shades of branches,

When logs have been vomited on to the river banks.

Our nephews thos are hearths the alluvium,

The left-overs from the old sages;

Please make a great fire, a flame.

The sulphur-fire that will never go out.)

The first meaning in Stanza 1

The poet observes that the old willows have been washed away by the eroding storm-waters. He points out that the old willows have gone away with the waves in the stream. He laments that the shades provided by their branches will be missed. The poet emphasizes that the nation will strongly miss the shades provided by these old willows when some logs have been vomited by the greedy storms on the banks of the river.

The second meaning

When using connotation he refers to the old poets as logs and poetry as “**meduwane**” (willows) whose pleasurable creative writing “shade” we will miss when storm-waters (which he portrays as censorship) has banish and sent them to prison. Fortunately some poets “**dikoqo**” (logs) have been released from imprisonment. He says that some logs have been “vomited” by the greedy storms on

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to the banks (**mabopong**) of the river. These logs are the little the poet has learned from the old sages.



The first meaning in Stanza 3

The poet presents these logs as the firewood for his nephews. He refers to these firewood as the left-overs as the greedy storms swept the willow trees away. The poet further appeals to the readers to make a huge fire that will not go off. He wants this fire to be like sulphur-fire that will never be extinguished.

The second meaning

These (**dibeso**) hearths are the little the poet has learned from the old poets (logs). He presents them for acceptance to the reader as **maratha a dilepe tsa kgalala tsa kgale** (the left-overs from the old sages). The poet presents his poetry to the reader and appeals for acceptance because this is what he learned from the old poets. He implores the reader to make use of these gathered

logs meaning his writings. Readers should make use of these hearths to make a big fire namely to kindle interest and appreciation that will never subside. **Sebabole se sa tlo tima. Ke re le kgale!** (Sulphur-fire that will never be extinguished-never).

It is hard to imagine Maphalla not active in politics. His interest in politics was inspired by the regime of the National Party. In most of his poems, he is protesting against the apartheid laws but what is unusual is that he also comes back to human beings. He consoles and cleanses their hearts.

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His message is clear; he has put to use whatever traces of aesthetic art he has learned from his forerunners. He introduces this to the reader and pleads that it be made accessible to those who follow with the hope that they may bear better fruits.

The logo of the University of Johannesburg, featuring two stylized human figures with arms raised, holding hands, with a sunburst above them. Below the figures, the text "UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG" is written in a serif font.

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#### Denotation and connotation meaning of “noka” in Stanza 2

Let us consider an example: The word “**noka**” (river) its signification appear in the Essential English Dictionary. River: A large amount of fresh water flowing continuously in a long line across land.

According to the dictionary meaning, the river remains a river, a token of a type, always and only a copious stream of water. But when the word “**noka**” is worked into the language of poems it takes on meaning as a feature of their design. The river is not only a copious stream, it is also a mysterious movement in dreams, or the weariness of life. And all this because the word fits into place in a unique pattern of language in the poem, a pattern of sound and lexical association and

syntactic form created by arrangement which has no dependence on the conventional functioning of syntax.

The relationship of sound and meaning is of its nature arbitrary. For Saussure the arbitrary relationship was one of the two primordial characteristics of the linguistic sign, and represents one of the two basic principles of language. But in poetry this principle is not operative because sounds are fashioned into designs which are meaningful. The patterns of language are significant beyond their function of realizing the rules of the conventional code and this is the reason why there can be no transposing into different message form by paraphrase without radical alternation of meaning. The double structure of poetry, the convergence of patterns, necessarily depend on the denial of

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double structure as a primordial characteristic of the linguistic sign. Poetry operates on a fundamental difference and contrary principle from that which informs conventional language use.

The logo of the University of Johannesburg, featuring a stylized sunburst or flower-like emblem above the text "UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG".

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## **2.4 CONCLUSION**

We should be familiar with the deconstructional belief that a poem is a literary art with no meaning in its own unless someone designs meaning to it. Ellis (1989:139) has this to say:

Authors do not create the meaning  
of their texts by composing them,  
but instead readers do by reading them.

Readers should investigate meaning from a poem because a readily available meaning of a poem does not exist. The meaning of a poem is never self-formulated, the reader must act upon the

textual material in order to produce meaning. Selden (1985:119) quotes Gadamer arguing that:

A literary work does not pop into  
the world as a finished and neatly parceled  
bundle of meaning. Meaning depends on  
the historical situation of the interpreter.

The researcher believes that competent readers go beyond the surface meaning of a poem. If readers attend only to a poem's meaning, it means that readers reduce it to a string of unrelated bits. It requires ordinary linguistic competence to understand the meaning of a poem, but the reader needs literary competence to deal with the frequent ungrammaticalities encountered in reading a



poem. During the process of reading, the reader is forced to uncover a second meaning of a poem which will explain the ungrammatical features of the text.

Drury (1991:143) quotes Frost saying:

A good sentence does double duty:  
it conveys one meaning by word and syntax  
[and] another by the tone of voice it indicates.

Poets often use irony, saying one thing but intending another. It is simple to pick up the inflections and insinuations of a speaker's tone of voice, but in a poem we are depended on other clues; such as word choice, phrasing or rhythm. The poem's tone is its manner of speaking, its mood. It can be neutral but often it will be adored and shaded to suggest emotions, instead of boldly stating

them.

There are two ways of using words, one artistic, one non-artistic. This brings us to the notion that words themselves can be viewed in two different ways. Here we can talk of the meaning that a word has in the dictionary (what other people call the denotation) and the connotations which means the associations that the words have gained through constant use. The dictionary definition is designed only to make you understand what the word means.

The poet is much more concerned with the connotations, the way in which he makes his words move or excites readers. The poet, whose literary work is said to represent the highest form of literature, is concerned with the connotations of words.



The word can carry two meanings, can suggest two different things at the same time. It is not only the dictionary meaning that counts, it is sound, suggestion of other meanings as well as connotations. Poetry relies mostly on the power of words, their manifold suggestiveness and in that sense we may say that poetry is the most literary of all branches of literature. It is most literary because it makes the greatest use of the raw material of literature, which are words.

## CHAPTER 3

### CREATIVITY AND ART IN POETRY OF FOUR POETS

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is informed by creative voices of the following writers: C.L.J. Mophethe, L.S. Booysen, N.S. Litabe and P.T.P.K. Maboea. In this chapter we intend to examine the overview of our research into the nature of “the voice of Sesotho creative writers”. The art of poetry is not primarily a critical activity, it is creative. When a poet composes a poem, he has to select words and his selection involves a critical judgement.

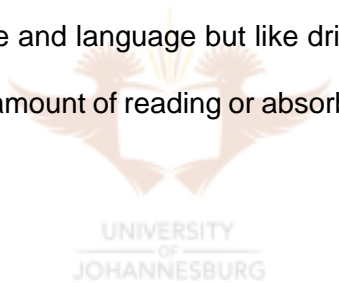
The word “voice” is indeed, used to mean “art”, to mean “to value highly” and also to mean “beauty”. But not even one of these meanings is appropriate to mean exactly what should be meant when we talk of “the voice of Sesotho creative writers”. If we all agree that “the voice of Sesotho creative writers” means understanding beauty or the awareness of beauty that is found in poetry, and leave this idea unanalysed, we will be theorising about poetry, because we will be talking about poetry. But when we are talking about something else suggested by poetry, we consider that the arousing emotions or appeals of poetry constitutes the appropriate meaning of the phrase “The voice of Sesotho creative writers”.

The “appeals” of our poets lead to the focus and discussion about the beauty of words and about the beautiful examples of images and symbols, all of which form the unity of the whole poem. Our intention here is not only to discover the relations of the content of a poem to its form, but also to go

deeper and arrive at some conclusions about the ways in which the essentials of beauty or beauties are co-ordinated.

### 3.2 CREATIVITY AND ART

Creative writing is a skill - like other skills, it can be learnt and like most skills it is not an inborn thing. For example, few people lack the basic equipment to learn to drive a car, but most become skillful car drivers only after much practice. Confidence is the main necessity and having the courage to get on and try. The same is true for creative writing. Most people have the basic equipment such as tact, experience and language but like driving a car, creative writing is a skill that must be learnt by doing it. No amount of reading or absorbing rules and advice can substitute for practice.



According to the New Standard World Dictionary (1985:237) creativity is:

“The ability to see things in a new and unusual light, to see problems that no one else may even recognize the existence of and then to come up with new, unusual and effective solution. Creativity can thus be thought of in terms of solutions to problems. The poet writing a sonnet is solving a problem ... the musician composing a symphony, the sculptor chiseling

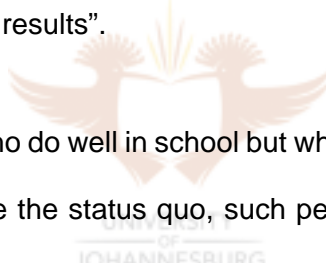


a form from a block of marble ...”

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This view is supported by Essential English Dictionary (1989:180).

“Someone who is creative has the ability to invent and develop original ideas especially in art. Creative activities involve the inventing and developing of these ideas. If you use something in a creative way, you use it in a new way that produces interesting and unusual results”.



For the researcher bright people who do well in school but who exhibit little evidence of the quality that advances rather than enhance the status quo, such people are intelligent but not creative. People who test poorly and muddle their way through school but who constantly come up with original ideas, are creative. It seems then that creativity and intelligence often do not go hand in hand. From the above mentioned views on creativity, it seems then that creativity and art often do go hand in hand.

The Encyclopedia Americana Vol.2 (1986:382) sees art in the following way:

The word “art” comes from Latin - “ars”, meaning “skill” and it still retains this original meaning for example the art of cooking. But it has come to have a wider

significance. In the broadest sense,  
art embraces all the creative disciplines -

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literature, poetry, drama, music, dance  
and the visual arts.

The researcher sees art as the creative activities such as drama, poetry or sculpture in which people create something beautiful or to express a particular idea.

When asked: *Is there a relationship between “creativity and art”?* The poets responded in the following ways:

*Booyesen: Creativity and art are two concepts which are interdependent. A poet starts first by creating a poem, thereafter he makes it beautiful. Creativity will not go well without artistry which is the creative skill of an artist. If poets really have something worth saying, they are bound by the nature and necessities of their language to say it. In their creativity they exhibit their artistry by the language they use when they compose poems.*

*Mophethe: Both “creativity” and “art” are conversation between the reader and me. Creativity has a lot to do with writing and I think it is inseparable from “art” because “art” makes creativity to be highly valued. It is good for anyone who wishes to become a good poet to endeavour before he allows himself to be tempted by the more showy qualities to be direct, simple, brief, vigorous and lucid.*

*Litabe: Creativity has got something to do with “art”. Creativity and art is like a tree and its flowers.*

*A tree without flowers is as good as dead wood. There is a close connection between creativity and*

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*“art” because this is what makes literature or poetry different from other arts. Here I am referring to language we use in creating poetry because it is different from the one we use in our daily communication. The relationship between “creativity” and “art” is revealed by the employment of word economy. But in practising an economy of words, one should not make the mistake of using too few words. One should again not pack important thoughts so closely that your readers have no time to grasp the full meaning of a poem.*

*Maboea: Yes, I think there is a close connection between “creativity” and “art”. In creative writing, a poet is like a hairdresser who has to cut your hair with clips. The hairdresser needs his tools in order for him to perform his duty. I believe the imagination is the tool and one’s words to display the connection between creativity and “art”. But the poet’s subject should not be drowned in a sea of words, nor starved of the words needed to convey a thought precisely or to give it strength.*

The creativity and artistic mode as realised in the poetry of the four poets we interviewed is recognisable through language. Poetry is a vital and surprising language because even if a poem contains the whole range of human emotions, but if its language is not vital and surprising, those emotions will not be effectual. We have discussed “imagery” and “repetitions” as the basic devices of the poets, but without a vital and surprising language, they are nothing. Poetry is language, and we have to consider the type of language employed by Booysen; Mophethe; Litabe and Maboea.

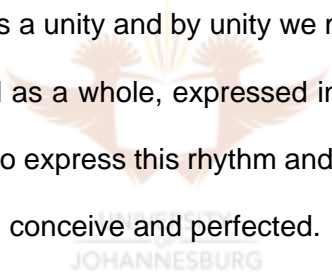
On the contrary “creativity and art” are complex activities in which all the powers of the poet’s mind are working together to form on unity. It is expected of the poet to have insight and vision and at

the same time to have an awareness of the choice of his words to express his experiences. The

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creation of a poem consists of knowing meanings of words as far as a poet is able, and a perception of the sounds of the words. It is expected of the poet to animate and visualize these activities by emotion and to combine them harmoniously into a co-ordinated unity. "Creativity and art" involve associations and imagery strengthening thought, the sounds expressing this thought and emotion, and all these being in line with rhythm and all ordered and shaped by the poet's stanza form. The poet's experience of choosing words expresses all these thoughts, associations, images and emotions, with particular qualities of their rhythm and pattern.

The creativity and art of a poem has a unity and by unity we mean close associations of thought, imagery and emotion apprehended as a whole, expressed in rhythmic and patterned language. The language that a poet employs to express this rhythm and pattern is imaginative and makes a "form" which the poet has striven to conceive and perfected.



Poetry in one sense is all form ... not properly  
the artistic treatment of the subject, but  
the subject so translated into form that the  
mind does not want anything else (Gurrey, 1968:109).

In creating poetry the poet is not only receiving new ideas, and new impressions, but he is also receiving words to express these experiences. The true moment of "creativity and art" is that in which the poet makes his readers recognise the "form" of the imaginative creation. This is not a simple event, but it is complex and it is an experience in which the poet's mental powers are functioning very hard. The poet appeals to the reader's sense of rhythm, powers of forming

imagery, perception of sound and his emotions, and that all these elements are not separate

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entities, to bring him to an awareness of beauty through unity. When the poet succeeds in combining all these elements to penetrate into the reader's imagination as one "form", the poet has succeeded in displaying his creation. When the poet's combination of these elements reaches the readers' imagination and make them aware that they (readers) have come into contact with "something" which excites their "wonder", which stirs their exultation and leaves them with "satisfaction", then he has succeeded in displaying his "creativity and art".

Even today, there are still people who do not understand why we have creative writers. Other people believe that creative writers compose literary works of art because they want to earn money.

Let us hear the views of the poets we interviewed when they respond to the following question:

*"What causes you to write?"*



*Booyesen: There are many factors that causes a person to write, but generally a person writes because he has a spark in him. Every person has a spark or talent of doing something. The spark of creative writing enables me to recognise things that other people do not recognise. Creative writing can thus be thought of in terms of solutions to problems. Problems cause me to write and if I write a poem, I am solving a problem. If a musician composes a song he/she is solving a problem. Just remember that you cannot use yesterday's methods to solve today's problems.*

*Mophethe: The truth that I wish to convey to my readers, causes me to write. Poetic language is the result of creativity, art and a belief in truth. Truth is a condition of the human*

heart.

*Through language a poet uses what material he can to present truth in the best possible way. From such a poem the reader must be able to see that there is truth and belief in it. Poetry is an instrument to broaden our awareness of life. Through poetry I take my readers through their imagination deeper into the real situation and make them understand the nature of existence. It is the personal satisfaction that comes when you ring the bell and know it. When you know you have completely expressed your idea, it is knowing that you have written the truth.*

*Litabe: I never planned on being a poet. The worldly problems and difficulties forced me to create poetry, just for the sake of relieving my painful thoughts. I had problems concerning my domestic life and on top of that my wife passed away. I could not handle the situation and I only thought of one thing, to commit suicide. I remember when I was near a dam, thinking of throwing myself into it, but suddenly something rang in my mind and I thought of writing so that my heart could be relieved.*

*At that moment I sat near the foot of the mountain and started writing the book entitled "Boikgutsong ba Thabanantlenyana".*

*Maboea: The real writer will write because he has something inside of him that must come out. In other words I write because I want to say something to the community. If I have a poem in me, I sit down and write it. There is no surgery approach through which this sort of thing can be examined. If I have something for my readers, I say what I have to say, but I say it in such a way that the reader can hear what I mean. I also write*

*because one of the functions of literature is to heal the broken souls of people. I*

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*comfort their soul and make them understand their problems, because once they understand their problems, they will be able to deal with them.*

Poets also make it a point that they go out of their way to break general rules of the language in order to produce what is known as “art”. Furniss and Bath (1996:10) maintain that poetic language is “the current language heightened” and it can also be described in terms of literariness. For Rice and Waugh (1992:17), literariness is that which makes a text - a literary work. Literariness has to do with the special language that achieves its distinctness by deviating from the practical language which is the language used for acts of daily communication while literary language is the language that makes readers see things or episodes in a different way. Literariness of literature or poetry is achieved through the use of literary language.

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The primary aim of literature in thus foregrounding its medium, as Victor Shklovsky said, is to “estrangle” or “defamiliarize”, that is by disrupting the ordinary modes of linguistic discourse, literature “makes strange” the world of everyday perception and renews the reader’s lost capacity for fresh sensation (Abrams, 1988:236).

Literary language defamiliarizes habitual things and ordinary language. Literary art can do this by employing various techniques in a way that will disrupt familiar responses from the reader. The most outstanding technique of literary “art” is to make “familiar” objects “unfamiliar”. A poet can

achieve defamiliarization by employing various literary devices.

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### 3.2.1 Artistic unity

The creative writer (an artist) may make a play, poem or story (novel), but he wants to make the people who see or hear or read his creation feel excited and say about it, "That is beautiful".

Burgess (1984:3) says:

"The primary task of the artist's creations is to be beautiful". Artists take raw material and force it into a pattern. A sculptor will take hard, shapeless stone and force it into the resemblance of a human figure. Here unity has been established between completely different things, soft flesh and hard stone and also between the shapely human figure and the shapeless inhuman rock. The novelists take incidents from human life and give them a plot, a beginning and an end, which is a pattern too. Unity, order and pattern may be created in other ways too. The poet may bring two completely different things together and make them into a unity by creating a metaphor or simile.

Let us see how Booyesen brings unity in his poem "Phate ya Ntate".

Basotho ba ntate ke a lla,  
Pelo ya ka e sisa ha bohloko,  
Meokgo e tsholoha marameng,  
Ke llela phate ya ntate.

(Booyesen, 1987:1)

(My fellow men I weep,  
My heart sobs painfully

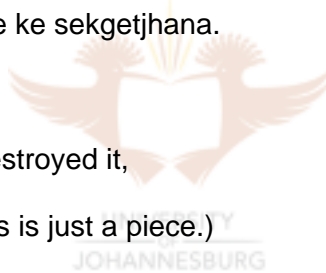


Tears overflow on cheeks,  
I mourn for father's kaross.)

In this poem the poet sobs painfully for the skin of an animal that belongs to his father. The reader wonders why is the poet crying for something that can be bought, that can be replaced. The answer is found in the following lines:

Empa tshwele e e jele,  
Kajeno phate ke sekgetjhana.

(But moth destroyed it,  
Today kaross is just a piece.)



Here the reader gets an answer that this skin belonging to the poet's father cannot be replaced, or it cannot be bought. Here we see Booyesen's creativity where he takes two different things and create a meaningful unity in his poem. He tells us of "**phate ya ntate**" which means "a skin spread on the ground as a bed, that belongs to the father. Here the poet chooses words for their suggestive power, as well as their meaning to express what he intends to impart to readers. Deconstruction as a literary theory gives its readers plenty of freedom to read poems without any constraints to discover as many meanings as possible. This is supported by Ellis (1989:125) who says the following about the multiplicity of meaning:

"A poem really means whatever any reader

seriously believes it to mean” or that “there is

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no limit to these meanings since the mind finds in the text whatever it is looking for” is through the numerical terminology of many, unlimited meanings, as opposed to one meaning”.

The poet takes two different things which is “**phate**” and associates it with **ntate** (the father). In “**Phate ya ntate**” (the father’s skin mat) there is a possessive element “**ya ntate**” (of the father). By “**phate**” the poet is referring to the “world” but the one belonging to the father. This reminds us of Psalm (24:1) which says:



The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof  
the world and those who dwell therein.

It is evident that the poet sobs painfully for the Lord’s world, because it was enough for all the people. But the poet says now there is only a small piece of this world left. For the poet rust destroyed this beautiful land or world. By “moth” the poet is referring to the National Party Government which took the land from black people and placed them where they did not belong or like.

Gurrey (1968:34) says:

... we must remember that poetry does  
not consist of merely “beautiful words” ...

but is concerned with giving us new, distinctive,  
and particular experience.

Let us focus on the following lines from Litabe's poem entitled: Wa lla molodi, hwapa ke sa mang?

Keukeukeu! Keukeukeu! Keukeukeu! qidingqiding!

Keukeukeu!

Thaba tsa reketla, phala tsa hwasana;

Tshepe tsa hlabana moolo mesong, ya hosana.

(Litabe, 1983:1)

(Ring! Ring! Ring! Ring! Ring!

Mountains trembled, vales rustled,

Bells tolled in the early morning of the day.)

The implied meanings of words in poetry and associations give readers reality to general ideas. If we look at the first line of Litabe's poem is not the "ringing of a bell" (**ho lla ha tshepe**) which gives the poem its artistic value but it is the "tolling" of a bell (**seboko sa tshepe**).

We say this because this is a funeral bell and this sound of a bell is associated with a solemn emotion. The idea of death is enforced by the phrase: **Thaba tsa reketla** (mountains shivered).

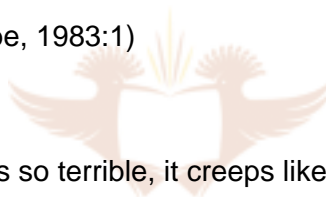
The line **Tshepe tsa hlabana moolo mesong, ya hosana** (Bells tolled in the early morning, of the day) does not present readers with a simple or usual dawn of the day, but the dawn's departure felt

deeply in a mourning way. The phrase above makes the dawn to be definite, it is not vague or to be imagined in different ways.

The poet takes two different things and creates a unit from them. He takes an inanimate thing which is “death” and also takes a human being and creates one unit, which means that the death of a human being is necessary for people to meet the Lord. The poet says:

Fu la thipa ho tshabeha, ho nanyetsa, eka letolo.

(Litabe, 1983:1)



(Murder by knife, it's so terrible, it creeps like lightning.)

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This description resembles a strong human being who started long ago to work (kill) but even today, he is not yet tired. He will keep on working till there is no more work for him to do. The picture of this strong man keeps on coming into readers' minds as they read through the poem. Apart from personification, beauty brings objects or phenomenon (death) closer to the human beings. The poet brings unity by bringing death and human being closer and makes them to belong to one class so that they share with him in his appreciation of another part of life which is death.

The excitement poets derive from work of art is mostly the excitement of seeing connections that did not exist before, of seeing quite different aspects of life unified through a pattern. Through this artistic unity, poets find a means of setting down the reader's emotions – joy, sorrow and regret. Poets are experts at expressing emotions for us. A death in the family and other calamities are

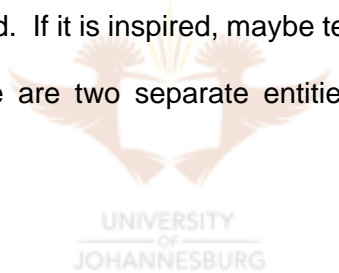
soothed by poetry, which seems to find in words a means of getting the sorrow out of our system.

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We feel that we do not have to bear the sorrow on our own, because our sorrow is part of the universe and a necessity. When we discover that a thing such as “death” is necessary we no longer complain about it. In poetry the emotions are not only stirred, but they are brought into artistic relation with the other elements of life by the power of the poet’s words. The emotions are held to the experience and worked into its unity because they intensify the thought and imagination.

### 3.3 POETIC TECHNIQUE

We have said that poetry is inspired. If it is inspired, maybe technique too is inspired. We do not believe that poetry and technique are two separate entities, they are inseparable. Reeves (1970:105) sees technique as:



The “How?” of poetry - how it is written,  
how language and form are chosen.

Booyesen presents his poems artistically and readers see artistic beauty in his work. In the following poem he speaks about the importance of time:

Nako ke ntho ya bohlokwa,  
E a tsamaya ha e emele motho,  
Ha e o siile o le bale,  
E matha la ntshwekge.

(Booyesen, 1987:65)

(Time is a precious thing  
 It moves it does not wait for a person,  
 If you are late you must forget  
 It runs like Ntshwekge.)

This stanza is from Booyesen's poem entitled "Nako" (Time) written in a well practised command of poetic form and the ability to express what he wants to say in adequate language. If we look at Booyesen's technique we might be correct to say that his technique is his ability to match the structure and language of his poem to the thought and mood which he wants to convey to his readers. "Artistic beauty" implies the power to create poetic movement through rhythm. It implies also the ability to find the right words which means that Booyesen possesses a large vocabulary and graphic imagination.

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The poet personifies time, as though it hears what the poet says about it. This device draws the reader's attention to imagine this object that the poet is talking about. The poet emphasises the fact that time moves forward and it will not come back. In other words it does not wait for a person and for this reason we see the poet employing three synonymous words in which he appeals to the reader to create three situations and perceive them differently. The phrases are: "E a tsamaya", "Ha e o siile" and "E matha". These phrases carry the same idea that "time and tide wait for no man", even though this idea is expressed differently. The poet displays his linguistic creativity and artistic ability through the use of his poetic language. Artistic beauty is vivid in this poem because the poet takes time as a common thing and portray it in an unusual way. This is witnessed when the poet reveals a deeper meaning of the concept "nako" (time). Personification brings beauty and

unity in the above stanza. The poet's stanza is composed of personification and this personification acts like a person who unite things to make one thing.

In the poem entitled "Diketso le Mookgo", let us see and hear how Mophethe chooses language and form.

Diketso ngwana wa ho fela habo,  
 Mookgo ngwana ya mong to habo;  
 Mong o horula pitsa ya habo  
 E mong o hlatswa sebae sabo.

(Mophethe, 1983:81)

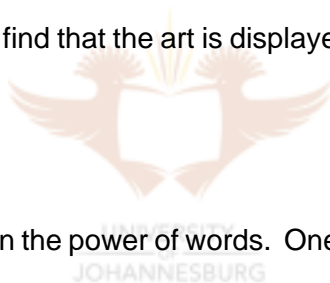
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(Diketso the last born at his home,  
 Mookgo the only child at her home;  
 The other one is the one and the only,  
 The other one is an heir.)

If we look at the above stanza, we notice that it is a moulded pot into which the molten stuff of poetry can be poured. The stanza has a "breath" of poetic life in it. In other words, the form of the above stanza exerts a particular important shaping of the poet's poetic experience, to work out his artistic design. Mophethe's stanza form is the shape which his experience takes under the stress of words. The artistic beauty is seen where each line consist of six words. From the above stanza we see grouping, development and progression of the poet's thoughts.

The last words “**habo**” create the impression that two similar ideas are being linked together to form one idea. These are “Diketso” and “Mookgo”. The repetition emphasises that there is a common characteristic between the young people, “Diketso” and “Mookgo”. “Diketso” is a young man who is the last born at his home, and “Mookgo” is a young woman who is the only child at her home. Because of common characteristics between the two, they ended up being a husband and wife. The poet’s advice through the poem is that young people should see to it that they have common characteristics before they enter into matrimony.

If we look at Mophethe’s stanza we find that the art is displayed by the use of imagery which is not merely visual.



The beauty of poetry relies mostly on the power of words. One may agree with us that poetry is the most literary of the branches of literature because it makes use of the raw material of literature, which is words. In poetry, the poet is concerned with expressing emotions such as - love; hate; sorrow; pity - relying in most cases on the power of the words he chooses. Poets are more concerned with the connotations, the way in which they can make their words excite their readers. Poets do not restrict their words because once their words are allowed to vibrate freely, they will not only call up associations but also suggest other completely different meanings.

Poets when asked *how they “create” beauty in their poetry,*? responded in this way:

*Booyesen: Most of the beauty has to do with the rhythm of a poetry line. I am much concerned with the rhythm of language. Let us consider the following example: “**Letsatsi le***



**tswile**" (the sun came up).

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*I regard the above line as an inadequate sentence or line of a poem. Even though it conveys the necessary information to the reader, rhythmically it is lacking. But if I say: "**Letsatsi le tswile le le letsho**" (the sun came up being black) not only I have perhaps entertained the fancy of the reader, but I have made a more complete line of a poem, the sound and beauty of a sentence.*

*Here I associate the "sun" with "black colour" which is unusual in a true sense. This association creates beauty in the eye, and minds of my readers. When they see a black colour others might think of war where people are dying in the battle fields, others will think of bad luck, while others will think of beauty as the saying goes: "black is beautiful".*

*Mophethe: The poem on its own is beautiful if it means beauty. The way in which the building blocks of a poem are placed, makes it beautiful. By the building blocks of a poem, I am referring to the "words" or language employed to create poetry. The beauty of a poem*

*consists of knowing the complete meaning of the words. Words assist a poet to be able to take the building blocks of a poem such as, sound, symbols images, just to mention few, and combine them harmoniously into a co-ordinated unity. A poet might be a good speaker of the language, but if he cannot have a good choice of his poetry words, then his poem cannot display its "beauty". By unity here I mean a real and close association of thoughts and imagery and if these are apprehended as a whole, are expressed in rhythmic and patterned language to make a form of a poem which is also*

*the beauty of a poem.*

*Litabe: For one thing, the subject matter must hold some interest on its own. To make it a well written poem, it should be constructed logically and thoughtfully and be presented in an efficient fashion. The poet should have some respect for the mother tongue. The grammar, syntax and rhetoric must be accepted and I mean accepted by some established standards.*

*Words are the building material of poetry and a good selection of them, displays the artistic beauty of a poem. Words can be viewed in two different ways, one artistic and one non-artistic. Poetry is like honey-comb. The honey-comb is divided into compartments and in each compartment there is sweetness (honey). In each stanza there is beauty of a poem which is made up of words of a language. The use of poetic language plays an important role in creating the poem and its beauty.*

*Maboea: Imagery is the backbone of poetry and it makes the poem beautiful. The idea of imagery seems to sort out beauty.*

*There I mean that if the language employed is very far away from the idea, the poem would not work or it splits and becomes another poem. The imagery that you may employ when portraying the theme of death, would not work properly if the same imagery is used to portray the idea about the theme of love. For example, the images that I employed in “Le Kututse Lapeng Leso” are deep and heavy because the theme is about death. Those that I used in “Lengolo le yang ho Duduzile” are light and sweet because they flow with the mood of the poem or the idea of love. The beauty of a poem is the close combination*

*of words and content and this closely related and compact whole makes a poem beautiful.*

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### 3.3.1 Rhythm

Rhythm is the most important technical resource of the poet because it is connected with the impulses of nature. The good example of rhythm is that of the beating of human hearts and the course of breathing. Reeves (1970:113) attempts a general definition of rhythm:

Rhythm comes from a Greek word meaning “flow”. “Flow” means movement from one point to another ... If the flow is absolutely regular, it can hardly be called rhythmical ... It is better, perhaps, to think of rhythm as pulse: pulse means alternating periods of effort and relaxation.

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Life is rhythmical because of all our cultural activities, the dance is the most marked rhythm. The Basotho songs and dances are accompanied by chants which is rhythm. Rhythm was heard during the oral literature but with the arrival of written poetry which is read silently, rhythm tended to become quieter and less marked. When for instance we read the following two stanzas of Booyesen’s poem entitled “Ya Ila tshepe” (The bell rings) we know that the poetic sound we are about to enjoy is of great significance for the poet and his lines are rich in magical suggestions.

Ketekete! Ketekete! Ya Ila tshepe!

E Ila hona teng ha Mmopi,

E Ila tjena e a bitsa,

E bitsa motjha ho tla rapela.

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Modumo wa hwaswa wa ya le motse,  
Hara lerata wa tihatjhametsa ka matla,  
Modumo wa fihla tsebeng tsa motjha,  
Ho mo tsebisa hore ke nako ya thapelo.

(Booyesen, 1987:23)

(Ringing! Ringing! The bell rings!

It rings at Lord's place,

It rings to call,

It calls youth to come and pray.



The sound rustle in the village

The sound goes forcefully in the noise.

It reaches the ears of youth,

To let him/her that it is time to pray.)

In the first stanza, the poet succeeded in choosing correct words to create his rhythm. He managed to choose words to portray the “ringing” of a church bell. The word “**Ketekete**” imitates the ringing of a church bell. The poet employed phrases “**Ya Ila**” (it rings). “**E Ila**” (it rings) three times to emphasise the fact that the church bell keeps on ringing until you go to church.

In the second stanza the poet tells how the sound of the church bell reaches young people. “**Modumo wa hwaswa**” (to rustle) ... “**wa tihatjhametsa**” (to go forcefully) ... “**wa fihla**” (it reaches

its destination).

In the above stanzas the reader sees a more controlled rhythmic pattern even though it lacks the regular syllabic stress pattern which is organised in “meter”. Through the rhythm, we see the creativity and artistry of Booyesen. He composes not only with his intellect, but also with his “ears”. His words do not only convey his meaning but they sound right in the context of the poem.

Tlase ho leralla motse o teng,  
Motsemonyane, sefellaseatleng,  
Motse seratwa ke baahi, mafeta ka tsela  
Motse o tummeng ka kgotso ho e feta.

(Mophethe, 1983:76)

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(At the foot of a hill there is a village,  
Small village fitting into a hand.  
A village loved by its citizens, travellers,  
A village renowned for its hospitality.)

Mophethe creates rhythm through the selection of words, as he seeks ways of linking ideas together. This rhythm brings about unity in the above stanza. It is so beautiful and exciting for the reader who knows the township Lindley-Ntha, who is able to associate the message of the poet, to what he knows. The poet’s rhythm is well displayed by the linking of words in successive lines in an appealing manner. Mophethe eulogises **Ntha** for its outstanding “beauty” and “peace” and capture the beauty of Lindley-Ntha by linking one nickname to another in a progressive chain. The poet’s

rhythm is very striking and holds the reader's attention. He employs associations to portray rhythm that stimulate the reader to see and hear how beautiful Ntha is.

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He shows us a picture of how people like Ntha. He strengthens this by employing “**motse**” (town) in consecutive lines to portray a forceful tone. The reader is bound to inspect **Ntha** and come up with his/her own views with reference to the poet's view on **Ntha**. The rhythm of the poem controls the associations of words in a powerful and artistic manner. By this rhythm, Mophethe appeals to his readers to keep on beautifying **Ntha** because it deserves praises.

We further asked the poets the following questions: *How do you create rhythm in your poetry?*

*Booyesen: I employ language in an exalted state to awaken wonder in the reader's imagination. If a poem does not have rhythm, it does not have the radiance, the luminosity, it does not have the angelic intensity. If the poet needs to be excessive to awaken the reader, the simple way to do that is with unexpected words. I am more attuned to the connections between language and things, existence and experience. To portray rhythm, I choose words that have the capacity for me to change reality, to deepen it, to make it more meaningful. Rhythm controls the pace and mood of the poem. The rhythm in a poem saying something about “death” is slow because everything is steady, people are sad. The rhythm is fast in a poem where the poet is praising something or a person.*

*Mophethe: To understand what rhythm is in poetry, it is important to recall that poetry is not separated from words. Rhythm is an intrinsic part of the poet's creation. I say it is intrinsic because it is not possible for readers to see rhythm, but they can hear it*

*when a poem is read. The theme of a poem controls the rhythm in that particular poem. The selection of words should go hand in hand with the theme of a poem. In*

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*Sesotho creative writing, we do not take into consideration the “stress” on certain syllables to create rhythm. The rhythm of our poetry is made up of combinations, of the pace, the weight of the words that we select for a certain poem.*

*Maboea: The rhythm of a poem is in actual fact the rhythm of the selection of words. The good selection of words makes a quality of the whole response - of sound, imagery, emotion and thought. Rhythm is the part of the creative process, it is an aspect of unity in a poem. The selection of words makes it possible for rhythm to help to determine the unity of the whole. When the following lines are read aloud, they give a light pressure of sound which goes hand in hand with the mood of the poem:*

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Botle le bokgoba ke ntja le katse,

Botle bo motsula metso ya bokgoba.

(Maboea, 1987:7)

(Beauty and laziness are enemies,

Beauty eradicates the roots of laziness.)

In the above extract, there is no regular stress, but a smooth sound shaped in words by altering soft and hard consonants. The true meaning and the full expressiveness of the above lines are revealed to the reader's sensitive imagination through rhythm which is made up of a selection of words.

*Litabe: We must remember that the words of a poem are primarily sounds and rhythm is the regular beat of sound. I create the rhythm of a poem by selecting words having the sounds that go hand in hand with the mood of the poem. A poem is like a song, even though you do not say a poem aloud, there is sound imagined. I select words in such a way that they bring unity in my poem. If the poem is a lamentation, it should be heard by its regular beat of words. And if a poem is about love, its regular beat should bring unity in that poem and at the same time direct the reader through its rhythm that is about love. In European poetry, rhythm is portrayed by “stress” and “syllables” or the “meter” but in our literature (Sesotho) we employ words to portray rhythm. For example, let us focus on the title:*

Ra fihla, ra bona, ra hapa.

(Litabe, 1983:29)

(We arrived, we saw, we conquered.)

*The above extract lacks the regular syllabic stress pattern as compared to that of European poetry. This rhythm drives the reader to my message. It is also the element of beauty or emphasises what I am talking about.*

From the views of the poets interviewed, we find that rhythm is the movement, the flow or the pulse of a poem. They further said that it is not easy to isolate rhythm of a poem from its meaning. Rhythm is like a stream because there can be no flow of a stream without water. It contributes to



the emotional effect of a poem and helps to portray the poet's meaning and message.

### 3.3.2 Sound poetic features

In modern Sesotho poetry, the sense of sight dominates, but a modern poet will want to engage the sense of hearing as well.

Gurrey (1968:69) says the following concerning the sound in poetry:

Yet in most poetry sound has an indisputable importance, but an importance for its power of quickening, imagination, thought and emotion, rather than emotion alone.

One thing we can say, however, a poem is made up of words. Words have not meaning, but also form and sound.

This makes us believe that the sound of the words of poetry has a value in most poetry. In Sesotho poetry sound is important because many poems are concerned more with the explicit expression of feelings than with the control of emotion by thought.

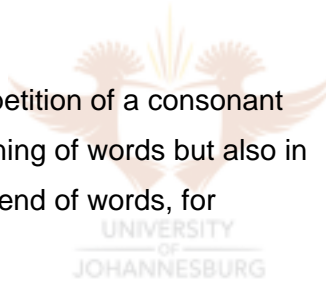
#### 3.3.2.1 Alliteration

Wade (1997:55) sees alliteration as the closeness and matching of consonant sounds. This repetition of consonant sound is also known as consonance.

For Leech (1980:92) alliteration is used primarily as a sound effect, either euphonious, cacophonous or onomatopoeic, sometimes pleasant for its own sake. It also seems to link associated words, to tighten the structure of a poem and to formalise the language making it more highly wrought.

Hendry and Gardyne (1994:28) see alliteration in the following way:

Alliteration is the repetition of a consonant usually at the beginning of words but also in the middle or at the end of words, for added impact.



From the above explanations we can deduce the fact that alliteration is the employment of words containing the same letter initially or internally. In Sesotho modern poetry, alliteration is used more sparingly but sometimes, with great effect. It depends for its success or failure on the poet's ear.

The following are examples of alliteration sounds. The repeated sounds are underlined:

Lefu le bopile monyako,  
Le halefile le letsho  
Le busitse makopo le hlwentse,  
 Ha le kena ka tlung ke dillo.

(Booyesen, 1987:63)

(Death camps at the door,  
It is angry, it is black,

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It looks angry, it is threatening  
Whe it enters a house, it is sorrow.)

Through this alliteration the poet arouses in the mind of the reader the shameful of death. In Sesotho death is “lefu” so the sound that the poet employs is the “L” sound because it is associated with death. The alliteration sound “L” emphasises how cruel death is. For the persona death is very cruel because its sword cuts an innocent person without any reason.

He is preoccupied with the subject of death and uses personification when he speaks of death because he addresses it as an enemy that fights him. It is an enemy which is black in colour, that brings sorrow in the family. Booyesen employs personification successfully when he is thinking deeply about death. Because death is an invisible phenomenon, the poet personifies it as a concrete image.

The “l” sound gives the quoted lines an aesthetic effect. This “l” sound draws a picture in the reader’s mind about two things. The first picture is about those who are gone, because death took them because the “l” sound is associated with death “lefu”. The second picture is that they deserted this “lefatshe” (world) which is full of tragical events. Through this “L” sound the reader is able to form a picture in his mind that death has long been there, it is still there and it will still be there, it does not get tired.

### 3.3.2.2 Assonance

Abrams (1988:8) defines assonance as:

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“The repetition of identified or similar vowel sounds especially in stressed syllables - in a sequence of nearby words.”

Drury (1997:53) says:

“A singer will practice vowels by chanting on the same note, “ma, may, mi, mo, moo” and then raising it pitch by pitch. The exercise might be a good one for poets to perform in their “singing schools”.”

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The following are examples of assonance sounds. The repeated sounds are underlined:

Badisa ba thari e ntsho ba laetse

Ba feng tsebe ha le tsamaye sekwai.

(Maboea, 1987:15)

(The shepherds of Basotho have instructed

Listen to them, you are not without a shepherd.)

What is noticeable from the above extract is that the poet employed the sound “a” in the first line

and “e” sound in the second line. The poet employed these sounds purposely for aesthetic effect. The sounds “a” and “e” give the pleasant sound of the above lines. They also form the pleasant rhythm of these lines. The vowels the poet employed in the above extract form an aesthetic picture

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in the reader’s mind. This repetition of vowels captures the reader’s eye. It enhances the beauty of the poem and the pleasant rhythm of the poem.

For the researcher what is noticeable about Sesotho poetry is that assonance goes hand in hand with alliteration. Assonance cannot occur in isolation as alliteration too cannot occur in isolation. Assonance and alliteration are interdependent. It is crucial for the poets in the making to consider how many times the alliteration and assonance sounds should occur. Should they be two, three or four times in a line of a poem. One other important fact about alliteration and assonance is in pace. Poets in the making should decide on how quickly these sounds should follow one another.

### 3.3.2.3 Rhyme

For Leech (1980:91) rhyme occurs in words similar in sound, usually at the end of a line or verse. Sometimes a rhyme comes in the middle of a line.

A rhyme may be an ear-rhyme or an eye-rhyme or both. Many Sesotho poets employ an eye-rhyme. Rhyme was used as an aid to memory in the days before poetry was written down. But today rhyme is an essential element in the sound-pattern of poetry. This seems to be the purpose of the device as employed by Litabe:

Tjhe bo, ngwana ka, se ka mpaleha ke o tswetse

Tlisa biri re nwe, re tswe re tsebana hantle  
Ke itswaletse poho ha o bone, nkile ka ba motswetse  
Tona leihlo ntjhanyana, bona tsewe le ituletse ka ntle.

(Litabe, 1983:26)

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Wollacot (1990:75) says the following concerning rhyme:

There is a modern tendency to sneer at rhyme.  
Rhyme is not what poetry is about. If you use  
rhyme, it does not necessarily have to come  
at the end of a line, but can be internal.

One factor about Litabe is that he employs rhyme at the end of a line. In each of his pairs of lines rhyme is intentionally organised with extreme artifice to form a balanced whole, and he uses rhyme to clinch the meaning and hammer it home. If we consider the function of Litabe's rhyme, not only does it help the memory, but it satisfies an expectancy and gives the aesthetic fulfilment which comes from responding to his pattern. Litabe's rhyme represents satisfaction which is associated with beauty.

From the above stanza one is aware that there is no internal rhyme. There is only an end rhyme. Litabe created the beauty of his rhyme through an eye-rhyme because he does not employ corresponding sounds between two words in the above example. Litabe's rhyme gives pleasure because it has some slight element of surprise such as "**tswetse**" and "**motswetse**". His rhyme is well chosen and it fits his context naturally.

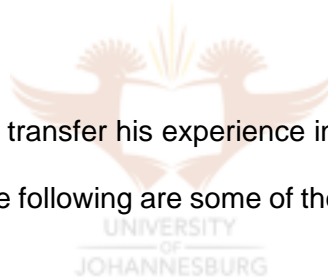
A poem is itself; it is an act of magic, an imaginative creation. No one can analyse its magic fully. One thing we can say, however: a poem is made up of words. Words have not only meaning, but also form a sound.

(Reeves, 1970:146)

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Litabe broadly uses rhyme to include other aids that come to his assistance. He employs the similar sounds at regulated intervals, but it may also refer to alliteration and assonance. The poet's rhyme helps the memory and it also satisfies an expectancy and so gives the beauty of the poem. The rhythm of his poem is developed through these sounds effects which give his poems their artistic beauty.

The creative writer's objective is to transfer his experience in the written word. There are no set rules for composing a poem and the following are some of the responses of poets we interviewed on how they compose their work.



*Litabe: Art is a luxury, it needs clean hands and composure. I use different ways to compose a poem, but the one I like most is communicating with other people. I listen when I am talking to people. To mention one poem, "Ho bona pelo ngwanaka". I composed this poem after listening to what the blind old woman was saying to me. I listen to how people say things, to what they really mean because people in most cases say one thing and mean another.*

*After talking to people I store my information and let it marinate in my imagination and come out later. One other thing that helps me to compose a poem after talking*

*to people is a calm place, when I am alone. In a calm setting I manage to listen to music made by nature and feel the sound of the wind, then I find it easy to direct my poem.*

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*Maboea: I do not believe that there has been a poetry volume in the history of poetry writing that has been totally invented. As a poet, I take information all the time. A painter looks out of the window and paints what he sees. As a poet I compose that way too. I go to a party and take home some of the language. I take home a description of a dress that a fat woman was wearing. I take things from my environment. If I have something for my readers, I ask myself, how I am going to say it to my readers. I choose to employ my language artistically because if I fail to use language artistically, I will not be able to create imagery which is the backbone of a poem. Rhythm, rhyme, repetition, symbols sound are all created through language. I wake up in the middle of the night. I stay calm to about twenty minutes and thereafter I can start writing and directing my poem.*

*Mophethe: It is not easy to say that there is a certain method that I use to create a poem. Poetry is different from other genres because it has to do with the flow of ideas in ones imagination. Whenever I see a thing or read a book there are ideas coming into my mind, sometimes unaware. Let me pick up only one example: I read a poetry volume "Dipjhamathe" by B.M. Khaketla, unconsciously. I managed to compose a poem about that poetry volume. Because I read that poetry volume with a calm mind, I wrote anything that came into my mind and at the end, I could not*



believe that I wrote about "Dipjhamathe".

*When I hear about the death of someone, I become sad. When I am sad, it is when I will be able to create a dirge. I would like to point out that I don't have a certain way of creating poems.*

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Booyesen: *I prefer to do a research on the subject that I would like to write about. For example, if I would like to say something about drunkenness, I try to trace it from the years ago. For example in my poem entitled "Mmaditaba" I wrote about alcoholism tracing it from the Biblical era where Seima became drunk and took off his clothes. When I am through with the subject, I think of the language that I should employ to give my poem a fistful life. Through language I can use what material I can to present creativity in the best possible way.*

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*To start writing my poem, I prefer to be alone in a calm place where my mind will function well, then I am able to direct my poem. I create a poem from beginning to an end in one sitting because I am afraid of interruptions and losing whatever it was that made me wish to write a poem in the first place. In one sitting I rework my poem because I think that it is good to try to get that poem down before I lose sight of it. I also think that it might not sound well tomorrow.*

The above views are supported by Drury (1991:9) when he says:

The German poet Schiller liked to have  
a basket of rotting apples under

her desk. Some poets drink coffee or tea. Some poets follow a set routine that might involve physical exercise, maybe jogging or a walk. Some poets read to get in the mood to write. Some poets sift through a box of old drafts and notes.

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For the researcher, the creative writer should not overburden his mind with conscious thoughts because the mind should prepare itself to guide the fingers. The creative writer should also remember that on his table he must have tools such as a dictionary to check the meaning of words and a computer in order to submit a clear type-written manuscript.

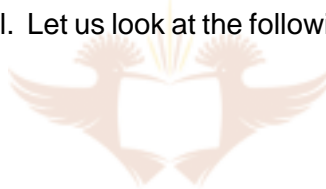
Even though Christianity coloured their creativity, the poets we interviewed write on the basis of their African tradition. In most of their poems, they employ the African traditional belief to articulate their own philosophy of life and their own world view. They are able to transform reality into artistic forms because they seem to be realists. They do not distort life by forcing it to agree with their own beliefs.

They all maintain that poetry is not made with ideas but its building blocks which are words. The poet's thought in creating poetry is very important and to disregard the thought expressed in the poem would degrade the value of a poem. The poet's selection of words in composing a poem gives power to the thought. We should also remember that the printed word has no meaning in itself. Poetry relies for its full effect upon what the reader brings with it. Words do not only differ in meaning from one another, but also in quality as well as in the quality of meaning which they suggest to readers.

The poets all agree that the element that gives a poem a fistful of life is imagery, meaning that imagery is the backbone of poetry. They all maintain that it is highly impossible to separate the imagery from the poetry without a huge loss. They emphasise the fact that even though he can have something that he experiences imaginatively, which has come to him through the senses, he can express it only if the mind can find imagery to represent it. For the poets our everyday conversation is about things known both to speaker and hearer and it is concerned with ordinary

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things. But when they begin to describe unfamiliar incidents, strong feelings, striking emotions, they employ imagery in order to make their readers aware of what they were impressed by. If they do not employ imagery, their message will be a merely a flow of ordinary words which lacks definitions, makes vague references, to general. Let us look at the following line from Maboea's poem entitled "Ditsenene" (Stings):



Leleme la ka ke mmila o isang lemeneng.

(Maboea, 1987:62)

(My say is a path that leads to bondage.)

The above line is full of images. "**Leleme**" literal translates as tongue, but the poet says that during apartheid era what he was saying was wrong for the authorities. "**Mmila**" is a path, and the poet says what he was saying carried or led him to gaol. "**Leleme**" is a trap, here the poet associates bondage as a trap.

In the above extract, there are no vague references because the poet helps his readers to make his experience clear by means of his image that shapes his words. These images suggest sense impressions and the infusion of meaning with imagery is sufficient to give the reader these


meanings, quality of exactness, richness and vitality. Heese and Lawton (1978:62) describe imagery as:

... a reference to or a description of something concrete by means of which the writer wishes to tell you something else. Concrete in this sense means that it can be perceived by one or more

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of senses. The “something else” may be abstract, or it may be concrete too.

The poets we interviewed pointed out that poetry especially lyrical poetry is concerned with expressing certain emotions such as love, hate, pity, fear, relying all the time on the power of words. Gurrey (1968:53) quotes Fry saying:



Art as created by the artist is in violent revolt against the instinctive life, since it is an expression of the reflective and fully conscious life.

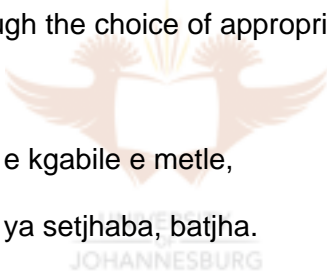
The creation of their poems include a great deal more than the arousal of emotions. If emotions played no part in their creativity, they would not have a form of any value of their experiences. Poetry demands the participation of emotions in the experiences it provides, but they should be centred on experiences of life. They maintain that in a well created poem, thought, imagery, emotion should be combined by the form of a poem into a perfectly balanced whole for emotion to predominate.

Judging from what has been said by the poets we interviewed it is evident that the music or sound

of poetry is the most important feature of poetry. They maintain that sound in poetry quickens imagination, thought and emotion. For them the building blocks of poetry are words and these words are primarily sounds. The sounds of words in poetry are closely associated with the meaning of words. They maintain that in creating poetry they portray sound in a manner that is in close association with the meaning embedded in the poem, with the poet's thought and imagery used in a poem and the rhythm of the poem.

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To create the rhythm of a line of a poem, they all maintain that they do not take accented syllables or stresses into consideration because in Sesotho syllables and stresses are not an issue. They create rhythm by the associations, imagery and repetitions. Booyesen portrays the beauty and rhythm in the following stanza through the choice of appropriate words to the subject matter.



Mehaladitwe e kgabile e metle,

Mehaladitwe ya setjhaba, batjha.

(Booyesen, 1987:38)

(Lilies are adorned and beautiful,

Lilies of the nation, the youth.)

The beauty of rhythm in the above stanza comes out in the repetition of words “**mehaladitwe**” (flowers) which the poet employs to symbolise beauty. Through the rhythm the poet is able to associate the beauty of the “lilies” with the youth he loves so much. Pretorius and Swart (1982:32) maintain that repetition occurs to create rhythmical effect. It also emphasises a particular idea and it promotes unity in the poem. Also repetition makes for a chain-linking of the same ideas and thus unifies the poem.

Poets maintain that they create rhythm in their poetry in order to enforce meaning and to make the reader aware of their thoughts, message and emotions. Rhythm makes poetry beautiful and beauty can be found beneath the “warts” and “moles” of something outwardly plain or ugly. Their responsibility in creating rhythm is that they are truthful to themselves and their readers, regardless of the physical beauty of the subject-matter.

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The poets were asked: *What is the significance of stanza forms in poetry?*

They all maintain that it builds up their creativity and thinking. It moulds their creativity so that they are able to design poetry which has order and unity. The stanza form increases their vitality and their emotional depth, while at the same time they are able to control the economy of their poetic words. What is important about the stanza form is that during the process of writing or composing the rhyme schemes and stanza patterns are carried out with the way of designing the poem and the development of the theme.

### **3.4 CONCLUSION**

Having talked at some length with creative writers about the creative aspects of literary work, we are now able to sum up their views. Our review and analysis of our research on creative writing has identified a number of factors that seem to foster creative writing. Every creative writer is different, but all of them have characteristics in common. The importance of this analysis is that creative writers do not have one right way to compose works of art, because there are no set rules on how a literary work of art should be composed. There are various techniques and methods in the composition they use to appeal to their readers.

All the creative writers interviewed maintain that they cannot make people be creative writers or make them write well. The best thing they can do is to suggest to them some guidelines for creative writing.

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To avoid repetition we shall, in subsequent chapters, discuss the poets under investigation selectively and individually. This means that we shall discuss style in relation to Litabe; theme in relation to Maboea; and intertextuality and influence in relation to Booyesen and Mophethe.



## CHAPTER 4

### STYLE IN LITABE'S POETRY

#### 4.0 INTRODUCTION



The purpose of this chapter is to discuss style in Litabe's poetry volume Wa lla molodi. Readers or critics should develop an understanding that style is a revelation of individuality, and all poets who possess style, necessarily show in their creativity certain peculiarities that distinguish their written language from that of other poets. One other important thing that readers should know is the affected style that reveals the poet's intention of displaying his craftsmanship. Style should not make readers feel that the poet wishes to impress them with his dexterity, because in the long run such attempts prove to be irritating. A poet will not go wrong if he can set out his ideas and tell his poem as well as he can, in the manner that best expresses his conception and not in the manner that he thinks will best impress his readers with his skill.

In literature style denotes a deliberate method of expression and construction; that is, in which readers are aware of a process of selection and arrangement intended to produce a special effect.

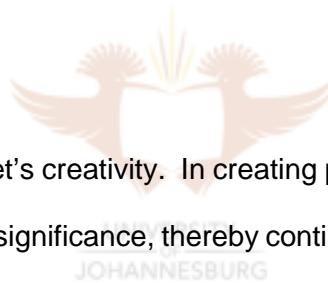


This brings us to the notion that style is a broad field of study in literature.

Enkvist, Spencer and Gregory (1964:10) attempt to analyse the concept “style” by putting forward three types of definitions; they say the following:

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Firstly, they maintain that there are definitions based on the point of view a writer such as Goethe’s in *Einfache Nachahmung der Natur, Manier, Stil* (quoted by Enkvist et al. 1964:10) where Goethe regards style as “a higher, active principle of composition where the poet penetrates and reveals the inner structure of his subject”.



The important issue here is the poet’s creativity. In creating poetry, the artist lends to an outward phenomenon of language an inner significance, thereby continuing and expanding the basic fact of language.

Secondly, there are definitions that deal with the characteristics of the text itself. Here the analysis of style is mainly in terms of objective investigation of textual features. This is what we will try to focus on in this thesis.

Thirdly there are definitions based on the impressions of the reader: where after reading a particular text comments like “Oh, what a work of art!”, “the author tried his best!”, and “it wasted my time,” will be made.

Style is the broad field of study and for the purpose of this project we intend to analyse Litabe’s

style mainly in terms of an objective investigation of textual features. Our main focus will be on the following features, namely: imagery, personification, symbolism, world-view and repetitions.

It should ring a bell in the minds of the readers that poets use language to create their styles. In other words language and style are inseparable. One who tries to separate them is like a person who is trying to destroy the umbilical cord.

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#### 4.1 POETIC LANGUAGE

Poetry is the term for the many literary forms through which man has given rhythmic expression to his most imaginative and intense perceptions of himself and his universe. For the *Encyclopedia Americana* Vol. 22 (1986:278) poetry is from the Greek word “*poiein*” meaning to make. Poetry names writing that gives concentrated imaginative utterance to experience in words so chosen and arranged that they create an intense emotional response through the union of language, theme, sound and rhythm. Poetry is always artificial, consciously made. It is always rhythmic, although the kinds of rhythm it uses vary from language to language and culture to culture. Its subjects and tones are seemingly limitless and its meaning is said as what is said.

For the research, language plays an important role in composing a poem. It is a prerequisite in creative writing. There is a difference between the language that we use in our daily conversation and the language that we use in creating poetry. In our everyday conversation we find that it is about things known both to speaker and hearer, and it is concerned with ordinary things. In poetic language we describe unusual incidents, curious happenings, deep feeling and striking impressions. We use imagery to make our reader aware of what we were impressed by.

Poetic language is seen by Leech (1980:5) as a language that is characterized by for example, the use of tropes, like irony and metaphor, although it still has its roots in the everyday uses of language.

This view is supported by Reeves (1975:168) when he points out that among the chief resources of poetry are devices such as metaphor and simile.

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Poetry differs from prose in several significant respects. Both may employ the same subject matter and attempt to evoke the same emotions, but poetic language differs from prose language. In poetry, the poet uses language economically. The poet uses fewer words to portray the message, but in prose the writer uses many words to describe characters or events. Poetic language unlike prose language makes a poem more intense, less direct, more suggestive and ambiguous. Both poetry and prose have rhythm, but poetic language makes poetic rhythm more marked and regular. The language of poetry is essentially imaginative and most good poems are on one level, structures of images. Poetic language unlike prose language, helps poetry to attempt to express incommunicable aspects of experience through analogy and metaphor. Ultimately every metaphor is a little poem, a device for communicating a perception, and longer poems become rhythmical arrangements of metaphors in conscious designs.

The *Encyclopedia Americana* Vol. 2 (1986:382) says the following about poetic licence:

Poetic license is the term given to liberties that poets take in regard to diction, grammar, and pronunciation to achieve effect or to adhere to the requirements

of a person, such as meter or rhyme.

Poetic license is one of the aspects of poetry that distinguishes it from prose. Not only is poetry constructed in patterns of rhythmic repetition but it also consists of interlocking word sounds within a line or among lines. Another common form of interlocking is alliteration in which the initial sound of two or more words is repeated. Another frequently used word sound pattern is assonance where there is a similarity in sound between vowels but not between the succeeding consonants.

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In response to the question: *“Can you tell us how you developed your style?”* Litabe stated:

*“I am not a stylist. The necessity of an idea creates its own style. The material itself dictates how it should be written. Style must always have an organic relation with the poem. If I am telling a simple thing, then my style is simple, but if I am dealing with complex issues, my style becomes complex too.”*

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#### 4.1.1 Choice of words

Litabe like all other poets, uses language artistically to design his poems. He selects his words appropriately to create his unique verbal texture. When he wants to say a thing, he does not just say it because there are plenty words to say it, but he looks for a precise word to say it. It is good for a poet to be able to use words precisely in order for him to put his message across, rather than to have a rich vocabulary but fails to select words creatively. Litabe in his creativity uses appropriate words to describe events in his poems. For example in the poem entitled *“Saint Bartholomew Sekolong”* he says:

Tee ra nwa tse kubellang, ra dihela kopi hodima kopi.

(Litabe 1983:19)

(We drank very hot tea, we drank cup after cup.)

The poet chooses an appropriate word for “**tshesang**” (hot) which is “**kubellang**” (very hot). He further says “**ra dihela kopi hodima kopi**” instead of saying “**ra nwa kopi ya tee ka mora e**

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**nngwe**” (we drank cup of tea after a cup). “**Dihela**” means to pour, and the poet describes the way they were drinking tea, it was just like pouring it in their mouths. The poet describes for his readers how tasty this tea was.

The poet further says: “**Noto ba ota yona e thata, ba qhaqholla dikotwana.** (They were beating the correct note, they were dismantling pieces.)

The poet chooses the word “**ota**” instead of saying “**ba bina**” (singing). He further says: “**yona e thata**” (the one that is difficult). The poet describes for his readers how they were singing. In music there are no difficult and easy notes. He says that they were singing very beautifully. He further says:

**Korosetina le katara di kgonya hoja jwale lehlwa le boetse le kgetheha.**

(Litabe 1983:19)

The poet uses the word “**kgonya**” (to bellow like bull) instead of using the word “**lla**”. For the poet the sound which is produced by these musical instruments is not a common sound it is an

extremely loud sound. Because of the high volume produced by these musical instruments he associates it with that of a bull.

Here we see Litabe's technical ability and craft skill. The way the poet uses his words, we are able to see the literariness of his work. Selden (1985:8) says that literariness has to do with the special use of language to achieve its distinctness by deviating from practical language. Shklovsky (1917)

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points out that literary language defamiliarizes habitual situations and ordinary language. Shklovsky (1965), cited in Lodge (1988:20) says:

The role of art in the general is to remove this veil of familiarity, to re-alert us to objects, ideas and events which no longer make an impression.



The technique of art is to make familiar objects unfamiliar so that the perception of art is increased. Such defamiliarisation techniques can be achieved by using various literary devices in the work of art.

In analysing Litabe's style in his creativity, we intend to present his thoughts in an unfamiliar manner and show creativeness in his poetry.

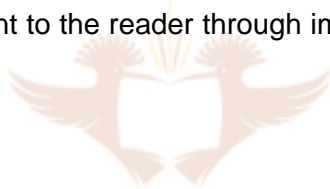
## 4.2 IMAGES

Most modern Sesotho poetry is written primarily for the eye. The reason for this might be that the

reader is taking in the poem in silence. We do not deny the fact that there is sound and rhythm in a poem to emphasize its music, but the visual predominates. Sight is the sense most entrusted with invention. This means that the poem gets to its readers by the freshness of its imagery, the rightness of its metaphors, symbols, similes and personifications.

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All the poets the researcher interviewed are for the idea that the outstanding element in poetry is the message. This message is sent to the reader through imagery. Abrams (1988:81) says the following about imagery:



“This term is one of the most common in modern criticism, and one of the most variable in meaning. Its applications range all the way from the “mental pictures” which, it is sometimes claimed, are experienced by the reader of a poem, to the totality of elements which make up a poem.”

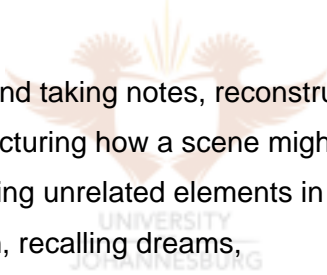
The *Encyclopædia Americana* Vol. 2 (1986:382) goes further to make this observation:

Images may be either literal or figurative. A literal image does not require change or extension in the clear meaning of the words used. A figurative image requires that some turn or change in the literal meaning of the words occur.

For the researcher an image is a verbal representation of a sensory experience or of an object that can be known by one or more of the senses. It functions by representing to the reader a sensation, by presenting him with a reminder of some already known sensation. The image is a distinctive element in poetry the means by which experience in its richest and most emotional complexity is communicated, as opposed to the conceptualizing process of science. Imagery is therefore a portion of essence of the meaning of a poem not merely a decoration.

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Drury (1991:42) suggests the following ways to come up with images:



“Observing and taking notes, reconstructing memories, picturing how a scene might look, combining unrelated elements in a new situation, recalling dreams, mediating to see what rises into view.”

Gurrey (1968:46) says the following about the vital contributions which imagery makes to poetry:

“Without imagery poetry would be abstract, and it would lack those qualities which raise it above clear, logical expression. It is imagery which vitalizes such expression, infusing it with copious suggestions of weights, buoyancies, textures, sound movements, shapes and colours.”

This brings the researcher to the notion that imagery is the backbone of a poem. Good imagery



puts the reader right in the poem itself. It enables him to see, hear, smell, taste and touch what is in the poem.

The method by which most modern criticism studies a poem is by examining the images that go to make it up attempting to determine the intellectual and emotional relationships that exist among these images and trying to understand the intellectual and aesthetic structure that the images form.

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For the purpose of this study, the researcher intends to use the term imagery in a general sense to include both literal and figurative language. The researcher further intends not to restrict himself only to those figures of speech listed by Heese and Lawton (1986:106) namely simile, personification, metaphor and symbolism. He intends to include any figure of speech that evokes imagery, among others proverbs and allusion.

#### 4.2.1 Metaphor and simile

Among the chief resources of poetry are the devices metaphor and simile. A metaphor is superior to a simile in that it is more suggestive and compressed. According to Hawkes (1984:1)

“Metaphor refers to a particular set of linguistic processes whereby aspects of one object are carried over or transferred to another object, so that the second object is spoken of as if it were the first.”

Simile is defined by Abrams (1984:64) as:

... a comparison between two distinctly different things ...

Drury (1991:45) sees metaphor and simile in the following way:

Metaphor comes from a GREEK WORD MEANING TO “TRANSFER” or to “bear or convey change”. The prefix meta-deals with change as in “metamorphosis”. In a true metaphor, we say A = B ... In a simile on the other hand “A” is similar to “B”.

Simile can specify the ground of the comparison and it is expressed by terms such as “like” or “as”.

Metaphor on the other hand, is inexplicit with regard to both the ground of comparison and the things compared.

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#### 4.2.2 Copulative construction

Here the poet uses direct equation of two things by making use of the identifying copulative. Such copulative is used to identify one object with another.

Here is an example of metaphor from the poem entitled “**Kgato di supile phelong ba motho**”.

Sethathong ke lesea;  
Le tsetselang, le raharaha, le khapha,  
matsohong a le hodisang.

(Litabe 1983:5)

(At the beginning he is an infant,  
That cries, that kicks and vomits  
in the hands that nurtures it.)

Here the poet is exposing this infant to worldly danger. This metaphor “**ke lesea**” (it is an infant) is meant to give encouragement as well as advice to this infant. The poet uses the metaphor which is associated with worldly troubles to encourage this infant who will be involved in troubles before he could reach the stage of adulthood. He gives him (the infant) the picture of violence so that he can be prepared to work hard in order to earn a living. In other words the poet says to the infant “**kgato di supile phelong ba motho**” (there are seven steps in one’s life). The poet seems to be helpful to this infant because he is not crying with him but he is directing him towards the right path of life.

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In the extract the metaphor is preceded by the word “**sethatong**” (at the beginning). Here the poet is specific about which life he is talking about. It seems as if the poet is encouraging this infant to start living a clean life. The life the poet is referring to have a general bearing on life but it relates specifically to infants. This means that life is war to infants not everybody. Today people are not prepared to take care and lead infants properly. Now the poet becomes clear to this infant by urging him to take a specific line of action through arming himself strongly for his life to reach all the seven steps of life. The tender care that parents give to this infant is very important. Through this metaphor the poet helps readers to understand the desperation of this infant if left alone as well as a word of encouragement from the poet. The poet’s message to infants is simply that they should regard difficulties as opportunities to prove their real worth in this world in order for them to reach the seven steps of life.

What is noticeable from the poet’s style is that the poet explains his metaphor by putting the tenor and the vehicle side by side. In the above example the comparison is more sophisticated because of the vast dissimilarity between the tenor and the vehicle.

#### 4.2.3 Metaphor with implicit tenor

Here the poet does not mention the tenor at all. The tenor is replaced by the metaphor.

Let us hear how Litabe uses metaphors in “Mona ke Hyde Park”.

Thope ena e tshowanatshowana, seilatsatsi wa tshomong,

E meriri e botshwane ba meetse ya pere tsa barui.

(Litabe 1983:52)

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(This young girl is very dark in complexion, the one who avoided the sun of folktales.

The black hair is like the manes of rich people's horses.)

The poet opens this stanza with an apostrophe to Hyde Park. He addresses Hyde Park as though it is within an earshot and as though it will respond to the poet's praises. This gives great impact to the poet's feeling to praise Hyde Park. The metaphor **“thope”** (young girl) is simultaneously a personification of Hyde Park. The immediate meaning here is that Hyde Park is like a young girl which provides the poet with beauty and good life. The metaphor **“thope”** (young girl) implies a number of things to the poet.

In the first line there are also metaphors **“tshowanatshowana”** (very dark complexioned female) and **“seilatsatsi”** from **“ila”** (to avoid) the one who avoided the sun burn). The Basotho identify a dark complexion with beauty. In order for the poet to convince readers that Hyde Park is like a beautiful young girl, it is referred to as **“thope e tshowanatshowana seilatsatsi wa tshomong”**.

This is affirmed in the second line:

E meriri e botshwana ba meetse ya pere tsa barui.

The beauty of Hyde Park is strengthened by the metaphor “**meriri**” (hairs).

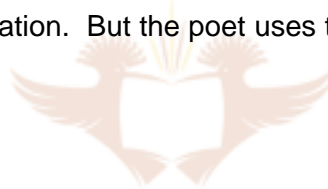
The hairs of this young girl (Hyde Park is black in colour. The usual thing among Basotho is to associate the black hair of a young girl with beauty.

#### 4.2.4 Idiomatic expression

Here the poet uses what we can regard as dead metaphor because we always use idiomatic

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expressions in our daily communication. But the poet uses these expressions very artistically to suite his style.



The line in “Ke tla o jesa ka e kgolo kgaba”

O jele mokgokakgwale, o tsamaile a babaila felleng.

(Litabe, 1983:10)

(He brought endless matters, he walked painfully at the desert.)

In some idioms the meaning may be purely literal, but in the poet's idiom, there is a shift of meaning from the literal to the figurative. The poet uses the idiomatic expression in a good way but in reality their effectiveness does no longer carry a good idea because they have become part of our daily idiomatic expression.

O jele kgomo ya molatelle tenane.

(He brought endless troubles unto oneself.)

The poet uses the object of the infinitive to be followed by the qualitative. He uses the possessive type to predominate (... **ya molatelle**).

Through these idiomatic expressions, the poet is giving us the picture of a prodigal son. The younger son asked his father to give him the share of property that falls to him. The young son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far away country, and there he squandered his property in loose things. When he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country and he

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began to be in want. One of the citizens of that country sent him into the field to feed swine. But when he came to himself he said that his father's servants have more than enough to eat. He decided to go back home and ask for forgiveness from his father.

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#### 4.2.5 Possessive construction

Here the poet uses the possessive as metaphorical attributes of the possessor. In the following line the function of the word "**lentswe**" (voice) is to qualify the boy.

Mehatla e kae re tlo e kgaola mesela! ntswe la kgaruma,  
La moshemane a le mahonyoko tjee, mahlwana a diketse patleng.

(Litabe, 1983:13)

(Where are the tails, we want to cut them off! the voice shouted of a stubborn boy with small eyes.)

The poet's possessive stem represents the possessor. "**Ntswe la moshemane**" (The boy's voice).

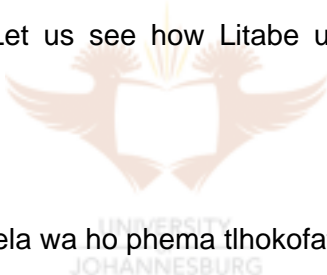
It is clear from the poet's style that in the word order the possessive precedes the possessor even though he uses the verb "**la kgaruma**" (it shouted). The possessive stem indicating the possessor constitute the possessive qualificative.

#### 4.2.6 Simile

The poet in his simile compares two things which may differ in all respects except for one specific characteristic which they have in common. In Sesotho similes are usually introduced by words

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"**jwalo ka**", "**sa**" and "**seka**". Let us see how Litabe uses similes in his poem "**Moroka Koletjheng**".



Monyetla o mong feela wa ho phema tlhokofatso, phafa;  
Phethisa taelo tsa baeka, kgumama, phahama, qhomela hodimo,  
Bohola jwalo ka ntja, honotha jwalo ka kolobe, kakatletsa.

(Litabe, 1983:14)

(The only opportunity to avoid abuse, sjambok,  
Fulfil the instructions of the fellows, kneel down, stand up, jump upward,  
Bark like a dog, grumble like a pig, cackle.)

In the poem the dog might appear unimportant as compared to the poet, but it surprises him in one respect, since it is free from the abuse that the poet is receiving. The poet is at a boarding school where they are abused because they are new at the school. He is forced to bark like a dog, to

grumble like a pig, and cackle like a hen. For the poet the dog, pig and hen, pride themselves in their freedom because no one forces them to speak or cry like a human being. It is not easy for the poet to find the reason why he has to live under the student's bondage and yet the dog, pig and hen have their freedom. The poet says that in order for him to avoid punishment, he must kneel down, stand up and jump according to their instructions. Here the poet associates himself with bondage and the dog, pig and hen with freedom.

Here the contrast foreshadows that which is between the contrasting situation of the poet and that of the animals. This simile forces the poet to make himself an animal and find out from God why is he

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treated badly because he also wants to be educated. An important aspect of this simile is that the poet's dignity is damaged.



A simile is a definite expression of a likeness between different objects or events. A metaphor is an implied simile, it can change the mood of a poem by making readers see something particular in an unusual light.

One thing that is noticeable about Litabe is that when he uses simile and metaphors, he makes sure that he adds force to the description or statement in his poems.

#### **4.3 PERSONIFICATION**

In his discussion of personification, Abrams (1988:67) says,




Another figure related to metaphor is personification, or in the Greek term *prosopopeia*, in which either an inanimate object or an abstract concept is spoken of as though it were endowed with life or with human attributes or feelings.

#### 4.3.1 Human features

Let us see how Litabe uses personification in “Ya biri botlolo”.

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Boleke Leibole ke diba se maphodi, e o hlabisa  
hlohloodingwane,  
E o ruta ho hafa ka nkatana, feela se ka hlohlora sepatjhe.  
(Litabe, 1983:28)

(Black Label is a cool fountain, it turns you upside down,  
It teaches you to waste, but do not empty your wallet.)

The poet visualises **“Boleke Leibole”** (Black Label) as a person who is untrustworthy. An untrustworthy person does bad things. Here the inanimate thing which is **“Boleke Leibole”** (Black Label) is made to do what is normally done by human beings. The poet gives his inanimate object physical characteristics which are normally found in human beings. This Black Label beer pushes strong men violently. We all know that it is common for a human being to attack another one violently. He (the poet) visualises “Black Label” as not only a person but a violent one. To show

this person's violent action, it does not notice people before it takes an action. **“E o hlabisa hlohloodingwane”** (it turns you upside down). This is a cruel action of “Black Label” because it turns people's happiness into sorrow without indicating something to them. This Black Label is not afraid to mislead poor people. **“E o ruta ho hafa ka nkatana”** (it teaches you to be rich). Here the poet gives us a picture of a person who is under the influence of this Black Label beer. A drunken person will always feel that he is rich and educated. In reality the poet says that Black Label is not good, because it ruins people's life and health.

The picture of this “cruel person” (Black Label) sticks in our minds as the poet calls up to our senses associated with violence to portray the wickedness of the human heart. Through this personification

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the poet condemns Black Label in its most manifestations. The actions of a drunkard should on no account be equated with glory. This uncalled for actions not only makes life miserable but are also capable of terminating it just like violence.

#### 4.3.2 Apostrophe

Litabe addresses various objects as if they are human beings. In a number of poems he talks to these objects as if they understand him and as if they will give him answers.

In “Kwankwetla tsa fata makwatsi” the poet uses personification in the following way:

Haesita Lesotho le hlobotse mokwatja, le hlotse ledimo Moswaswanyane,

Bakeng sa lehaha le lehata ho hlonngwe tempele le qwaha;

Wena Qwaqwa sedi le tla o tjhabela neng o lese bohlowanyane,

Mahaheng a matsho thakong tsa lehodimo o tla tswa neng Qwaqwa?

(Litabe, 1983:24)

(Lesotho has turned itself into an enlightened land, it defeated the cannibal  
Moswaswanyane;

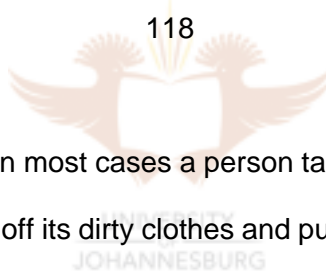
In the place of a cave and a human skull a temple has been built;

You, Qwaqwa when shall new light fall upon you, and leave filthy deeds.

In the dark caves, ruins of the Heaven when shall you exit Qwaqwa?)

The poet personifies “Lesotho” in order to endow it with physical strength. **“Lesotho le hlobotse mokwatja”** (Lesotho has turned itself into an enlightened land). Here the poet gives Lesotho the

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characteristics of a human being. In most cases a person takes off his clothes and puts on other clothes. For the poet Lesotho took off its dirty clothes and put on clean clothes. The dirty clothes that the poet refers to is **“mokwatja”** (ritual murder). Ritual murder is not merciless, because it is not ashamed to burn down the villages in Lesotho. The poet is crusading for Christianity. His reverence for Christianity inspired him to condemn the old ways of people in Lesotho and preach the “new” light. Through this personification, the reader is immediately thrown into attributes by which Lesotho’s future activities will be judged. The poet further says **“le hlotse ledimo Moswaswanyane”** (it defeated the cannibal Moswaswanyane). The poet engages the cannibals as an evil practice of man-slaughter and devouring, their outward appearance is filthy and fear-inspiring, yet Lesotho is saved by Christiani to defeat Moswaswanyane the chief of cannibals.

Wena Qwaqwa sedi le tla o tjhabela neng o lese bohlwanyane.

(You Qwaqwa when shall new light fall upon you, and leave filthy deeds).

The poet addresses Qwaqwa as if it is a human being capable of hearing and understanding what he tells it. The place (Qwaqwa) which the poet addresses does not give a reply. It is presented as a listener to the poet's comments. Through this personification, the poet ridicules Qwaqwa. This is witnessed through this expression "**sedi le tla o tjhabela neng**" (when shall light fall upon you?). The expression "**o lese bohlwanyane**" (leave filthy deeds) shows that the poet is not happy about Qwaqwa. He takes it as a boastful person who cannot be defeated by anyone. He portrays it as a cruel person who must be severely condemned.

Through this personification, the poet gives readers a picture of Qwaqwa. He says that Qwaqwa is still in the darkness of darkness, during the era when people still devoured one another like beasts

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of the veld. The poet gives a vivid description of unrest, warfare, hunger, fear and cruelty in Qwaqwa during that time.



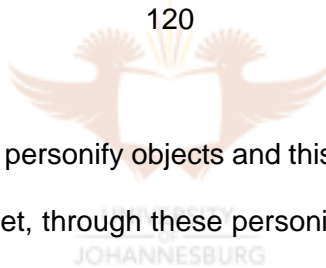
The poet uses personification to portray the cruelty of ritual murder in Qwaqwa. Its destructiveness is exacerbated by its actions. It stalks its preys which are human beings who leave behind loved ones in grief. When it stalks men, widows and orphans are left behind. The brutality of death is portrayed where the poet asks: **Mahaheng a matsho thakong tsa lehodimo o tla tswa neng Qwaqwa?** (In the dark caves, ruins of the Heaven, when shall you exit Qwaqwa?).

The poet gives us a picture of how Qwaqwa is situated. It is in the dark caves. The poet says Lesotho was once in such a situation, but it turned such caves into temples. The poet makes it clear to Qwaqwa that it has that chance of changing as Lesotho did.

What is the importance of personification in the poem "Kwankwetla tsa fata makwatsi"?

"While the picture of ritual murder is indistinct, readers can visualise the movement of this "human being" (Qwaqwa) as he hovers around men and burns down villages. This personification is fully consistent with a person's behaviour. It kills men and leave women as widows and children as orphans, which is common in real life. It further burns down villages and leave ruins behind which is also common in our real life. The poet personifies this death as humorous satire. The satirical implication is in the assumption that this ritual murder is not death that is caused by God. It is something new in the poet's culture."

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The poet uses different methods to personify objects and this presents an interesting mode in his expression. We further see the poet, through these personifications, bringing objects and other places closer to human understanding. The poet elevates the objects by talking to them and asking them questions as if they will provide him with answers. These objects can listen to his questions about some aspects of human life. Litabe presents the objects he addresses as sympathetic listeners to his comments. This gives us the impression that the poet indirectly wishes that man could listen to him just like these objects.

#### **4.4 SYMBOLISM**

New Standard Dictionary of English Language (1959:2445) defines a symbol as:

an object chosen to typify or present

some idea or quality in something else,  
on account of a resemblances in one or  
more of their characteristics or associations.  
A representation, an emblem, a type as  
the oak is a symbol of strength,  
the sword of war, white of purity.

Abrams (1988:184) further says about symbols:

In discussing literature, however  
the term symbol is applied only to a word  
or phrase that signifies an object or event  
which is in turn signifies something or has  
a range of reference beyond itself.

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#### 4.4.1 Cultural symbol

Let us hear how Litabe is using symbols in "Ka mora nako".

Salesioro Mahlatswetsa ka mo siya a temeka, lehlakana,  
Athe o habile dinako, kgosana, motshwara diyang, o dikgau ...!  
Ka mora nako.

(Litabe, 1983:9)

(I left him being a small boy at Mahlatswetsa,  
So he was in a hurry for the time, Prince, the leader, he is full of brass ornaments.  
Not so long.)

The poet uses the word “**lehlakana**” (reed) which is a symbol for birth in Basotho culture. The poet left Mokete in a hut where a reed was placed over the door of that hut. In Sesotho custom this reed announces to everybody that there is a new baby confined with his mother. In most cases inside the house there is only the mother and the nursing mother of a baby from the birth to about two months of age. This reed also warns those who are by custom not allowed from entering such a house, not to do so.

The reed as a symbol is traced from the origin of Basotho. The Basotho believe that they came out of a round lake surrounded by reeds at a place called **Ntswana-tsatsi** (the place from which the sun comes). These reeds surrounding a round lake has connotations of the female sex and of motherhood. The expressions used above, the symbolic reference to a birth is clear from the following phrases: “**ka mo siya a temeka**” (I left him being more flexible).

The poet further refers to the hero of the poem Mokete Mahlatswetsa respectively as “**Kgosana**” (Prince) and “**motshwara diyang**” (the one who is responsible for difficulties) “**o dikgau ...**” (you are full of medals.)

All these are symbols composed for the hero on the basis of the qualities the poet sees in him. The person the poet is talking about is not an ordinary person, but one from a good stock and good blood. Another meaning which can be deduced from “**lehlakana**” is “crown”. This means that the poet is giving us a picture of a prince. A crown is a symbol of power, strength and endurance. The poet arouses emotional response in the reader by an effective use of a symbol “**lehlakana**” (crown) when referring to Mokete. This means that Mokete is a symbol of strength, ferocity and majesty. This awakens the imagination and creates vivid pictures in the reader’s mind. This symbol “**lehlakana**” (crown) identifies the hero Mokete with the phenomena of nature which is noted for possessing to the highest degree the qualities observed and praised in Mokete.

#### 4.4.2 Symbol of hope

It is not an easy task to separate the symbols of hope from those of prosperity. One may argue for example that a bird's flight symbolise achievement and also that **naledi** (star) is a symbol of achievement.

For the purpose of this thesis we intend to take **naledi** to symbolize hope in the poem "Ra fihla, ra bona, ra hapa":

Athe naledi di ntle tjee ke mahakwe, re qala ho di bona.

(Litabe, 1983:30)



(Indeed stars are so beautiful, they are pebbles, we see them for the first time)

The poet refers to "**naledi**" (star) as a symbol of hope after they had nearly died as they got a puncture on their way to Cape Town. They were in a hurry and it was dark outside as it was in the evening. "**Naledi**" as a symbol of hope is appropriate in this poem because the star brings light even though it is not as bright as the sun. The poet through this symbol "**naledi**" describes the hope the stars give them by providing them with light when there is insecurity as a result of darkness and their car's breakdown. When the poet sees the stars he hopes that they can proceed with their journey to Cape Town.

In some poems Litabe uses the sun (**letsatsi**) as a symbol of hope as in the poem "Saint Bartholomew Sekolong"



Ho a halalelwa, aparo ke se sesweu jwalo ka lehlwa,  
lane le letseng thabeng tsane tse tjabetsweng ke letsatsi.

(Litabe, 1983:19)

(People are holy, clothes are as white as snow,  
that on those yonder mountains where the sun is shining.)

The poet is afraid of the snow that is on the mountains. He is very worried about the cold. The sun that shines on the snow gives him hope as he had nearly lost courage. The poet is so worried by the weather in England because it is always snowy. He is in England as a student and he wishes to



pass his examinations and go back home. His main worry in England is the snowy weather. As the sun rises he tells himself that something more important will come soon. The rising sun brings hope to the poet that soon he will pass his examinations and go back home.

Litabe refers to the light from both the sun and the stars to symbolise hope. They are both the natural agents that remove darkness and bring light. These symbols are very appropriate as he uses them as symbols of hope.

#### 4.4.3 Symbols of prosperity

The Basotho use **pula** (rain) to symbolise prosperity. Litabe in his poem "Tsa pele e be tsa pele" uses rain to symbolise prosperity.

O tla tlelwa ke kgotso, pula, nala, le kope o tla tidinya.

(Litabe, 1983:56)

(You will have peace, rain, prosperity, you will beat the musical instrument.)

For Litabe drought and famine are some of the living examples of the ancestor's wrath. When he says "**kgotso, pula, nala**"! (peace, rain, prosperity) he implies that if the ancestors are not at peace with his subject then there will be no prosperity. The poet through this symbol reveals the importance of the ties that bind a person to his culture especially his ancestors and his elders. If a person is at peace with his elders then he will beat the musical instruments meaning that he will prosper in life.



Another common image to symbolises prosperity is that of the livestock especially the cow (**kgomo**). In the poem "Kwankwetla tsa fata makwatsi" Litabe says:

Kgomo eso mphe matla le nna ke tla o fa matla.

(Our cow give me strength, I will also support you.)

**Kgomo** (cow) is a symbol of hope and that is the reason why the Basotho says: **Kgomo Modimo o nko e metsi**.

When they use the salutation **Kgomo Modimo o nko e metsi**, they actually imply that a cow plays an important role in the life of a Mosotho. When we bury a deceased person we slaughter a cow; even during wedding ceremony we slaughter a cow. In the poem the persona regards the subject

as “**kgomo**” because he knows that there are many functions that he can complete with the help of the subject. The persona feels like a rich man if the subject is new to him, just like a Mosotho when he possesses a cow.

In many instances livestock is a symbol of status among the Basotho. For a long time among the Basotho they have assessed the well-being of a man according to the cattle he owned.

#### 4.4.4 Christian symbol

Symbolism is also illustrated by Litabe in “Ha o ntate” (You are not my father).

Ngolo la ngolwa ke mora, oho ntate tseba  
mathata a kwano.



O kile wa re beleha, lefatsheng ra fihla,  
wa jara sefapano.

(Litabe, 1983:49)

(The letter was written by your son, oh father  
Know about difficulties here,  
You once gave us birth, on earth we arrived,  
you carried the cross.)

The word “**sefapano**” (cross) is a symbolic of the crucifixion as well as Jesus Christ who was crucified on the cross. The poet seems to have written a letter to Jesus informing Him about what is actually happening here on earth. The poet says Jesus gave us birth and surely we arrived

safely in this world. He further says because of our sins Jesus carried a cross for us. Through this symbol the poet is emphasising the fact that Jesus came here on earth to suffer and die for our sins but there are those who have not yet repented, because they are still living with sins.

The poet was asked: *What made you choose the Biblical symbol as a subject for your poem?*

*“This symbol creates an impression in the mind of the reader about the Day of Resurrection as well as the Day of Judgement. The reader visualizes God sitting on the judgement throne, separating sheep from goats and thereafter exposing all those who are not Christians, meaning those who denounced Jesus Christ. The cross means to unite people, because when Jesus was on the cross, He was dying for all the people on earth, but there are those who denied Him. Through this symbol I*



*convey my condescending attitude towards all those who are not of Christian stock for He fear for their fate.”*

For the researcher a symbol is anything that communicates a fact or an idea or that stands for an object. Some symbols such as flags and stop-signs are visual. Others including music and spoken words, involve sounds. Almost anything can be a symbol, for example the letters of the alphabet are among the most important symbols because they form the basis for almost all written and spoken communication. Gestures and sounds made by human beings also symbolises ideas or feelings.

#### **4.5 DEVIATION FROM THE NORM**

Litabe is stylistically distinctive because some features of his language deviate from the norm of writing. For Freeman (1970:6) there are questions posed by the

style-as-deviation school: If we deviate from the norm, what is the role of language in addition to what are the rules of grammar required it to do? What is this that the language of poetry conveys in addition to the poet's information? What is the importance of the poet's pattern of syntactic and lexical choice of words where he has an option?

Van Dijk (1985:45) points out that the poet deviates from the expected norms of linguistic rules because he possesses poetic license. In other words the poet breaks the rules of language in order that his work is seen as powerful language. Litabe deviates from the norm because he changes the structural patterns of Sesotho proverbs. Guma (1983:65) maintains that proverbs have a fixed and rigid form to which they adhere at all times and which is not changeable.

#### 4.5.1 Proverbs

Another common element of poetry is the proverb. Guma (1983:65) defines a proverb as follows:

A proverb is a pithy sentence with a general bearing on life. It serves to express some homely truth or moral lesson in such an appropriate manner as to make one feel that no better words could have been used to describe the particular situation.

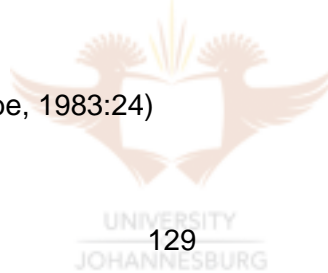
Jones (1981:61) supports the above definition when he says:

“In Africa, even modern Africa, the spoken word still has an extraordinary power. It is not considered time wasted for a character to spin out a thought in a string of proverbs.”

Let us see how Litabe uses proverbs in:

Kgomo eso mphe matla le nna ke tla o fa matla,  
Tjhaba a se binela koma e le nngwe nyene le bosiu.  
Etswe ntjapedi ha e hlolwe, ke ha e phalwe ke  
sebata.

(Litabe, 1983:24)



(My brother, give me strength, I will also give  
you strength.  
He sang a secret song for the nation day and night.  
Because two herds make the work light.)

Here the structure of the proverb has been altered. The poet uses this technique of changing the set structural pattern of this proverb which is “**ntjapedi ha e hlolwe ke sebata**” (many hands make work light). The poet changes the structure of the proverb for the attainment of a new verbal style that corresponds with his poetic versification and also as an additional dimension to the primary significance of this proverb. Through this proverb, the poet points out that when Chief Mopedi took

over the seat in parliament, he was singing one song for the people in Qwa-qwa. The song he was singing, was that people should work together in order to achieve success and prosperity.

When the poet says “**ntjapedi ha e hlolwe**”, **ha e phalwe ke sebata**, emphasizes the fact that many hands make the work light. By the additional part “**ha e phalwe**” (it does not get defeated) the poet creates a rhythm just like the rhythm that is found in a song when people sing to make their work light.

Proverbs in Litabe’s “Tsa pele e be tsa pele” appear as follows:

Tsa pele ya eba tsa morao, tsa morao tsa pele,  
Ngwana a kgahlwa ke none, thungthung tsa tshello, noha e loma,  
Athe mofuta ha se qoba la kwae, o tla lla pitsa e tjhele!

(The first ones become the last ones, the last ones the first ones,  
The child is deceived by a blesboek, roses of thorns, poisonous snake,  
A sort is not a leaf of tobacco, you will cry when food is burned.)

The phrase “**tsa pele ya eba tsa morao, tsa morao tsa pele**” (the first ones became the last ones, the last ones the first ones) reminds us of the proverb “**di pele di morao**” (If you don’t obey parents, you will fall into troubles). By using the altered form that suggest a specific proverb, the poet succeeds in engaging the reader’s recollection of that proverb as well as its meaning. This proverb captures the traditional belief of the Basotho that a person is likely to be in trouble if he does not listen to parents. The poet chooses the name “**ngwana**” (child) to refer to the young

boy's unacceptable behaviour in the society. The proverb "**di pele di morao**" (If you don't obey parents, you will fall into troubles), accentuate the meaning of this young boy. Through this proverb, the poet creates certain expectations in the reader's mind and also focuses on the incidents that follow in this poem.

This proverb does not only state the fact that the Basotho believe that when a person does not listen to parents they will fall into troubles. It also adds an effect of contributing towards the development of the poem. The poet uses this proverb to express his bitter condemnation for such unacceptable conduct as that embodied in the name "**ngwana**" (child).

This proverb is supported by the phrase: "**a kgahlwa ke none**" in which its correct form is: "**O se ke wa kgahlwa ke none e hlotsa**" (Do not be impressed by an unknown person).



For the poet in Sesotho culture, the daughter-in-law is addressed as the most welcome person. If the daughter-in-law is present at home, surely there will be life at home. The central figure in this poem is "**moshanyana**" (boy) who wants to be a bridegroom. Through the proverb "**o se ke wa kgahlwa ke none e hlotsa**" (do not be impressed by an unknown person), the poet urges the subject "**moshanyana**" to take another direction in life because the tender care that he received from his parents will no longer be available if he insists on marrying at his tender age. The poet urges the subject to take time before getting into marriage, because he is too young for marriage.

The poet uses only the middle part of this proverb to reach his readers quickly. For the poet, the subject intends to marry a physically beautiful lady and this beauty does not play an important role



in Basotho life. This is supported by **“thungthung tsa tshelo”** (roses of thorns).

The poet associates the physical appearance of this lady with that of **“thungthung”** (flower). This beauty is not the one expected by the Basotho, since they expect the humanness of this lady. The poet associates the humanness of this lady as **“tshelo”** (thorns), which means that this lady is not a good person. The poet uses this proverb: **“o se ke wa kgahlwa ke none e hlotsa”** (do not be impressed by unknown person) to encourage the subject **“moshanyana”** to listen to his parents to succeed in life.

The poet closes this marriage scenario with the phrase: **“mefuta ha se qoba la kwae”** which reminds us of the proverb: **“mofuta ha o nkgwe ka nko e se qoba la kwae”** (it is difficult for the husband to know the behaviour of his wife before marriage). From the first two proverbs, **“tsa morao ebe tsa pele, tsa pele tsa morao”** and **“a kgahlwa ke none”**, the poet is totally condemning this young man who intends to marry in spite of the warnings from his parents.

Through the last proverb **mofuta ha se qoba la kwae** we see the contradiction. The poet seems to console this young man, that even though a person can follow all the necessary steps in marriage there are still difficulties and problems that the couple will encounter.

The poet was asked: The altered form of proverbs in your poetry. Explain?

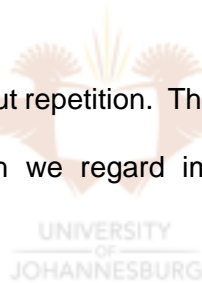
*“By using the altered form in all three proverbs, the poet succeeds in engaging the reader’s memory in all these proverbs as well as their meanings. I use three different proverbs but with the same meaning. I further use only a certain part of the proverb with a purpose. The main purpose here is that each proverb does no longer bear a general meaning, but a specific meaning directed to this*

*young man. I intend to use these proverbs to give encouragement as well as advice to all people so that they can be prepared to offer help where it is needed.”*

Litabe alters the structure of proverbs because he uses poetic license, meaning that he is allowed to change the structure of words as long as the meaning is well kept. Sometimes he changes the structure of a proverb if he wants to relate it to a specific situation, which is the central concern of his poem. This means that the proverb no longer has a general bearing on life. The significance of this alteration and sometimes the substitution intensifies the reader's understanding of the thoughts and ideas expressed in the proverb altered or substituted.

#### **4.6 REPETITION**

The richness of poetry is not seen without repetition. Through repetition we can see that poetry is evocative and emotive. Even though we regard imagery as the backbone of poetry, its effectiveness



is increased by the use of repetition. It contributes to the aesthetic form of a poem, and also gives unity to a poem. Repetition is the most fundamental characteristic features of oral African traditional literature (Okpewho, 1992:71).

There are various forms of repetition, but for the purpose of this project the focus will be on parallelism.

##### **4.6.1 Repetition techniques**

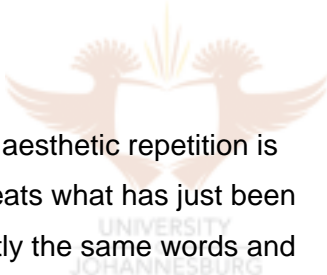
In our discussion of Litabe's style in poetry writing, we intend to touch on some of the sound stylistic

features especially those which are significant in the creation of poems. Here the focus is mainly on parallelism, alliteration, assonance and rhyme.

Drury (1995:224) sees repetition as:

The recurrence of words, phrases, lines, or groups of lines, of rhyme sounds, of consonants and vowels, of images and symbols, of themes and ideas.

For Kunene (1971:68) repetition may be aesthetic, but there are times when it can be monotonous and unaesthetic.



Typically, an aesthetic repetition is one that repeats what has just been said, in exactly the same words and

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without alleviation by incremented elements ... By contrast, in aesthetic repetition, selected words and/or phrases are repeated while additional ones are brought in an incrementing phrases to advance the narrative or the syntactical order is reversed to attain emphasis etc.”

The poet was asked: *What is the function of repetition in your poetry?*

*“Repetition is a device that gives beauty and attractiveness to a poem. The purpose of repetition is*


*to emphasise a certain idea in the poem. It is also used to emphasise the mood of a poem or to point a feeling of excitement or sorry, for aesthetic effect. Too much repetition in a poem would be monotonous. A poem won't sound effective if a poet uses one pattern of repetition. It is of importance for a poet to apply different patterns of repetition. It should be very effectively used to secure clarity and coherence.”*

#### 4.6.2 Parallelism

According to Kunene (1971:68) parallelism can be sub-divided into the following headings:

- Parallelism of thought through the repetition of words and phrases.
- The re-statement of ideas by synonyms and indirect references.
- The repetition of syntactical slots.

Guma (1983:159) defines parallelism as:



A certain similarity between two

parts or members of a sentence, whose words correspond to one another. The first member may raise an expectation which is satisfied or completed by the second.

For the researcher therefore, parallelism can be described as linguistic similarities observed between certain lines in a stanza of a poem. Modern poets took parallelism from traditional poetry and they employ it effectively in modern poetry. There are different kinds of parallelism but for the purpose of this study the researcher intends to examine few examples from those that are

commonly used in Sesotho modern poetry.

#### 4.6.2.1 Parallelism by means of initial linking

This poetical technique occurs when the beginning words or phrases of two successive lines of poetry are the same.

Litabe illustrates this technique in the following way with lines taken from his poem "Ho bona pelo ngwanaka" (It is the heart that sees).

"Ngwana ka, mphe"

"Ngwana ka mphe pelo ya hao".

(Litabe, 1983:57)

(My child give me,

My child give me your heart.)



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This repetition emphasises that the persona is blind. She tells the subject that she see through the heart. This repetition points the fact that in the midst of the chaos that surrounds the persona, she finds solace when talks to a warm-hearted person like the persona. She has to release the pressure button by always calling: "**Ngwana ka mphe pelo ya hao**" (My child give me your humanity) because it is the only way she can guarantee her strength. The kindness of the persona is emphasised by the repetition of "**ngwana ka**" (my child). The persona is not the subject's child but because he is so kind to her, she regards him just like her own child. The old blind grandmother asks for only one thing from the persona, the persona's heart. For Basotho people, heart is what

makes a person. They don't say a person is bad or good, but they say his heart is bad which means that he is not a good person. They also say his heart is good, meaning that he is a good person.

The idea that is stressed in the above extract is that the heart is a source of life. This linking emphasises the inevitability of life's end, meaning that life ends through death. The subject finds inner resilience from the attitude towards life and death. For the subject life is lent to people by God so He will not hesitate when He calls His people in Heaven. He says when your name has been called, don't waste time, just rest in peace. But according to the subject the person will only rest in peace if his heart is pure and clean.

#### 4.6.2.2 Oblique line repetition pattern

For Kunene (1971:71)



In oblique-line repetitions the line position of a repeated phrase is shifted, and this shifting may result in a phrase that was mid-line-position or end-line-position in

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a preceding line becoming initial-line-position in a following line, or an end-line-position in a preceding line becoming a mid-line position in a following line.

In all the above described shifting, the oblique line position would be from right to left or from left to right stand position.

Examples of right to left oblique-line repetition from Litabe's poem entitled "Ha o ntate".

Mma bona a itjesa masoko, bara ba batla polao.

Ba re, "Ha o ntate!" le bona ba batla selao.

(Litabe, 1983:49)

(Their mother became angry, sons need to be killed,  
They say, "You are not our father" they too need  
a home.)

The repetition creates the impression that two different ideas are being linked together but they form two different ideas. These are "**polao**" (death) and "**selao**" (liar). The poet simply says that the mother is perpetually exposing her male children to danger because they do not accept her boyfriends. Her boyfriends are busy ill-treating them when they complain, she says that they (her children) deserved to be killed. They reply by saying that they deserve a protection from their mother in their house.

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The dissatisfaction of the children goes further and we hear them saying the following words about their home:

Lapa jwale le fetohile mantlwane, le ka lapeng ha re phomole!

Re entswe kgoanyanarobala, lapeng mona ho ikenelwa ka fole!

(Our home has been turned into a play ground, at home we do not rest!

We have been turned to be fools, they enter our home the way they like!).

The poet arouses in the mind of the reader how the situation was in this home when the father was still alive. The harmonious atmosphere that was prevailing at this particular home, suddenly turned into bitterness. Children left with their mother after the death of their father are no longer happy about how things are at their home. The repetition of “lapeng” (at home) emphasises the dissatisfaction of these children about the “image” of their home. For them the image of their home is of utmost importance but their mother is busy destroying this image they wish to maintain. For their mother the home should provide her with accommodation when ever she wants to meet her boyfriends. All the children in this house are weeping because of the image of their home and at the same time they want to respect their mother as the only parent left with them. On the other hand the mother fails to act like a real parent, to stop her boyfriend from abusing her children.

#### 4.6.2.3 Examples of left-right oblique-line repetition

Phelong ba hae o ile a palama ya Ramashala kariki,  
Athe ya jwalo ruri tsela tsa hae ke tsa fariki.

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(During his life time, he rode the cart of Ramashala,  
Then his manners are like those of a pig.)

This repetition is suggestive of doomsday, on which every person will have to answer for his sins. On the other hand this repetition also reflects the amplitude of the poet’s Christianity in his mind. The poet speaks as a frightened man and gives his readers the picture of a person who did not live according to the laws of God. It also suggests that the speaker believes in the second life which



exists as far as Christianity is concerned. For the poet nobody can escape God's punishment as they are suspected of doing bad things. God is also watchful that wrong doers cannot escape His punishment.

#### 4.6.2.4 The horizontal-line repetition pattern

Specific words or phrases are repeated within one and the same line of a poem as in the following:

Yaba ke-fihile, ke fihlile nna mofodisi.

(Litabe, 1983:47)

(Then I arrived, I arrived, I the doctor.)

The repetition "ke fihlile" emphasises the importance of arriving at a certain place. According to the persona "**mofodisi**" is of great importance because he cures the sick. The idea that is stressed by the repetition is that the sick will not escape from "**mofodisi**". The persona emphasise that on the arrival of "**mofodisi**" illnesses are gone meaning that they will not come back again.

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#### 4.6.2.5 Parallelism by means of end linking

This poetical technique occurs where the last words or parts or words in successive lines of a poem are the same or convey the same meaning.

Litabe quotes the following lines from his poem "Wa lla molodi, hwapa ke sa mang"?

Ntshing tsa lebitla ho kgutsitse tu!

Ha ho puo, ha ho sefela, ho itse tu!

(Litabe, 1983:2)

(At the edge of a grave is completely silence

There is no talk, there is no hymn, it is quiet)

Here the poet emphasizes the quietness that is found on the grave. The idiophones “tu” introduces the idea that there is not even a little noise that can be heard. For the poet there is no place that is quite as a grave. It is quite for a dead person because people cannot talk to him. If they talk he, unfortunately, cannot hear because of this quietness. If they sing a hymn they are not singing for him because it is so quiet in the grave.

For the researcher there are many different types of repetition such as crossed-line repetition, the vertical line repetition, repetition of syntactic slots and others. For the purpose of this research project, the researcher focused on the repetition that is commonly used by modern Sesotho poets.

#### **4.7 CONCLUSION**

While describing a poet's style is a rather elusive task, we can make the following general observations about Litabe's style, as illustrated in “Wa lla molodi”.

Litabe adopted the poetic prose style. Poetic prose is prose that attempts, without the help of rhyme to produce the effects of poetry, and to a great extent of poetic rhythm also. The means

generally employed are, a greater use of suggestions and personifications, a swifter rush of thought and the introduction of images not sufficiently precise to suit prose. The use of such artifices destroy the clarity and rhythm proper to prose, hence the result is unsatisfactory.

Mona teng ho kgaolwa kgang, ha jwale re iswa kolobetsong metsing.  
Phororong tse batang, jwalo ka lehlwa, ho ya tloswa seqhaka, ha ho bolelwa;  
Re jellwa mefao, re etsiswa dinthwanthwana ke tseo diqhalamajwana;

(Here we are in a big trouble, at the moment we are taken for baptism in water;  
At the cold waterfalls like snow, to remove bad smell from us as they say,  
They eat our provisions, these bad boys force us to do filthy things.)

This would be better as prose. Conversely, observe how transposition and slight additions, by transferring the rhythm and language of poetry to that of prose completely destroy the poetic effect of the above stanza. We miss the magic of the suggestion produced by the panting eagerness of stanza by the impetus of the poetic rhythm. There is no economy of words as that found in poetry.

The reader of poetry merely wonders why the poet keeps on using unnecessary phrases such as “**phororong tse batang**” (by the cold waterfalls). The waterfall is always cold. It is not necessary for the poet to tell readers about the cold waterfall. The phrase “**ha ho bolelwa**” (as they say) is not important in this stanza because this is not prose. Readers do not want to read poetry as if they read prose.

Litabe’s style is also characterized by the affectation of Biblical expressions. At its worst, it

degenerates into feeble imitation of the magnificent language of the Bible and the Prayer Book. **“Aletareng ya tefelo barapedi ra ikatametsa, ka mangole ra kgumama”** (We Christians came near the altar and kneeled down to pray). At its best, however, it is unequalled with beauty as many passages of the Bible will show.

Litabe’s stanzas seem arbitrary because they impede the flow of the poem. The lines of his poems are too long. Balanced lines are attractive, but become monotonous if used too frequently. Moreover, it is found that, in order to secure balance, Litabe is sometimes led to misrepresent facts. Drury (1997:89) says:

In Italian, where the word originated, a stanza is a room ... Moving from stanza to stanza is like moving from room to room, each chamber has a different function and particular furniture, but all are somehow connected.

A stanza is a combination of rhyming lines other than a couplets. This implies that in a stanza there is an idea of the poet, or with several closely related facts, in such a manner that readers grasp at

once what the poet is trying to express. A succession of very long stanza is displeasing to the eye, which, it must be remembered, is a powerful agent in conveying impressions to the mind. If readers open Litabe’s poetry volume “Wa lla molodi” and come upon a page of unbroken line, it repels them by its solid appearance. Again, if the eye lights upon a series of “snippy” stanzas, readers naturally, incline to regard the matter contained in these stanzas as trivial, and not worth their attention.

A poet should bear in mind that his main object is to attract his reader’s attention. In a well balanced

stanza sentences should be closely related, and should all deal with the same idea. The connection between the series of sentences should also be closer than that between one stanza and the next. In other words, at the end of a stanza the reader should have the feeling that he gets, when he reads the last sentence in a poem.

Another factor that destroys Litabe's artistic style is adaptation. There are various ways of adapting to the changed outlook of an art work. For instance the poet can translate an old text in a stylized language to change the outlook of that old text and finding new subjects for the old forms is another way of adaptation. A good example of translation as form of adaptation is found in Litabe's poem entitled "Antoni, Phetedi a phele".

Balekane, Maroma, matswallwa a heso,  
Nkadimeng ditsebe.  
Ke kwano ho epela Kesara e seng ho mo babatsa.



The above lines are an example of direct translation from Shakespeare's work. In English it is correct to say "lend me your ears" but in Sesotho it is incorrect to say: "**nkadimeng ditsebe**". "**Ho**

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**epela**" is not a good phrase for "to bury", the poet should have employed "**ho pata**" which means "to bury".

Readers should know that prose or drama translations convey no real conception of the beauty of the originals. In such translations especially direct translations as those of Litabe, the work suffers by being filtered, through a different language and by being transferred to the medium of poetry.

In conclusion the researcher would like to point out that style is the expression of individuality. As the spirit of one age differs from that of another, style varies with the change of time. This enables readers to class a work of art as the production of a certain period. If a poetry book possesses style, that is, if it is the expression of a well- defined individuality, it will always afford a certain amount of pleasure to the readers, no matter how remotely in time it was produced. Style should be in relation

to subject matter. For example light subjects require a lighter style than that which is suitable for serious matters. A good style charms the imagination of readers into sympathy with the poet's point of view, so that their minds enlarge on the ideas suggested to them. In this way a written world acquires creative power and a vigorous life of its own.

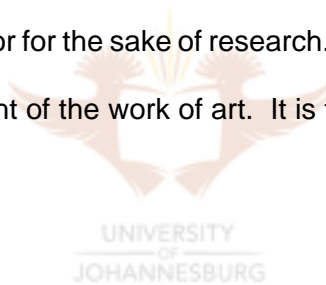


## CHAPTER 5

### THEME IN MABOEAE'S POETRY

#### 5.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse themes in Maboeae's poetry volume entitled "Tihaka ya Basotho". The focus will also be on classifying Maboeae's poems according to subject matter and to determine the theme of a poem as classified. Our classification in this thesis is only used as a framework within which to analyse or for the sake of research. For Perrine (1978:105) theme is the controlling idea or the central insight of the work of art. It is the unifying generalization about life implied by the work of art or poem.



According to Holman and Harmon (1986:502), theme is a central dominating idea in a work of art. It is the subject matter, or idea on which a poet bases his poem. In line with the above definitions we can accept Guerin's (1992:14) statement when he states that theme is: "often rich and valued underlying idea of the action ..."

To add to the above definitions, the researcher can further say that the theme is the central insight of a text or poem. It is the unifying generalization about life implied by the poem, or what the poem is essentially about.

In this chapter the term "theme" is used in a broad sense to include the subject matter. The subject matter relates to "what" is being said by the poet in his poem or the poet's lesson in his poem.

Theme refers to the central insight of the poem. Theme is not the topic or the story in a literary work of art. It is the nucleus of the poem, the common factor which can be reduced from the plurality of all the communicative elements in a poem. It is a line that runs through all these elements, that binds them all together.

When Maboea was asked how he portrays a theme of his poem he responded in this manner:

*I don't believe that there is a bad or good theme but there are interesting and relevant themes. When I create a poem I present my theme in such a way that the text can provide the reader with repeated reading pleasure. It is possible to have a poet with a good idea, but fail to present that idea in such a way that the reader becomes interested in what he is reading. Theme is what gives a poem its unity and the function of the poet is not to state a theme but to vivify it. What I tell my readers in my poem is not an important issue. What is important is the way in which I tell my poem. Since a poet is regarded as an artist, my readers expect me to produce a creation of artistic value.*

For the researcher a poet through his literary work of art, can entertain and give pleasure to a reader because of the artistry of his text. The literary work of art is not a mere portrayal of the poet's observations of reality, but it is his interpretation of what reality is. By being an interpreter of reality the poet reflects on that reality through an underlying theme. In portraying the theme of a poem, a poet asks: "What do I want to reveal", not "what do I want to teach". The revelation offered by a well-presented poem may be something fresh or old but which is artistically revealed.

Maboea is a poet who reveals a variety of themes in his poetry volume "Tlhaka ya Basotho". His poetry shows how he refers to the theme of death, especially of his relatives. He also looks at the



theme of protest. The poet also shows through his poetry how we are connected to God, the theme of “hope”. The theme of formal education is also discussed and highlights how people like Prof. Moleleki and J.P. Mohapeloa contributed in education. Satire is another theme that the poet reveals very artistically.

We now look at some of the themes as reflected in Maboea’s work. For the purpose of this thesis we intend to group poems in Maboea’s poetry volume “Tlhaka ya Basotho” according to the following themes:

- (a) Theme of death
- (b) Theme of protest
- (c) Theme of formal education.



It should be noted that this grouping or classification is only for research purposes. This grouping is only used as a framework within which to analyse poems.

## 5.1 THEME OF DEATH

Death has been very much a part of people’s daily life. Death was and is still feared, but its hovering presence was and is not accepted as natural and normal. Death has become one of the few subjects we hate to talk about. A healthier attitude towards death has arisen through the Biblical teachings, an attitude that seeks to understand it, to explore the emotional, moral and practical issues surrounding it, and to make this inevitable outcome of our lives as positive as possible for the survivors of death. We all know that we are going to die but it so difficult to accept

death. The one

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who has lost a parent or a beloved one becomes precociously aware of the meaning of death. Many people fear death because they do not know about life after death, but most of the Basotho believe that death is a move from one place to the other. Ngcangca had this to say:

Ka mokgwa oo, Kodiyamalla ke thuto ka tumelo  
ya Basotho, ya hore lefu ha se pheletso ya bophelo,  
le hore Kamano e teng pakeng tsa batho ba  
phelang lefatsheng lena le ba phelang  
ka mose ho lebitla.

(Ngcangca, 1990:56)

(In that manner dirge is a lesson about the  
believe of Basotho, that death is not an end  
of life and there is a link between the people  
who live on this world and those who live  
beyond the grave.)

Poets of all nations have reflected on the misery of death in their creative writings.

Among the poems in Maboea's volume Tlhaka ya Basotho, Ke leshano, Le Kotutse lapeng leso and Lefatshe o lonya ha ka kang? deal with the subject of death.

### 5.1.1 Death in the family

The idea of death is more prevalent in the poem entitled "Le kotutse lapeng leso" (It has reaped at my home). Maboea addresses death directly:

Lefu towe, wena o lema neng na?  
 Lefu towe, wena o hlaola neng na?  
 Ha ho helwa kotulo wena o teng,  
 (Maboea, 1987:55)

(You death, when do you plough?  
 You death, when do you weed?  
 When harvest is being mowed you are present.)

Maboea apostrophises death as if it is a human being capable of understanding what he does not like about it. The phrase "**lefu towe**" (you death) shows the poet's anger as he accuses death of killing his family members. Death which the poet addresses, does not reply to the poet as it is presented as a sympathetic listener to the poet's shouts.

For the poet, death has qualities of a man. The picture of a man is relevant here, because it is common for a man to plough the fields, weed it and harvest the crops. But even this description does not clarify the picture so much because a woman too can do what the man can do. She can also plough the field, weed it and harvest the crops too. The poet seems to expose this picture deliberately because death seems to have no definite features.

By the repetition:      wena o lema neng na?  
    wena o hlaola neng na?

the poet portrays “death” as a parasite, because the poet never saw death ploughing the field, he only saw it harvesting the crops. In other words, he saw it killing his relatives. The poet further says:

Efela o hlotse ngwana lefu,  
 O hlotse Monyakaladi a o balehela.

(Maboea, 1987:56)

(It is true you have won the son of death.

You defeated Monyakaladi running away from you.)

Monyakaladi was one of the poet’s relatives who decided to go and hide himself in Mabopane because he was ill. But unfortunately death caught him up. The poet visualises “death” as a cruel person. The poet gives death the physical characteristics which are normally found in human beings. He visualises death not only as a cruel person but also a violent one. To show this person’s violent actions death does not notify people when it is going to attack. The phrase “**o hlotse ngwana lefu**” (you have won the child of death) shows that death attacks people and defeats them. The idea that is stressed by the repetition “**o hlotse**” in the above extract is that there is no escape from death sting. The poet emphasises the fact that his relatives are dead. Even though he loved his relative so much, he could not stop death sting from pricking them.

The picture of this “cruel person”, death, sticks in our minds as the poet calls up to our senses ideas associated with violence to portray the wickedness of human beings towards death. Through apostrophe and personification, the poet presents the painful deeds of death in its worst manifestations to condemn its actions.

In the poem entitled “Ke leshano” (It is false) the poet emphasises the fact that people tell themselves and others that when they say a person has gone to consult the doctor, they will come back, but it is only death who knows whether you will be saved or not.

O ile Setanere,

O tla kgutla. UNIVERSITY  
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(Maboea, 1987:58)

(He has gone to Standerton,

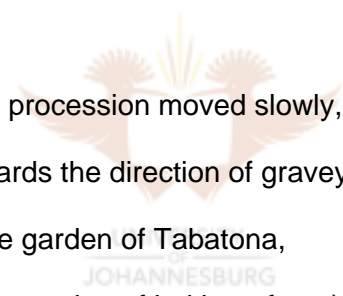
He will come back.)

The poet gives us the picture of a sick person who was taken to Standerton because of ill health. He says that it is false to believe that this person will come back because we are not sure when death shall strike him. His relative says: “**O ile Setanere**”. For the poet “**o ile Setanere**” (he has gone to Standerton), means he is gone, he will not come back, because a person cannot run away from “**lefu**” (death).

The poet proves the relative wrong - that Moshoaantle will come back - as he was in Standerton.

Mokoloko wa koloka  
 Ho leba nqalong ya bafu  
 Setsheng sa bo Tabatona  
 Setsheng sa boLekhonofane.

(Maboea, 1987:60)



(The procession moved slowly,  
 Towards the direction of graveyard,  
 In the garden of Tabatona,  
 In the garden of Lekhonofane.)

Here the poet says that death looms above every human being. Death is invisible and human beings are helplessly exposed to it. The brutality of death is well portrayed where the poet describes the place where people are buried. When he says: “**Setsheng sa bo**” (in the stand of so and so), he describes the expression of pain because those people he has just mentioned are his relatives. Some of them are still living but at the end they will find themselves lying there. In this poem, the poet does not employ personification but he uses a popular conception of death as a sleep which enables one to join one’s ancestors.

Towards the end of the poem, the poet refers to death as a natural phenomenon, which means that

it is only God who regulates the movement of death. But we feel that this would have been better if

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it had come before the end of the poem because when the poem ends, the readers feel that the end comes abruptly, as the poet could have kept on adding some important points about death.

Tsamaya ka kgotso.

Ikele badimong,

Ba tla o amohela.

(Maboea, 1987:60)

(Go well,  
Go to the ancestors,  
They will welcome you.)

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The poet seems to stress the idea that the deceased is relieved from the hardships of this life and he should go well to the land of ancestral spirits because the ancestors will welcome him. The idea that is stressed in the above extract is the inevitability of life's end, meaning that life must end through death. The poet finds inner resilience from the attitude towards life and death. For the poet life is lent to people by God and He will not hesitate when He calls His people to Heaven.

For the researcher, Sesotho poets employ hyperbole, apostrophe and personification when they speak about death because they address it as man-eater which is the enemy bringing sorrow to the people. These figures of speech add an effect, contributing towards the development of the poem. Poets use these figures of speech to express their bitter condemnation of brutally unacceptable

conduct as embodied in death. They also set down our emotions because they make us see our

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troubles as part of life. We feel that we must not bear our sorrow on our own because when we discover that death is necessary we no longer complain about it.

### 5.1.2 Death in general

Maboea in the poem entitled "Lefatshe o lonya ha kaa kang?" employed figures of speech to condemn death.

Mohlanka hao o ratha moo o ratang,  
O ratha dinatla le dikwankwetla,  
Bahale le makwala ho se kgethollo  
Lefatshe, o lonya hakaakang?  
(Maboea, 1987:61)

(Your servant chops wherever you like,  
He chops strong and stout men,  
Heroes and cowards without exception.  
World, how wicked are you?)

In the above stanza the poet seems to speak directly to death and makes death aware that his servant works according to his instructions. Here the poet portrays death as a "king" because a king possesses servants. The metaphor "**mohlanka**" in line one is effective because it makes an instant comparison and imaginative fusion of two things. The metaphor "**mohlanka**" (servant) is



appropriate here and a servant is a person whom the king sends wherever he wants. Here the poet emphasises the notion that death's servant carries the instructions from death. The poet personifies

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death's sharp stings as "**mohlanka**". Death sends his stings wherever he wants. This means that death is so watchful and fast that its victim cannot escape its merciless attack. The word "**mohlanka**" reveals the poet's spiteful attitude towards death which by implication come about as a result of unwarranted envy.

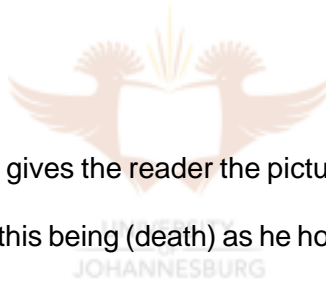
The poet replaces the word "**bolaya**" (kill) with "**o ratha**" (chops). This substitution highlights the pains that death inflicts upon the persona. When talking about "**ratha**" (chop) one thinks people using axes which are tools for cutting wood. An axe is strong and sharp, the poet associates the sting of death with that of the blow of an axe. The poet further employs the phrase "**o ratha**" (he chops) to make readers aware that death is like an axe, meaning that at any time it can kill its victim. Death takes orders from itself when to start using its axe, which no one can prevent. This arouses in the minds of readers that God is the only one who rules over mankind.

Death chops "**dinatla le dikwankwetla**" (strong and stout men). This is a cruel action by death because it leaves women as widows and children as orphans which is common in real life. The poet further emphasises the fact that death is not afraid of any one because ("**o ratha bahale le makwala**") it chops down heroes and cowards without exception. Death is not even afraid of strong men, it defeats them whilst they are standing firm. They stand firm and watchful but suddenly they find themselves defeated by death. Death is cruel because without heroes, we are all plain people and do not know how far we can go.

The poet's personification to portray the cruelty and power of death gives the reader the picture that death's destructiveness is exacerbated by its actions. It stalks its preys which are human beings who leave behind their loved ones in grief. The poet conceives of death as a special human being

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with an axe in his hand. This idea of death's ability to chop (**ratha**) has been fully developed because he describes how helpless men are in the face of it. The brutality of death is portrayed where the poet says: **Lefatshe o lonya ha kaa kang?** (World, how wicked are you?). Here the poet talks directly to death and wishes that if he had the power to stop death from chopping down people he would do that immediately. The expression describes how brutal death is. It chops down the villages, which means that what remains after death has chopped down men, is widows and orphans.



The repetition “**o ratha**” (you chop) gives the reader the picture of ritual murder which is indistinct. Readers visualise the movement of this being (death) as he hovers around men and chopping down people who are not yet expected to die. This personification is fully consistent with a person's behaviour. The poet personifies and apostrophises death as Satan. The satirical implication is in the assumption that death chops even those who run away from it. It chops down heroes and cowards with no exception. The poet emphasises that there is no-one who can escape from death's axe. It is everywhere at any time and it is ready to do its duty to chop down people, to kill people.

When Maboea was asked what inspired him to create a theme about death, he responded in the following manner:

*I am preoccupied with the subject of death because death is an invisible phenomenon which*

*makes people bitter and sad. I don't believe that there is a person or persons who can claim that death never made them sad.*

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*Death once visited my home and there after I was able to create some poems about death. I say it visited my home because normally, it is a person who visits other people. The theme of death is an indication that we are all going to die, so it is good for people to be ready for death. Another aspect that inspired me to write about death is that the poet can employ many figures of speech, such as personification, apostrophe, symbols and imagery very artistically. Through these figures of speech a poet can portray death as a monster and at the same time convince readers that death is part of our life.*



According to the researcher, in near future poets will portray death as a source of income. The Saviour that takes people to greener pastures. They will not address it as a man-eater but as an angel that takes people to the save land. Their theme will revolve around the Afrikaans proverb: *Die een se dood is die ander een se brood.*

For psychologists Papalia and Olds (1988), adolescents and young adults talk about death because it is not a threat, either to themselves or to those around them. They come to terms with the fact that they themselves are going to die. Knowing that time is limited, they take stock of their careers, friendships and make major changes.

Poets of other nations do not seem to scare their readers about death. To them death is powerless

and it has been defeated long ago by Jesus as he rose from dead. John Donne used the sonnet form not for love-poetry, but for passionate and religious poetry. His sonnets have arresting opening lines:

Death be not proud, though some have called thee  
mighty and dreadful, for, thou art not so!

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Leopold Senghor in Beier (1979:105), had this to say:

The African attitude to death is fundamentally different from the European one. The European has almost lost his belief in survival after death altogether ... In African, on the other hand, the idea of death is not associated with horror. The living and the dead are in continuous contact and a large part of the religious life of the African is devoted to establishing a harmonious - contact with the dead.

Even in Maboea's poetry, life and death are connected because there is life after death. **"Ithoballe ka kgotso Moshoantle"** (Rest in peace Moshoantle). Even though the poet starts by portraying death as a cruel person, at the end of his poem he portrays the connection between life and death. This act of showing the connection between life and death, symbolises the traditional life of the poet.

## 5.2 PROTEST

Some poets find their subject-matter in modern political ideologies. A good example is George

Orwell's "Animal Farm" which expresses a profound dissatisfaction with the economic inequalities and the social anachronisms of English life in the nineteen-thirties. The animals take over the farm on which they have been exploited for the selfish ends of the farmer, but gradually the pigs, ostensibly in the name of democracy, create a dictatorship over the other animals far worse than anything known in the days of human management.

Politics provides an inspiration for poets too. Feinberg (1980:11) has this to say:

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Poetry and song are the most popular and accessible means of creative expression and communication in South Africa. Indeed, to the vast majority of South Africans, these art forms are often the only means of expressing feelings about life under apartheid, a life where a human concern and assertion have been systematically stifled and stamped upon by the most outrageously ruthless and exploitative state system. It is this brutal oppression, with its unique codification of racial discrimination, which has generated the immense engagement and passion of South African song and poetry.

Maboea seems to say that although there is good in the ways of the Europeans, the Basotho must not forget about their culture and identity. When asked about his protest theme, he responded in this way:

*"Apartheid is the evil force that has changed the lives of Black people and destroyed their culture. The symbol of one phase of apartheid was exploitation and physical cruelty. If a white man's religion made people to abandon their customs, they are lost. Our culture gives us vision and the*

*way to the future. Before 1994 general elections, apartheid divided us but culture united us. Our culture is built on symbols such as our music, food and stories. Just like our struggle we are faced with new challenges, so does our culture. It is time that everyone recognise that life is meaningful, culture must reflect the challenges we face as a nation. Let us stop to act as if our demands around culture are less important.”*

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From long ago creative writers have been found to express their dissatisfaction with certain practices. There was and there is still an argument whether or not the artist should involve himself with politics or the problems of society. The supporters of the expression: “art for art’s sake” believe that other considerations are not very important. They believe that the main purpose of art is for entertainment.



“Some time ago, in a very testy mood, I began a lecture with these words: “Art for art’s sake is just another piece of deodorised dog-shit” ... In other words I will insist that art is, and was always in the service of man” (Achebe, 1975:19).

The researcher does not fully agree with the idea of “art for art’s sake” because even though part of art is entertainment, that entertainment is also commitment.

By protest poetry we mean the works which are created with the aim of conveying strong messages about some serious issues. The aim of the poet through protest poetry is to arouse some feelings of contempt and hatred. The focus can be on the political party or some state of affairs. The focus


can also be on some aspects of the society in which the poet finds himself.

For the purpose of this thesis, we would like to classify Maboea's protest poetry into two categories; namely the protest against the apartheid regime for oppressing black people and his protest against his fellow blacks for looking down upon their culture. He protests against human behaviour.

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### 5.2.1 Protest against oppression

In the poem entitled "Ditsenene" (stings), Maboea expresses his belief that oppression is evil and inhuman.



Ditsenene tsa tla ka sefapano,  
Se sefubedu se pelo e ntsho tsho,  
Pelo e tletseng mahlwele a matsho.

(Stings came by the cross  
The red one with a pitch black heart  
A heart full of black coagulated blood.)

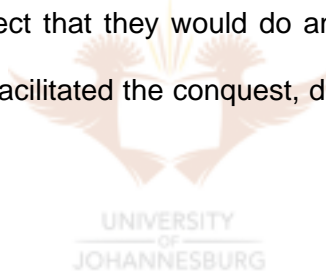
The poet employs imagery - "**ditsenene**" (stings) - to portray oppression that he experienced from the national government. When talking about "**ditsenene**" one thinks people fighting, because stings are very sharp instruments which are used when people are fighting. Stings are strong and sharp instruments, and the poet associates stings with oppression. He makes readers aware that oppression is like (stings), meaning that at any time oppression and apartheid can kill its victim either spiritually or physically. The poet uses "**sefapano**" (cross) very artistically. He arouses in

the minds of readers that missionaries are the people who tamed black people through their false teachings about the word of God. The poet employs the image “**sefapano**” (cross) to represent the missionaries.

For Hartshorne (1987:68), the main task of the missionaries was that of colonising the mind of their native wards. The need and desire to spread the gospel among black people made it necessary to reduce the indigenous languages to writing and to teach these written languages as widely as

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possible. It is necessary to stress that the missionaries became invaluable agents of colonial rule in that they helped to train people who could spread the knowledge of the Bible among the colonised people. It was impossible to expect that they would do anything to undermine the system of apartheid. Indeed they inevitably facilitated the conquest, dispossession and subjugation of the indigenous languages.



The poet goes on to describe this “**sefapano**” (cross). He says: **se sefubedu se pelo e ntsho tsho** (it is red, with a pitch black heart). Here the poet describes human beings, not the cross. This cross symbolises human beings who are the missionaries. The red colour symbolises blood or danger. This means that the missionaries came to a black person with an idea of destroying his life, they were a danger to black people. The poet portrays missionaries as devils, because their hearts were full of black clots of blood.

The poet gives his readers a clear picture about the apartheid system in South Africa during the Nationalists Party government. He says that the government used the missionaries to tame blacks.

They did this strategically because blacks thought that missionaries were spreading the word of God, but they were spreading oppression of black people. They taught black people the

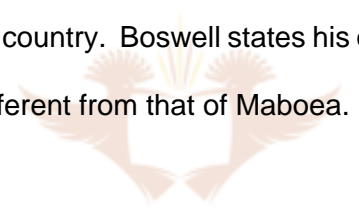


following verse:

... seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not things that are on earth.

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The poet condemns the missionaries because they taught black people to set their minds on things that are in Heaven whilst they were busy taking away things belonging to black people. For the poet blacks are slaves in their own country. Boswell states his own position about oppression and his argument seems to be very different from that of Maboeba. He says:



To abolish a status, which in all ages God has sanctioned, and man has continued, would not only be robbery to an innumerable class of our fellow-subjects, but it would be extreme cruelty to the African Savages, a portion of which it saves from massacre, or intolerable bondage in their own country, and introduces into a much happier state of life.

(Boswell, 1961:878)

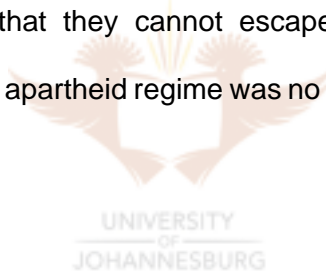
Boswell's argument seems to be full of flaws, because in no sense can God be considered to have sanctioned oppression. Apartheid in terms of its own options was necessarily a system involving a great deal of silencing of the voices of black people, banning their protest literature as well as their newspapers.

Ditsenene, ditsenene tse hlabang,  
Leleme la ka le tlamilwe thata.

(Stings, stings that prick,  
My tongue is tightly bound.)

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For the poet during the apartheid era, whites filled different positions, they were governors, administrators, ministers of God or landowners. Blacks turned alternatively to one group and then to another and they discovered that they cannot escape brutality or even find relief from exploitation. The exploitation of the apartheid regime was no harsher than the spiritual domination exercised by the missionaries.



In the poem entitled "Tlhaka ya Basotho" (The tattoo of Basotho), the poet still pays much attention to the apartheid system.

Dira tsa baholo bao di dikile naha,  
Lehloyo le mona ke bathusi ba tsona,  
Ditletlebo, dipelaelo le dillo hohle.

(The enemies of our ancestors are surrounding the land,  
Hatred and envy are their helpers,  
Discontents, grievances and lamentations in all spheres.)

The poet visualises “**dira**” (enemies) as the untrustworthy and cruel whites during the apartheid era. As they are oppressors, they surround the land of the poet’s ancestors. For the poet, South Africa belongs to the blacks. This is strengthened by the phrase “**baholo bao**” (those ancestors). The phrase also strengthens the poet’s position that the apartheid system started long ago and his ancestors suffered the wounds of apartheid. The phrase “**di dikile naha**” (they surrounded land) does not only mean surrounding in a sense, but it also means that the white people are occupying the higher positions in all the government spheres.

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Through the personification “**lehloyo le mona ke bathusi**” (hatred and envy are helpers), the poet presents virtue in its manifestation to form a picture in the reader’s mind about the cruelty of the apartheid system. “**Lehloyo le mona**” (hatred and envy) are symbolic of one phase of the apartheid system which is exploitation and brutality inflicted on blacks. The physical destruction of blacks’ life and property by the whites is coupled with the psychological destruction of the black people and their mode of life.



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For the poet the white man imposes his own custom, religion and values on the black man which is hatred and envy. The black man’s tradition and way of life are forcefully interrupted by the white man that is why there are complaints, “**ditletlebo, dipelaelo le dillo**” (discontents, grievances and lamentations).

The poet was asked: *What motivated you to create protest poetry?*

*“The white people are growing visibly wealthy but blacks are poor in their own land. Whites live in houses as big as churches, where they protect their families, whilst blacks live in small shacks. The white man is in possession of the majority of the productive land and even more profitably and he*

*controls the exports of goods and products from the black's land. He holds the black's in economic slavery. The white people, by instilling the notion of damnation, they used religion or Christianity to control the blacks."*

Even though the poet is oppressed, he does not despair, he says to his fellow blacks: "**Nka, amohela tlhaka ke ena, o tiye**" (take, accept this tattoo, be strong). Here the poet gives encouragement as well as advice to his fellow blacks. The poet uses the metaphor "**tlhaka**" (scar

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made by vaccination) which means "strength" or "unity". He shows them the picture of strength and unity so that they can be prepared to work hard to defeat the apartheid system. In other words, the poet says to his fellow blacks: "defeat is for those who accept it". The poet seems to be helpful to his fellow blacks because he is not crying with them over their land, but he is directing them to take the right path in their lives.



For the poet unity is the power. This is strengthened by the poet's line which says: "**Kolokang ka mebila yohle Basotho**" (march one behind the other in all roads Basotho).

The poet, by inviting the Basotho to protest against the apartheid regime, not only helps him to face the succession of apartheid tragedies which have befallen him and his family but also points towards a more hopeful future. The unity that the poet is referring to, reminds us of La Guma (1988:111) when he says:

People can't stand up to the world alone ...  
they got to be together.

Unity is important that is why it is also found in Ecclesiastes (4:9-12).

Two are better than one; because they have a good  
reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will  
lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone  
when he falleth; for he hath not another to help  
him up. Again if two lie together, then they have  
heat, but how can one warm alone? And if one

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prevail against him, two shall withstand him;  
and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Through protest, the poet attempts to explicate South African society in terms of the fundamentalist Marxism-Leninism. The poet also demonstrates that his protest poetry is not simply a vehicle for political propaganda but it has artistic integrity as the resilience of human solidarity in the face of impossibly oppressive circumstances.

### 5.2.2 Protest against human behaviour

Maboea is a committed poet of a different kind because he is able to show his readers the two sides of protest. He is not only committed to change the apartheid regime's system, but also seeks to change the inner being. He wants the Basotho to feel proud of themselves and to identify themselves through their culture. For the poet, even though we live in a multi-cultural society, characterised by the existence of groups with different linguistic and cultural traditions, the fact that people take part in several social sub-systems, must not over-rule cultural identity or ethnic differences. Cultural identity is very attractive because the Basotho should experience a community to which they belong and where they can express themselves about their way of life. The poet is

not satisfied with the young generation as they gradually step out of their identity and advance towards a moderate cultural relativism. Hejl argues that some parts of the cultural tradition are transformed into the reality constructs of particular social systems.

Culture can be seen as a domain of generalised knowledge that members of a society probably take to be essentially consistent. It is not understood as a kind of a program, but as a network whose

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extension and state of elaboration are not clearly known.

(Hejl, 1993:242)

In discussing some of Maboea's poems we would like to point out that the poet expresses his disappointment as he sees young people stepping out of their culture . He expresses protest and disappointment very artistically in "Tahlehelo".

Serobebe mohloka ditshiba

Bokgabo ba mmele wa sona.

(Maboea, 1987:2)

(Sparrow who is in want of feathers

The ornament of its body.)

The poet portrays the Basotho including himself as a nation without an identity and culture. He refers to the Basotho as "**serobebe**" (sparrow). A sparrow is a bird without a fixed place so are the

Basotho because they seem not to have fixed or stable cultural way of life. Maboea tells his readers that the new civilisation forced the Basotho to change from their traditional way of their clothes to the new ways of wearing clothes. “**Serobele**” symbolises the casting away of traditional clothes and adopting the Western way of wearing clothes. He feels that the change is ugly because the Basotho look like a naked nation. For him the change is the same as disarming the Basotho so that they cannot defend themselves against enemies.

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Rumo le thebe di hlohilwe.

(Spear and shield have been snatched.)

For the poet, the new civilisation has stripped the Basotho of their identity and integrity. He is despondent because the treasures found among the traditional Basotho are fast disappearing. He hates materialism and material progress because under the clothes of modern people lies the naked truth of poverty. Life is real and earnest and should be spent in trying to reform the world. Democracy cannot make our world a better place to leave. Through our culture, we can reform the world and make it a better place to leave.

The poet’s main criticism is against his own people. The implication is also that the Western civilisation or the whites influenced blacks to adopt whites’ culture that which they knew was not theirs. We hear the poet warning his people:

Tlohela ho nna o hlabaka dijo ka mamao.

Mphe sekgama ke tswe ke tlohela ntho ena.

(Stop using fork and knife when you eat.

Provide me with traditional necklace so that I leave this thing.)

The poet urges the Basotho to stop eating like white people. By “**mamao**” the poet refers to fork and knife that white people are using when they are at table. The poet appeals for “**sekgama**” which is a kind of necklace. “**Sekgama**” is a traditional necklace made up of beads. The poet says that if he can get “**sekgama**” he is prepared to give up “this thing” (**ke tlohela ntho ena**). By “**ntho**

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**ena**” (this thing), the poet refers to a neck tie. He prefers to call it “**ntho**” (a thing) because in Sesotho we do not have a word for tie.

He expresses his disappointment about the Sesotho music which his people are looking down upon. This music reminds him of his culture and identity. He urges the Basotho that they should see to it that their music should not die out:

Hlakoreng lane ke mokorotlo

Ha ka kwano e le meqoqopelo, botle.

(On that side is “mekorotlo”

On this side is “meqoqopelo”, the beauty.)

Songs such as “**mokorotlo**”, “**meqoqopelo**” and “**mokgibo**” are some rich elements of traditional music. For the poet this music is dying out. This type of music symbolise the culture and identity of the Basotho during the times of King Moshweshwe. The poet blames the Basotho for discarding their music for non-Basotho music. The music symbolised unity among those who were singing



together. For the poet some measures should be taken before the culture and identity of Basotho disappear completely.

Even though the poet is condemning his own people, he seems to say that the apartheid system is the force that has changed the lives of blacks. In the course of the imposition of apartheid many Basotho social structures were shattered, family groupings destroyed and individuals plunged into disillusionment and despair.

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Maboea's art, which comes from his religious faith, found it's best to attack apartheid. To Maboea there is close connection between art and faith - the pursuit of the beautiful becomes almost a religious duty and it is with his religious fervour that he attacks apartheid. He condemns his people but he says the source of influence has been the apartheid system. For the poet the identity and culture that existed in the olden days, reminds him who he is, recalls his roots, and the **ubuntu**, which is an important doctrine in black culture.

Ke le wa batho, batho e le baheso.

Letswalo le ntsha seboko ka mehla,

E ntse le: Motho ke motho ka batho.

(Maboea, 1987:68)

(I was of the people, people were

Conscience laments everyday.

It is always: A person is a person by other people.)

The doctrine of **ubuntu** identifies blacks from other ethnic groups of the world. The extract "**Motho**

**ke motho ka batho**” (A person is a person by other people) reminds us that mutual assistance is very important in the Basotho’s life. Through **ubuntu** the poet teaches us about the value of thanking and helping people who do good things and helping those who need to be helped. For the poet, even though (**“kajeno ke kajeno”**) today is today meaning that we cannot go back and practise our culture in full because of the changing times of the modern world, urges the Basotho to have a clear direction about life and **ubuntu** will give us that direction and a base from which to work.

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The poet seems to say that there is help he can receive from his fellow people. The extract **“Raka le shwetswe ke molebo”** meaning that his helpers have died, reveals and evokes memories of his ancestors and their behaviour during their life time. By using the phrase **“Raka le shwetswe ke molebo”** the poet believes that his appeals will reach his ancestors. The poet’s voice of protest is evident in the poem and the poet is not able to convince his people that they took a wrong direction of life, by destroying their identity and culture. The poet appeals to his ancestors to convince his people that culture is transmitted and carried by means of **ubuntu**. It is true to say that a society’s **ubuntu** is an aspect of its culture. It is a reflection of culture, a mirror through which culture sees, builds, judges or warn itself.

The poet is also concerned about matters of love and protests about ways of courtship these days. Today the ways of courtship are far from those in the olden days.

Ha se Kedibone a nanyetsa Thabo?

Molodi wa senna o tlola lefifing.

A ka reng Thabo, ha e se a ikise?

(Maboea, 1987:69)

(Is it Kedibone who creeps to Thabo?  
The whistle of manhood is heard in the dark,  
What will Thabo say, if not to go by himself?)

In the above extract, the poet conveys the ridiculous style of courtship. According to Basotho custom a boy who has reached manhood will say some words of courtship to a girl who has reached

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maidenhood. For the poet courtship is reversed, because we see Kedibone who is the girl, whistling

during the night like a man. To show that this style of courtship is not accepted by the Basotho, the poet employs the concept “**nanyetsa**” (creep to) which also shows that Kedibone is not proud of what she is doing. The poet portrays Kedibone as a male person because she whistles like a male person. The personification “**o tlola lefifing**” (it jumps in the darkness) arouses fear in the reader that what Kedibone is doing, is not accepted in the life of the Basotho.

In conclusion we would like to point out that what we regard as poetry of protest in Maboea's poetry volume entitled “Tlhaka ya Basotho” are those poems in which he points out the oppression and unfair treatment of the Basotho by the whites during the apartheid era. The poet's second part of protest is mainly focussed on his own people. Even though there is also an implication that the whites influenced blacks to adopt their whites life style, the poet points out to his own people that blacks are as blessed as other nations so they must be proud of their culture and identity.

Throughout the ages poets have been expressing their dissatisfaction about oppression and unfair

practices by whites. By protest literature we understand the strong convictions about some issues.

When the poet exposes some evils about the apartheid system, he wants to arouse in his readers a state of anger which perhaps will lead to some sort of reform.

This brings us to the notion that the poet has to acquire proper balance of what he intends to convey and how he will convey it to his readers. Readers will applaud a poet who expresses their grievances in poetry but the danger is that sometimes this work will die or it will not be relevant when conditions change. Nnolim had this to say about protest literature:

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... committed literature has a way of dying  
a natural death - certain to be dulled and  
dimmed by the fog of time when the issues  
if fought over are no longer current (Nnolim, 1976:71).

Poets should be aware of such danger and they must see to it that their poems contain something more spicy than the central idea that can lose its relevance after the change or return has been achieved. The theme of colonialism or apartheid is one of the most persistent found in African poets. The question of whether the theme of protest will continue to be present in many literatures or not is very important. As in South Africa, apartheid no longer exists, it is necessary for us as readers and poets to take stock of this protest literature. We may ask the question: The politically oppressive conditions to which protest literature responded no longer exist, is protest literature still relevant? Will protest literatures continue to be read?

Maybe part of the answer to the above questions might be found in an article in the Mail and Guardian (2001:22) for its radical views when launching a scathing broadside against the ruling

African National Congress for its tendency to overlook the venality of its party members:

Some South Africans are, indeed, more equal than others. It seems that, if you manage to achieve a certain rank in the African National Congress ... the changes of your being pursued for inept or improper behaviour are minimal.

Maboea employs satire not as a scourge to his enemies; the function of satire in his poetry is to ridicule human manners, as a corrective to them.

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When he was asked why he uses satire so strong and harsh, Maboea says: *I used satire as humour and exaggeration to show how foolish some people's behaviours are. In reality I am not attacking a person, either male or female. My concern is about the person's behaviour, because it is possible for a person to change his or her behaviour. If you attack a person, not his or her behaviour, you can destroy that person spiritually. I further use satire as an instrument for argument, philosophical, often cruel exposition and wit. The function in my poetry is to ridicule the human manner or behaviour but as a corrective to them.*

### **5.3 THE THEME OF FORMAL EDUCATION**

Maboea maintains that in order for people to know and understand their world, they must not only perceive it, but they must also look at it with a view to understanding and knowing it. In other words formal education is important for people to observe things in order to achieve knowledge and understanding of them. Kruger et al. (1983:18), maintain that formal education is the form of

education that occurs in recognised educational institutions such as schools, colleges, technikons, universities, etc. It takes a goal-directed course and it is handled by professional persons. Formal education leads to a relatively permanent change in behaviour. It reflects a gain of knowledge, understanding, or skill achieved through experience, which may include study, instruction or observation.

Most Sesotho poets do not create poems where their themes revolve around formal education. Maboea in his poem entitled "Ena tholwana" (this fruit) tells how difficult it is for a person to achieve education.

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(Maboea, 1987:43)

(Is it sour?

No!

Is it delicious?

Yes!)

The title "Ena tholwana" evokes in the reader's mind the question of what kind of "fruit" the poet is talking about. Through the demonstrative "**ena**" (this one), the poet seems to separate the fruit he is talking about from other fruits.

In the above extract, the poet explains that “**ena tholwana**” is the one which is not sour but delicious or sweet. The poet employs the imagery of “**tholwana**” which is delicious and sweet and that is achieved through hard effort, to symbolise formal education.

Na e fumanwa jwang?

Ka dinkgo tsa mofufutso.

(How is it achieved?

By pots of sweat/Through hard efforts.)

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For the poet it is not easy for a person to achieve his/her goal in education, but it is possible provided that a person works very hard. In order for the person to achieve their education he/she must have courage. He employs the following psycho-synonyms to emphasise that much effort is needed in order for a person to achieve education. The concepts: **boitelo, mamello, boitapiso, tjantjello le tjheseho** (state of strengthening oneself, patience, state of becoming tasteless, to be interested in, to become astonished) emphasises the fact that it is not easy for a person to be educated, if he or she is not interested in education. For the poet there is no easy path to education because a person can fail and if he does not have patience, that failure can destroy him forever. Through the above concepts, the poet is encouraging his readers to be physically and spiritually strong when they enter the field of education.

The poem entitled “J.P. Mohapeloa, Sebata” falls under the category of poems forming the theme of formal education. In this poem, the poet praises a man who was outstanding in the field of music, creative writing and education. That is the reason he opens the stanza of this poem by

metaphorical symbol:

Ke kgahlwa ke memo eo ya hao, Sebata,  
O batla ho kgobokanya ba fatshe lohle,  
O phuta ntjhanyana ho tla hlaba pina.

(Maboea, 1987:20)

(I am impressed by that invitation of yours, Sebata,  
You want to unite the whole world,  
You organise youth to come and sing a song.)

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In the above extract, the poet employs apostrophe, because he talks to Mohapeloa as if he is within ear-shot. Through this apostrophe, the poet praises Mohapeloa for his contribution in the field of music. The poet says: “**ke kgahlwa ke memo eo ya hao**” (I am pleased by our invitation). Mohapeloa is not inviting the poet or the reader. The familiar invitation means a request to come to an event such as a party. In this line the poet employs “**memo**” (invitation) in an unfamiliar way. In this line the poet says that he is pleased by the way Mohapeloa composes and teaches his music. The message embedded in his music (“invites”) makes people leave their inhuman behaviour and come as if they are invited to turn into human beings.

The poet further says: **O phutha ntjhanyana ho tla hlaba pina** (You gather youth to come and sing a song). The poet employs the concept “**ho tla hlaba pina**” direct translation: to come and prick the song. It is unusual or unfamiliar to say “**ho hlaba pina**”. People usually spear (**hlaba**) an animal when they slaughter it. When an animal is slaughtered, it bellows, it makes a loud, deep



sound. For the poet when the youth “prick” the song, it makes sound. That sound is not only pleasant for the ear but it also spreads the message that Mohapeloa sends to his readers through songs. The poet employs apostrophe to emphasise the fact when people sing Mohapeloa’s music it seems as if Mohapeloa is talking to them personally.

By the symbol “**Sebata**”, the idea is to reinforce the praise already due to Mohapeloa as a hero by describing him not only as a musician, creative writer and educationist, but an outstanding one. By the symbol “**sebata**” (wild beast), the poet intentionally employs it as a metaphorical name in addition to its use as identifying Mohapeloa with his totem. The poet arouses emotional response in the reader by an appropriate use of the symbol “**Sebata**” when referring to Mohapeloa. This

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means that Mohapeloa is a symbol of strength in education. This awakens the imagination in the reader, because Mohapeloa is identified with the wild beast. Mohapeloa is referred to as “**sebata**”, more usually “**tau**” (lion), because he is from the Bataung clan. A lion is a symbol of a chieftain, meaning that Mohapeloa is a forerunner, one who shows the way in music creative writing and education.

Masiba ke ana a kgabisa pampiri,  
Ke ya dibata tse tswileng pitso.  
Mmila ona o o tsamaisane le boCaluza.

(Here are pens decorating papers,  
Are of those who assembled,  
You walked this road with Caluza and company.)

The poet employs the metaphor “**masiba**” meaning “pens”. The phrase “**a kgabisa pampiri**” (they

decorate papers) refers to the composition of musicians trained by Mohapeloa. The demonstrative “**ke ana**” (here are they) means that even today they still keep on composing music just as Mohapeloa had taught them.

The second line tells us whose pens these are decorating the papers. The poet employs the concept “**kgabisa**” (decorates) because music is an art, it shows beauty, where music notes are written readers see an art, as well as artistic beauty. “**Masiba**” refers to the pens that these musicians use when they write songs that they compose. For the poet these pens belong to **(dibata tse tswileng pitso)** wild beasts that assembled. The metaphor “**dibata**” (wild beasts) refers to musicians taught by Mohapeloa. The metaphor “**masiba**” also refers to the pens that they used to

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obtain their education. The metaphor “**masiba**” goes hand in hand with “**dibata**” because by “**dibata**” the poet is referring to people, particularly the educated ones. The musicians and educationists use these pens to butt all those who are their obstacles. Beside composing and writing educational matters, they use their pens to butt all those who are trying to stand in front of their educational path.

In the last line the poet tells readers that Mohapeloa was not alone in this educational path. People like Caluza were also present because he was also a musician and a composer too. The metaphor “**mmila**” (path) refers to the educational and musical fields that Mohapeloa was involved in.

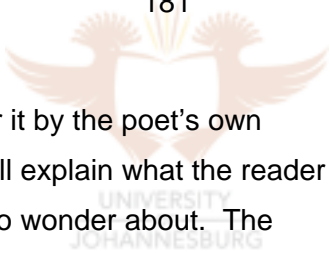
In the last line of the poem the poet says: **Diteboho ke moepa, Mohapeloa, o sebata**. The metaphor “**ke moepa**” (is up a steep slope) means that it is difficult for the poet to express thankfulness for Mohapeloa because Mohapeloa has done so much for the nation. By the

metaphor “**o sebata**” (you are a wild beast) the poet associates Mohapeloa’s strength with that of a wild beast. The way in which Mohapeloa was strong in the field of music and education, the poet cannot associate him with another person because the poet cannot think of a person so strong as Mohapeloa, hence he is associated with the wild beast.

In the poem entitled “Ke Daggakraal” the poet praises this area for producing well-known people in the field of education. The poet invites his readers very artistically and powerfully in the title of his poem. The first thing we notice about this poem is its title. In the title the poet tells what the reader will find him doing in the poem.

Ferry (1996:46) says the following about the title:

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The reader will enter it by the poet’s own invitation. In it he will explain what the reader will no longer need to wonder about. The title therefore characterizes the poem in advance for its openness, its directness in meeting and answering the expectations readers bring to the work of this poet ...

The title of the poem strikes the reader because the poet does not say “Daggakraal” but he says: “Ke Daggakraal”. The “**ke**”, which is the verbal part used for expressing the copula in the independent present of the indicative, strikes the reader, and he becomes aware that in the poem, the poet is not talking of a certain type of cocaine or a drug which people take for pleasure, but which they can become addicted to.

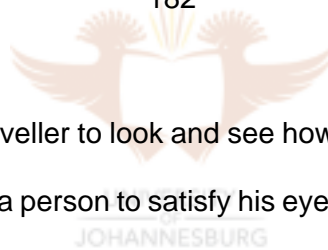
Motsamai, isa mahlo naheng o bone,

O bone ha naha e ikgabetse,  
E kgabile kang e se matekwane?  
Ana ke a molemo, a phedisang.

(Maboea, 1987:47)

(Traveller look at the land and see  
See how beautiful it is.  
What makes it beautiful if not dagga?  
These ones are useful, they save life.)

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In the first line the poet asks the traveller to look and see how beautiful the land is. The repetition “**o bone**” (and see) is the need for a person to satisfy his eyes through the beauty that is found on the land named “Daggakraal”. The repetition “**e kgabile**” (it is beautiful) emphasises the beauty that is seen on the land. The rhetorical question: “**E kgabile kang e se matekwane?**” takes the reader by surprise because it is not yet clear for the reader what makes the land beautiful. The poet mentions “**matekwane**” (dagga) which is a type of drug which people smoke for pleasure and sometimes this drug makes people mad. In the last line the poet tries to explain to his readers that the dagga he is talking about, is the one which is useful in the lives of people. The poet employs the demonstrative “**ana**” which enables the reader to differentiate between real dagga and the dagga that the poet is referring to. The poet takes the reader by surprise because he says: “**a molemo a phedisang**” (are useful and saves life). It is difficult for the reader to understand the poet, because dagga destroys people’s lives, even though it can be a different type of dagga, it destroys. For the poet the type of dagga he is referring to heals and keep people healthy. In the

last line, the poet employs irony very artistically to portray what he wants to in a beautiful manner.

The poet further says:

Naha Ntate, o lebitsoleholo.

Ka ho medisa palesa e kgolo;

Thuto ke yona palesa ya hao

Ka yona re fumana melemo ya hao.

(My father's land, you have a big name.

By growing a big flower;

Education is your flower,

Because of it we get your kindnesses.)



In the above stanza, the poet employs apostrophe because he addresses the land “Daggakraal” as if it is a human being capable of answering the poet. The importance of this apostrophe emphasises the notion that the beauty that is seen in “Daggakraal” is the beauty that was supposed to be seen and found in a human being.

The phrase “**o lebitsoleholo**” (you have a big name), tells readers that there is something more important which can be found inside the name “Daggakraal”. The phrase also gives the notion that the poet employs the name “Daggakraal” as an image, meaning that he is not telling us about dagga but about something else. For Sorenson (1994:131) imagery refers to:

Mental images, as produced by memory or imagination. Descriptions and figures of speech

as in the imagery of a poet. In writing, usually referring specifically to sensory images, i.e., those created through the five senses.

In line 2, there is an image of “**palesa**” (flower). A flower is a symbol of beauty. This flower makes the land “Daggakraal” very beautiful. The poet takes readers by surprise because in a true sense, many flowers make the land beautiful but in this case particularly in “Daggakraal”, there is only one flower that makes it beautiful. In other words, the flower that the poet is referring to differs from usual flowers, but the question still remains, what type of a flower is this?

The answer is found in line 3: “**Thuto ke yona palesa**” (Education is the flower). In other words the flower that the poet is talking about is education. “**Ke yona palesa**” (it is the flower) emphasises



the beauty, kindness, usefulness that is found in this flower which is education. The possessive “**ya hao**” means that education is like a person because it possesses “**palesa**” (flower). The poet emphasises the notion that through this flower people are able to see the usefulness and kindness of education. In other words these can be seen from people who received education in “Daggakraal”.

Na ha ho boMofokeng dingaka,  
BoKobajwang, ka baka la palesa ena?

(Are there no Mofokeng doctors,  
The Kobajwangs, because of this flower?)

Most Sesotho poets do not compose poems about formal education. When Maboea was asked what motivated him to compose poems about education, he responded in the following way:

*“Today formal education is important because it helps the child to understand the world by learning more about it. Through the formal education, the child can plan his or her future. I think this is the reason why I composed poems emphasising the importance of formal education. I also composed poems where I praise the heavy-weights in the field of education such as Moleleki, Mofokeng and Mohapelo. For example, the child is born into this world in which a network of meaning already exists. The child cannot unravel them, to make sense of them. The world into which the child is born, is initially impenetrable to the child. Its meanings must be revealed to the child by means of education. Through the adult’s educative care the world appeals to the child to discover its meaning*



*and thereby progresses towards adulthood. I have seen the educative care from people such as Moleleki, Mofokeng and Mohapelo just to mention few, and that is the reason why I composed poems about them too”.*

#### **5.4 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has shown that Maboea’s poetry deals with many themes. It has touched only on three different themes and the writer still feels that there are a number of them which can still be discussed, such as the theme of “hope”.

The themes revealed here highlight what the poet sees, feels and experiences about his environment. The poet makes his readers see, hear and also observe what is going on around them. In other words, the poet acts like the ear and eye of a society. For example, within the protest theme, he exposes the apartheid laws, and this helps him to be able to cleanse the hearts of human beings. Maboea uses his poetry to expose and censure the injustices perpetrated against his people.

The theme of death is well portrayed because he employs figures of speech such as personification, hyperbole and apostrophe very artistically. His reason for using such figures of speech is that no one is familiar with death even though people are aware that they are going to die.

The theme of formal education is also well portrayed. The poet encourages his readers to get educated because today's world needs educated people. He also praises people who contributed more in education.



In concluding this chapter we would like to point out that Maboea does not design his themes to teach a moral lesson. As a poet, he is not apologetic about what he is. He portrays his themes to suit his community. He does not create themes to suit European writing because he will misinterpret the true meaning of his culture. His themes are broadly human, because poetry is about man's conflict with man, man's search for perfection and for a better society.

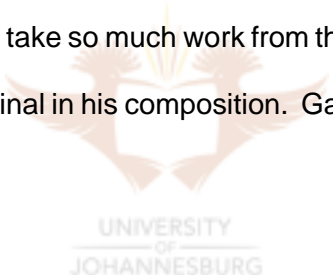


## CHAPTER 6

### INTERTEXTUALITY IN RELATION TO BOOYSEN'S POETRY AND INFLUENCE IN RELATION TO MOPHETHE'S POETRY

#### 6.0 INTRODUCTION

Oral traditional narratives of the Bible as well as European poetry provide poets with much that they could use to enrich their creativity. It is also necessary for the researcher to point out that the work of poets is developing because they take so much work from their predecessors. In other words no poet can claim to be completely original in his composition. Garrison (1970:518) says the following about originality:



If originality were defined as the creation of entirely new products or ideas, without dependence upon the work of others, few of the world's masterpieces could be termed original.

This chapter is informed by the creative voice of Booysen under intertextuality. It highlights the relationship of Booysen's poetry upon the Bible. It is also informed by the creative voice of Mophethe under influence. The idea is to lead readers and creative writers in discovering and interpreting the role of intertextuality in Booysen's poetry and also the role of influence in Mophethe's poetry.

Originality is not an anaesthetic criterion, so we are not going to over- emphasize it. The main thing is that in his composition, the poet should express himself as an artist. A poet has to acquire proper balance between what he intends to say and how he will say it. A poet might have good morals to communicate to his readers, but if he has no expression to communicate this as a poet, he will forever remain voiceless. In other words, the poet must have an art of choosing words from a language and stylistic devices to give his creative art his individual mark. This means that the poet should possess skills in his composition of modern poetry.

#### **6.1 INTERTEXTUALITY IN RELATION TO BOOYSEN'S POETRY**

Intertextuality is a term popularised by Julia Kristeva which signifies that a literary text is linked to other texts. A text can be linked to earlier texts whether by allusions or by the assimilation of the features of an earlier text. This brings us to the notion that the poet is the reader of other poets before he is a creator of poems. Intertextuality embraces features of other texts and this reminds us of the aspect of double meanings as one has to look at the meaning of an earlier poem and that of a later one.

Hirsh (1991:4) seems to confirm the above statement when he says:

A text must constantly be read in its relationship with other texts, of which it must be seen as an arrangement, adaptation or continuation.

Let us hear how poets answered the following question:

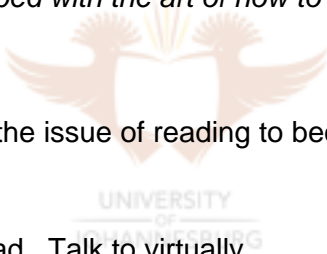
*How is reading a necessary prerequisite for creating poems?*

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*Mophethe: A potential poet amasses a certain amount of research by reading books to learn from others. One may read different genres, news papers as well as the Bible. Apprentices work under craftspeople in order to study their techniques. Reading, like apprenticeship is also a requirement for an inspiring poet.*

*Booyesen: Reading is essential for creating poems, even though at the onset, one may fall into the trap of copying other poets. But later one will develop good habits of learning in terms of syntax, semantics and authority. A serious and dedicated poet who reads becomes well equipped with the art of how to create poems.*

Wade (1997:16) seems to support the issue of reading to become a poet, when he says:



All writers should read. Talk to virtually any successful writer and they will have favourite authors. Only by reading and then analysing your responses to what you have read, will you make progress.

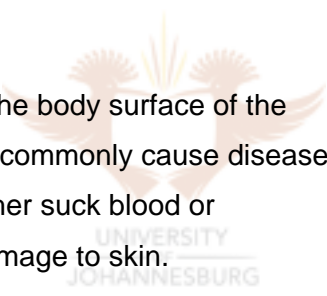
The views of the above poets are also supported by Drury (1991:151) when he says:

... reading may seem aimless, but it is really a kind of fishing, you never know when the big one may snap at your bait.

There are relationships between texts, as some of these texts are seen as continuations of earlier texts. It is important for readers to have a wide knowledge of literary works, so as to be in a position to identify literary works that are adaptations of already existing works of art.

Bloom (1986:252) maintains that deconstruction finds in a text the relationship of the “parasite” and the “host” signifying the inter-relationship between literary texts or creative writers.

*Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Vol.2:1046) says the following about the “parasite” and the “host”:



Parasites ... live on the body surface of the host ... They do not commonly cause disease in their hosts but rather suck blood or create superficial damage to skin.

The two concepts “host” and “parasite” in this study are adapted from Manyaka (1992:7) who says:

A host is an equivalent of an older writer or precursor writer who influences or acts as an inspiration to the new writers and who is also in turn sucked by new writers. A parasite will be any writer, critic or reader who uses another as a source or any new writer who “feeds” on the precursor writer, because he sucks what would make his work look good and survive.

*What is the role of intertextuality in poetry creative writing?*

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*Booyesen: A critic of a literary text would not exist if a poet of a text does not exist. To this as much as a parasite or a new poet won't be in existence without the host or the old poet. A new poet strives for other poet's work for survival. The new poet by merely feeding on other poets' work (poems), becomes the parasite in this case. New poets in creating their poems, do this in the framework of previous poets. In poetry writing, the one who we regard as a "parasite", creates his poems along the lines of a precursor poet whom is regarded as a "host".*

Bloom (1986:217) states that:



The host feeds the parasite and  
makes its life possible.

*What is the importance of a host in your poetry writing?*

*Booyesen: The importance of a host (precursor) in my poetry writing is to make the writings of a young poet (parasite) possible and more organised. The precursor poet feeds and makes the life of the younger poet more organised. The precursor work (my work) in some cases gets new clarity and it is also supplemented by the new work.*

Jenny, in Culler (1988:104), states that there are two types of inter-textuality, namely, intertextuality proper and allusion. Intertextuality proper occurs when a text redeploys an entire structure and

meaning from a prior text. On the other hand allusion occurs when a text repeats an element from a prior text without using its meaning.

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For the purpose of this project we are not concerned with the difference between the two types, but intertextuality is taken as the combination of the two. If we separate the two types, other forms which are repeated and which are part of intertextuality proper or allusion will be excluded.

Abrams (1985:9) states that:

The current term intertextuality includes allusion among the many ways in which one text is interlinked with other texts.

It is evident from the above discussions that no poet can claim to be totally original. This brings us to the notion that in intertextuality all poets are first readers and one way or the other are subject to influence by the literary works of earlier poets. Intertextuality embraces influences as well as references to other literary texts. For the purpose of this study intertextuality will include the identification of common elements between texts.

#### 6.1.1 Booyesen feeding on Biblical extracts

Biblical influence is evident in Booyesen's poetry. As we indicated earlier the Bible influenced most Sesotho poets, and it is evident from Booyesen's poems that the Bible played an important role in his poetry creating. During his early years of formal education, more emphasis was placed on the study of the Bible and they were taught more about Biblical stories. He also possesses a Doctoral degree in theology. Intertextuality is evident in Booyesen's poetry because there are lines or

sentences and meaning from the Bible that are noticeable in his poems. It is evident that Booyesen is a “parasite” and the Bible is the “host”.

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Under intertextuality the focus will be on the “host and parasite”, the “images of Biblical origin” and the “Biblical stories”.

*What made you choose the Bible as a subject for your poetry?*

*Booyesen: I did not decide, I wanted to do it until I investigated it mentally. I had the idea, and I did my research, which was to read the few books of the Bible. We should take note that the Bible is not primarily literature, but the sacred book of Christianity. There is a great tendency to appreciate the “Bible” for its artistic qualities to view it not only as the “Word of God”, but as the work of great writers. Whatever our religious beliefs are, if we wish to have a full appreciation of the development of Sesotho poetry, we cannot afford to neglect the Bible. Its purely literary impact on Sesotho creative writers is almost too great to be measured.*

E hlotse Noe monna wa Modimo,

A nwa iwala a kopana hlooho,

A hana diaparo a hlobola

Monna a sala posho, ra makala

(Booyesen, 1987:50)

(It defeated Noah the man of God,

He drank wine and became drunk,  
He refused clothes and lay naked,  
A man remained naked and we became surprised.)

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Let us compare the extract from Booyesen's poem with the following extract from the Bible:

Noah was the first tiller of the soil,  
He drank of the wine, and became drunk  
and lay uncovered in his tent.  
(Genesis 9:20-21)

The parasite (Booyesen) adopted the story of Noah from the host (the Bible). Here the poet (parasite) wants to give his readers a clear picture of the bad results of wine and drunkenness. Noah was the man of God, that is why God saved him and after the flood God made a covenant with him. Noah, the man of God planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine till he became drunk. Because of his drunkenness, he could not wear clothes. His sons Shem and Japheth covered their father's nakedness, and they did not see their father's nakedness because their faces were turned away.

The poet (parasite) succeeds in achieving his artistic unity through the help of the "host" the Bible. The poet says: **Ntho ena e hlotse kgale.** (This thing overpowered long ago.)

The poet employs "**ntho ena**" (this thing) when referring to the "beer". By the phrase "**ntho ena e hlotse kgale**" (this thing overpowered people from long ago), the poet portrays "beer" as a valueless drink; a strong intoxicating drink that ruins and destroys the lives of people. Beer is not



trustworthy because it overpowered “Noah” the man of God. Noah was not supposed to lie uncovered, but beer made him to lie uncovered. The phrase “**a kopana hlooho**” (he became mad), is much harder than “**a tahwa**” (he became drunk). Here the poet emphasise the fact that

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immediately Noah had drunk beer, he acted like a mad person. In most if not all instances, a mad person does not want to cover his body, he likes to be naked.

In the phrase “**monna a sala posho**” (a man remained naked), the poet succeeds in using language in an artistic manner. By the noun “**monna**” (man), the poet is referring to the righteous person. This man, the poet is referring to, is Noah. Lord said to Noah:

“Go into the ark, you and all your household,  
for I have seen that you are righteous before  
me in this generation”. (Genesis 7:1)

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Through the concept “**posho**” the poet succeeds in describing how naked Noah was. In other words he was not half-naked, but he was completely without clothes on his body.

The poet further says:

Phapang ya hlaha ha Noe,

Thohako ya tlola boroko kgabareng.

Mora Noe a jariswa tshotleho.

(Booyesen, 1987:50)

(Conflict occurred in Noah's household,  
A curse took place,  
Suffering was upon Noah's son.)

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Let us compare Booyesen's lines with:

When Noah awoke from his wine and knew  
what his youngest son had done to him,  
he said,  
"Cursed be Canaan; a slave of slaves shall be  
to his brothers" (Genesis 9: 24-25).

Here the poet (parasite) gives us the result caused by drunkenness in Noah's house. Booyesen (parasite) succeeds in displaying his creativity.

This means that the "host" gains something new from the parasite. The poet parasite took Noah's story from the Bible "host" and created a poem with a strong message to his readers. In the Bible (host) there is no clear reference about the result of "beer". The poet (parasite) satirises "beer" in a humorous manner, but in a very sarcastic way. He selects Noah as his character and describes him and his lack of sense because of "beer". The poet succeeds in illustrating the impact "beer" can have on human life. The poet emphasises the notion that, no one can overpower alcohol, because

alcohol overpowered man from long ago. The best suggestion the poet has for his readers is to go away from alcohol.

Let us also see how Booyesen use the extract from the Bible to create the poem entitled Judase:

Wa nna wa kgukguna lefifing

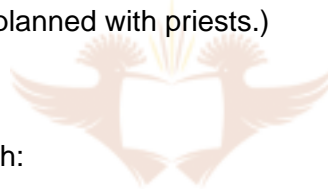
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Wa rera le bapirisita wa qeta.

(Booyesen, 1987:80)

(You have been creeping in darkness

You planned with priests.)



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Let us compare Booyesens lines with:

Judas, procuring a band of soldiers and  
chief priests went there with lanterns and  
torches and weapons.

(John 18:3)

Booyesen (parasite) took extracts from the Bible and created a poem. He spices his poem through the use of language. He employs “**wa**” when referring to Judas. This way of using the language enables the poet to employ apostrophe throughout his poem. The poet seems to be talking direct to Judas, and it looks as if Judas will apologise to the poet. The poet (parasite) employs apostrophe because he wants to convey his anger about what Judas did to Jesus. In other words he condemns

it strongly and he wants people also to condemn such dirty deeds. The Bible says that Judas and the chief priests went to hunt Jesus with lanterns and torches. The poet says that Judas has been creeping in the darkness. For the poet darkness is the symbol of evil. In the beginning the earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep. “God saw that light was good, and separated the light from the darkness” (Genesis 1:3-4).

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Wa fihla Gethesemane thapelong,

Wa fihla o latetswe ke mohoula,

Mohoula o hlometse ho qeta.

(Booyesen, 1987:80)

(You arrived at Gethsemane during prayer,

You arrived being followed by a crowd

A crowd strongly armed.)

Let us compare the above lines from Booyesen’s poem with the following lines from the Bible:

And they went to a place which was called

Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples. “Sit here

while I pray”. Judas came and with him a crowd

with swords and clubs ...

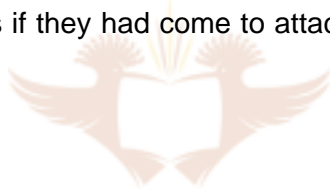
(Mark 14:32-43)

The poet (parasite) portrays the story of Judas very artistically. Through the repetition “**wa fihla**”

(you arrived) he emphasises the fact that Judas was more prepared to betray Jesus. Through the repetition again, the parasite condemns the action Judas took to betray Jesus. The repetition further emphasises Judas who betrayed Jesus, knew the place very well, for Jesus often met there with his disciples.

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The poet further says that Judas came and with him “**mohoula**” which means a crowd. This crowd from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders was armed to the teeth. What the poet is saying here, is that, physically the crowd was armed but spiritually they were empty. The parasite condemns Judas and his crowd as if they had come to attack a robber, with strong weapons to capture Jesus.



Empa wa sulafallwa hampe,  
Wa lahla tjelete ya hao,  
Wa ipolaya ke ho swaba.

(Booyesen, 1987:80)

(But you became bitterly disgusted,  
You threw your money away  
You killed yourself because of sadness.)

Let us compare the above lines from Booyesen's poem with the following extract from the Bible:

When Judas saw that he was condemned, he

brought back the thirty pieces of silver ... throwing  
down the pieces of silver in the temple ... and  
he went and hanged himself.

(Matthew 27:3-5)

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In each line of the poet (parasite) there is “**wa**” which refers to Judas. The repetition of “**wa**” enables Booyesen to employ apostrophe in an artistic manner. Through the apostrophe the poet is not only talking to Judas, but is condemning his evil action, and in actual fact, he is talking to people who can hear. He is warning people to be more careful about life otherwise they will fall into a trap just like Judas did. The poet is saying that there is no reward for filthy work. The repetition enables the poet to say three things very artistically. “**Sulafallwa**” (disgusted). Judas became disgusted and this led him to throw (“**lahla**”) (throw) away his money and lastly he threw away his own life (“**ipolaya**”) because he killed himself.

This excitement which Booyesen (parasite) derives from the Bible (host) is mostly the excitement of seeing connections that did not exist before, of seeing different aspects of life unified through a pattern. Through this artistic unity “**sulafallwa**” (disgusted), “**lahla**” (throw away) and “**ipolaya**” (kill yourself). Booyesen (parasite) finds way of setting down the reader’s emotions, sorrows and regrets. He also finds a means of warning and sending his strong message to the people.

### 6.1.2 Titles

Intertextuality in Booyesen’s poetry from the Biblical extracts is also detected when we look at the titles of his poems. Booyesen borrowed the following titles from the Bible:

Monna wa Modimo (Man of God) - Genesis 9:1

Mmaditaba (Beer/Wine) - 1 Corinthians 15:55

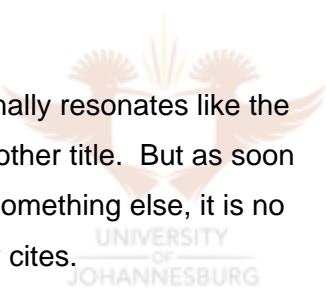
Lefu (Death) - 1 Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Bibele (Bible) - Genesis 1 - Revelation

Judase (Judas) - Matthew 27:3.

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The first thing we notice about a poem is its title and it is also the tag we use to refer to a poem. Titles exist as borders between the supposed outside and the inside of the poem. Derrida quoted by Wolfreys (1999:94) says:



Title occasionally resonates like the citation of another title. But as soon as it names something else, it is no longer simply cites.

We don't read the title as we read the body of the poem, we submit a title to a different reading. It is at the outer limits of the outside that it is the text. Effectively, outside/inside distinctions are shown to be not as clear-cut or discrete as we had previously believed.

Booyesen's titles (some) and the contents of some poems are from the Bible (host). There is a great creativity on the part of Booyesen. There are new things that the reader can find in Booyesen's poetry that he cannot find in the Bible. In this instance the Bible (host) gains a lot from the poet (parasite).

Let us hear how Booyesen responded to the following question:

*In every culture we have had to make up mythology to explain death to ourselves. In your poetry writing do you have any thought on that?*

*Booyesen: Very provocative statement. We have a myth explaining how death came into existence. But do not have a myth explaining how should people handle death, or how should they behave when death is in the family. The reason is that now death is*

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*with us in such abundance and hovers over us in so massive a form that we don't have time to invent a mythology explaining that death is part of life, nor is our creativity directed towards same. We still have a strong belief that the Bible handles this issue of death in a very creative way. Most of our creativity about "death" is based on the Bible extracts or expressions. Now our challenge as poets is to prevent unnecessary death that causes by deceases such as "AIDS". This can be done through creative writing.*

In his poem "Lefu" (Death) Booyesen says:

Lefu le bopile monyako,

Le halefile le letsho.

(Booyesen, 1987:63)

(Death camps by the door side,

It is angry and black.)



Booyesen's lines remind us of 1 Corinthians (15:55) where St. Paul employs rhetorical question and apostrophises death.

O death, where is thy victory?

O death, where is thy sting?

Readers might agree with us if we say that Booyesen borrowed the poem entitled "**Lefu**" (Death) from the Bible. The poet portrays death as if it is a human being, "**le bopile monyako**" (it camps by

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the door side). This means that, at any time, death can strike its prey. Here the poet employs personification, to reveal his artistic mode. In the second line, the word "**lefu**" (death) has been discarded but the subject concord "**le**" (death) because he uses the words economically. This reduction also intensifies the readers' understanding of the idea expressed in those lines. The poet uses the phrase "**halefile le letsho**" (it is angry and black). An angry person with black heart can cause sorrow in people's life, because he has no mercy. But for the poet "death" is more cruel than a cruel person. This means that death is so watchful and very fast that its victim cannot escape its merciless attack. The word "**halefile**" (angry) reveals the poet's spiteful attitude towards death which is by implication come about as a result of unwarranted envy. To Booyesen the death's angry seems a reality because he has been experiencing death in his family.

Fu le tla qeta neng ho senya?

Kgale le rinya empa ha le kgotsofale.

(Booyesen, 1987:64)

(When will death finish destroying?)

It started long ago destroying but it does not get satisfied.)

The poet visualises death as a person who does not want to stop destroying people's lives. The poet (parasite) borrowed "death" from the Bible (host) and goes beyond how the Bible portrays death. He takes an inanimate thing which is "death" and takes a human being and creates one unit which means that the death of a human being is a necessity for people to meet God. The line: **"Kgale le rinya empa ha le kgotsofale"** (It started long ago destroying but it does not get satisfied) resembles a strong human being who started from long ago to work (kill) but even today he is not

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satisfied. The picture of this strong man keeps on coming into our minds as we read through the poem. The poet add other details about this strong man death, for example:

Ha jwale le ntonetse mahlo.

(At the moment it makes big eyes at me.)

This completes the picture of a human being with the "eyes". In this case death does not only make big eyes at the poet, but death shows that it understands human beings and it knows how to attack them.

The methods Booyens uses to personify death, offers beauty in his expression. Apart from beauty, personification brings objects closer to the human being. The poet finds in words a means of getting the sorrow out of our system. We feel that we do not bear sorrow on our own, because our sorrow is part of the universe and a necessity. When we discover that a thing such as death is necessary we no longer complain about it.

### 6.1.3 Biblical stories

Apart from Biblical meanings and Biblical expressions, Booyens narrates stories found in the Bible. In the poem entitled "Bibele" (Bible) the poet tells us about what is written in the Bible from Adam and Eve until to the book of Revelations.

E hlalosa tsohle tsa motho

Ho tloha ho Adama le Efa.

(Booyens, 1987:78)

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(It explains all about a human being

From Adam and Eve.)

This story is found in Genesis 2 (4-9) when God formed man of dust from the ground. God commanded man saying he must not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil God said that it is not good that the man should be alone God made a woman from the rib of a man.

Adam and Eve let themselves be tempted to disobey God by the serpent who is "the Devil and Satan". They wanted to be like God but instead they became servants of Satan through their own fault. God inflicted his punishment for their sin, but promised that one of Eve's descendants would crush the serpent's head.

Buka e bua tse bohloko,

Taba tsa Kaine le Abele.

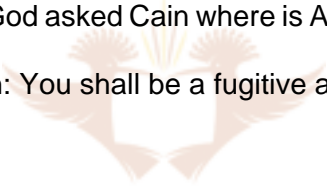
(Booyens, 1987:78)

(The book tells sorrows,  
News of Cain and Abel.)

This reminds us of Genesis 4 (3:16) which tells the story of Cain and Abel. Abel was a shepherd and Cain was a tiller of the soil. God had regard for Abel and his offering of the firstlings of his flock, but for Cain and his offerings of the fruit of the ground, God had no regard. Cain became so angry and his countenance fell. He asked Abel to go out to the field and Cain rose up against his

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brother Abel and killed him. When God asked Cain where is Abel, he said: "I do not know", am I my brother's keeper? God said to Cain: You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on earth.



Morwalle wa fihla batho ba shwa.  
Noe a pholoha le ba ntlo ya hae.

(Booyesen, 1987:78)

(Flood took place and people died.

Noah and his family were saved.)

This story is found in Genesis 8 (6-15). In a sinful world Noah was the only just man, who found favour with God, and for his sake his family was spared. After the flood God made covenant with him.

After the flood, God instructed Noah to go forth from the ark. Noah built an alter to the Lord and

took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered offering on the alter. God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them: Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

Hela o reng ka Tshenolo

E bua tse boima tsa bofelo.

(Booyesen, 1987:78)

(Hey! What are you saying of Revelation,  
It speaks of the last judgment.)

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The Revelation is the last book of the Bible and its main theme centres around the last judgement and the new heaven and earth. The book of Revelation states that dead, great and small will stand before the throne. They will be judged by what is written in the books, by what they have done.



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God will dwell with His people and they shall be His people and God Himself will be with them. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more.

In concluding intertextuality, we would like to quote Bloom in Culler (1981-108-109):

The text is the intertextual construct  
comprehensible only in terms of other texts  
which it prolongs, completes, transforms and  
sublimates; but when we ask what these other  
texts are, they turn out to be the central poems  
of a single great precursor ...

As said earlier that intertextuality embraces references to other texts, it therefore takes us to the aspect of dual meanings because we had to look at the meaning of the Bible (host) and thereafter that of a new text (parasite). There is an evidence of dual meanings, because the meaning from the Bible is not the same as that of Booyesen's poems. Booyesen (parasite) borrows Biblical verses to create his poem and he succeeds to introduce his own individuality and modifications to the borrowed material from the Bible. Booyesen has a sharp mind he is an instrument to transform what he sees around him into images about which he write poems. He borrows something from the Bible and portray it in such a way that it appears to readers as if they never heard or seen it before.

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## 6.2 INFLUENCE IN MOPHETHE'S POETRY

We have critics with different views about the role of influence in literature. For example Palmer's view about the role of influence in literature is that:

... the African novel grew out  
of Western novel ...  
(1982:6)

For Palmer influence is not a contributory factor towards creative writing or towards shaping of a literary work of art, but it causes one to write or it is the cause of plagiarism.

Palmer's view on influence is fully supported by critics such as Wilde as quoted by Bloom (1973:6) by this remarks:

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

If we compare the two views, of Palmer and Wilde, we find that the two critics tend to believe that influence is not important in literature. They believe that influence is one way of giving away of one's creativity to another writer. For them it is not a way of encouraging one writer to create his literary work of art.

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On the other hand we have critics who oppose the views of Palmer and Wilde. Bu-Buakei Jabbi (1979) opposes Palmer in particular when he argues that the Western novel influences the African novel to take the form that it is. Moleleki (1988) seems to support Bu-Buakei Jabbi (1979) when he says that it is not important that the work of art grew out of influence, but these are factors which have an effect upon the writer's mind in the creativity process.

For the researcher, originality is not something that is found in literature, be it prose, drama or poetry. This view is supported by creative writers the researcher interviewed. Ntuli (1984:15) also supports this view when he says:

It is common knowledge that an  
artist cannot work in a vacuum.  
For him to produce anything a number  
of influences work on him.

Let us hear how Booyesen and Mophethe respond to the following question:

*How important is “influence” in poetry creative writing?*

*Booyesen: Influence is very crucial in creative writing, because it is a source of inspiration. In creative writing a precursor writer is a literary master who guides a young creative writer on how to give his literary work a good shape or form. Therefore influence should taken as a way that gives shape, style and sustenance to one’s literary work of art.*

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*Mophethe: Influence is very important in creative writing because the work of art grow out of it. I don’t believe that there is a poem or work of art that can be termed original, because original does not exist in creative writing. For a poet to create or compose a poem, a number of influences work on him. Influence can become a conversation or something in nature or reading something in the newspaper or even the Bible. Sometimes influence is just a feeling or a dream. Influence is so important in creative writing because it enriches creativity. The work of poets is developing because of what they took from their predecessors. A poet’s creativity comes from resources such as praise poems, culture or Christianity.*

### **6.3 TRADITIONAL POETRY VERSUS MODERN POETRY**

At this juncture, there is a hot debate among critics about the nature and status of traditional oral poetry. Their argument is that oral literature is relatively undeveloped and this led critics to debate



about the issue of superiority in speech or writing. The crux of the matter is that the oral text has tended to be a mere collective records of a particular type of culture. Barber (1984:497) gives us a reason why scholars and critics have turned their backs against traditional oral literature.

The reason is to be found in the political situation of oral literature in general. Oral literature everywhere has been or is being marginalised with the displacement and impoverishment of its bearers, the illiterate peasantry.

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Here Barber is reflecting specifically on African oral literature because politically Africans are peasants. Scholars are still reluctant to develop criticism in oral literature because they have an idea that oral literature is about collection and annotation of texts. It should be clear that, within a given cultural group some texts, for example proverbs, can be considered as more serious or more important than others, idioms or myths, for example. These distinctions are ignored by scholars because they tend to see oral texts as mere historical documents. For them there is no much difference between oral literature and history. Some readers tend to differentiate oral texts within a functional perspective, with little attention given to their prestige.

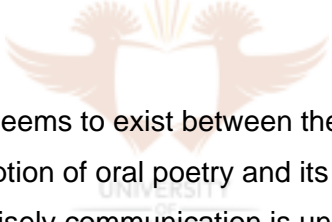
*Does communication exist between the consumption of oral poetry and its readers?*

*Mophethe: The research into oral African traditional literature has succeeded in developing its own horizon of expectation with regard to the African oral traditional text. Today, if the audience of an African oral traditional art participates in its creation, the reader*

*of the written text understands the audience' meaning. The oral traditional performance shows a mere theoretically compelling way of submerging the individuality of the artist. The oral artist is well known to his audience he performs to. In most cases he is even better known than the creative writer of a published book to his readers. The author's act of composition is separate in time and space from its resultant object (the text) and can for that reason be studied in its own right.*

Olabiya Yai (1989:59) seems to disagree with the researcher:

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No communication seems to exist between the production, consumption of oral poetry and its criticism. More precisely communication is unidimensional. When the creator of oral poetry and his academic critic are contemporaries, the terms of the critical exchange are unilaterally set by the critic. The poet is thus degraded from his status of creator to that of an informant.

We need not stop here, fortunately there are critics with different views from that of Olabiya Yai because we Africans still have those prestigious oral African traditional texts.

Chadwick, in Finnegan (1976:15), states his point in this way:

In civilized countries we are inclined to

associate literature with writing, but such an association is accidental ... Millions of people throughout Asia, Polynesia, Africa and even Europe who practice the art of literature have no knowledge of letters.

The above quotation states it clearly that literature is not only what is written, because even in some countries where written literature is unknown, literature exists in a form of traditional oral literature, which is unwritten literature.

If we take this argument about written and unwritten literature back to deconstructionists and structuralists, we find that structuralists rank speech above writing. They rank speech as having a primary importance above writing. On the other hand Derrida disputes Saussure's notion that

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writing is there as a means of conveying speech. Derrida's analyses show that logocentrism tends to manifest itself in indirect ways. An example occurs in Derrida's "phonocentrism". Phonocentricity privileges speech over writing. This preference for speech is based on a logocentric assumption that speech directly expresses a meaning that the speaker has in mind. Speech is taken as being transparent to meaning in a way that writing can never be writing is thought to copy speech rather than the ideas themselves.

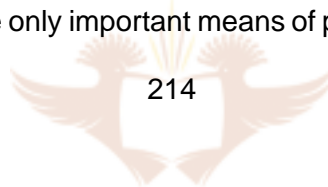
Derrida emphasizes the fact that even when speech is subjected to interpretation it is usually in written form. For Derrida, in contrast to Saussure, speech is a species of writing. Derrida believes that the terms signified as well as signifier are of secondary importance. Derrida maintains that there is no difference between signifier (writing) and signified (speech) because they both possess traces of all the other signifying elements with which they are associated. The Saussurean

approach give “speech” and “writing” equal status, since it regards language as a system of differences and not as a collection of terms for conveying information.

Finnegan (1976:20) states that:

It is already widely accepted that these two media can each draw on the products of the other, for orally transmitted forms have frequently been adopted or adapted in written literature ...

Derrida’s and Finnegan’s assumption of equality between oral and written literature fits well in this thesis where we see oral literature influencing written literature. Our traditional oral literature was more oral in nature than today. The only important means of preserving oral traditional literature is



by means of writing. As people pass away we have seen that the mind is not a permanent repository knowledge of oral literature and writing is the only reliable means of recording.

Let us hear what Ong (1982:22) says about the poet:

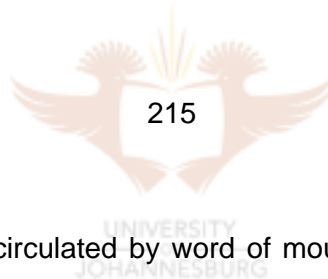
Homer, by the consensus of centuries, was no beginner poet, nor was he a poor poet ... it now begins to appear that he had some kind of phrase book in his head ... Homer stitches together prefabricated parts.

For Ong, the person with the book in his head presents the picture of the oral formulaic theory. It is forced by the necessity to keep going to save face in front of his audience. There is still another

view of Homer presented by Hommond (1987:11):

The Homeric poems are in one sense the creation and find flowering of a long and distinguished tradition.

What is important from both quotations even though they seem to be opposing standpoint, is that they address the issue of the creativity of the oral traditional at the level of the creative storyteller. What we should remember is that there is creativity in African oral traditional art because the oral artist-performer is not isolated from his people. He is part of his nation, culture, tradition and he is always face to face with his audience, meaning that he does not create in a vacuum.



Our traditional oral literature has circulated by word of mouth rather than by means of written literature. Okpewho (1992:17) notices traditional oral literature, especially in African Universities, is studied in the context of its relationship to modern literature and not necessarily only for its own sake.

Most Sesotho creative writers collect from their people's traditional oral literature as a way of displaying their cultures. In this regard Guma (1977:1) points out that:

A people's past is its spiritual heritage, and as such it should not only be nursed and nurtured, but preserved and jealously guarded for all times. This is because of the stability that it provides, or without it, a nation is like a tree without roots,

liable to be blown over by the gentlest of breezes.

The characteristics of oral literature as transmitted by word of mouth seems as good a yardstick to examine the various ways in which Mophethe as a modern poet has been influenced by traditional oral literature.

For the purpose of this project we intend to focus on the following and show how these influences have been assimilated into Mophethe's work.

#### 6.4 EULOGUES AS A SOURCE OF INFLUENCE

Mophethe responds in this way, to the following question:

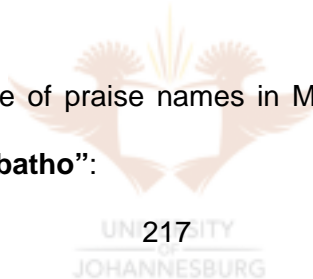
*“How important are eulogues in poetry creative writing”?*

*Mophethe: In African society the naming of a child assumes to some extent a cultural significance. Culturally naming was and still is an important issue. Most of our cultural facts, values and norms were drawn from observable phenomena and are kept alive by different idiomatic expressions and proverbs. The Basotho formulated a proverb saying: **Bitso lebe ke seromo** or **Bitso letle ke thoriso** meaning that a bad name is an omen or a good name is a praise. The proverb “**bitso lebe ke seromo**” (a bad name is a bad omen) reminds us of an English proverb which says: give a dog a bad name and it will live by it. The proverb “**bitso lebe ke seromo**” (a bad name is a bad omen) captures the traditional belief of the Basotho that a person is likely to be influenced by his or her name. If I choose the name of*

**“Mothomoiketsi, moithetsi”** I refer to a drunkard with unacceptable behaviour in the society. I employ these names to condemn the unacceptable conduct that is embodied in the name **“Letahwa”**.

The main distinction between modern poetry and traditional Sesotho poetry is in “theme”. The theme of traditional Sesotho poetry is to praise people whom we regard as heroes for brave deeds or achievements. We use eulogues to encourage bravery, loyalty and integrity among the people. In modern poetry we use names for two purposes, namely to condemn a bad behaviour in the society or to praise a person for his achievement.

In order to illustrate the importance of praise names in Mophethe’s poetry we take the poem **“Tshebeletso ya Sesotho, Seotlabatho”**:



Namane e tshehla, sebata mora Hlalele, wa Matitjha;

Tau ya puruma hara meru, fatshe la tetema;

Makwala tlhabela ra di menola; tshea fatshe tsa wa.

(Mophethe 1983:30)

(Tawny calf, wild beast son of Hlalele, the teacher;

The lion roars in the forest, the earth trembles,

We cowards run away, our trousers fall down.)

In the above lines, Hlalele is often referred to by praise names called eulogies. Kunene (1971)

classifies these according to their origin and function under metaphorical eulogies, deverbative eulogies, regimental eulogies, descriptive eulogies, clan eulogies and associative references.

The poet praises a man who is outstanding in the field of Sesotho Radio announcing. In the first line the poet uses more than one eulogy to praise his hero. The poet's hero earned his praise names through distinction in Radio Sesotho. This means that he accumulates many praise names directly or describing his brave deeds in which he has distinguished himself.

The poet opens his poem by metaphorical eulogy, "**namane e tshela**" (tawny calf). The idea is to reinforce the praise already due to Hlalele as a hero by describing him not only as an announcer of Radio Sesotho but as an outstanding one. By the eulogy "**sebata**" (wild beast), the poet intentionally uses it as a metaphorical name in addition to its use as identifying Hlalele with his totem. "**Mora Hlalele**" (Son of Hlalele) is an eulogy of associative reference. The poet seems to be proud of Hlalele's ancestry because Hlalele is from good stock.

Hlalele is referred to as "**tau**" (lion). A lion is a metaphorical eulogy with the notion of chieftain. The lion is feared and people tremble when they hear it roaring. For example in Chaka by Mofolo, as men of the village penetrate the forest following the lion which has killed some of their cattle, the lion suddenly roars and men scatter in all directions. The poet arouses emotional response in the reader by a prolific use of the eulogy "**tau**", when referring to Hlalele, so that even as it leaps to the attack, it still evokes feelings of admiration in the reader's mind. It is a eulogy associated with strength and endurance. This awakens the imagination and creates vivid pictures in the reader's mind. The eulogy **tau** identifies the hero Hlalele with the phenomena of nature which is noted for possessing, to the highest degree, the qualities observed and praised in Hlalele.



In “**Dithoko tsa Moqapi Joshua Pudumo Mohapelo**” we also find eulogies used by the poet to praise his subject, in this case Joshua Pudumo Mohapelo.

Ke e motona, ya tswetsweng ke sebata  
Bata se maro, se meetsetse, taumoholo.  
Ke Motaung enwa ha Maloisane, Pudumo,  
Hoba pineng ke yona sentle pudumo.  
Phoofolo ya meru le madiba (Mophethe, 1983:1).

(He is the male one, who is born from a beast,  
The beast with claws, with plenty mane the old lion,  
This one is Motaung of Maloisane, Pudumo.  
Because in music he is a real black wildbeast,  
An animal of forests and deep waters)

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Mophethe uses the metaphorical eulogy “**Ke moshemane e motona**” (He is a boy) when referring to Joshua Mohapelo. At the time Mophethe was composing this poem his subject was already an old man. Through this eulogy “**Ke moshemane**” (He is a boy) the reader sees Mohapelo with the qualities that are found in a boy, such as strength and creativity. The poet further extends the eulogy “**e motona**” (the boy). This reminds us that the Basotho refer to a boy even while still a baby as:

Ngwana e motona pholo ya letlaka.  
Kabelwamanong.

(The male child an ox abandoned to the vultures  
One apportioned to the eagles.)

They said these words referring to a male person for he might die on the battle-field and his unburied corpse be devoured by vultures and eagles. The poet visualises Mohapeloa as a warrior who will die with his pen in his hand. To the poet Mohapeloa is a hero in the field of music. The poet further

says: “**ya tswetsweng ke sebata**” (who has been borne by a wild beast). The poet shifts his focus and concentrates on the subject’s father as “**sebata**” (wild beast). The poet is proud of the ancestry of his subject, that is the reason why he start by praising the ancestors of his subject before praising it. The metaphorical eulogy “**ke sebata**” (he is a wild beast) makes readers believe that Mohapeloa’s father was a strong person, a warrior, a chieftain, a symbol of strength, ferocity and

majesty. In the second line the poet keeps on using descriptive eulogies. He describes this wild beast as “**bata se maro**”, **se meetsetse taumoholo**.

The poet associates Mohapeloa’s father with a wild beast (lion) in metaphorical references, and Mohapeloa’s father admires the qualities of his personality with that name he is linked to and believes that he possesses these qualities. For the poet the qualities that he see in Mohapeloa’s father, are also found in Mohapeloa himself.

Now the poet goes back to Mohapeloa and says, “**ke Motaung**”. The poet praises the hero Mohapeloa by identifying him with his clan name “**Motaung**”. As the hero’s clan takes its name

from a wild animal, the hero is also called by the name of that animal. In this case Mohapeloa is “**tau**” as his father is “**taumoholo**” (the great lion). The poet uses another associative reference **ha Maloisane**, to indicate which “**Bataung**” Mohapeloa is from. We have many Bataung such as:

Ke Motaung wa ha Sefatla sa Tshukudu.

Ke Motaung wa Ramokgele.

Ke Motaung wa ha Rathulo a Mphethe.

Ke Motaung wa Nthethe a Morapedi.

(Ngcangca, 1990:27)

The poet identifies his hero further as “**pudumo**” (black wildebeest). A black wildebeest is an animal with long ears and sharp horns. The poet refers to Mohapeloa as this “black wildebeest with a sharp horn”. This sharp horn refers to the pen that he uses when creating and composing songs. The horn also refers to the stick he carries when conducting his choristers. The black wildebeest uses its long horns to butt all those who are its obstacles. Mohapeloa uses his stick to butt all those who are trying to stand in front of his musical path. “**Phoofolo ya meru**” (an animal of forests). The poet associates Mohapeloa’s strength as that of a lion. Through this eulogy “**phoofolo ya meru**”

(an animal of forests), the reader visualises Mohapeloa as a person who is physically and spiritually strong, but who also perseveres. This means that when his musical path becomes difficult, he does not surrender but he strives onwards.

The quoted lines comprise solitary occurrence of metaphors. This is strengthened by the fact that the lines containing the metaphors constitutes complete sentences as a result of the use of the

copula “e” which means “he is”. The poet uses these metaphors to raise in the reader’s mind a picture of Mohapeloa’s perseverance in his effort to obtain his music courses.

Mophethe uses different eulogies to praise his subjects. There is evidence of “**dithoko**” (traditional praise poetry) influence in Mophethe’s poetry. “**Dithoko**” is part of the poet’s culture and in his composition he reminds one of those time when the women were dependent for their safety upon the strength of their men. In those days women were not attracted by a coward. Mophethe applies praise names to associate his heroes with strong and brave animals. He uses the animal’s name not only as a clan name, but also as a metaphorical eulogy. For example: “lion” can be a clan name and at the same time a metaphorical name. The poet goes further to bestow upon his subjects attributes associated with the animal he chooses. In most instances Mophethe associates his subjects with wild animals. In other words he displays the bravery that is found in his subjects. His subjects are heroes, not cowards.



## 6.5 LEGENDS AS A SOURCE OF INFLUENCE

In Sesotho we have a well known legend (**tshomo**) which is the boy hero Senkatana. Some critics draw similarities between the story of Senkatana and that of Jesus Christ. They equate the snake

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that betrayed Eve in the garden of Eden as the Kgodumodumo, which they also see as a sin. Maditaolane, the woman who bore Senkatana, is the virgin Mary. Senkatana, the slayer of “Kgodumodumo” is Jesus Christ.

Let us focus on the following lines from Mophethe’s poem entitled “**Dithoko tsa Moprefesa Samuel Doggie Ngcongwane**” and hear how the poet associates his subject with the boy-hero Sankatana?

Mmannyeo yoo wa hao ngwana ke ya jwang?  
Ngwana ya sa reng le ngee jwana,  
O bontsha ho tswa ho badimo,  
Ka moso e tla ba Moshanyana wa Senkatana (Mophethe, 1983:9).

(Mother of so and so, what type of a person is your son?  
The son who does not even cry,  
He shows to be from the ancestors.  
Tomorrow he will be the boy-hero Senkatana.)

The story of the boy-hero Senkatana tells how the monster **Kgodumodumo** had suddenly appeared from nowhere and swallowed all the people in the village. Only one pregnant woman escaped by hiding herself in a calves' enclosure, and her newly-born son grew to manhood in a miraculous way. The son noticed the absence of other people and on being told by his mother that **Kgodumodumo** had swallowed them, and being shown **Kgodumodumo** lying between the two mountain peaks because of its big stomach, the son decided to go and rescue his fellow men. Senkatana advanced

towards the monster and came closer to it and chopped off its tongue with a spear, until he killed it and delivered his people.

It is clear from the poet that Professor Samuel Doggie Ngcongwane was a great person with unusual qualities. The poet's subject has grown up just like Senkatana, in a miraculous way. The

poet tells us that women in the village were puzzled by Samuel's personality. They ended up asking Samuel's mother what type of a person is her son Samuel? Samuel was another type of a person from childhood, he could not cry, as children often do.

The poet equates Samuel's mother as Senkatana's mother because nowhere in the poem does the poet tell us about Samuel's father. Even in "**tshomo ya Senkatana**" (legend of Senkatana) we are not told of Senkatana's father. The poet says: "**O bontsha ho tswa ho badimo**" (He shows himself to be from the ancestors). Samuel was a miracle son, as were both Senkatana and Jesus. Some people believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and the poet because of his culture he believes in ancestors, that is the reason why he says Samuel is the son of the ancestors.

*How vivid was your character Samuel in your mind before you began your poem?*

*Mophethe: Just like Senkatana, among the qualities Samuel possessed was that of selflessness and the realisation that there is more joy in giving than in receiving. Samuel was a great teacher who enlightened people and eradicate jealousy among them. Here jealousy that is ruining people's live can be associated with **Kgodumodumo**. Senkatana killed **Kgodumodumo** to set people free. Jesus killed "sin" to set people free and Samuel killed jealousy to set people free. Samuel did not hesitate to go and*

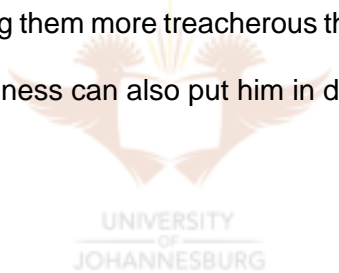
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*educate people - most of them did not even know. For his qualities he could have easily remained with his mother and left them to their fate.*

The poet says that regardless of what Samuel did to the people "**Ka moso e tla ba Moshanyana**

**wa Senkatana**” (Tomorrow he will be the boy-hero Senkatana). Here the poet arouses fear in the minds of the readers. The poet says that human beings are unkind even to their benefactor. Senkatana rescued people and thereafter they attempted to kill him. The poet makes his readers aware that Samuel’s actions of a selfless life may be misconstrued and misunderstood, leading to those he set out to help, trying to kill him. Jealousy and misunderstanding on the part of the people he set free could have cost Samuel his life.

A few selfish power-mongers, especially the close relatives who feel that Samuel has robbed them their limelight, can be dangerous. The fact that it is Samuel who has been appointed to a high position and not their sons and daughters, is sufficient to drive people to cruel deeds or actions. The poet emphasises the fact that Samuel will be in danger because near relations are in possession of family secrets, making them more treacherous than outsiders who may find it difficult to know much about him. His openness can also put him in danger because he will not know his friend and his enemy.



Senkatana’s victory over death, his triumph over his enemies, both signify that evil can never overcome good. It is clear that he still had the ability to foil the attempts of his enemies, but because of his weakness, he let them have their way to kill them. The poet makes us aware that Samuel is a person who is just like Senkatana. What we see in Senkatana, we see it in Samuel. It is in view of such considerations that some critics identify Senkatana with Christ.

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Another well-known legend is “**Dimo**” (The cannibal):

Senthu se nkgae kae banna, ha se ne se nkgae?  
Senthu se ka mona ka hlabeng sa Auckland Park.

... Kholooooooma! Kgetsi ya Dimo.

(Mophethe, 1983:29-30)

(Men, where does the smell of human flesh come from,  
as where was it from?)

The smell of a human flesh is on the plateau of Auckland  
Park.

... Speaaaaaaaak! Knapsack of cannibal.)

In some villages, the memory of the cannibal Dimo is still kept alive by elders who scare children when they cry. They say these words: **“Ha re yo ipatang, Dimo ke eo!”** (Let us go and hide ourselves, there comes Dimo). The poet portrays Radio Sesotho as Dimo because it is the most fearful station. It is the most fearful in the sense that other stations pay much respect to Radio Sesotho station because of its outstanding radio announcers as well as their creative programmes.



It does not only accommodate Sesotho listeners, even listeners of other radio stations have been swallowed by Radio Sesotho.

After Dimo managed to capture Tselane, he boastfully asked **“senthu se nkgae?”** (Where does the smell of human being come from?). The poet associates **“senthu”** (human flesh) with other

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radio stations because they are inside the knapsack of cannibal Dimo. For the poet other radio stations are as good as dead, because they are at the mercy of Dimo, which is Radio Sesotho. The poet further says: **“Senthu se ka mona ka hlabeng sa Auckland Park”** (The smell of human flesh is on the plateau of Auckland Park). He says: **“Ke mona”** (in this). It seems as if the poet is



pointing to the knapsack of Dimo. It sounds as if the poet does not hear of other radio stations and now he asks a question on the whereabouts of other radio stations and their announcers. After a while he gets an answer that other radio stations are all in Auckland Park. Auckland Park is a big area in Johannesburg. He does not want his readers to wonder where in Auckland Park. He helps his readers by pointing to the knapsack of cannibal Dimo.

The poet says: “**Kholoooooma! Kgetsi ya Dimo**” (Speaaaaaak! Knapsack of cannibal). He chooses to say, “**kholoma**” instead of saying “**bua**” (speak). “**Kholoma**” is an Isizulu verb meaning “**bua**” in Sesotho. The poet is saying that even the Radio Isizulu with an outstanding number of listeners and prolific announcers is not as popular as Radio Sesotho.

This Radio isiZulu is inside the Radio Sesotho’s knapsack. In other words the poet emphasises the fact that Radio Sesotho dominates other radio stations. It is popular and well-known among listeners of other languages.



## 6.6 KODI-YA-MALLA (DIRGE) AS A SOURCE OF INFLUENCE

There are many types of songs that are still preserved among the Basotho, which still constitute the lyrical and dramatic poetry of the people. The poetry in the form of songs is descriptive of the joys, sorrows and inspirations of the nation. Basotho songs treat devotional themes and the emotional

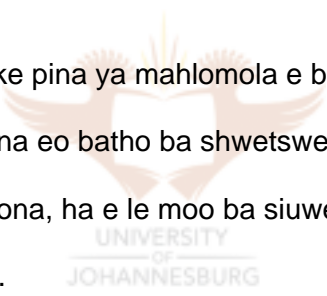
element is always the uppermost, then the narrative element follows. The element of dramatic poetry in Basotho songs is seen when they are singing and clapping their hands, beating drums to create a strong rhythm and also when they stamp on the ground with their feet, especially men.

This is supported by Guma (1977:102) when he says:

It is also characterised by a strong rhythm, which conveys such pleasure to the ear that old men, no longer able to participate, may be seen nodding their heads in unison. Hence the idiom **Ho bina koma ka hlooho** (To sing a song by means of the head). It is communal in origin ...

It is not our intention to mention and discuss the different types of songs which are still preserved among the Basotho. For the purpose of this thesis we intend to focus on **kodi-ya-malla** (the dirge) as a type of a song that influenced Mophethe in his creativity. Ngcangca (1990:56) says the following of dirge:

Kodiyamalla ke pina ya mahlomola e binwang  
lefung. Ke pina eo batho ba shwetsweng ba  
itelelang ka yona, ha e le moo ba siuwe ke eo  
ba mo ratang.



(The dirge is a song of sorrow which is sung at the funeral.

It is a song that the family of the deceased sings

to console themselves with, as they have been left by their beloved ones.)

Ngcangca is not specific about the people that sing the dirge. He is not specific whether the community takes part as a whole or is it only the women that take part, or men only. For the researcher it seems that **kodi-ya-malla** has been sung by women only, including a woman who has lost a husband. It is not expected from Basotho to see a man crying. This is in keeping with a Sesotho proverbs saying:

Monna ke nku, ha a ke a lla.  
(Even in difficulties, man never cries.)

Men do not seem to have indulged in singing because immediately after the death of a person, they had to dig the grave and slaughter a beast. They had to wrap the deceased with the skin of a slaughtered beast and pull it to the grave-side, and it was their duty to fill it up with the soil or sand.

An outstanding feature that is noticeable in Mophethe's dirges is a clear conflict of influences. The two conflicting influences seems to suggest that the poet is torn between cultures; his own culture which is ancestor worship and that of western world Christianity. In his lamentations it is noticeable that his own culture has a stranglehold on him, while at the same time he wants to embrace Christianity.

The following poems reflect some of these conflicting influences referred to above.

Ntese moratuwa ke tsamaye!  
Ntese ke yo dula mabitleng!  
Ngwanabo Jobo ke ikgabitlake dibebe.  
Kgapa tsa lefu di mpetjola marama,  
Di fetohile sebabetsane, bohloko.  
Ke yo leta bitleng la ntate.

(Mophethe, 1983:21)

(Beloved one leave me alone so that I can go.  
Leave me alone so that I can go and live by the graveside.  
Brother of Job, to scrape myself loathsome sores,  
Tears of death cracks my cheeks,  
They turned to be painful itching  
I am going to wait at my father's grave.)

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In this **Kodi-ya-malla**, the poet laments the death of “Ngaka William Frederick Nkomo”.

**Kodi-ya-malla** is part of a cultural ceremony of the Basotho. In this dirge the poet laments the death

of Ngaka William Frederick Nkomo. It is clear from the poet’s lamentation that he is influenced by both his culture as well as his Christianity. One may suggest that there is a conflict of influences that are found in the poet’s mind. Such conflicting influences seem to suggest that Mophethe strives to embrace the Christian culture whilst his traditional culture embraces him.

The following lines reflect some of the conflicting influences found in Mophethe’s poetry.

Ntese ke yo dula mabitleng;

Ngwanabo Jobo ke ikgabitlake dibebe.

(Leave me alone so that I can go and live by the graveside,

Brother of Job, to scrape myself loathsome sores.)

In these lines reference is made to both the ancestral gods “**mabitleng**” (by the grave-side) as well as the Christian God. The poet seems to align himself with both the ancestral worship as well as the Christian worship.

The poet starts his lines with a repetition: **ntese ntese** (leave me, leave me). He appeals to his wife to leave him because he intends to go and live by the grave side. He also appeals to his wife to leave him so that he can lead a life just like Job. The poet emphasises the importance of his wife leaving him and going to live by the grave side because it is of no use for him to live in the village because the great leader and teacher is no longer living. For the poet, it is good for him to go and live with the ancestors and worship them. The grave side is the place of ancestral worship and for him it is better to live with them not only to worship them. He appeals to his wife not to stop him from going to the ancestral place.

The poet associates himself with Job from the Bible whose wife discouraged him from praying to God. He appeals to his wife not to disturb him during his mourning of the death of Ngaka William Frederic Nkomo. The following line reminds us of Job and his sufferings as well as his trust in God.

It also reminds us of Job's wife who encouraged him to turn his back against God, but Job did not listen to his wife.

Ngwanabo Jobo ke ikgwabitlake dibebe.

It is evident from the above line that the poet believes in ancestral worship as well as Christian worship. When the poet takes himself to be Job's brother, it reminds us of Job 1-2. In order to put Job to the test, God instructed Satan to take all that belonged to Job. His sons and daughters were eating and drinking in their eldest brother's house, and a great wind came and struck the house, and it fell upon the young people and they were killed. Job rent his robe and shaved his head and fell upon the ground and worshipped God. "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return, the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord".

But worse was to befall Job. Satan afflicted Job with loathsome sores from his foot to his head. And he took a potsherd with which to scrape himself. The poet says: "... **ke ikgabitlake dibebe**" (... to scrape my loathsome sores). Job did not lose hope in praying to God, and the poet intends to be like Job. He emphasises the fact that even though he can be afflicted with loathsome sores like Job, he will not stop lamenting the death of Ngaka William Frederick Nkomo. God set Job a test and he

passed it and the death of "Ngaka Frederick Nkomo" has put the poet to the test. The poet convinces his readers that he is prepared to be like Job who did not turn his back against God when he was in difficulties. The poet makes his readers aware that even if Satan afflicts him with loathsome sores, this will not stop him lamenting the death of his subject. Here the poet is prepared to pray continuously to God during his lamentation.

Job's wife said to him: "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die". But he said to her: "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak". The poet does not want to hear his wife telling him to curse God, that is why he starts by asking her to leave him alone so that he can pray to God during his lamentation. The poet appeals to his wife in the following manner: **Ntese moratuwa ...** (Wife leave me). The poet believes that he will receive good from the hand of God and they shall not receive evil. In his lamentation, the poet tells of the unfathomable workings of God in the lives of men. He tries to give an answer to the problems of the meaning of suffering and speaks of the right and wrong ways of fearing God.

6.6.2 Another conflict in influences can be found in the dirge entitled:

"Zachariah Keodirelang Matthews"

The poet laments the death of Zachariah Keodiretseng Matthews who died in 1968. His lamentation is witnessed in:

Setjhaba sa heso ke le kopa ho lla:

Hi, hi, hi, hi, hiii,

(Mophethe, 1983:14)

(My people I am asking you to cry:

Hi, hi, hi, hi, hiii.)

In the following lines, the poet strives to embrace both the traditional culture and the Christian culture.

Oho, Kgosi, Matthews ke eo!  
... Mo feng tulo se pela morena Tsheledi Kgama.  
Kgotla la lehodimo le tlale,  
Mangeloi a thabe, a etse dithapelo.  
(Mophethe, 1983:15)

(Oh! chief, there come Matthews!  
... Let him be given the chair that is near chief Tsheledi Kgama.  
The court of heaven to be full,  
Angels rejoice, and pray.)

In the first line the poet makes a direct reference to the ancestors. He appeals to the ancestors to welcome Matthews. In the first line we notice the conflict of traditional worship and Christian worship. The poet seems to ask his ancestors to welcome Matthews in heaven. For the poet Matthews will only be welcomed in heaven through his ancestors.

The poet observes the ancestors as benevolent but if one neglects his custom they can be angry. The poet uses apostrophe to appeal to the chief as though he is within a short distance or as though the chief is still within the poet's scope of vision. This gives us the notion that according to the poet's culture the chief can hear him because he is not dead and Matthews too is not dead but they are just in the world of the poet's ancestors where they can hear when we call to them. This is why the poet keeps on to saying:



Mo feng tulo se pela morena Tshekeledi Kgama.

(Let him be given a chair which is near chief Tshekeledi Kgama.)

The poet's implication is that Matthews is just about to join the ancestors, namely chief Tshekeledi Kgama and the others who died before them. Mophethe directs his message to the ancestors from whom he expects fruitful answers which one may say are good fortunes. The poet through his dirge, seems to remind readers that people do not have control over their lives. They should appeal to their ancestors in order for them to receive help. The ancestors have got the power to take over from where human powers fall short.

In the following lines, the poet puts ancestors worship aside and turns to Christian worship:

Kgotla la lehodimo le tlale,

Mangeloi a thabe, a etse dithapelo.

(The court in heaven is full,

Angels rejoice and pray.)

This reminds us of the Revelation (4:2-8) where John the apostle says he saw a throne standing in heaven and one seated on it. Around the throne, on each side of the throne are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind. And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all round and within, and day and night they never cease to sing Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.

*In some lines from the poem entitled “Zacharia “Keodirileng” Matthews” you embrace Christian culture. How did you create this Christian culture?*

*Mophethe: Here we have a picture of angels singing and praying. They will not sing for sinners, and the poet tells us that Matthews is not a sinner because angels do not rejoice for the death of a sinner. The poet gives an imperative statement “**Mangeloi a thabe, a etse dithapelo**” (Angels to rejoice and pray). The poet seems to be sure of Matthews’ life while he was on earth. He does not appeal to the angels to do him a favour by accommodating Matthews. The manner in which the poet is pleased about Matthews’ life is that at this stage he is talking as if he is Jesus Christ who said: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).*

Mophethe does not want to forget his ancestors in his lamentations. He is aware that they can be moved to anger especially when people forget to do sacrifices for them. In his lamentation for Moruti J.R. Liphoko who passed away in 1970, the poet says:

Pula le katleho di atele naha ena;

Kereke lefatsheng e hodiswe (Mophethe, 1983:17).

(May rain and prosperity be plenty for this country;

Church on earth to be extended.)

For Mophethe drought and famine are some of the signs that ancestors show when sacrifices are not offered to them. At the end of the burial ceremony, the Basotho use the salute “**Kgotso, pula, nala**”. This implies that the deceased should ask those who died before him to be at peace with the people on earth then there will be rain and prosperity. Mophethe instructs Moruti J.R. Liphoko to go and ask the ancestors for “**Pula le katleho di atele naha ena**”, (Rain and prosperity to be plenty for this world). The slogan “**Kgotso, pula, nala!**” (Peace, rain prosperity) gives a picture of the ancestors. It is also a prayer to the ancestors to bring prosperity to the world of the living. The poet seems like one who is in trouble because the deceased has left him alone. For the poet only ancestors can take him out of his trouble. The slogan that alludes to the ancestors, shows the need for the ancestors.

The poet also asks God for prosperity, so that:

Kereke lefatsheng e hodiwe.

(Church on earth to be extended.)

The poet in his mourning appeals to God to expand His word on earth. This reminds us of Matthew (28:16-20) where the eleven disciples worshipped him, but some doubted. And Jesus told them that

authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him. He further instructed them to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The poet is of the idea that God should give him the power so that he can teach people of the Word of God. For him this will help people to know about the home which is in heaven. The poet reminds his people that they have a home in heaven in which they can take refuge in times of trouble.

From the above exemplification, it is evident that there is conflict noticeable in Mophethe's influences. This is especially common in his lamentations. He does not cease to talk of his ancestors as well as his God. Williams (1975:54) seems to support this when he says:

A religion which speaks only of religious ideals and moral truths, without touching on the concrete situation of man in his everyday life, can give to man nothing but emptiness.

Mophethe seems to realise that Christianity cannot be meaningful to him if people do not know their roots. He also realises that he cannot afford to be a culture-bound person without being a Christian, so he remains an African Christian. This implies that he is a strong believer of his culture whilst on the other hand he is also a Christian.

We would like to point out that the idea of death as an end to life was never accepted by the Basotho. That is why they buried their deceased with seed in the hand so that the dead in the under world can continue to live as they had done on the world of the living. They believed that the living could go there and return safely. Mophethe in his lamentations has this cultural belief too, life is endless and indestructible.

According to Christian culture all those who died will rise again.

And I saw dead, great and small, standing  
before the throne, and books were opened.

(Revelations 20:12)

The lamentation of the poet as a whole expresses the poet's utter dependence on ancestors and at the same time on God. He appeals to the ancestors to welcome the deceased while voicing his confidence that God will grant restoration to them, just as an apparently dead seed sends forth shoots and grows.

## 6.7 WORKS OF OTHER POETS AS A SOURCE OF INFLUENCE

Mophethe praises the poetry volumes of other poets, as they helped him to create his poems. He injects into the poem of praises composed for the poetry volume "**Mathemalodi**" (Nice words). He tries to be closer to the forms of his Sesotho traditions. He demonstrates that he has enough resources in Sesotho traditions, for him to use in the treatment of any subject in his poetry. He is unlike other Sesotho poets who have been influenced by the works of European creative writers.

### 6.7.1 Mathemalodi

Sehanyatedi sa mora Makati, Lesoro;

... Mathemalodi, Morupedi wa bothothokisi,

E qala ka ho ikala phate.

Thothokiso Kgonthe, ke a ana,

Ke ho ba le morethethomonate;

Seka lekwatlakwatla la kgatala (Mophethe, 1983:39).

(The big stout person, son of Makati, Lesoro;

... Nice words, tutor of poesy

It begins by introducing itself.  
The real poetry I swear,  
It is to possess harmonious rhythm,  
Like the running of a ram.)

Mophethe starts by eulogising the poet “Lesoro” for his outstanding poetry volume “**Mathemalodi**”. Mophethe created a poem and named it “**Mathemalodi**” wherein he praises Lesoro’s poetry volume entitled “**Mathemalodi**”. He uses the descriptive eulogy “**Sehanyatedi**” (big stout person) when referring to Lesoro. Mophethe is not referring to the physical appearance of Lesoro, but Lesoro is a big stout person in his creativity. He further uses the associative reference “**mora Makati**” (the son of Makati). Lesoro is praised by reference to his father. These eulogies paint a mental picture that appeals to his readers’ feeling as well as their understanding of Lesoro. Through these eulogies, the reader captures the beauty of Lesoro’s poetry volume “**Mathemalodi**”.



Mophethe does not compose praises only for animals or people with which he wishes to be identified, but also for poetry book of other poets. Kunene (1971: 143-144) had this to say:

The Mosotho’s close observation of animals  
and their habits is evidenced by the fact  
that most species had a little poem composed  
for them based on their nature.

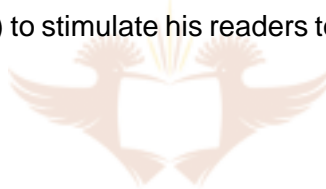
But why is Mophethe for example, praising a poetry book for just being a poetry book?

Mophethe brilliantly uses his imagination by incorporating titles and poetry concepts of Lesoro's collection into his poem "**Mathemalodi**". The concept "**Mathemalodi**" is an image in its own.

Coles (1985:95) says the following of imagery:

It conveys word pictures. Imagery evokes  
an imaginative, emotional response, as well as  
a vivid specific description.

The concept "**Mathemalodi**" (Nice words) conveys vivid meaning and appeals to the senses of the reader in such a way that its effect strikes him and gives him pleasure. Mophethe employs the image "**mathemalodi**" (nice words) to stimulate his readers to see with their mind's eye and hears the objects he is describing.



The poet refers to "**mathemalodi**" as "**morupedi wa bothothokiso**" (the lecturer of poetry). Mophethe humanizes "**mathemalodi**" and gives it the human features. According to the *Essential English Dictionary* (1988:446) "a lecturer is a person who teaches at a university or college". This means that a lecturer is a person who is highly educated, and as the poet sees the poetry volume of Lesoro as being a lecturer, this seems to mean that this poetry volume is an outstanding one in terms of creativity.

"**E qala ka ho ikala phate**" (it starts by explaining itself). It is common for a human being to introduce or tell about himself. In the eyes of the poet the poetry book "**Mathemalodi**" is not a mechanical object, but it is as important as a human being. It is for this reason that "**Mathemalodi**"

the poetry volume of Lesoro is described as having the qualities of a human being and moreover as an educated person or a lecturer good in poetics. The poetry volume “**Mathemalodi**” is given the mind of a human being and can on its own be able to do certain things as a human being. It can introduce itself as a human being can. The poet gives this poetry volume “**Mathemalodi**” the mind and soul of a human being.

The poet does not fail to find among the living animals one to which the animated object has a striking resemblances and animation is then identified with a living object. The poet says:

Ke ho ba le morethethomona;

Seka lekwatlakwatla la kgatala.

(As you have a melodic rhythm.

Like the running of a ram.)

In Sesotho the comparison is introduced by the conjunctives “**seka**”, “**jwalo ka**” or “**sa**”. For Cohen (1973:51) a simile makes a direct comparison between two elements and it is introduced by “like” or “as”. The poet is comparing two things, the rhythm of the poetry volume “**Mathemalodi**” and the running of a ram. The *Essential English Dictionary* (1988:683) defines rhythm as a regular movement or beat. Mophethe’s comparison is significant in this context because rhythm is a movement in a poem and he compares this movement with the rhythm that is made by a ram when running. It is clear from this comparison that Mophethe makes a meaningful communication to his readers.

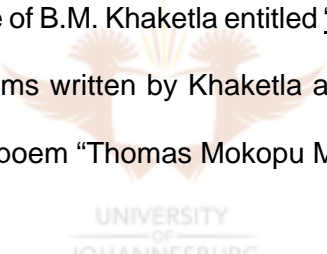


Mophethe seems to compare the poetry volume “**Mathemalodi**” with a ram (warrior), because the endowments of these poetry books are as necessary for their creativity as the strong ability of the ram (warrior) is for him. The notion of the comparison of the poetry volume of other creative writers for this shows clearly that this creativity is of utmost importance for all Sesotho readers as well as other poets. For the poets they are the source which creative writers can use as their base for creative writing.

#### 6.7.2 Another poetry volume that Mophethe praises - Khaketla’s poetry

Volume entitled “Dipjhamathe”.

Mophethe praises the poetry volume of B.M. Khaketla entitled “Dipjhamathe”. In this poetry volume Mophethe praises some of the poems written by Khaketla and we intend to choose the stanza where Mophethe praise Khaketla’s poem “Thomas Mokopu Mofolo”.



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Ho Thomas Mokopu Mofolo ra opa diatla!  
Khaketla o beile mokolokotwane ho kgalala,  
O hlomme fika sa tlhompho ho mohale.  
Ntata mengolo ya Sesotho dumela Motaung!  
La hao lebitso bothata - Tsitsinyalerumo.  
Le ka timela jwang Tjhaka e duletse ho le utulla?  
Pitseng le Moeti wa Botjhabela di le upulla.

(Mophethe, 1983:41)

(To Thomas Mokopu Mofolo we applaud!  
Khaketla erected a boundary stone to a leader,  
He planted a heap of stones as an honour to a hero,  
The father of Sesotho creative writing, I greet you Motaung!  
Your precious name - Shakespeare.  
How can it perish as Tjhaka is busy poking it?  
Pitseng and Moeti wa Bothabela reveal it.)

Mophethe praises Thomas Mokopu Mofolo and point out that he will not praise him much because Khaketla the author of "Dipjhamathe," has already done a lot in praising him. For Mophethe, Mofolo is not only a creative writer but he is a leader in creative writing. For this reason he creates eulogies that he uses in praising him. He refers to Mofolo as "**kgalala**" which means a leader. Mofolo is a real leader because he formulated goals in an effort to influence the other creative writers to bring about change and to create a different future through their creative writings. During Mofolo's times the printing press was under the control of the missionaries and their main focus was on Christianity. Mofolo as a leader in creative writing deviated from that norm. The strong action of Tjhaka arises from the traditional African value even though there are still few Christian values in the book. The traditional African value for example, when Senzangakhona wants to marry another woman, hoping she will bear him a son, though he already has three wives.

Kunene (1989:146) quotes Zurcher saying:

Mr Mofolo's book Chaka caused a bit of discussion and hesitancy among the missionaries of that time, fearing that the descriptions

of witchcraft etc., might have an adverse effect of their evangelistic teaching.

Mophethe further eulogises Mofolo as “**mohale**” (hero). The poet seems to say that creative writing is not an easy task, but tough as war. Mofolo completed his manuscript Chaka in 1910, but the book was published in 1925. Mofolo as a hero knew that at last his book will be published. He possessed perseverance just like a real hero in the battle front knowing that at last he is going to win.

Mophethe refers to Mofolo as the father of creative writing and says: “**dumela Motaung**” (I greet you Motaung). Mophethe addresses Mofolo as if he is within ear-shot. It is though he is near the speaker and he will respond. Mophethe seems to say that Mofolo is not dead but in the world of ancestors and he can hear our cries and praises. Death is something that is not in the mind of Mosotho. Sekese (1983:21) says the following about death:

Mohla ho epelwang mofu, ho nkuwa ...  
mefuta kaofela ya peo eba ho thwe  
o latediswa mabele, a yo lema moo a  
ileng, le hona a no a fana.

(The day the deceased is buried, all the types of seeds are taken and he is instructed to plough where he is going, and he should give sorghum to the living.)

According to Mofolo:

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When a person is said to have died, he is not dead, he is merely transformed, the breath of life having left his covering of flesh and migrated to another land which shines more gloriously than the sun and he goes and lives there exactly as he had done before ...

(Mofolo, 1985:115)

In English literature the most well-known creative writer is Shakespeare. Mophethe points out that Mofolo's name is so precious as that of "**Tsitsinyalerumo**" (Shakespeare). In short Mophethe's idea is that in Sesotho creative writing we still have Shakespeare, but our Shakespeare is Mofolo.

For the poet Mofolo's name will never perish because **Tjhaka e duletse ho le utulla** (The book Chaka is busy poking it). The poet applies personification to give readers an idea of how important the book Chaka is. Sorenson (1994:132) defines personification as:

A figure of speech in which a thing or idea is represented as a person.

Through this personification Mophethe evokes the imagination of the reader to see through his imagination how good and artistic the book Chaka is to the reader. For the poet readers should appreciate Chaka because it makes Mofolo popular among creative writers. Kunene (1989:151) says that the novel Chaka is translated into many languages across the world.

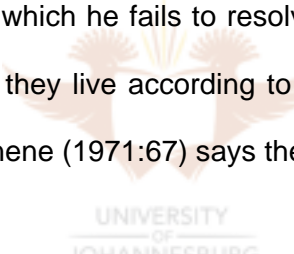
This is supported by the last line: **Pitseng le Moeti wa Botjhabela di le upulla** (Pitseng and Moeti

wa Botjhabela reveal it).

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The poet portrays the two books of Mofolo namely Pitseng and Moeti wa Botjhabela as having features of a human beings because they keep on revealing the name of Mofolo even though he is no longer among the people who are living.

Mophethe artistically places the two books of Mofolo in the same line. His reason for doing this seems to be that of the theme centres in these books. The theme in both books centred around Christianity. The book Moeti wa Botjhabela begins with an image of darkness which is equated with evil. Mofolo's main character Fekisi is no satisfied with the unwholesome life of the people in his environment. This creates conflict which he fails to resolve. Fekisi wishes to see God's wrath coming to his fellow men because they live according to their traditions. He decides to go to Ntswanatsatsi to seek for God. Kunene (1971:67) says the following of Ntswanatsatsi:



Ntswanatsatsi therefore has a strong religious significance as the place where the Basotho first came out of the earth's womb. It is also a place of regeneration and purification as the sun perpetually rises from there.

Through death, Fekisi has found the God he has been seeking for. Mophethe further praises "Pitseng" because before the coming of Katse to Pitseng (the place) Pitseng was also in darkness.

Batho ba badumedi ba ne ba welwa  
mona Pitseng. Palong ba ne ba sa qete  
letsoho, mme ba ne ba phela ha bohloko ...

(Mofolo 1980:7)

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(Christians were hardly found here in  
Pitseng. In number they were no more  
than the fingers of one hand and their lives  
were difficult ...)

Mophethe does not reflect on all the three books of Mofolo in one line because they differ in their themes. Chaka is much on traditional beliefs and Pitseng and Moeti wa Botjhabela which are reflected in the same line, their theme is about Christianity.



## 6.8 CONCLUSION

Two concepts which are closely related, intertextuality and influence have been discussed. The interrelationship between Booyesen and the Bible is highly recognised in the usage of Biblical stories. Booyesen created poems which show resemblance with the stories in the Bible. The Bible influenced Booyesen so much to an extent that he created poems where his theme centred around Christianity. Booyesen borrowed from the Bible with great success. Under intertextuality Booyesen artistically came up with a new thing from the Bible. In many instances we see him introducing his own creativity and modifications to the material borrowed from the Bible, so that it can be suitable for his creativity.

Mophethe has been mainly influenced by both Christianity and his own culture. Through influence it is noticeable that Mophethe creates his poetry whilst is on two platforms; namely the religious

platform and the cultural platform. Traditional oral literature, which influenced Mophethe, reminds us

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of our origin and at the same time give us a direction to our actions and even our behaviour. This is supported by Kraft (1990:65) when he says:

In many ways culture is communication.  
Each cultural form therefore, is the bearer  
of impressions, values, attitudes and  
connotations from person to person and  
group to group.

Mophethe, through his poems as he is influenced by oral literature, reminds his readers how culture was performed and carried out. Culture is never self-formulated, the reader must act upon the textual material in order to produce meaning out of that culture. The function of culture depends much upon the way people employ it. It is true that culture is the people's heritage. Our culture identifies us as human beings and Mophethe, too, reveals this aspect through his poetry.

A people's past is its spiritual heritage, and  
as such, it should not only be nursed and nurtured,  
but preserved and jealously guarded for all times.  
This is because of the stability that it provides, for  
without it a nation is like a tree without roots,  
liable to be blown over by the gentlest of breeze.

(Guma, 1977:1)

Mophethe's creativity comes from praise poems and culture that influenced him. In his praise poems he does not confine himself to the praises of the well-known Basotho kings only. In most of

his poems he praises people who are heroes in other spheres of life; Mohapeloa who was a champion in composing music and poetry; Hlalele who is an outstanding Radio Sesotho announcer. In his lamentations too, he does not lament for the Basotho kings which is a common event among our

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poets, but he laments for people who contributed something to society. For Okpewho (1992:18) it is for the nation that creative writers would like to feel what they were many years ago if there are some elements in their poetry from oral tradition that they can bring to their readers.





## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUDING STATEMENT

#### 7.0 INTRODUCTION

Our concluding chapter is divided into two divisions. In the first part of this chapter we intend to look back and reflect on what has been done. In the second part of this chapter we give detailed findings from our research. This part mainly focuses on attempting to answer our hypothesis: “Creativity and the art of poetry is a complex activity which involves all the powers of the poet’s mind to work together to one end. To experience what was conceived by the poet’s imagination is possible and at the same time to have a lively awareness of all the powers of the poet’s words to express those experiences”.

What is creativity and the art of Sesotho poetry?

#### 7.1 LOOKING BACK


In the first chapter we indicated that the aim of this research project would be to interview poets on their poetry composition and creative writing. We also focussed on the key concepts and it has been our objective from the beginning to interpret extracts from collected material.

In our second chapter a deconstructional approach as our theoretical framework was dealt with. We have tried to show that the deconstructional approach as having multiple meanings and of words as signs is applicable to our literature. It was also indicated that the poetry of the poets we

interviewed

yields itself to a deconstructional approach and the poets made themselves available to prove some of the deconstructional suggestions true.

Chapter three is informed by the creative voices of Booysen; Litabe; Mophethe and Maboea. In this chapter their views on creativity are combined. They tried to explain that there is a relationship between creativity and art. They further explained how people should measure creativity and art in poetry. They all maintained that the true moment of creativity and art of poetry is that in which the reader recognises the structure of the imaginative creation. Their views helped towards answering the hypothesis of this study.



In chapter four we focussed on Litabe's literary style from his poetry volume Wa Ila Molodi. We managed to discuss some of the poetic devices employed by Litabe to reflect on his creativity. We looked at the way in which Litabe uses imagery in his poetry and how he alludes to other forms of poetry such as proverbs, symbols and personification, to promote word economy. On style we further looked at Biblical allusions used by Litabe to demonstrate the influence of Christianity in his poetry and lastly we looked at repetition techniques in his poetry such as parallelism.

Chapter five focussed on some themes prevalent in Maboea's poetry volume Tlhaka ya Basotho. We only focussed on four themes namely, the protest theme - which is divided into two divisions - death and education. The poet protests against the former government and he also protests against the uncalled for behaviour of his own people. In the theme of death Maboea employs personification and apostrophe more than any other figure of speech to portray death as a monster. In the theme of education he encourages people to learn because education is the key to success.

He further

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shows readers how people such as Moleleki and Mohapeloa contributed to education. In his satire the poet views people, especially women, with harshness, cruelty and little compassion.

Chapter six presented intertextuality and influence as literary approaches having links with the deconstructional approach. The aim of this chapter was to illustrate the interrelationship between Booyesen's poems from the poetry volume "Phate ya Ntate" and the Bible. The role of traditional influences in Mophethe's poetry volume "Menyabuketso" was also looked at. His mastery of tradition is shown when he writes eulogies.

In the second part of the analysis we focus on the findings of the research. We also look at how poets can be more creative and we attempt to answer the hypothesis of this study.

### 7.1.1 Findings from the research

We have now reached the destination of our journey in poetry creative writing, and we must attempt to answer our hypothesis:

Creativity and art of poetry is a complex activity in which all the powers of the poet's mind are working together to one end. To experience what was conceived by the poet's imagination is possible and at the same time to have a full awareness of all the powers of the poet's words to express those experiences.

What is creativity and art of Sesotho poetry?

The views of the poets interviewed make us believe that the understanding of "creativity and art of

Sesotho poetry” can perhaps be achieved by noting what is not “creativity and art of Sesotho poetry”, so that we can have a better understanding of what creativity and art of Sesotho poetry is. It should

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be clear that when we say that we note what it is not, this does not mean that what we are going to mention is out of the scope of what creativity and art of Sesotho poetry is, but we do say that those are only half-formed ideas.

“Creativity and art of Sesotho poetry” is not all about the enjoyment of visual and non-visual images, not even if they are pleasing in one way or another. For images are the backbone of a poem and pleasures of this sort arises from imagining, for instance in a flower. But pleasure of this kind should not be taken fully for creativity and art of Sesotho poetry. The reason is that these pleasures are much more easily achieved than pleasures resulting from experiences provided by poetry. Creativity and the art of Sesotho poetry is not even the process of understanding the poet’s meanings which are expressed in poetic language. It is also not only the enjoyment of sounds signifying beautiful things, but also the sounds found in such devices as assonance and alliteration.

The voice of a poet can soothe with the sound of bees or babbling of pebbles made by sea water, but this enjoyment in the mere sound of words is far from identical with what the creativity and art of Sesotho poetry is all about. The perception of poetic rhythm or the pleasure of metre itself, which depends on the expressions to which the metrical form is superadded, is also not enough to place us near what the creativity and art of Sesotho poetry is all about. It is also not merely enjoyment of the poet’s phrasing of beautiful words, meaning that it is not warm appraisal of modes of expression. It is also not merely the apprehension of poetic form as if we could be aware of the beauty of a stanza but also the realization that the poem is a creation and has a purpose. Formal beauty as an ideal of beauty is hinted through the medium of sound or words rather than plainly

expressed. It is very important to note that we will be diminishing the value of poetry if we consider creativity and the art of Sesotho poetry to be any of the elements mentioned and put aside as insufficient.

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We would like to emphasise the fact that the creativity and art of Sesotho poetry includes all of those elements already mentioned.

Let us reconsider what we mean by the creativity and art of Sesotho poetry. Our following position seems logical, if we become aware that the whole field of the creativity and art of Sesotho poetry contains elements of what does not actually belong to its material but is imputed to it by the poet's constructive mind. Creativity and the art of Sesotho poetry thus has essentially and necessarily a unity. By unity we mean that all the elements we earlier said that the creativity and art of Sesotho poetry is not all about, are now combined for a real and close association of thought, imagery and emotion and this, which is apprehended as a whole, is expressed in poetic and patterned language, so precisely and completely that the language sounds so imaginatively and of impassioned thought.

In other words we will be correct to say the creativity and art of Sesotho poetry, in one sense is about form, not actually the artistic treatment of the poetic subject, but it is the subject that is translated into form that the mind combined harmoniously into a well-coordinated unity.

Creativity and the art of Sesotho poetry is the process of bringing about a combination of content and expression through the power of the poet's imagination. In actual fact it is a process of making readers aware of their experience which is evoked by the words the poets choose and at the same time these chosen words express their experience. Poets make readers aware that in reading poetry, they should not only receive new impressions and new concepts but they should also

receive words to express these experiences.

This brings us to the notion of saying that there is a difference between the language that we use in our daily conversation and the language we use in creative writing. In our everyday conversation,

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we are concerned with ordinary things and in poetic language we describe deep feelings, striking impressions and we employ images to make our readers aware of what we were impressed by.

Here are the views of the poets interviewed concerning poetic language. They responded to this question: *“What is poetic language?”*

*Mophethe: Poetic language is a language that its force and vitality is renewed by means of metaphors and similes. The language combines all the ingredients of poetry building into one unit.*

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*Booyesen: Poetic language is pregnant of meaning. It is more copious in its vocabulary, more dignified in the matter of style. It is poetic language which vitalizes a poem infusing it with copious suggestions of power, sound, rhythm, shape and beauty.*

*Maboea: It is the commonest way in which poetry engages our attention. This appeals to our senses to vitalize a quality of beauty or greatness that people see or experience in something. As a poem presents a theme to readers, thought, feeling and imagery go to the working out of that theme and this combined thinking, feeling and imagining are expressed by poetic language because poetic language stands for all that has been thought, felt and imagined.*

*Litabe: It is a language that is less elliptical than the forms we employ in ordinary speech. In poetic language figures of speech are well portrayed. Poetic language in making its contribution of*

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*strength, through the activity of the other elements, it helps to determine the unity of the whole poem.*

Poetic language is seen by Leech (1980:05) as a language that is characterized by, for example, the use of tropes like irony and metaphor, nevertheless has its roots in everyday uses of language.

This view is supported by Reeves (1975:168) when he points out that among the chief resources of poetry are the devices such as metaphor and simile.

This brings us to the final notion about creativity and the art of Sesotho poetry. The true moment of creativity and art of Sesotho poetry is when we recognise the form of the poet's imaginative creation. It is when the poet managed to combine, unify, all the elements successfully.

Finally it is when our thought, imagining and other responses to the language of poetry, and creative powers are under control and are working in an ordered and directed work.

This is the moment of highly sensitive concentration of our mental powers as we know that we have come in contact with what stirs our exultation and leaves us with some satisfaction. Creativity and the art of Sesotho poetry is measured on the success or failure of the poetic words or language to engage a poet's creative abilities to animate these abilities so that they all function in combination

and create one unit, and satisfy both the poet and the reader in that all feeling and imagination is well represented by those words or that poetic language.

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The following are the responses of the poets we interviewed to the following question:

*Which of your poems gives you the most personal satisfaction?*

*Mophethe: I consider the poem entitled "Tshebeletso ya Sesotho Seotlabatho" as my best work.*

*Let us quote line 1 from stanza 2. "Tshebeletso ya Sesotho seotlabatho" (Mophethe, 1983:29).*

*Here I address Radio Sesotho (Today it is Lesedi FM) as if it is within earshot. I address it as if it is a living person who will respond. The rhythm is fast, the tone helps to drive the message to the reader.*

*Badimong Lepoqo ke enwa o duletse ho oma hlooho kgafetsa.*

*(Mophethe, 1983:29)*

*(Among our ancestors Lepoqo is frequently nodding his head.)*

The above line sounds as if I am no longer in the world of living people, because I tell the audience about Lepoqo's situation as if I am near him, at the ancestral place. From this poem I feel that I have shown my creativity as well as my art because all the elements of a work of art are closely related in a balanced proportion and in complete unity.



*Litabe: There is no one poem that I can say it gives me the personal feeling. Let us pay attention to the poem entitled: "Kgato di supile phelong ba motho" (Litabe, 1983:5).*

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*The title is the first impression the reader gets of my creativity because it is always striking, original and memorable.*

*From the above title, I omitted prefixes: I said "**kgato**" instead of "**dikgato**", "**phelong**" instead of "**bophelong**". I did it because in poetry writing, it is always a question of how I say it, which words I choose, which I omit and how I join them together. In this poem I reach my readers quickly, because I use words economically but at the same time I do not confuse my readers. I don't believe that the unnecessary long and unusual words will serve me as a good poet or send message to my readers. I think it is important to employ plain, simple words, but what is important is that they should be arranged in studied way and effective sentences or lines will produce the most telling results. Imagery in this poem combines all elements into a unit and appeals to readers to discover its beauty, not by an eye, but by the force of their imaginations.*

*Booyesen: There are more than one poem that give me satisfaction, but let us pay attention on the poem entitled "Metsamao":*

Ka Sontaha moruti o a omana,

O lla ka metsamao ya badumedi;

(Booyesen, 1987:61)

(On Sunday the priest scolds,  
He complains of Christian's behaviour.)

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*In this poem I give readers a picture about the disgusting behaviour of Christians especially after the church. The poem is the vivid imagination of the disgusting behaviour of Christians. The priest is suppose to preach in church, but heis bound to scold the congregation. I employ reflected meaning artistically and beautifully because I don't use language the way I think I can. I use euphemistic language because there are certain concepts that my culture does not allow me to utter, instead I use other concepts to make my poem polite. I take my readers step by step to this actual behaviour of Christians but in a polite manner. The phrase "**ba hlolwa ke mabatha**". The word "**mabatha**" means "feet turned outwards" (direct translation). In this poem "**mabatha**" means adultery. To accommodate my readers it has become difficult for me to use the words "**bofebe**" or "**botekatse**" which means "adultery". Here I express concern about material things especially how we use our "flesh" to accumulate things or pleasure. I employ the verb "**ba hlolwa**" to produce the effective meaning to my readers.*

*In this poem I bring two different things, namely Christians and the sin (adultery) closer and make them to belong to one class. The excitement I derive from this poem is an excitement of seeing connections that did not exist before, of seeing quite different aspects of life unified through a pattern.*

Maboea: *I think all the poems I created give me the satisfaction. But for the sake of the question, let us focus on the poem entitled “Le kotutse lapeng leso”.*

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*In this poem I visualise death as a person who does not want to stop destroying people’s life. In this poem I took two different things and created a unit from these two different things. I took an animate thing or a phenomenon which is “death” and took a human being and created one unit which means that the death of a human being is a necessity for people to meet the Lord.*

Na sesiu sa hao se tsejwa ke mang?

(Maboea, 1987:55)

(Who knows your grain-basket?)

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*Here I portray death as if it is a human being because a human being carries a grain-basket to put what he harvested in it. I apostrophise death as though it will respond to my question. Here I portrayed death like a strong person who started long ago to harvest (to kill) but even today he is not tired. He will keep on working until there is no more work for him to do. This picture of a strong man (death) keeps on coming into my reader’s minds as they read through the poem.*

*In this poem, there is a form which consists of all the elements needed in poetry writing. This form makes this poem a unit which enables the reader to follow my path to my message in the poem. This unit directs the reader where he will find me*

*in the poem. This unit invites the reader to come and read my poem and also to understand the content of my invitation.*

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All the poets we interviewed maintained that poetry is the overflowing of ideas that pull poets in a certain direction. For them the beauty of a poem has essentially a “unity” or “form”. Poetry in their sense is all about “form” so in all their poems there are “forms” approximating to perfection, forms which they have striven to conceive and idealized. The form of a poem constitutes all the building blocks necessary in building a poem - imagery, rhythm, sound, thought, emotion and experience.

#### 7.1.2 How a poet can be more creative



For the researcher the following suggestions which are based on “creativity and art” may help poets to be more creative in their work. It is important for a creative writer to take time to understand a problem that he wishes to write about before he begins trying to solve it. It is also good to get all the facts that seem to be the most important before he tries to work out a detailed solution.

The following are some of the views of poets interviewed on how a poet can be more creative:

*Litabe: Be alert to puzzling facts, if you can be able to explain them, then your solution may be at hand. For example, if two men argue, don't just think who is right and who is wrong. Think what their sides are. As a poet you know who is right and who is wrong. As a poet you should not judge, you should understand so that you will be able to make the reader to understand the situation but not to judge it.*

*Maboea: Creative writers should eliminate cultural taboos in their thinking such as gender stereotyping that might withhold their ability to come up with novel ideas. When you write your object is to convey every sensation, sight, feeling, emotion, to the reader,*

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*so you have to work over what you write. When you write about something, admire it and abandon yourself to the feelings that come naturally to you. This will help you to be original in your composition.*

*Mophethe: The poet who wishes to be more creative, must trust his intuition. Take a guess and see whether you can back it up. Play with ideas and possible approaches. Try looking at the same situation in a number of different ways. Look at familiar things as if you have never seen them before.*

*Habitual ways of doing things should be discarded and force yourself to figure out new ways.*

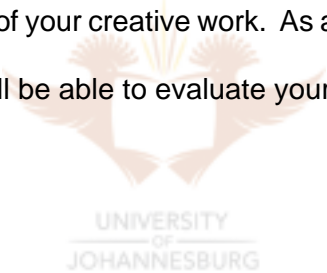
*Booyesen: Passion is the key for poets to be more creative. Poets should not write something just because they think readers will be interested in it. It is better for poets to choose subjects they themselves truly care about. If you care about a subject you'll produce the rhythm of a poem that goes with the pace of your lines. A poem must work like a piece of machinery, begin slowly, then feel comfortable while picking up speed. A poem must move forward constantly, when you hear your poem read, you can tell that it is your poem.*

For the researcher, it is important for you as a poet to write out your own thoughts. This will allow you to capture important points and to come back to them. Keep an open mind and if your initial approach does not work, ask yourself whether you made assumptions that might not be true.

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As a creative writer you might be stuck. If you are stuck on your approach, try to get to the idea or solution by another route.

Creative writers should not be selfish, they should do some brainstorming with one or more other writers. This involves trying to produce as many and original ideas as possible even without evaluating any of them until the end of your creative work. As a creative writer, it is of importance to strive for objectivity because you will be able to evaluate your own ideas as you would those of a stranger.



This brings us to the notion that a creative writer who wishes to be more creative, must strive to create an atmosphere suitable for the appreciation of the work of art. This appreciation is achieved through the use of language in the work of art. In creating drama, poetry or prose, the artist lends to an outward phenomenon of language an inner significance, thereby continuing and expanding the basic fact of language. The meaning might be arbitrary at least from the point of view of the current usage of the language, associated with an acoustic phenomenon.

All poets are influenced or inspired in one way or another. The following are some responses of the poets to this question:

*Who/what inspired you to be a poet?*

*Mophethe: I started writing at an early age when I was at secondary school. We had the school newsletter “Wamba” and I was writing poems and stories for that school magazine. There-after creative works of different creative writers also inspired me to be a writer.*

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*The conferences and workshops that I attended really inspired me because it is where I met some of the great creative writers. Through their sharing of ideas with me I tried my luck and fortunately I managed to write something publishable.*

*Booyesen: The person who inspired me to be a creative writer is my former high school Sesotho teacher. He could teach Sesotho literature very well and that made me love Sesotho. I could feel that really the subject matter was not from his knowledge but from his heart. It is not possible to be a successful creative writer and have not been inspired by what I call the pillars in Sesotho creative writing, namely Khaketla B.M., Mofolo T. and Ntsane K.E. Their creative works also inspired me to be a creative writer.*

*Maboea: My inspiration for poetry writing came from the conversation when I was talking to people. Once more I am a person who reads constantly and I attend creative writing workshops.*

*People should remember that creative writing is an inner thing that is triggered by an outer thing. My former Sesotho teachers also contributed in inspiring me to be a poet. The way they taught me I could feel that really the subject matter was not from*

*their knowledge but from their hearts.*

*Politics also inspired me and I managed to use my literary talent to protest against the unfair and uncalled-for treatment we Blacks received from our superiors. The regime of the National Party made Blacks to know a White man as “Baas” (boss).*

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*My position of subordination became clear from the early age. My dignity, if then I had any, suffered a permanent dent. The inferior position to which I has been relegated since an early age inspired me to protest against the apartheid system.*

*Litabe: The tremendous worldly difficulties, especially after the death of my wife, inspired me to be a poet. I was intending to kill myself but something pushed me to write so that I could forget my problems and really started writing “Boikhutsong ba Thabanantlenyana”.*

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*Another factor that inspired me to be a poet is Christianity. I was a Sunday School teacher and a member of N.G. Kerk choir. In most of my poems, I am trying to show people that the word of God is powerful. Reading also inspired me, as I was reading other people’s work. I became inspired to be a creative writer. The oral traditional poetry also inspired me. Most of my poems comprise features of oral traditional poetry.*

When asked why do they write or what causes them to write, they all maintained that the creative writer has something inside of him that must come out. They insisted that if a person has a book in him, he will sit down and write it. There is no surgical approach through which this sort of thing can



be examined.

For the researcher, readers should think that all creative writers write because they have something to say that is truthful and honest and pointed and important.

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They are bound by the nature and necessities of their language to say it as simply as they can. In their creativity they must exhibit their artistry by the language they are using when they compose poems. It is good for poets if they can say clearly, simply and attractively just what they want to say and nothing more. It is also good for anyone who wishes to become a good poet to endeavour before he allows himself to be tempted by the more showy qualities, to be direct, simple, brief, vigorous and lucid. In practising an economy of words, do not make the mistake of using too few words. Do not pack important thoughts so closely that your reader has no time to grasp the full meaning of one before the next is upon him. Your subject should not be drowned in a sea of words, nor starved of the words needed to convey a thought precisely or to give it strength.

All creative writers we interviewed maintain that there is no one right way to start creative writing, the reason being that there are no set rules on how it should be handled. They all suggest reading as the best tool that aspiring creative writers should do. Reading is part of research that creative writers-to-be should undertake.

This is supported by Drury (1991:151) when he says:

“A poet’s reading may seem aimless,  
but it is really a kind of fishing, you never know

when the big one may snap at your bait?"

Wade (1997:16) seems to support the issue of reading for a creative writer when he says:

"All writers should read. Talk to virtually any successful writer and they will

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have favourite authors. Only by reading and then analysing your responses to what you have read, will you make progress".

Poets-to-be should read to see how it is done or how others are doing it. Reading may involve simply reading for pleasure in some area of interest. Poets are helped by reading books on natural history, or biography in addition to the usual reading they do in the area of poetry. One may wish to write a drama book about the Basotho war and need information to give one's words authority. You may need the specific terminology of a subject. Further you may need to gather facts about a place or an activity.

The poet can carry a notebook that is used to write something such as dreams, ideas, and observations as well as questions. Free writing can be done at this stage, making brainstorming lists as well as questionnaires.

If you are new to poetry, where do you start? If you wish to write poems, you have to read anthology books which are also helpful because they can give you a broad view on poetry. Poets should remember that poetry is not self-expression. You cannot begin writing poetry in sing-song

rhyme to proclaim your feelings. Thus we may conclude this part by citing Gurrey (1968:12) who says: "Poetry is not self-expression, though it may be self-discovery". To this effect reading helps to bring back memories of great creative writers and also shapes one's work. We can sum it up simply: read widely, read closely and respond to what you read.

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When asked if they were to advise a young person wishing to be a poet, what would their advice be, our poets said:

*Mophethe: Ambition is a characteristic of all successful poets. To develop this ambition I think it is a good idea for aspiring young poets to attend workshops. It is not for everybody, but I don't believe that there are creative writers or musicians who have just sprung full-blown without some kind of help. My belief is that everybody, whether it is a composer or conductor, they've all learned their business from older practitioners. The idea of the maestro-apprentice relationship is an old and distinguished relationship. People should bear in mind that this is not going to guarantee that a workshop is going to make a good poet out of anybody, but I don't think it is going to hurt the poet's chances either. Practice by writing poems and giving them to those who once wrote poems so that they could help, is also a good idea.*

*Litabe: An aspiring poet should keep a book wherein he writes almost anything that can be written. For any person who keeps a book, remember to be alive to everything, not to what you are feeling but also to animals, plants, stars, dreams, to what you are reading. I would further suggest to a beginning poet to write about what he sees*

*everyday and to hold readers' interest, he must write very well. Writing very well means seeing in a totally original way.*

*For example, let us take a dog, and if four people are asked to draw it, would produce four different works of art, which is good. In the same way a poet must be just as honest in what he sees because it is the freshness that matters.*

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*People are always asking me if I believe that creative writing can be taught. My answer is that I don't think that creative writing can be taught. If I were a young poet and convinced of my talent, I could attend good creative writing workshops for one important reason only. Any creative writer needs an audience. The more immediate that audience is, the better for him because it stimulates him in his work, he gets a better view of himself and how he should portray the message for his audience. Never think of the effect of what you are writing. Hold on to your idea and get it down and have the courage to write whatever your dream is for yourself.*

*Maboea: It is difficult for me to give advice. There are poets who talk beautifully about poetry writing, but it is a pretty obscure process for me. One writer cannot tell another writer or aspiring writers what to think about or how to write. People have different metabolisms, different habits because of their individual systems. But there are some concrete things I think I can tell people that would be helpful.*

*Aspiring writers should do exercises, play handball or football, something physical to keep them in their physical body. Writers tend to live too much in their heads (minds). You need to be grounded in your physical body.*

*You should read poetry books and look how it is done. It could also be prose, as long as it is something that will get you excited about language.*

*Learn to look at the sky, the reason for this is that most of the great philosophical ideas of human kind have come from the sky. Our notions of change, of religion,*

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*some came from looking at stars and clouds. Create pictures in your mind from stars and clouds you have seen. Attend creative writing workshops so that you can meet other poets and share your ideas with them.*

*Booyesen: My advice would be; get all the formal schooling you can. Have an idea of what you are going to write about. If you are not sure of your topic that you would like to write about, do a thorough research. Read as widely as you can, to see how it is done, how language has been used. I don't believe that poets can be taught to write, I believe that poets can be taught to communicate. One part of writing well is writing something that can be read well. Otherwise, the link between the poet and the reader is broken. Any time the reader fails to get the message, it is the poet's fault. Say what you want to say, but you have to learn to say it in such a way that the reader can see what you mean. My belief is that the real poet will write because he has something inside him that must come out. People must realise that although deep feeling is important, you must also think a poem out, so it is the mixed combination of being able to think and feel about that which makes good poetry. If you feel that something does not make your poem good, you can break your poem to remake it. You must think and feel at the same time so that the thinking part of*

*you can see why that particular line does not work.*

The poets we interviewed maintained that there are two kinds of creative writers in the world: the organised ones and the organic ones. The organised ones do an outline, they do all of this before they write. The other approach is the organic one. The organic writers know where they are going and their kind of just let it take them there. From their views, we could pick up that they are

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organised creative writers because they like to outline their poems and they like rewriting because that is where they get a handle. Rewriting to them is like polishing a fine gem from a rough stone.

Finally the world needs poets. There has been no world known to us that did not have poets. They will always be necessary because poetry is not a luxury; it is a necessity. The poetry in our lives separates sanity from savagery. The poet, by relating honestly his or her experiences, views, thoughts, wishes, and even bigotry, helps us articulate our own feelings. Man would not only starve without poetry, but he would also turn on himself and be lost. By poetry we mean gentleness, understanding, truth and illumination. It can be a piece of music that for few seconds fills the ear to overflowing and changes the way we feel for a moment. Poetry is transportation taking us out of ourselves. It needs not be a vehicle, but it is definitely transportation. It is treasure that gives us a means of knowledge, inspiration and awareness. Poetry books are to us familiar and simple things. Yet they are one of the greatest miracles man has ever created in his research for happiness and power.

For Burgess (1984:166) "Poets are the trumpets which sing to battle; poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world".

In other words to be a poet means a tremendous responsibility because the poet holds the key to the hidden mysteries of life. A poet is not a mere embellishment of everyday life, but a man who gives life its meaning. He is a prophet, not the transcriber of other men's truths but the initiator of truth itself.

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For the researcher poetry is like water to the soil, poetry is like sun to the plant and poetry is like mother to child.

### 7.1.3 Suggestions for future research

The writing of this thesis has been stimulated by the belief that the creative writer's resources are vitally important for those who wish to be creative writers and those who wish to hold workshops on creative writing. Researchers have not done enough to attempt new fields like creative writing. There are very few researchers who conducted interviews on creative writing. Research has proved that English researchers have done a lot on interviewing creative writers on their literary work and on their creative skills. For example: Women writers in Russian Literature by Clyman and Greene, Contemporary Mexican Women Writers by Gabriella de Beer, just to mention two. But we are not saying there are none from the African languages, but we are saying that research in African Languages is not enough.

Most researchers write on literary theories, especially those theories that promote form or structure.

There is a paradigm shift in the field of literature where the focus is no longer on form or structure but on research. There are still scholars who do not believe language and literature can be researched, or there is anything of language or literature which is related to research.

According to Herbert (1990:1):

Research is a process of seeking, by means  
of methodical enquiry, to solve problems  
and to add to one's body of knowledge

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and that of others by the discovery of significant  
facts and insight.

For Herbert researchers engage in research firstly to discover something new, that no one knows so that they can contribute to the wealth of human knowledge. Secondly, research is used to describe complex phenomena. And researchers are concerned with testing an existing theory.

Research is important to both the reader and the creative writer. Through research, we discovered that the essential equipment for creating poetry is awareness of words. If a poet uses words and language in an artistic way in a significant order and form, then he is able to capture the power of his experience to command words to do what he wants them to do. The reliance on the words of a poem will enable the reader's experience to be similar to that of the poet. In other words the reader is partly a creative writer, because the process of getting to understand a poet is also constructing or creating his own poem in his mind.

The more accurately the reader discovers the creative writer's meaning as well as his intention in his work of art, be it drama, novel or poetry, the more his ability will approach the writer's thinking, imagination and feeling. Then the reader will create the literary work of art anew for himself, by

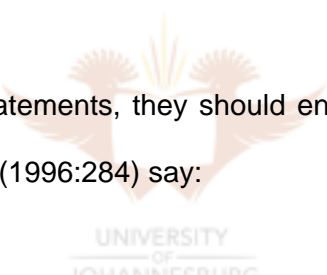


means of the creative writer's words. To discover of the creative writer's intention depends on the reader's response to the poet's words. But readers must not rely on their personal interpretation, but on the interpretation subject to the poet's control of words.

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In conclusion, we appeal to researchers to look at the relationship between creative art and science. They can also try to answer the question: What is meant by the subjective and the objective in creative art or poetry?

To answer the abovementioned statements, they should engage themselves in field research. Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1996:284) say:

The logo of the University of Johannesburg, featuring two stylized figures holding hands above the text 'UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG'.

While in the field, the researcher continually asks questions as to fit relevance and workability about the emerging categories and relationships between them. By raising questions at this time, the researcher checks those issues while he still has access to the data. As a result, he continually fits his analysis to the data by checking as he proceeds.

Field research involves studying actions and activities of people as they occur in their natural setting. In field research, the researcher goes into the world of others and obtains first hand information about people and a culture. Field research involves many people not necessarily the researcher only, because field research involves real life situations of how people live, how they

talk, their behaviour and what makes them happy and what distresses them.



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