

A ANALYTICAL SURVEY OF ZULU POETRY

BOTH TRADITIONAL AND

MODERN

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## A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T

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## INTRODUCTION

It is proposed in this thesis to make an analytical study of both traditional and modern Zulu poetry. The survey will cover the earliest known periods of Zulu poetry, up to the very modern period of recorded poetry.

There are two divisions into which Zulu poetry can be classified. These divisions, although not mutually exclusive, have specific characteristics which make them necessary. One type should be called traditional because it is uninfluenced by western forms of poetry. It is essentially an African art form. This type of Zulu poetry is related to poetry found amongst most pre-literate people. It is an oral type of poetry having characteristics which are essentially those of oral poetry. As in all oral poetry, it has the same eulogistic tone, and seldom reveals a formal philosophical reflection on life. The reason for this becomes clear in the course of this work. For the present it is enough to mention that poetry, not being an isolated product, is conditioned by cultural circumstances. Hence the poetic productions of the Zulus are expressive of Zulu culture in its different stages of development and change. Themes are based on the accumulated experiences of the Zulu society; ideas are expressed only in the form available to traditional preliterate Zulu society.

In a general study of oral poetry one could go so far as to say that there is a fundamental similarity in the use of techniques as, for instance, in the universal usage of repetition. The manner in which these techniques are used naturally vary from country to country and from time to time. Zulu traditional poetry, therefore, has its own specific characteristics which distinguish it from other oral poetical works.

From the earliest times to the present day Zulu poetry has continued to develop. To get a clear picture of what comprises Zulu poetry, it is essential that the course of its development should be carefully studied. In this work an attempt will be made to classify Zulu poetry according to specific periods which affected its development. This thesis deals mainly with traditional poetry as this forms the greater part of Zulu poetry.

A historical account of the development of the Zulu nation is included as essential to the study of Zulu poetry. The very nature

of Zulu poetry demands that a thorough study should be made of Zulu history; obscure facts can only be elucidated by historical accounts.

With the cultural impact caused by the coming of the European in South Africa, a new form of poetic expression has arisen showing a strong influence of western (English) poetry. In this period, re-organisation of society is followed by re-organisation of ideas. The impact on Zulu culture made by foreign culture was to stimulate a strong desire in poets to imitate. Some attempt to find a compromise between the traditional and foreign forms of poetical expression. As would be imagined, this poetry is composed by the educated African. Few pieces of this type are available owing to the difficulties of finding a market for African literature; the rest lies in manuscript form. The little that is available discloses interesting experimentation. Poets have experimented with rhyme, syllabic metre, and various stanza forms. On account of these experiments this type of poetry has been dubbed academic.

Traditional poetry has fewer enthusiasts than before, especially amongst urbanised Africans. Not only because an active foreign culture is more attractive, but also because the customs, the life, and the social organisation that in itself inspired traditional poetry has changed. The result is that although its appreciation as a form of poetic expression still remains, it is based on traditional works rather than on original modern compositions. The compositions found in the reserves are in most cases modifications of traditional works and seldom original. Those that do exist generally lack the epic conception of original traditional works.

## II

Research work, especially on traditional poetry has been carried out mainly at the Campbell Museum in Durban where there is a large collection of works on African Culture. Research is handicapped by the fact that there are few or no books on the subject. Few literary critics have made a study of oral poetry. Most of the information on oral African poetry is contained in anthropological works and, <sup>as</sup> ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~be~~ <sup>be</sup> ~~expected~~ <sup>expected</sup>, has an anthropological bias.

In most cases the anthropologist is merely interested in the cultural aspect of poetry and not in its literary value or literary merit.

A great deal of trouble has been taken to choose pieces of poetry from various anthropology books and journals. It was found very difficult, due to lack of information on the subject, to define exactly the area in which this eulogistic type of poetry is found amongst Southern African people. Further research needs to be done on the subject. Rarely does the collection of traditional poetry available follow any systematic form of arrangement. The compilers seem to assume too much about the historical knowledge of the reader and omit explanatory notes about obscure facts connected with tribal history. This in itself is a great handicap for the understanding of traditional poetry depends on an understanding of historical events leading to its composition.

Zulu poetry attracted enthusiasts of the language like James Stuart who compiled the only available collection of Zulu traditional poetry. In addition, he wrote several Zulu books, some of which contain accounts of the events that led to the composition of particular praise-poems. Stuart also collected a number of Zulu folk tales which, like all the stories of Africa, are interspersed with pieces of poetry.

The most useful work in this study of Zulu traditional poetry is undoubtedly his "Izibongo". This is found in manuscript form in the museum mentioned above. It covers the earliest periods of Zulu poetry up to the time of Zolomon ka Dinisulu. Voluminous though it might seem it is only the beginning in a field that must receive more attention from Zulu scholars. The collection is small considering that out of a population of about 500,000, approximately two-thirds had eulogies composed on them. About one hundred members of the nobility would have specially paid court praisers to compose poetry.

It follows that there should be, in a generation, at least one hundred good poems; though one hundred nobles may not necessarily mean one hundred good poets. Nevertheless it does mean that such poets would have more time to devote to poetry and a greater possibility of developing new forms of poetic expression.

It should be noted that Zulu traditional poetry does not mean eulogies only. There are other types of traditional poetry including songs of birds, lullabies, and several other lyrics. Stuart's manuscript only covers a section of traditional poetry, though no doubt the most important. It is a random collection based neither on a strict chronological sequence nor on tribal origin. There are also many repetitions which do not seem to have been contained in the original compositions. They suddenly appear at the most inappropriate points of the eulogies. Some repetitions are of particular praises. This may be justified by the fact that eulogies of the same individual may be of two or more varieties. What has been said so far is not meant to be a criticism of James Stuart, whose contribution to the development of Zulu literature can never be disputed, but as a challenge to all students of Zulu poetry.

There is, besides Stuart's manuscript, Dr. Killie Campbell's manuscript with the same title as Stuart's "Izibongo", which includes mostly recent compositions gathered from African newspapers and magazines. Stuart's manuscripts would be incomplete without the latter. It clearly shows the continuity of the development of Zulu poetry; without Dr. Campbell's collection there would be a missing link between ancient traditional poetry and modern academic poetry. An anthology of traditional poetry must, if it is to be complete, include poems from this manuscript.

Most of the poems in this manuscript are written by what one could term occasional versifiers. They vary from strictly traditional to semi-academic types. In the main they are semi-academic lyrics. The collection has a variety of short and long poems. The long ones are composed in the traditional style. Since the collection is not based on any selective method it has poems varying from very impressive lyrics to very poor verses. Some of these are written by unknown poets whose works are unpublished. In the course of this research work two poets stated that they had written more than five hundred poems, but found it difficult to publish their works.

Dr. Killie Campbell's manuscript has the same defect as Stuart's manuscript, i.e. a lack of systematic arrangement.



Besides the afore-mentioned sources of information about traditional poetry, there are numerous books on African culture, such as "Long Long Ago" by Samuelson, "Olden Times in Zululand and Natal" by Dr. A.T. Bryant, "Chopi Musicians" by Hugh Tracy, "In Darkest Africa" by Henry Stanley, which give more information on the subject. Eulogies on individuals should be studied from different sources in order to get a comprehensive picture of their literary value. Shaka's eulogies, for instance, differ slightly in Stuart's manuscript "Isibongo" from "Long Long Ago" by Samuelson.

James Stuart manuscript "Zulu Fairy Tales" contains accurate records of the stories as they were narrated by the Zulus of old. They are found interspersed with either eulogies or lyrics on the characters in the story. This traditional style was copied by early Zulu writers like Miss F. Dube in her book "Phoshozwayo". Later writers like Dr. W. Vilakazi used this method in their novels, e.g. "Nje Nempela" and "Dingiswayo-Khobe". A study of Zulu poetry has to utilize material from story books, early missionary works, anthropological works, and African travel books.

Field work is indispensable in the study of traditional and modern Zulu poetry. The author of this work has himself made an extensive tour of the districts of Inanda, Umsinto, Dumiya, Stanger, and Ebo areas. This fieldwork reveals what remains to be done on this subject. It was found, for instance, that in each district traditional poetry follows certain lines according to the poetical tradition of the people in that district. There was also an obvious tendency for local poets to plagiarize praises of the Zulu kings.

In mission stations and in schools, despite the attempts of early missionaries to discourage anything related to traditional culture, there is still great love and respect for traditional poetry. African intellectuals often prefer traditional poetry to modern academic poetry. This stems from the fact that academic poetry generally falls short of the heroic spirit of the eulogies to which most Africans have cultural allegiance.

Traditional poetry enjoys special favour among the important African figures in the countryside who take pride in referring to themselves by the praise-poems, e.g.

"Imadevu abomvu,  
Inkosi yakomkhumbi,  
Ungasela Ekosi,  
Siyakwela nawe ...."

(Praise of Chief Mlomela - Umsinto district)

Prominent Europeans who live in these districts have praise-poems composed about them, e.g.

"Ukhono iyahlaba,  
USkhize obomvu,  
Umagida kaTomase."

Fieldwork also revealed that Zulu poetry is one of the most universally shared aspects of Zulu culture. Traditional poetry has done much to preserve a common language. Differences in the praise-poems of the same individual in different districts will be more ideational than linguistic. In the Mgebosini area of the Umsinto district, for instance, there is no change in the use of the clicks, despite the fact that this area shows prominent Baka influence. Whereas a Mgebosini man would say "Cinisela noma amashisa encabisile", in poetry he would recite:

"Cinisela ukuba nokuba yisinqaba,  
Kumcakashiso ngaliva linye".

Traditional poets are affected by the break with the past to a lesser extent than academic poets. Their poetry still retains the aggressive tone indicating deeper psychological rootedness in the traditional culture and history.

Research work was also carried out amongst workers in the industrial areas. The aim was to find out how far the poetry of other communities had influenced original Zulu poetry. The mine workers were of special assistance in this research. It was found that though different groups have been together for almost three-quarters of a century, there has been very little

mutual acculturation in this respect. The reason for this appears to be inaccessibility of traditional literature and inability to read. These factors deprive individuals of the equipment that would enable them to appreciate the finer elements of another culture. Knowledge of the language is not in itself sufficient. One needs the knowledge of the history of the people in order to fully understand their arts. A member of the Sotho community, for instance, understands the full emotional import of seSotho poetry because he knows not only the language but also the cultural background.

For a true picture of Zulu poetry, investigations should be made into various related poetical works of other groups. Whether a heroic age inevitably produces a great heroic poetry can only be revealed by the study of the poetry of other groups in their different heroic periods.

### III

It was found convenient to divide Zulu poetry into traditional and modern with sub-divisions into various eras and periods

1. Traditional,
2. Modern.

#### 1. THE TRADITIONAL

This is sub-divided into:

- (i) The Pre-Shakan Era:
  - Phase I of the Shakan Era
    - (a) The Pre-Dingiswayo Period.
  - Phase II of the Shakan Era
    - (b) The Dingiswayo Period.
- (ii) The Shakan Era

(This era is so diffused that division into periods is unwarranted.)

- (iii). The Post-Shakan Era  
 Phase I of the Post-Shakan Era  
 (a) Mpande Period.  
 Phase II of the Post-Shakan Era  
 (b) Cetshwayo Period.

## 2. THE MODERN

Academic poetry.

## 3. SYNTHESIS

Having given this general outline, a statement should be made about the method of analysis. The aim of the poet is to communicate his experience in the clearest and most effective manner possible.<sup>1</sup> His poetic experience must be more than a mere representation of what others feel but cannot express; it must also be what others have not perceived.

The effective communication of the poetic experience shall prove the <sup>Zulu poets'</sup> worth as poets.

In all periods an attempt will be made to find out how far a poet has been able to express accurately his poetic vision. How far his poetry has advanced the social ethic and "helped to mould both the character of his own society and the future of the world."<sup>2</sup>

The aim of this work is to present a study of the Zulu poetic content rather than form.

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I "Practical Criticism" by I. Richards, p.II, Published by K. Paul, French, Trubner & Co.Ltd., 1929.

2 "Voices of the Past" by James Janet and McLean Todd, p.26

PART 1.GENERALChapter ION ORAL TRIBAL POETRY

An introductory chapter on the nature of oral tribal poetry is essential if the whole subject of Zulu poetry is to be understood. It is hoped to define the extent of its poetic value in the context of related works of poetry.

Oral tribal poetry bears some relationship to the many lyrics of modern peasant communities, e.g. the Italian ripetto, especially with reference to its spontaneity. It would be a mistake to suppose that all oral tribal poetry is so simple that an equation can be made on this basis. At its best its artistry is of a very high standard. Facts indicate that the best oral poetry is the ambitious type, composed on gods and kings.

Scope The scope covered by tribal poetry is wide and varied. It includes themes on love, death, <sup>and</sup> historical events. It differs from tribe to tribe and from country to country. It is in itself an extensive study requiring individual attention. No claim, therefore, is made here for its exhaustive treatment. It is proposed to give only an outline.

A thorough study would involve a detailed analysis of all types of melic poetry found in preliterate tribal societies, their structure, and their extent of development. It would require also an analysis of the eulogies, found not only in some parts of Africa, but also in early recorded poetry of literate nations like the

Egyptians, the Japanese, and the Chinese.

The study of oral tribal poetry reveals that the melic type of poetry is prevalent amongst the South and the North American Indians, the Pacific Islanders, the New Zealand Maori. Amongst these "practically all poetry is either sung or chanted".<sup>3</sup> This is not surprising when we recall that in Greece "they used the word music in a very wide sense and that it might include several arts. But it is a suggestive fact that, in the Greek language, long before poetic art was called 'making', it was called 'singing', the poet was not

*ποιητής* but *αοδός* ."<sup>4</sup>

Almost all tribal melic poetry assumes the form of the unisonic plain song. There are among these tribes, songs of war, songs of victory, funeral songs, festival songs and magic songs.

The study also reveals that there are tribes who, besides having a large amount of melic poetry have, in addition, eulogies and lullabies that are totally dissociated from music. These latter include most African communities. The melic poetry of this group shows a marked degree of development, both in its dramatic expression and in its structural construction.

Generally speaking, poetry in all preliterate tribal societies is closely related to drama as shown by the masked imitations of the devil of the North African and the Ceylonese tribes. Recitals of poetry are in most cases accompanied by pantomimic performances.

3 "Encyclopedia of Literature" by Joseph Shirply, p.70.

4 "Encyclopaedia Britannica" Vol.XIX, p.260.

In studying oral tribal poetry a scholarly approach should be adopted. It should be realised that the difference between the recorded poetry and this type of poetry is one of degree rather than of kind. Its significance to modern poetry should also be analysed; there is a possibility that its study might lead to new trends in poetry, just as the study of African art resulted in symbolic modern painting.

It should not be dismissed as a useless study, suited only to anthropologists and literary historians alone. These oral tribal compositions echo the jubilant and free recitations of these communities, who recited spontaneously, inspired by the and historical upheavals. cataclysmic manifestations of nature. The uninhibited social life of these communities resulted in a highly emotional poetry. The annual festivals and feasts provided ample opportunity for the release of these poetic feelings.

Function In these tribal communities the functional aspect of poetry is very significant. Poetry has a practical value. It is composed to please the gods or to appease them, to please the king, or to induce magical charms to do what man cannot do, e.g. the shamanistic songs of the Eskimos, the poetry of the Congo Africans, and the Bechuana.

From very early times poetry was composed in honour of the gods. Indeed, even Greek dramatic poetry began as a religious performance held in honour of Dionysius, the god of wine and fruitfulness. It was, probably, on account of the hypnotic effect poetry has on people, that a myth developed that it was god-inspired. This hypnotic effect was felt to be ecstatic and capable of inducing a trance which uplifted man above humdrum life. This bore a relationship to the psychic states associated with religious worship.

Magical poetry, which abounds in tribal communities, has a practical therapeutic value. The witch-doctor induces an emotional state in a patient by the use of this type of poetry. Often the words are directed to a positive state of mind, in which the cure is effected psychologically by a number of suggestions and hints. By inducing an hypnotic state in the audience itself, the witch-doctor inspires confidence in his audience, which in turn assures his patient of his (the witch-doctor's) ability to cure.

Amongst some African societies self-praise poems are used to inspire confidence in war or in a duel. The praising is either done by friends or is done personally. It is reported that amongst the Romans similar utterances were made as the challenger advanced towards his opponent. This type of poetry is characterised by threats or a narration of deeds of bravery claimed by the duellist, or known to have been performed by him on previous occasions.

Characteristics One of the most outstanding characteristics of tribal poetry is its oral nature. This is important to note because, as an unwritten form of poetic expression, it has techniques which are peculiar to it.

Written poetry has forms which, because they can be recognised by the eye, make it easy for the reader to understand ideas as classified in a particular form. Stanzas for instance, are clearly recognisable as compartments of certain ideas and the reader on seeing a stanza immediately expects a new group of ideas. This is also true of rhyme schemes which by their very sound place an emphasis, or are intended to, on certain ideas in the poem.

The poet in preliterate communities has to adjust his material to suit his media of expression. Because his poetry is oral, he has to depend on mental props and subtle



suggestions for an accurate communication of his ideas.

The poet frequently uses repetition in order to guide the mind of the listener. Recognition of a familiar phrase from a variety of ideas gives a pleasurable sensation, and is an intellectual guidance to ideas as they occur in a poem. In almost all oral works of poetry there are "patterns of verses or repeated verses (e.g. a a, b a, b a, d c, a a, c c, d c.), which make for rhythmic repetition of form. Meaningless syllables or words, phrases may be repeated not once but many times; monotony in content often emphasise the idea of the poem which is the chief centre of interest".<sup>5</sup> Note this characteristic in the following poem from the Tsihsath group of the American Indians, and also the Zulu one that follows it:

"Hoo, hoo we are just this o,  
ho hangau hiyiya hiyiha he!  
I shall be searching seeking,  
The chiefs of the tribe we are thus:  
Angaw hiyiko hooo! etc".

"Alala he alala he!  
Thina singamaqhawe enkosi,  
Sashisa izwe sashisa izwe,  
hiyiya ho, hiyiya ho!"

Though the repeated syllables seem to have no meaning, close examination will reveal that their poetic significance lies in their rhythms and the dramatic actions that accompany them. Such

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid 3, p.72

dramatic actions have a specific symbolic significance and their value is determined by the relevance with which they are used with a particular group of ideas. It would be quite wrong, poetically speaking, in the case of the Zulu poem to substitute "alala he alala he" for "yeyeye yeyeye yeyeye". The reason being that the latter type is associated with lighter moods and the former with more serious moods. It might also be added that these sounds are in practise assigned to male and female consecutively.

Another universal characteristic of tribal oral poetry is the method of recounting ancestral names and their deeds. The New Zealand Maori in their lullabies, the Africans in their eulogies, "the Pacific islanders in their songs make mention of the great names ..... of the gene<sup>to</sup>gies of chiefs who sometimes were honoured by being credited with the deeds of ancient heroes, while the old heroes sometimes got credit for the deeds of their descendants"<sup>6</sup>.

The use of these great names is meant to preserve cultural traditions and values of society, and also to keep tribal historical records intact. Keeping historical records in the form of poetry was no doubt the easiest way for pre-literate societies to preserve them.

The highly subjective nature of oral poetry is one of its major characteristics. This overall subjective nature of oral poetry results in a poetry in which intellectual analysis of the facts of life tends to be dominated by the emotions of the person. Themes are treated in terms of their immediate function, either to the individual or to the community. The poetry is directed towards eliciting an immediate reaction rather than to deal with permanent

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 3, p.75

truths. Its approach to the subjects of love, justice or ambition, for instance, lack the order and seriousness of a clearly intended illustration of their different aspects. Hence, these virtues have a highly personal meaning, and their value depends in most cases on whether the circumstances from which they arose still exist. However, this is not true of the best productions, like those of the Zulu or Sesotho heroic periods. The personal occurs only as a tendency, not as an invariable rule of oral poetry.

In tribally organised societies, poetry tends to extremes. Some pieces of poetry, especially love poems, often reveal the tenderest and the softest of feelings. In some, the poet comes out in the open to face life in all its harshness. He appears a true humanist eager to promote the welfare of mankind around him. His greatest failure in depicting human life lies in his tendency to show it as too pathetically sad, or too ecstatically happy. A bad

man in bad, and he is unreservedly condemned; a good man in good and he is unreservedly praised.

first two illustrate violent disapproval, and the third excessive praise. The result is that one is left with a feeling of terrible despair on the one hand, and a feeling of revulsion at the undiluted praise on the other.

"Ngathi uyangithanda!  
Kanti ngiyazilibazisa ngawe,  
Ngangicinga ukuthi sokwahlukaniswa ukufa,  
Kodwa namhla ungincamisile;  
Awusoze wabalutho!  
Ulihlazo, ulihlamvu, ulinashanasha!"

- - -

"Mwana wangu gwambha wombha gugulelwa,  
Mwana wangu gwambha wombha gugulelwa,  
Ngougo wako!"

- - -

"Obebuso bungenandawo yokusolwa,  
Obemehlo engenandawo yokusolwa,  
Obenyawo zingenandawo yokusolwa,  
Obezitho zingenandawo yokusolwa,  
Obemathanga angenandawo yokusolwa,  
Obemadolo angenandawo yokusolwa,  
Obemasinyo angenandawo yokusolwa,  
Obemlomo ungenandawo yokusolwa,  
Obandlebe zingenandawo yokusolwa."

The study of oral tribal poetry shows that like all poetry it makes a skillful use of imagination, as evidenced by the highly poetic theogenic myths amongst all tribal societies. The frequent use of symbolism in poetry gives scope to the exercise of the imagination. For the understanding of this type of poetry it is essential to have knowledge of the symbolism.

Poetry must move the reader. It must appeal to those facets of our minds which, either because they are associated with pleasant

unpleasant events in our lives, relate our own experiences of the events of life. It must make us aware of the fullness of our existence and our relation to things around us. In this state we feel sympathetic with others, thus sharing together in the event of existence.

In order that poetry should achieve this, it must have "a deep sense of the emotional, whatever its subject matter, concrete in its method and its diction, rhythmical in its movement, and artistic in its form"<sup>7</sup>. Oral tribal poetry achieved this, for even in tribal society the poet is a very conscientious artist. Tribal poetry shows an outstanding awareness of the need for poetic devices that must convey different shades of thought.

Oral tribal poetry is characterised by the essentials of all great poetry - imagination and feeling. Once it is understood, it does not fail to move the reader. A great deal of misunderstanding arises out of lack of a full grasp of the techniques used.

One of the merits of oral poetry is its spontaneity. On the importance of spontaneity in poetry, Wordsworth says in one of his preface-essays: "In that condition (of simplicity) the essential passions of the heart find better soil in which they can attain their maturity less under restraint and speak a plainer and more emphatic language". R.D. Blackman says, in his book called "Composition and Style", "the more early Greek writers had no models to imitate; and accordingly they surpassed those of every other learned nation in point of beautiful simplicity". This is true of oral poetry. A poet had to evolve a style of his own, state what he wanted to state with the object in view, and

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.* 4, page 257

state it with a spontaneity foreign to the literate poets who have models to imitate. The few examples below illustrate this directness and spontaneity in oral tribal poetry:

"An'isakufuni wena ntombi yomthakathi,  
Ngoba ugibela imfene,  
Wena ntombi yomthakathi."

- - -

"Hakulo ora kusika timbhila,  
Hakulo ora kusika timbhile,  
Sipingani walikwekwe ndi bhebha."

Affectation and academic artificiality, prevalent for instance in the modern Zulu academic era, is absent. The poet faces the problem not in terms of tabulated principles but in terms of present inspiration.

Often poetic canons are imposed on conceptions of poetry different from the principles on which the poetry in question is conceived. Good criticism must include the ability to understand the circumstances that give rise to the literature under study. The isolation of literary products from prevailing conditions never gives a true picture of the works that are being studied. This should be avoided, especially in a study in which so many misconceptions exist. Conditions that were responsible for the origin of this type of poetry should be very closely examined.

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CHAPTER IITYPES OF ZULU POETRY

Traditional Zulu poetry has various types of poetry, each with its own peculiarities. The following types are found in the whole field of Zulu poetry: eulogies, nursery rhymes, simulations, dramatic poetry, and melic poetry.

1. THE EULOGIES

It can be assumed from the evidence available in various societies that this type of poetry precedes epic poetry. In Zulu eulogistic poetry this tendency is very marked. This does not necessarily mean that it is a stage that must inevitably be passed before epic poetry arises. Nor does it mean that the existence of the eulogistic type of poetry always leads to the production of epic poetry. Early Chinese eulogistic poetry was not followed by the epic. What is intended is a definition of the stage at which eulogistic poetry commonly occurs.

Zulu eulogistic poetry is most probably a development from an earlier lyrical period. There is some evidence about this in the style of the early lyrical compositions. If one ventured to classify the periods of poetry

according to the different levels of cultural development, they would probably fall into this sequence:

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<u>Periods of Human Development</u>	<u>Type of Poetry</u>
I. Early Period Hunting Stage	<u>Melic</u> : simple mimics and highly repetitive songs.
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II. Middle Period Pastoral and Agricultural Stages.	<u>Eulogistic</u> : Poetry separate from music; melic poetry still important; poetic techniques greatly improved.
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III. Later Period Complex and highly developed social organisation.	Clear-cut classifi- cation of the different types of poetry into: narrative, lyrical (divorced from music), and dramatic.

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The eulogies were composed about important personages, like kings, princes, headmen, and national heroes. They were also composed on prominent women, young boys, children, dancers, composers and poets. Objects of affection like cattle, dogs, battle axes also received praises from their owners.



The Zulu eulogies are the highest products of ancient literary genius. A Zulu eulogy is not only an endless praise of the eulogised individual but often a sincere commentary of the virtues possessed by him. There are two aspects of the eulogy. A eulogy may be composed by a man about himself or an object dear to him. In this case, as would be expected, he usually showers himself or the object with praise. The praise might refer either to imaginary or real virtues. The only moderating factor in an otherwise exaggerated statement about one's virtues and heroic adventures is that society demands high standards of self-criticism and judgement.

The other aspect is one in which a eulogy is composed by others about the exploits of another. This type is usually of a higher standard than the previous one. One comes across not only praise but also biting criticism. It is this section of eulogistic poetry that has the best compositions. There is usually a more balanced analysis of man, especially with reference to the relevance of his actions in society. Composers of this latter type are generally poets of talent, who compose because they are inspired by the deeds of others. Such eulogies embody, particularly in the case of major characters like the rulers and great leaders, the history of the tribe and the heroic deeds of past and present members of the tribe. On the other hand, self-praise poems embody events which might or might not be of importance to the community. In most cases the national poet not only narrates the events, but also philosophises about them, thus giving them a universal

appeal and importance.

The aim of the poet in composing a eulogy is primarily to entertain, hence his work must have both emotional and intellectual appeal. Various techniques were used in order to achieve this.

Samuelson, in his work "Long Long Ago" correctly observes that Zulu eulogies are compositions between the epic and the odes. They fail to qualify as odes because they are too varied in subject matter to sustain the piston effect of an ode which concentrates on one theme.

Their address is never consistently direct. There are instances in which the ordinary third person narrative method is used.

Their epic quality lies in their grand scale execution and their tendency towards having the events take place around a hero. The treatment of character is casual. An attempt is seldom made to analyse motivation. In most cases the hero is depicted after having triumphed.

#### Presentation

One of the most important aspects of the Zulu eulogies is their dramatic presentation. Events narrated in the eulogy are demonstrated by body movements and voice modulation. The dramatic presentation of the eulogies is enhanced by the fact that poets, whilst narrating these eulogies, usually wear a garb which gives them a theatrical appearance. The garb of the court poet of Dingane reminds one of the masked Greek actors. The audience participates

actively in the performance. They clap, applaud, whistle in approval and shout appropriate sounds like "musho!" "musho!".

It was not enough for the poet to compose the eulogies, he had also to narrate them to a highly attentive audience. His role as a reciter of his compositions was as important as that of a composer. In fact, the two were scarcely separable because he composed on the spur of the moment and simultaneously recited and demonstrated his poetry, making a great deal of seemingly unintelligible phrasal expressions. Body movements, tonal variations, facial expressions and a variety of gestures all form an integral part of this type of poetry.

In the case of poetry composed by minor figures, such dramatic presentations are performed by the individual himself as he recites his praise.

Shorter works of poetry do not require elaborate body gestures, both because they are easy to understand and also because they lack the complicated dramatic structure of the epic-eulogy.

#### Social Significance

In Zulu society eulogies were not only used for purposes of entertainment but also to express various aspects of social life. As has been mentioned above, the preservation of the history of the tribe was one of its many functions. Eulogies passed this information by way of giving aesthetic enjoyment. Irving Babbit says "Poetry that is imitative in this sense is, according to Aristotle, more 'serious' and

philosophical than history. History deals merely with what has happened, whereas poetry deals with what may happen, according to probability and necessity"<sup>8</sup>. Those things which society approved and aspired to were lauded and encouraged in the eulogies; thus emphasis was given to the sanctity of the social structure.

The eulogies were undoubtedly of great cultural value. This is evidenced by the literary tournaments on poetic compositions that were held between different tribal groups. These tournaments widened the field of the eulogies from local types to inter-tribal synthetic forms. In this way poets perfected their art and found wider audiences. They afforded the same emotional satisfaction one has in observing a dramatic performance. Individuals identified themselves with the hero, and were able to project themselves into the story as it was enacted before them.

In dance performances the admirers bestowed various praises on the best dancers. This encouraged them to perfect their dancing, and made possible the introduction of new forms.

Zulu audiences never missed an opportunity of applauding a 'poetical' performance. Every poet could count on being rewarded by an appreciative audience.

Young members of society were introduced to this

very early.  
 form of art/He~~s~~They learnt the refinements of their  
 culture at an early age. If it be true that poetry is  
 a measure of cultural refinement, the Zulu child would  
 accordingly possess profound refinement. From early  
 childhood he is rewarded for his dance performance with  
 a eulogy. He values this, even though he does not fully  
 understand its meaning.

Another very important aspect of the eulogies  
 is the relationship they appear to bear to the national  
 religion and the monarch. Eulogies in Zulu society  
 were associated with ancestor worship. On sacrificial  
 occasions they were used as a form of prayer-praise.  
 Indeed, so ingrained is the use of the eulogy<sup>in religious ceremonies</sup>, that some  
 African Christians today think highly of a prayer with  
 occasional eulogies of God or Jesus Christ. Praises  
 like this one are quite common, especially in Protestant  
 Churches:

"Whlangothi ezimanzaba,  
 Nodana amaphiko abanzi,  
 Mvuzi kwabafileyo."

In olden times the head of the house recited the  
 praises of his ancestors on important occasions. The  
 court-poet recited the eulogies of the ruler's ancestors.  
 These had the distinction of being regarded as national  
 songs. This way the poet expressed the emotional unity  
 of the community in terms of religion. The ruler himself,  
 who was the high priest of the nation, muttered a few  
 praises in honour of his ancestors.

On national occasions the court-poet announced the coming of the king by reciting either the king's eulogies, those of his (the king's) ancestors, or both. The importance of eulogistic poetry in maintaining the prestige of the king cannot be over-emphasised. The king's praises had the same effect that national anthems have for modern societies. It was customary for many Zulu heroes to recite the praises of the kings before they died. In so doing they reinforced the importance of maintaining the social structure, of which the ruler was the central point, and for which these men died.

It was the poet's function to foster the spirit of nationalism. Wherever possible the poet raised the ruler's figure far above the dust of common humanity. Kings were raised to the positions of gods or even higher, as in the case of Shaka who was said to be so great that not even the spirits of his ancestors could ever hope to equal him, e.g.

"Ophotho intambo ende wabheka  
ezulwini,  
Lapho nezithutha zawoNdaba  
singeyufinyelela."

The more modern poet of chief <sup>h</sup>Bungane, eager to do the same for his lord and master, said:

"Umkhulu Nkulunkulu,  
Kodwa avungane<sup>h</sup>h Bungane;  
Ngoba wena uneziqu ezintathu,  
Yena uneni<sup>h</sup>mkhulu<sup>h</sup>ndulu."

The poet's social importance was clearly shown by the fact that he alone could publicly criticise the ruler with impunity and had the licence to mention the name of the ruler (which was, in the days of Shaka, punishable by death). Dinane's poet impugning him of cowardice, says:

"Umashikizela umashiya impi yakhe".

and Shaka's poet boldly calls him by name:

"Uteku kwabafazi babwaNongabi,  
Betekula behlezi emlovini,  
Bethi uShaka kayubusa kayu-  
kubankosi,  
Kanti kunyakana ezavunethe-  
zeka".

The court-poet received payment from the king for his performances. (This reminds one of the scopps and scops of Norway, who were also hired as poets to praise Anglo-Saxon lords and Norwegian lords respectively. The institution has been modernised into that of poet-laureate). The usefulness of the poet is connected with the social importance of his work. Poets raised the prestige of the ruler and by so doing spread propaganda that pleased his subjects and scared his enemies.

Mention has been made of the fact that there were occasional versifiers. The king himself sometimes composed eulogies. The praises he bestowed on the national heroes had the same value as the Victoria Cross or the Legion of Honour in modern England and France. The individual, so

honoured, recited his praises with satisfaction whenever the occasion arose. This encouraged the listeners to aspire to the same honours, and took the social ethic from the general to the particular.

The praised individual was given confidence and felt encouraged towards the attainment of those virtues to which he aspired. Zulu traditional poetry, therefore, had an ethical centre essential in all great literature. The empty phrase, "art for art's sake", would be regarded with contempt among Zulu traditional poets. They would hold that all poetry has a social 'sake', otherwise art loses its meaning.

## 2. MELIC POETRY:

This refers to Zulu traditional lyric poetry which constitutes a major part of Zulu poetry. This type of poetry was always composed to be sung.

The themes on which Zulu melic poetry is based covers the whole field of Zulu social life. There are two broad divisions into which it can be classified. The first division is based on serious social subjects, as exemplified in national songs, war songs, work songs, hunting songs, festival songs, funeral songs and initiation songs. These are invariably performed in groups. There is, however, no clear-cut division for some of these. For instance, some war songs are used as national songs on important national occasions. National songs may also be sung on battle



occasions. During the Shakan period, the division between the two began to become clear-cut. National songs were called 'anashubo esize', and war songs were called 'anashubo empi', thus distinguishing them.

Festival and hunting songs had themes based on the occasion with which they were connected. They had in common with the national and war songs the emphasis placed on group activity. Hunting and festival occasions aroused sentiments connected with war and national welfare on account of their concern with those virtues which are considered important for the survival of the group.

The second division is based on light social subject, such as, love songs, satirical songs, lullabies, story songs and nursery rhymes. The great bulk of this group is composed of love songs. Love songs are either sung individually or in a group. Love songs for instance can be sung either by a love-sick individual or by a group on a light social occasion. The same is true of the lullabies and nursery rhymes; they may be sung by children in a group or by one child-tender.

Melic poetry shows a close association with the historical development of the Zulu nation. In the pre-Shakan era romantic songs flourished. During this era emphasis was on love rather than on heroic exploits. Although a great deal of melic poetry of this period had been lost, speculations on its development are possible on the basis of the few fragments available. The following

song is said to date back to the earliest periods of Zulu history:

"Guga mzimba sala nhlisiyo,  
Guga sithebe kade wawudlela;  
Arukho sibonda saguga nasagxolo aso,  
Akhukho soka lehlala kahle imbangi  
ikhala".

In the Shakan era, Shaka's military exploits inspired war and national songs. Romantic melic poetry gradually took second place. Shaka sounded a death-knell to romantic poetry when he forbade men to marry at an early age, thereby interfering with what stimulates it.

The pre-Shakan war songs differ from the Shakan in that they depend for their meaning not on the content, but on the theatrical demonstrations of sounds. Songs of the Shakan era, on the other hand, emphasised content. Everything was used to express the all important spirit of nationalism. A comparison of these songs would demonstrate the point:

Pre-Shakan:

Voice:	Uhdaba uyinkosi!
Chorus:	Cho! O! O! ha! Oye!

Shakan:

"Bonisa bonisa, bonisa lokhuya,  
Kade sidla singaboni,  
Namuhla kudabuka uhlanga  
lwakaZulu,  
Kade singanoni sidla sisesi-  
qwangeni,  
Ulanga - liyaphuma linsansam-  
bili,  
Indlovu ihlaba yonde imisebe,  
Bonisa, bonisa lokhuya."

(Note how the song proudly announces the birth of the Zulu nation in verse three. Note also the tone of satisfaction at the availability of food, which is indicative of prosperity in the country. The characteristic symbol of the elephant further emphasises this new power. There is a radical difference between this lyric and Ndaba's. The latter depends on its ideas rather than on the dramatic symbols).

Voice: Wagedagetsi i:we,  
Uyakhlaselaphi na?

Chorus: EI Uyakhlaselaphi na?

Voice: WahlulamaKhomi,  
Uhlaselaphi na?

Chorus: EI EI EI  
Uhlaselaphi na?

.....

Izwe ngiesiko ngelendlova  
Wangoba amakhosi,  
Gakwajo kabuye,  
Aphinde kwakulu,  
Kawel uSuthu,  
Kwel uMkhosazi,  
Kawela imbulana.

The heritage of the Shakan era which introduced complex content in the song was invaluable to the whole development of melic poetry.

#### Presentation:

The dramatic actions with which the serious type of song is performed are basically unvaried. It is danced to in solemn and measured steps. War songs can also be danced to in the characteristic Zulu war dance. Body

movements demonstrate action in a slow and dignified manner, appropriate to the serious tone of the songs. The arrangement of these songs is such that a verse is sung by one man, and the chorus makes a simultaneous unisonic response.

The dramatic action connected with the second division is varied. Love and satirical songs can be danced to in the same way as the war songs. They may also be adapted to other dance forms, e.g. unququhumbelo. Lullabies and nursery rhymes are never danced to, but are associated with hand-clapping rhythms or child-rocking rhythms. That satirical songs could be performed in either way, that is, danced to or used as a lullaby.

The events expressed in words in both divisions are symbolically imitated by vigorous action. Lestrade says of the songs: "In game songs, work songs and ritual songs ... we encounter the greatest degree of combination between the lyric and the dramatic".<sup>9</sup> It is in this type of poetry that the elements of drama are found, as H.I.E. Dromo correctly observes in his essay "Nature and the Variety of Tribal Drama". Junod in his book "Life of a South African Tribe" Vol. II, makes the same observation and illustrates his point by showing how, by a variety of symbolic actions, the singers express the dramatic element in the songs.

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<sup>9</sup> "Bantu Speaking Tribes of South Africa" edited by Schapera - Essay on 'Traditional Literature', p. 302, Published by Routledge & Sons, 1937.

Social Significance:

Melic poetry has a more immediate social effect than the eulogies. While eulogies have broader philosophies referring to the life of the whole tribe, melic poetry has a more immediate application to the lives of the individual members of the community. Division of the poetry into different types is essential here in order to show how each type fulfills its social function.

(1) Satirical Songs

Whilst satirical melic poetry can be used purely for entertainment, its most significant function is that of maintaining the values of society. Zulu satirical poetry is mostly composed of songs expressing disapproval of the actions of some of the members of society. The following satiric songs were found by the author on his research tour:

Inanda: "Ziyogana zonke, siyongana zonke,  
Wesifebe samakula wesifebe samakula."

Ukainto: "Boze bakubone, boze bakubone,  
Wemthakathi ndini".

.....

"Nondingi sebekubonile osibonane,  
Ngingqi ngendibilishi."

The satirised cannot, in such cases, do anything but hope that time will gradually cover the crime. But these satirical songs take a long time to die out. It

could be said of them that the crimes of the fore-fathers descend on the children; for even the grand-children suffer the ridicule originally directed to their parents. A stanza could even be added stating that the descendants are the replicas of their criminal begetters. Melic poetry, in this way, reinforces the social ethic and checks the behaviour of the individual. Whilst eulogistic poetry states what is socially desirable, satiric songs see to it that what is desirable is maintained.

(ii) Funeral Songs

These were sung at funerals. Their effect on the bereaved was to give psychic alleviation of pain. Sharing grief enabled members of society to feel that the social structure, though threatened by the loss of one individual, could still survive. In these songs those grieved expressed their hope that the spirit of the dead member will continue to participate in their social life. The following song expresses precisely this hope:

"Umdakane ubonwa yithi  
Umhlophokazi ungowasekhaya  
Izibi simethwele ulapha".

Zulu funeral songs express the philosophy of hope and therefore comprise that literature which educates the community on stoic attitudes.

(iii) Initiation Songs

These songs add to the mystique associated with initiation. They are couched in highly figurative language, and as such arouse curiosity in those who were still to be initiated. This was important as initiation ceremonies were a necessary educational aspect of society. These songs expressed fundamental moral principles of society. Note the following examples

"Ubende wuthango lwabafasi,  
Intaba ngamehlo kambuki  
Ayikho inyoka kwamehunu".

(translation: "Blood is feared only by women;  
any obstacle is imaginary  
There is no coward at the Mounu.")

(iv) War, National, Festival Songs

The classification of these songs together is justified by the fact that each type can be sung on any of the three mentioned occasions, and fundamentally they fulfill the same social function. By their very nature they arouse feelings of national unity. The psychology involved in the appeal of war songs, for instance, is the same as that involved in the appeal of national songs. The only difference between them is that war songs emphasise the need for unity in the face of danger, whereas national songs arouse feelings of unity by celebrating events in which the country has triumphed. On national festival occasions national songs are used.

Some festival songs are slightly less important nationally than others, e.g. Nonkhubulwane. The theme in these deal with the rites of the festival. Their main function is to arouse sentiments associated with particular type of festival. The following are examples of the three different types of songs:

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| War song:         | "Siyobashisa ngembemba yampi<br>Amadoda ayobaleka<br>Amagwala hhiya hhiya hha!"  |
| National song:    | "Isiswe sikiphe ulimi<br>Yithi amaqawe kaZulu<br>Sisadla ngezinyama".            |
| 1. Festival song: | "Awu Yeheni amadoda<br>Angene ensimini acwila<br>Bezihlangu zempi".              |
| 2. Festival song: | "Singalusa saluse amahlungu<br>Ihkosazana yeZulu nansi<br>Uhlanga luyakhula we!" |

(v) Hunting and Work Songs

Like the previous group of songs these are functionally related. Their social function is to arouse feelings of common effort in relation to a particular task, e.g.

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Hunting song: | "Inyamazane iilelephi<br>Nanti ihlahla lenela<br>Ehhlane wayo." |
| Work song:    | "Gubula zasha<br>Insi'bi kayiwumi<br>Ithele amanzi."            |

(vi) Lullabies

Though lullabies are mainly used to quieten children when they cry, they are sometimes of a satirical nature, and then have the same social function as satirical songs.



(vri) Amorous songs

Although various practical functions are fulfilled by melic poetry, it is basically a form of community entertainment. As such there are a variety of other lyric poems which are composed purely for entertainment. This is largely true of amorous lyric poetry. The young and the old either laud the glories of love or express their disgust at it. The following poems give examples of this type of poetry:

"Ngitshela mngani wami washonapi umtakwethu,  
Uma nginkhumbula ngiziswa ngiyintandane,  
Kulelizwe lakithi".

"Refuse me if you will girl,  
The grains of maize you eat in your village  
are human eyes!  
The tumblers from which you drink are human  
skulls!  
The maniac roots you eat are human tibia,  
The sweet potatoes are human figures,  
Refuse me if you will girl". 10

Since the Zulu community was pre-literate, the song was one of the most convenient means of spreading local news. Most of these songs were composed on local affairs. Interesting news that would have been known only locally, was widely circulated by the spreading of the songs. This kept members of the community informed on what was happening in other places.

3. STORY-POETRY

Story-poetry comprises verses found interspersed between a series of escapades in African stories. It is either sung or recited. Africans, generally speaking, are great storytellers. These stories show a great imaginative ability. Characterisation is expressed in mimeries of action and variations of pitch levels.

Story poetry is, in most cases, a direct quotation of the words of the main character. Most of it is simple and closely knit to the action of the drama. It usually abounds in repetitions. In some story-poems the number of verses increases with the development of the story. One Zulu story from James Stewart's collection will illustrate some of these points.

The Flight of Shingili

(From Zulu Fairy Tales by Stewart)

Act 1

A shabbily dressed girl is standing alone whilst a group of girls giggle at her. They are gobbling food, she looks starved. The girls go out laughing at her. She turns to go in the opposite direction. Just when she is about to go out, a cannibal meets her on the way.

Izimu: Uyangaphi Ntombazana?

Shingili: Ngiya ekhaya koMama,

Izimu: Kulaphi khona konyoko?  
 Shingili: Angasi.  
 Izimu: Uyoko uphi?  
 Shingili: Sewafa.  
 Izimu: Uyihlo?  
 Shingili: Ukhona.  
 Izimu: Pho uhambelani wedwa?  
 Shingili: Ngihlushwa yisigqila. (Limbobose)  
 Izimu: Awukabi nayo inyama emnandi.  
 Usokwelusa isimbelwane zani.

### Scene 11

It is early in the morning, Shingili is driving out the fowls. Before she does so, she recites these verses:

"Kikiligi! Kusile,  
 Kikiligi! Kusile,  
 Ekhise kunjani,  
 Yeka untaba umahlupheka".

She then drives them out. The cannibal peers into the stage. Izimu (likhuluma lodwa): "Eha, ngithole ingane esongihlabelela kahle uma kufike amanye amazimu". After Shingili has driven out the fowls he peeps outside the stage as if expecting somebody. Suddenly there are noisy voices, soon thereafter about six cannibals enter. They indulge in the usual formalities:

Izimu: "Nginontanami ohlabelelelia okwenyoni".  
 Amanye: "Suka emthathaphi?"

Izimu: Awuhlabelele igama lakho siswe.  
(Acho): Kikiligi! Kusile,  
Kikiligi! Kusile.  
Ekhise kunjani,  
Yeka untaba umahlupheka.

(The cannibals are obviously taken up) :

Amazimu: Ehawul Ehawul!  
Yikho lekhu esingazali  
Wukudla abanye.  
Awonse elinye mntanami.

Shingili: UGoke utholo dinibuya,  
Gwayisa amagagu,  
Kuyabuswa laph'ekhaya.

Amazimu: Nathi siyabusa koZimazimu,  
KwabasemaNcubeni.

(Going out): "Uyeka inyamazane?  
Uthi iseyingane, singayidla sisuthe.

### Scene 111

She is driving the chickens before her. She  
pulls out a feather from one of the fowls.

Uphaphe: Namhlanje izimu lizokudla,  
Eluthula isinwele uzifake ophondweni,  
ubaleke.  
Uyozibeka emfuleni ezinye la uya khona.

Shingili heeding the warning does as she is told.  
She leaves tufts of hair on the stage. Outside the stage  
there are grunting voices of the cannibals, they enter  
casting their eyes everywhere on the stage.

Amazimu: Iphi intombazane yakho?

Izimu: Angiyazi madoda.

Amasimu: We Shingili!  
 Isinwele: We!  
 Amasimu: Uyokwenzani lapho.  
 Isinwele: Ngisaye phandle.

They rush outside, except the host. One of them appears on the stage again.

Izimu: Uhlaleleni wena! Kanti usibizela  
 ubala.  
 Nansi intombazane isisabela emfuleni.

(Aphume omabili egljima).

Scene IV (Riverside)

The cannibals are looking for her everywhere.

Amasimu: Usabelaphi kanti?  
 Izimu: WeShingili.  
 Isinwele: We .... e .... yi!  
 Izimu: Uyokwenzani lapho?  
 Isinwele: Ngiyokukha amanzi.  
 Amasimu: Kusabelaphi, mmemeze?  
 Izimu: Uyokwenzani lapho?  
 Isinwele: Ngisenzimbelwaneni.  
 Amasimu: Sizodla wena ayikho lentombazane.  
 Izimu: Kahleni madoda akenginemse kanye.  
 WeShingili.  
 Isinwele: We!  
 Izimu: Uthi weni? Uphi?  
 Isinwele: Ngisendlini.  
 Izimu: Ngaze ngafa ngesifo sakho.

The other cannibals drag the host. He is protesting at the top of his voice.

Scene V

Shingili's father is seated on a stool smoking snuff. Uyise: Wo yeka umtanami, kasi washonaphi! (He cries). Just then Shingili enters. The father is overwhelmed with joy.

UYISE:           Mtanami! Mtanami! Mtanami!

- Finis -

The study of this dramatic story shows the ability of the Zulu story-teller to depict character in all its variations. Shingili remains, throughout, the tender girl, noble and docile. She makes no attempt to run away, suspecting nobody, until fate intervenes to save her. Her character is contrasted with the character of the girls who appear mean and uncouth. The character of the cannibal-host is contrasted with the characters of the aggressive cannibals who have no scruples. Even they themselves are sorry to be childless, and music moves them deeply. Action moves unhindered by sub-plots and unrelated incidents. Shingili's father stands as a bastion of peace and security after a long period of suffering. The story-maker aptly expressed the feeling of tenderness in the final sentence with the most appropriate words: "Mtanami! Mtanami!" Music is used to express the girl's deepest feelings.

Story-poems are of a variety of types. Some have two verses, others five or six, and still others, as mentioned above, have cumulative verses. Some of them have more than eight verses. The following examples give an idea of the type of story-poetry found:

Simple Type

(with three verses only).

Mfo Mfo ogawula lelihlathi (three times)  
 Usungibike kubaba nomama ekhaya,  
 Uthi uNobantu bangqibe emtashen&webumba.

(with four verses).

Tulube! we Tulube!  
 Awuboni ukuba ngiyabuya;  
 We Tulube;  
 Hamba-nje.

Umagegana lithi izimu huku,  
 Ngiphe uhlamvu huku,  
 Ngigugude huku,  
 Nhlava-ngeva huku,  
 Nasendulo angibonanga ngiludla huku.

(Note the rhythmic value of the word "huku", which gives unity to the whole stanza).

Complex Type

	Mbo Mbomboyambu, Mbo Mbomboyambu.
Voice I.	UNomathusi, Ngowakho; Mbomboyambu.
Voice II.	Mbo Mbomboyambu, Mbo Mbomboyambu, Angimthandi; Mbomboyambu.
Voice I.	Mbo Mbomboyambu, Mbo Mbomboyambu, ULuphoko owakho; Mbo Mbomboyambu.
Voice II.	Imbu Imbuyambu, Imbu Imbuyambu, Ngiyamthanda, Ibuyambu.

Most of the repeated words in this simple poem are valued for their rhythm; they have no meaning by themselves. Note how the repeated word "mbomboyambu" changes into "Imbuyambu" with the change from negative to positive. This emphasises the emotional change. The use of the vowel 'o' in the negative is expressive of a depressed spirit in the same way that Shakespeare used the "o" in the verse:

"Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow",  
to express the thought of an ill-omened day. In the positive, the use of the vowel 'u' in 'imbuyambu' is expressive of an elated spirit.

#### Presentation:

The story poems were recited by old women as a part of a story told to children round the fire-side in the evening. Those that were sung, were sung in a high pitched voice. Thus, they were not like most songs and poems, in which presentation was the work of artists and experts. There were no elaborate physical movements used to express ideas, except perhaps the use of hands in the same way as in ordinary speech.

#### Social Significance:

The social significance of story poetry cannot be separated from that of the stories from which they are taken.

The story poems are of great artistic importance in the story. They provide variety in an otherwise



monotonous narration. They are simple in construction, because their value lies in their ability to sustain the listener's attention. Most of them have very little poetic value, outside the context in which they occur. They are important, however, in training the young to appreciate poetry. The young members of society find poetical significance not in isolation, but closely associated with the social meaning of the story. Thus they learn to appreciate the practical aspects of poetry. Moreover, the highly rhythmic nature of this poetry, and the multitude of its poetical forms, trains the mind in poetic techniques.

Sometimes these story-poems are a summary of the moral of the story. They carry the idea of the story and enable the listener to follow it. Note how, for instance, the idea in the fourth example in this section develops. A number of names are mentioned which do not impress the lover. In the final stanza the name of the real lover arouses a feeling of love and satisfaction. This way the Zulu child is taught that all is well that ends well. The good man never suffers disaster. The good people, the child is taught, need not fear death because it will never come to them. Fate herself intervenes to save those who are attacked by evil forces. It is interesting to note that these story-poems are always relevant to the story in which they occur.

#### 4. NURSERY RHYMES (Spoken Type)

As the name suggests, nursery rhymes were composed mainly for children, and as such are mostly simple in structure. The majority of them depend for poetic effect largely on their highly rhythmic form.

There are two types of nursery rhymes in Zulu, namely the simple lullabies and complex lullabies.

### The Simple Lullabies

These are recited or sung to the accompaniment of the rhythmic jerks of the child-tender. They usually consist of only a few verses, the most characteristic of which are:

"Thulu mntwana, thula thula  
Ukama uyakubuya  
Thula mntwana thula thula mntwana".

The essential point about them is that they should be simple and highly rhythmical. Meaning itself is subordinated to form. Note, <sup>for instance,</sup> names of the different fingers which are put in a poetical form. The highly rhythmic structure of the words belongs to the category of nursery rhymes that are simple in form and rhythm.

#### Kwesobunxele

1. Ueikicane
2. Owabociki
3. Owabosinge
4. Usigwenagwegwe
5. Agwewenquma

#### Kwesokudla

6. Umoeane
7. Uthamsomagidi
8. Owagidamasi
9. Umakhathulela
10. Usindunjane.

### The Complex Lullabies

The complex lullabies are not only composed for children, but may also be enjoyed by adults. They have greater literary value than the simple lullabies. Meaning is of primary importance. In some of these there are serious satiric poems. This type is characterised by the exchange of words between the "voice" and the "chorus".

In this case the chorus responds to the voice either in the form of an answer to the question, or a

statement in relation to what has been said by the voice.  
The question and answer method carries the idea forward.

Example I. Chorus Type:

- Voice: We buya hobhe!  
Chorus: Ubuya uphetheni?  
Voice: Ngiphethe amasi enja.  
Chorus: Uyowadlola-phi?  
Voice: Ngiyowadlola andle.  
Chorus: Ekhaya kumani?  
Voice: Ngesaba ubaba.  
Rasongephuca, bangiphuce udebe,  
Lomtomdala ngiyalwesaba,  
Lunjengoblobhe ehlezi afucini,  
Eqobonyeka ethi maye maye,  
Kasi ngochonaphi ngochona kubaba,  
Evgungundlovu angiphe uoephe,  
Kuvayo isiywane sakwamasasasa,  
Kasasasa vuka, ngivuke kanjani,  
Ngibulewe-nje nganakheenkwaThabetha.  
UThabetha sphi?  
Yena losenhla.  
Shayinkomo le ijunjuthe ngalukhayo  
Lukatahive, tahiso ayomo,  
Chorus: Umsiya wenja uyanuka,  
Uthi nkhi nkhi nkhi.

Example II.

- Voice: wemfazi ongashaya uthi bhu bhu ini na?  
Chorus: Ngithi bhubhu isidwaba.  
Voice: Isidwaba yini na?  
Chorus: Indwangula fece.  
Voice: Amfece na mongo,  
Ayi ukukhala komdoni,  
Uthi kle we ma.

The nursery rhymes often have a lot of hidden meaning. The second example seems to be a satiric piece directed at a woman who had aroused the chagrin of her neighbour. It was a perfect way of making a verbal attack whilst pretending to be reciting a rhyme to the children.

Children would get so enthusiastic over these rhythms of the poems that they would recite them everywhere. The person concerned would be tormented by the thought that the words of the satire were directed to him or her.

In the second example for instance reference is made to the boastful nature of a woman, which it is hoped will cause her down-fall. The following example refers to the stingy man who gave his guests very little after having invited them to a feast.

Example III.

Chorus: Wabahlabisana?

Voice: Ngabahlabisana ucilo  
 Ucilo bayamala bathanda invubu,  
 Yona nyama inkulu tadla baphelele,  
 Nemikhonyana yabo, nezandlana sabo,  
 Nemilonyana yabo, nezingane sabo.

Some nursery rhymes have a light humorous tone:

Example IV

Voice I: Sekubona weGogo.  
 Voice II: 'Ngibona nginguGogo wakho mina.  
 Voice I: Ungubani?  
 Voice II: Angiyana uMashololwane.  
 Voice I: Ungubani?  
 Voice II: Angibona abantwana bakhona.  
 Voice I: Ungubani?  
 Voice II: Bathwale oThefukani.  
 Voice I: Ungubani?  
 Voice II: Bazongifuzazela. (etc).

These following are some of the interesting examples:

- (i) Chorus: Yeyi weafana  
Yeyi aph'amathole?  
Voice: Yeyi akonina.  
Chorus: Yeyi asodlani?  
Voice: Yeyi ungqushumba.  
Chorus: Yeyi uwubekophi?  
Voice: Yeyi endlini kaGasa (etc).
- (ii) Voice: Unyoko unani?  
Chorus: Silikope.  
Voice: Unentshengula?  
Chorus: Silikope.  
Voice: Imuphethephi?  
Chorus: Silikope.  
Voice: Ebalenseni?  
Chorus: Silikope. (etc).
- (iii) Voice: We Hongqange.  
Wosa siyothoza.  
Chorus: Musa angikuya,  
Ngandva yisife,  
Kuphuma ngingila.  
  
Yangangoxamu,  
Xamu lohxoxa,  
Izisiba zinde.
- (iv) 

<u>Voice</u>	<u>Chorus</u>
We Homeva	Wo he
Boza lapha	Wo he
Izindaba zakho	Wo he
- (v) Voice: Ubanina lo?  
Chorus: UJeqe.  
Voice: Uhamba nobani?  
Chorus: Koyise,  
Voice: Umphathelani-ntoni?  
Chorus: Amasi.  
Voice: Ngondebe enjani?  
Chorus: Ebonvu.  
Voice: Wayibekaphi?  
Chorus: Esibayeni.  
Voice: Esingakanani?  
Chorus: Esikhulu.

- (vi) Voice: Wamnandi ugwayi khu ...  
 Chorus: Waahiyelwa ubani khu ...  
 Voice: UmaSombeja khu ...  
 Chorus: We Dladle khu ...  
 Voice: We Msihana khu ...  
 Zenzele.
- (vii) Voice: Ngahlangana noQabelengwana,  
 Ephethe izinkonjane ngomlomo,  
 Sengihlekwa ezakwalanga,  
 Zingibona ngingenangubo,  
 Jengibanjwa nayizinjekasana,  
 Zingibamba nangozwani.

Voice

Washa!  
 Washa!  
 Washa!  
 Washa!

Chorus

Mashamle,  
 Ngoqela,  
 Mashamle,  
 Ngoqela.

## Chorus:

Wangen'entabeni,  
 Waqashaqasha.  
 Jingijole phusa ubukele,  
 Umuzi kayihlo,  
 Uahitheka egangelasini.

5. Songs of Birds

The songs of birds belong to the category of nursery rhymes both in structure and function. Some of them are of the complex lullaby type, e.g.

Insinzizi

Female: Ngiyahamba ngiyahamba,  
 Ngiyakwabakithi.

Male: Hamba hamba kad'usho.

Female: Ngiyahamba ngiyahamba,  
 Ngiya kwabakithi.

Male: Ukusutha konke lokho.

Isikhova

Voice I: "Yukungibhule! Yukungibhule!

Voice II: Wosa! Wosa! Mahhengwane".

Inswampe

Voice 1: "Swampe! Swampe! Swampe! Swampe!  
Voice 11: Khona ngigodola koba nani".

There are other simple types which are imitative of the bird songs:

"Bentsanyana ningenci".

Phesukomkhono

"Phesukomkhono! Phesukomkhono! Phesukomkhono!"

Besides these imitations of sounds there are odes addressed directly to birds. These have a higher literary merit than the ones above.

Ingede:

"Mame Mamdangede,  
Ngafike kwezinoju,  
Kwafaphath'azishiye,  
Nontebeketahe,  
Mapha kukhulu,  
Umondli wezintandane ezihambayo".

Mhloyile:

"Mhloyile kaGelegule,  
Umthumbu abheke ezulwini,  
Ushungu lageqa elinye ishungu,  
Mgingabanga ngivabone amashungu egeqana".

Mqwaqwa:

"Ungquashi lotovvu,  
Ungqengwadlele,  
Isithuthukazana esinanakhisane ekhanda,  
Uhuye!"

The admiration for the honey guide is beautifully expressed in the first poem.

The second and third examples are poetic descriptions of the external appearance of the birds. In addition certain habits of the birds are made the subject of praise. This is characteristic of most of these lyrics. Sometimes praises of birds are exchanged for the praises of other objects of affection. In the second example for instance

praises descriptive of a bull fighting, are attributed to a skylark.

Presentation:

As stated above, <sup>simple</sup> lullabies are recited or sung to rhythmic jerks of a baby tender. This is done to soothe crying babies who are usually strapped on the back of an elderly sister. The complex lullaby type is recited by a group of girls and boys to the accompaniment of rhythmic hand-clapping. They might also use sticks instead of hands.

Interest in Zulu nursery rhymes has waned considerably especially in the towns. They could be listened to only in nursery schools, or else from some records in the Zulu Broadcasting Station (Gardener Street, DURBAN). The songs of birds and simulations of sounds and other sound-making objects are recited either individually or by individuals competing in a group for the most accurate simulation. In these lyrics an attempt is always made to balance sense and form as, for instance, in the following song of the tympanistria (bicolor):

Obaba nomame abanginikanga amakhubalo,  
Inhliziyo yami ithi ndo ... ndondondo.

The tympanistria's song is aptly simulated in these verses. Their rhythm is derived from the song of the bird.



### Social Significance

Nursery rhymes are the first form of poetry to which the Zulu child is introduced. They train him to appreciate poetry. At first his appreciation stems from an emotional response to the pleasant rhythms of the language, later from the discovery of meaning. The apparently nonsensical words of some nursery rhymes reveal on analysis subtle hidden meanings which have a practical application to society. Their knowledge gives individuals with a poetical inclination an opportunity to learn poetical devices of the language. Simulations of bird songs educate the individual into creative imitation of sounds.

### 6. WAR CRIES

War cries are a common feature of almost all oral poetry. They are short pieces of poetry with a voice-chorus arrangement. They aroused man's fighting spirit in the same way that the beating of drums and the singing of war songs does in modern times.

The Zulu war cries were <sup>such</sup> an effective means of arousing the fighting spirit of the people. At each time they were recited, some fighting was bound to follow.

Their general approach to the subjects of national welfare makes them related to the eulogies. However, they are not executed on as large a scale as the eulogies. They are usually very short. They differ also from the eulogies in that they are not composed about any particular

individual. Their themes are taken from battle situations and national events. Some war cries include names of individuals who were subdued by the armies.

## 7. WORK CRIES

They are related to war cries structurally. Functionally they serve the same purpose as the war cries in that they arouse feelings of unity in groups engaged in a common task.

### Presentation:

The war cries are shouted by a group in response to the call of one individual. The group usually moves rhythmically as it shouts the war cry. The first part of the cry does not necessarily require action. The build-up of the emotions to bursting-point is one of the most dramatic features of this type of poetry.

The following war cries are some of the most popular ones:

Voice: Yinja umakhelwane

Chorus: Yinja umakhelwane, osuth'asuthe akhwele,  
phezu kwethu,  
Yinja umakhelwane.

Voice: Iyobe iyakhala ingane kubayeni,

Chorus: Ithi owa! owa! owa!

Voice: Iyobe iyakhala ingane esibayeni.

Chorus: Inja isuthi isisu kungesayo.

- - -

Voice: *Ziyokuvalela ucingo*Chorus: *Vala ucingo ankonkonko.*

- - -

The work cries are shouted in the same way, though the building-up of the emotions to bursting-point is not as important as in the case of the war cries. Work cries are recited whilst the task is being carried out. The following is one of the most common:

Voice: *Jubula!*Chorus: *asha.*Voice: *Jubula!*Chorus: *asha.  
Insimbi kayivumi,  
Yithel'amansi.*

### Social Significance

The primary aim of the war cries and work cries is to emphasise the need for emotional unity of the group for concerted action. In war cries social ethics are stated with the same seriousness as in the eulogies. War cries are not savage, meaningless cries, as some believe, but true interpretations of tribal ethics.

### 8. LOVE-CALLS

These are short pieces of poetry usually shouted by young men to draw the attention of girls. Young

women may also be heard to shout these love-calls at passing young men for the same reason. The following are some examples:

"Gege lagoge ntaba ziyangigayela,  
Zona zisha sikhuma,  
Ingabe sina ngenzenjani".

-----

"Iyaphi amazweni?  
Nongenankomo uyayidla inyama".

-----

"Wo he! Yek'kokwazi,  
Akukhontombi iyogana inyamazane".

#### Presentation

Presentation in this case depends on the individual. He may dramatically illustrate his words, or just assume the pose of a lover.

#### Social Significance

Love-calls are of very little social significance. They are useful only in so far as they express the feelings of the young lover. Most of them tend to be prosaic and cannot be considered as serious poetry. Some of them are of a highly humorous type.

#### General Comment

These are all the types of Zulu poetry. Other types are subsidiary to the types enumerated in this chapter. One type, however, needs special mention, namely, initiation poetry, which is still extant among those groups which still practise the custom of initiation. The ceremony was stopped

by Shaka, and Zulu initiation poetry died out. From the study of Xhosa and Sotho initiation poetry, it is clear that the prominent feature of this poetry was its obscurity. Only those people who had been to the initiation school at that particular time understood those recitals of poetry. They have a rhythm that is so unique that one could tell from the rhythm of the poetry that it is of the initiation type.

The important thing to note is that each of the different branches of poetry had a significant role in influencing the ethics of the community. Zulu poets did not only aim at preserving social ideals, but also at pleasing and entertaining the listener. The importance of this is shown in their desire to use all possible poetic techniques to reach the deepest recesses of the heart.

The following chapter will show how poetry developed throughout the different eras of historical change.

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PART IIPARTICULARCHAPTER IIITHE SHAKAN ERAIntroduction

Zulu poetry began earlier than the time from which this analysis begins. A large amount of early poetry has been lost. Even the available ones of this early period are mere fragments. Much has been taken away from them. Naturally, they have lost their original force and poetic vehemence, by which they were once characterised. Evidence to this effect is shown in the few popular verses available.

The bulk of the poetry of this era comes from the period just before the beginning of the Shakan era. There is a definite rise in the standard of poetry from the early part of this era to the very latest stage. The very tone of poetry gradually changes, in accordance with the changes of the times. However, the change was very gradual. There is no marked difference between the different stages of development, so that although the tone of poetry changes, nonetheless, the poetry remains essentially the same. There were improvements in technique, but these are not particularly revolutionary.

This era extends from about the mid-15th Century to about the early 19th Century. There is no certainty as to when the Nguni people arrived in the Southern part of Africa. Some historians put the date at about the 14th Century and some much earlier. These Nguni people found some parts of Southern Africa already occupied by the Khoisan and the Ika. They also found some parts occupied by the Basuto people.

The Nguni tribes were composed of a very small populations, who were mostly members of the same clan. Some related tribes formed some sort of loose union, in which the tribe was divided into a senior and junior section. In such cases the senior tribe section did not interfere with the internal affairs of the junior section. But for purposes of defence the two sections formed a military alliance.

The fact that the ancestors of the one section were also the ancestors of the other section was of great cultural significance. It meant that the poetical heritage of the chief house was shared by the members of the minor house. Moreover, the chiefs consciously and actively encouraged these cultural exchanges by organising inter-tribal dances called IJADU. In these inter-tribal dances, competitions were held to prove which group had the best dances. There was also a healthy competition amongst poets who accompanied their Lords to these gala

dances. There is ample evidence of cultural exchange in the inter-tribalisation of poetical ideas, as will be shown below. There are two types of inter-tribalised poetical ideas:

- (i) Local in time, i.e. confined to a specific period, and
- (ii) Continuous in time, i.e. recurring in different periods.

A great bulk of these poetical gems belong to the latter type.

Local in time:

- (a) Phakathwyo:  
(Shaka)

"Uteku lwamaWeya namaNowane,  
Betekuya ngay'USondabe,  
Bethi kayubusa kayubankosi".

Shaka:

"Uteku lwabafazi bakwaNongabi,  
Betekula behlezi emlovini,  
Bethi UShaka kayubusa kayubankosi;  
Kanthi kumyakana ezakunethezeka".

Continuous in time:

- (a) Nacingwane:  
(Shaka)

"Uzulu liza lilibi bomame khwezani abantwana,  
Ngabadala bodwa abayakuzibalekela".

Shaka:

"Uzulu liza lilibi bomame khwezani abantwana,  
Ngabadala bodwa abayakuzibalekela".



Dingiswayo:  
(Pre-Shakan)

"Uzulu lidume futhi kabi kaNdaba,  
Lidume eNhlalwini kubaThembu".

Mpande:  
(Post-Shakan)

"Uzulu lidume phezu kwamaJogqo-mabili,  
Laduma lazithatha izihlangu zezinyosi  
Laduma lazithatha izihlangu zemKhuyutghana."

(b) Macingwane:  
(Shakan)

Usixhokolo ingalokhu amatshe asenkandla."

Shaka:

"Usixhokolo ingalokhu amatshe asenkandla".

(c) Senzangakhona:  
(Pre-Shakan)

"Owaphotha intambo ende utakaJama,  
Lapho nezithutha zawoMavela  
zingayufinyelela".

Shaka:

"Owaphotha intambo ende wabheka ezulwini".

(d) Jobe:  
(Pre-Shakan)

"Umzizima ongukuhlwa".

Dingane:  
(Shakan)

"Umzinyazinya ongangamathunzi ezintaba".

(e) Senzangakhona:  
(Pre-Shakan)

"Onjengomzingeli kwamamfekane."

Dingane:  
(Shakan)

"Onjengabazingeli baseMbongolwane,  
Ebebezingela izinyathi nezindlovu".

(f) Senzangakhona:  
(Pre-Shakan)

"Ozithete zihle zedlela amancasakazi."

Dingane:  
(Shakan)

Onjengodwendwe lwamancasakazi".

(g) Khondlo:  
(Pre-Shakan)

"Onsiba zimaseya zidla amadoda".

Shaka:

"Onsiba-gojela ngale kwelkandla,  
Lugojela ngalo ludla amadoda".

(1) Mkhakayi:  
(Shakan)

"Inkomo .... yakhala umlomo  
wabhoboza izulu".

Shaka:

"Inkomo ekhale kithi kwaZulu,  
Iziwe zonke ziyizwile ukulila,  
Iye yazwiwa ngubunjwa waseluyangweni".

Often these phrases improve as they recur in different periods, note the following:

"Utoku lwamaWeya namaNcwane,  
Batakuya ngaye uSondaba,  
Bethi kayubusa kayukubankosi."

as contrasted with the stanza on Shaka:

"Utoku lwabafazi bawuMongabi,  
Batakula bahlezi emlovini,  
Bethi uShaka kayubusa kayuba-  
nkosi; Kanti kunyakana esezawunethesaka".

Both poets introduce the subject and in the two following verses deal with it. Shaka's poet, however, improves on the verses by giving the result of the action.

There were a number of related Nguni tribes who occupied some parts of the Transvaal and what is now known as Zululand, Swaziland and Natal. The Khosa group which shared the same culture broke away to occupy the part of the Cape. This break must have been quite early, as language differences show. Traditional poetry of the two groups shows signs of genuine borrowing.

#### Political Organisation

The people lived in scattered homes in a territory they regarded as their own. Any invasion was repelled by force.

In the Transvaal and Zululand, there were tracts of land which were occupied by the larger tribes like the Bathelizis, the Mchunus, the Ndwandwes, etc. There were also tracts of land occupied by smaller tribes like the Zulus, the Mkhizes, the Sibiyas, the Zungus, etc. The latter either held an independent position whilst recognising the authority of a relative chief or lived in subordination to some powerful ruler. There were still smaller clans, like the Mfekanes, who were without a ruler, who lived freely in their own premises.

The tribes were named after their founders or the prominent leaders of the tribe, e.g. Mkhize means people of Mkhize, the founder. Zulus mean the people of Zulu the founder.

There were frequent migrations from one place to another in the early periods of Nguni history which necessitated by the need for pastures. These were led by their chiefs, as for instance, Mavovo who led the Mkhizes from the Lubombo mountains to the Zululand area.

The smallness of the numbers of the different tribes forced on them a life of mutual dependence. Each tribe could not be a self-sufficient unit. Such a state of affairs would have meant that a tribe would be completely obliterated in time of famine, since these communities had very little surplus food. Life was a risky business, the few cattle that they had, could, as experience had taught them, be wiped out by disease. The battle against nature was so acute that communities had to direct all their thoughts and art to the problem of existence. This explains the closeness in traditional poetry between existing circumstances and the themes.

### Methods of Fighting:

A study of the methods of fighting of the pre-Shakan era is important. Their simplicity is responsible for the lack of the feeling of panic and urgency so characteristic of the heroic Shakan poetry. Large scale wars were unknown. There was generally no attempt made to incorporate people of other tribes forcibly.

If there was fighting, the strongest man would be chosen from both parties to fight on behalf of their groups. If any of them lost, the members of his group would accept defeat. The victors made no attempt to kill the members of the conquered group. It is related that even women and children watched these encounters. Another method of fighting was by spear throwing, and if the other party felt that they had had enough of it, it was no great disgrace to flee. The victors did not follow their victims in a blood-thirsty pursuit. They would only demand the payment of tribute. Chiefs who had been captured, as it once happened to Senzengakhona, were not killed, but released on payment of ransom.

The simple political organisation and the simple methods of fighting indicate that the pre-Shakan society was simple and peaceful. This is only true of the very early Pre-Shakan society. In the latter part of this era there were definite changes in the political and social organisation, as it shall be shown in this chapter.

The pre-Shakan era has, accordingly, been divided into two phases. The first phase in which social and political

organisation was of a very simple type. As an expression of these conditions the poetry of this era is relatively simple. Nature images are frequent. People spent their leisure dancing, feasting and love-making. The second phase was relatively more complex and differently organised. Its poetry expressed the conflicts that were emerging and the national units that were coming into being.

#### Historical Background of Pre-Shakan Zulu Poetry

The views of some critics who would have the historical part of literature separated from the study of literary values cannot be entertained here. Ideas emanate from society and their value depends on the functional role they play in that society. It is essential therefore to know the historical part of Zulu poetry in order to weigh the importance of the values expressed in it.

At the dawn of Nguni history the Zulus were not a powerful tribe. In fact they paid tribute to the powerful Mthethwas. The Edwandwes, the Buthelixis and the Mchunus were not the most powerful tribes. The area now called Zululand was called Ehunguni. North of this area was a place most probably called Eabo where there were the Dlamini and some scattered Sotho settlements.

The earliest historical figure in Zulu history is Nkosinkulu. It is uncertain whether this man actually existed. He might just be an imaginary figure of antiquity. It is the habit of societies that do not have historical records to refer to the earliest members of the group as the Great Ones. Note that amongst the Swazis the first ruler is said to have been Mkulunkosi. Malandela seems to be more real than the figures before him. The name Malandela might

be a praise name referring to his abilities of leadership.

Malandela had two sons, Qwabe and Zulu; owing to a family quarrel Qwabe moved away from his home country. Zulu, however, remained. The son who succeeded him was Mageba, who was succeeded by Ndaba. No praise poems remain of the rulers before Ndaba. It is unfortunate that praise poems of rulers of other tribes earlier than Ndaba have been lost, because their poetry would be better poetry than that of Ndaba who was, after all, not an important figure.

Jama was the next to succeed. He is said to have been a very intelligent and brave ruler. His eulogies have fortunately been preserved. Sensengakhona's eulogies were preserved almost in their entirety. These eulogies perhaps include those of earlier Zulu rulers, as is the habit with Zulu poets to confer ancestral praises on their successors. The mist of the historical past begins to clear off with Sensengakhona; thus even events that occurred in his youth are known.

When Sensengakhona became the ruler national consciousness of the Nguni communities was beginning to express itself in the formation of more organised communities. It was the Mthethwas who made the first important move towards a political union of tribes. Dingiswayo, the Mthethwa ruler was the first to conceive the formation of a big state. Of him Dr. A.T. Bryant says: "In his noble concept of empire-building, the untutored Dingiswayo by his own unaided intellect, formulated the very highest type of imperial organisation .... only modern England has succeeded in rising

to this height of statescraft,"<sup>11</sup> Wherever possible he preferred to win allegiance by peaceful means. He tried to woo the affection of neighbouring tribes by various methods. It was only when this wooing failed that he resorted to force. It should not be supposed that he was<sup>2</sup> weak and docile King. That he was brave and strong is shown by his policy of 'Let the weak plough and the strong reap'.

An incident is related of how, when his armies were about to meet those of Ndwandwe, he sent out a bevy of beautiful belles to dance in between the armies. The army of Ndwandwe, seeing this, decided to join the dancers. By such methods did Dingiswayo win the hearts of men.

He also opened up trade with Delagoa Bay. This trade had been in existence during the reign of his father. It did not, however, receive the same encouragement it did during Dingiswayo's reign. Imitations of European chairs and tables were made. Dingiswayo became not only the mightiest ruler of his time, but also the most cultured and the most enlightened. The only uniting factor prior to his time had been a common language. There had been<sup>no</sup> closely built state in existence with a central figure as an overlord. When he became a ruler he built a state that had one ruler as the head.

It was the age of rising nationalism. Other tribes like the Nkuzans, the Ndwandwes and the Swabes produced their own great leaders like 'the mighty and powerful Macingwane', the witty and powerful Zwile and the tyrannous Phakathwayo of the Buthelezi. In the struggle for leadership it was not the

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<sup>11</sup> "Olden Times in Zululand & in Natal" by A.T. Bryant, p.101  
Published in 1928 by Longmans, Green & Co.

Mthethwas nor the Ndwandwes who won, but the Zulus under the leadership of the great military genius, Shaka. Our study at this point must be confined to the Pre-Shakan historical era.

### Several Characteristics of Pre-Shakan Poetry

#### (1) Physical Characteristics:

The poetry of this period is mainly about physical characteristics. The poets found their inspiration not in the exploits of the praised, but mainly in the physical appearance of the praised. There were certain physical characteristics which were considered important to possess. In some cases these qualities were conferred on the individual by the poet because they raised the prestige of the praised. This reference to physical appearance reaches its climax in the eulogy of Senzangakhona in which a detailed study is made of his appearance. The following are some of the physical characteristics referred to in Pre-Shakan poetry:

#### (a) Blackness:

It is an interesting fact that blackness in Pre-Shakan times or before the white man came did not have the same psychological repulsion it has amongst some sections today.

Darkness, though it was the host of prowling wolves and the sneaking sorcerers, had not the religious sanction of being associated with the devil. The king was referred to as the 'Black one'.

There are numerous references made to the praiseworthy blackness of the ruler's appearance. It must be noted that this blackness was not a spiritual quality but a physical one.



Dingiswayo is referred to as:

'Umdaxube ongandima zamidaka.'

This refers to his physical appearance. He is so dark that his darkness is comparable to the expanse of the fields of mud. He might not, of course, have been so dark, but his poet knowing that blackness was desirable quality, made this hyperbolic comment.

Phakathwayo is also referred to as:

'Unofukuthwayo omnyama.'

Mondlo is referred to as:

'Nodungandaba omnyama.'

and

Dibandlala referred to as:

'Fizizima ongukuhlwa.'

It is related that when the King wanted a chief wife he usually chose the darkest-skinned girl in the country. A person who was too light was said to be undignified; hence the poets emphasis on the King's blackness.

(b) Tallness and Gigantism:

Gigantism was one of the qualities that was held in very high esteem. This was more the case in a society in which physical strength was a social asset. This quality did not inspire the poets as much as the others. The probable reason was that gigantism was no rare thing in a society in which only the fittest survived. Tough men like Haba were highly esteemed.

Senzangakhona is said to be:

'Ugabi kwezameva entendemuzi'.

Simamane the Qwabe ruler (1675 - 1777) is also said to have been tall and slender:

'Ubico lukashumpeye'.

Gowabe, the Mkhize ruler, is said to have been so slender that he could fit into the spear handle:

'UGowabe kangaknani  
Nasenhlokweni yomkhonto angenela'.

He shared this quality with Jama:

'Nasenhlanhini yomkhonto angenela,  
Nasemgatsheni angaphetholela'.

(c) Facial Appearance:

Facial appearance was one of the parts of the body that attracted the attention of poets. It was a social asset in a society in which love and song played an important part.

Simamane is referred to as:

'Umahlathwa ebusweni  
Ebusweni kusebuhleni'.

He is also said to have had the knack of choosing only the beautiful women.

Mashiza Ngocobo is said not only to have had a beautiful face but also beautiful feet:

'Umashiza lomuhle nezinyawo zokunyathela'.

Thunda is as beautiful as a girl:

'Utetemana onjengowasegudwini'.

This reference to physical characteristics reached its climax in the eulogies of Senzangakhona whose ears are said to have been perfect. His eyes, his cerebellum, his lips, his

chest, his arms, his thighs, his knees, his legs and his feet are all said to have been perfect.

Comment:

Such poetry could not be great poetry, for instead of stating that which was of general interest and social import, it merely commented on personal qualities. It could not rise to levels of sublimity because of the limitations of its terms of reference. It does not have the vastness, the grandeur, that characterises a poetry derived from great human aspirations. It is physical rather than spiritual. It solves no problem of life nor does it make any comprehensive comment on it. At its worst it is merely a tedious and monotonous comment on insignificant facts. For a man's beauty is not in his physical appearance but his admirable attempt to master life and himself. Moreover, in such cases the poet is more likely to be insincere because he would tend to avoid offending the praised, man being more sensitive about his physical qualities than his spiritual.

To have poetic depth, remarks on physical appearance should be <sup>a</sup>symbolic representation of lofty ideals. How beautiful the legs of Senzangakhona were, would matter to human kind only if, like the heel of Achilles, they might be responsible for some events affecting the lives of others.

(2) Mental Qualities

(a) Bravery:

Every man likes to be considered brave, even the most docile man will resent violently to a contrary assertion. The pre-Shakan society was not devoid of such people who even after taking to their feet, found excuses for their cowardice.

Although bravery was one of the qualities most highly valued, it was not at this time institutionalised. It remained a quality which, though enviable, was referable only to few factual situations. As a result this quality, like most of the qualities of the people praised in this period, is treated as an ideal rather than an accomplished fact.

Poets of this period commonly infer that the praised is brave, but they make no factual reference to the situations where the bravery was displayed. The following example demonstrates this:

Gcwabe is referred to as:

'Ishangashube elikuzwakubi  
lingabe liseqelwa'.

Phakathwayo as:

'Obizwe Kwabekisa wavuma  
Amashosi ebizwa iminyakanyaka'.

Macingwane as:

'Umkhokhobi ngankomo iyehlangeni'.

With the changes brought about by the formation of the Mthethwa Kingdom, poetry began to express more exploits of bravery more explicitly. Comments on the bravery of the praised cease to be laudatory.

Unlike men such as Mgwane Zondi who continued to live in shame after having fled, men of this period preferred to die rather than live in disgrace:

♣ Zondi is: Udla kalukhulu,  
(Pre-Dingiswayo) Umboni wamagwala ukunyelela  
Kanti aguyena wala elikhulu.

Comments on bravery, in the Pre-Shakan society, are often

with reference to the hunt. The area that was occupied by these tribes abounded in wild game. There were dangerous lions and elephants that were a constant threat to human life. On account of this anyone who could brave the dangers of the forest, whether as a leader of a migrating group or as a leader in the hunt, was held in very high esteem. The fact that these tribes depended more on hunting than the people of succeeding generations further enhanced the importance of hunting and the importance of hunting in turn enhanced the prestige of those who displayed courage in the hunt. The honour of having displayed great bravery in the hunt became one of the important *merits* in the praises of chiefs. There is a large number of poems referring to the bravery of the chiefs in the hunt.

Ndaba, the grandfather of Senzangakhona, is referred to as:

'Ozingela Amshlati aze avungame,  
Azathi Haya hci,  
Nanuhla kakunyamazane'.

Senzangakhona is also depicted as having been very brave in fighting lions and other wild animals.

Such references to events which might appear minor and unimportant can only be understood and appreciated when viewed within the context of the culture which existed then. There are numerous hunt songs of this period which have been lost. From the study of the praises of this period and also some war songs, it can be deduced that they were apostrophic and highly symbolic.

There were also other qualities which were closely allied, to the King's bravery, namely:

(b) Craftiness or Diplomacy:

The latter term means adroit and tactful dealings with the

chiefs of other tribes so as to outwit them in political affairs and get the greatest advantage in a situation. This was a much desired quality in a ruler as is shown in the praises of different chiefs.

Gcwabe is referred to as:

'Jawala lakithi lasesizibeni,  
Elishhelele umuntu ethi uyalibanabela'.

Zwide as:

'Igili abalihlabe lathona ilangu,  
Izibuko elimadwala abushelelezi,  
Lishelele umalusi wasengoleleni,  
Lishelele ubingiswayo wababuyengweni'.

Jama as:

'Gondhaki jana bakithi bakwasidlozi'.

Kondlo as:

'Ozibuko limadwala abushelezi,  
Lisheyeya umpizeya nenodana'.

Ngwane Ngcolosi as:

'Ufudu oludla abantu,  
Lubayenga ngendata,  
Luthi abasonjele'.

Nontshiza as:

'Umlambo ombokothe ibushelelezi'.

### (3) Eroticism in Pre-Shakan Poetry

By this term is meant the poetry in which there are vulgar references to love and generally the poetry which deals with love.

There are three factors that are responsible for the prevalence of sexual eroticism in Pre-Shakan poetry: (1) Peasant societies on the whole have fewer inhibitions about sex terms.

"The festivals, dances and artistic products of many primitive tribes have a strongly sexed character." 12

This does not mean, however, that tribal communities lived in promiscuity. In fact Zulu <sup>in</sup> society, virginity was held in very high esteem. Young girls were often subjected to an examination and any girl found to have lost her virginity was given to an old man as punishment. Erotic verses should not mislead amateur anthropologists into thinking that they have found evidence of promiscuity in early Zulu society. The truth is that Zulu poets in the Pre-Shakan era expressed attitudes to sex which did not necessarily coincide with the practice.

(ii) Since in Pre-Shakan poetry physical characteristics formed an important part of the theme they made poets more acutely aware of the relation between sex and physical appearance.

Great poets divert their libidinal energy to great subjects. Lesser ones concentrate on subjects related to the simplest forms.

This is apparent in Pre-Shakan zulu poetry. Whereas Pre-Shakan poets mainly composed poetry that was erotic and sensual, Shakan poets diverted their poetical energies to subjects of national importance.

(iii) The third reason why this eroticism prevailed in Pre-Shakan society is that Pre-Shakan society was, comparatively speaking, peaceful. People loved and took loving seriously. There was nothing more important than love. H. T. Bryant talks of this society as idyllic and Arcadian. Such terms of course are an exaggeration and should be used with great reservation.

The erotic element in poetry of the Pre-Shakan era is of two types:

(i) The vulgar; and (ii) The romantic one.

(i) Vulgar References:

Mavovo is referred to as:

'Intetne e'abula isibumbu'.

About the same reference is made in the praises of Jama:

Kondlo is referred to as:

'Amagayo abo engathi mabiyi  
dandi linye'.

Jobe is said to be:

'Ugagane lwehlanze  
Gugbala abantwana esibongeni'.

Nandi is said to be:

'Umathambe kwawil'igweni  
Ahlonyana ngokubona indoda'.

(ii) Anonymous Romanticisms:

Pre-Shakan women hostages were regarded as part of the booty of the captor. The honour attached to the capture of a woman is, of course, nothing peculiar to the Pre-Shakan society. In Greek, Roman and Oriental societies, captured women were a great prize. Such women captives were sometimes given away as slaves, the more beautiful ones became part of the ruler's harem, as was the case with Asoka <sup>and</sup> Farameline.

To be admired by women was also one of the desirable attainments.

Jama is said to be:

'Obenqabangwa ngamalandekazi  
Obebangwa yinjenje yaseMqekweni'.

Kondlo is:

'Isando sokubethwa siamqangazitha,  
Esiqandula ukabi athandwa yinjenje,  
Neyamxubukazi nebinaya'.

Senzangakhona who was apparently very handsome is referred to as:



'Ozithebe zihle zidlela amancasakazi'.

One often comes across references to rulers who not only captured their antagonists but also their wives. Sometimes the antagonist is mentioned as a victim whose wife was wrested from him. This disgraced the antagonist in the eyes of the world and boosted the ego of the captor. Sukuzwayo's wife is said to have been captured by several rulers.

(4) Personal Character of Pre-Shakan Poetry:

The ruler in Pre-Shakan society was not a national figure. The number of people he ruled over were few and he carried out few or no military exploits. The ruler's people heard a lot from poets about his greatness, but still they were conscious of the fact that a great deal of greatness attributed to him was an exaggeration. They saw their leaders humiliated and forced to flee. This made them constantly alive to the fact that though their ruler was the central figure in their tribal affairs, he was not the central figure in Nguniland.

The result of this was that the tribal attitude towards him was not that of a people towards a heroic figure symbolising the aspirations of the group, but of a figure rather 'domestic' than national. The poetry that was composed on him was personal rather than national. His personal characteristics (as an individual) and idiosyncrasies received more attention than national issues. Most of Pre-Shakan poetry therefore is not a compilation of tribal history; if tribal history does now and then occur it is only incidental. On the whole it seeks to record the ruler's personal eccentricities.

(5) Fugitive Elements:

Runaway elements in Pre-Shakan poetry show very strongly the difference in social attitudes between the two eras. Their absence in the Shakan period indicates revolutionary change effected by Shaka's militaristic ideas.

As it has been mentioned above, running away from your enemy was looked upon as a socially correct and right thing to do when faced with a strong opponent.

Senzangakhona is described as :

'Ubeba kamame beba simuke,  
abaseleyo abathetha amacala'.

From these verses and many others the unaggressive nature of the society is clearly summarised.

Fugitive Pre-Shakan poetry displays an escapism which, is more physical than mental. The very images used by the poet are images connected with the feminine side of life. They arouse associations of childhood and show the person praised in a state of dependency.

The semi-nomadic type of existence of the time produced a type of poetry that is descriptive of the emigratory nature of the tribes as represented by their leaders. The best example of this type of reference is found in the praises of Gcwabe:

'Washingishingi zifana nempongo yembuzi'

Mavovo is also beautifully described as:

'Inyoni abayibize ngamakhwelo emazibukweni  
Izindlu ziyosala amagobongo'.

The Mkhizes who had been led from Lubombo mountains by Mavovo had not at this time settled in the south with the Ntungwa Nguni tribes. In fact it was not until the nineteenth century when they found favour with Shaka that they occupied a place where they lived a more settled type of existence.

#### (6) Nature and the Pre-Shakans

By nature here is meant the appearance of natural objects in terms of colour as seen by either an artist or a philosopher. To the Zulu 'Nature' is not a spirit,

nor is it part / ...

nor is it part of God. Gods or goddesses, however, do sometimes assume the form of some natural object. Nonkhubulwane, the goddess of harvest, is a case in point.

The tribal Zulu was a practical man. He would have unhesitatingly embraced Hegel's idea of anthropocentrism. To him it was obvious, only too obvious in fact, that man is unidentifiable with any natural object. He was, like most peasants, concerned with the everyday things of life and little given to dreams about Nature. His deep understanding of man was a synthesis of his own personal experiences.

If at times he stood wrapped in thought about natural phenomena, it was because it is natural for man to reflect on the behaviour of external objects not because he had made a profession of such musings. For him, these musings were only valid so long as they enabled him to meet the challenge of life not with a disturbing sense of wonder, but with a composed sense of awe. His attitude to nature therefore was not that of a helpless individual who saw in Nature a God or a society of Gods inimical to man. He realized the potential power in nature but his practical mind taught him that Nature was only a world of inexplicable phenomena without any human - like personality. He appealed to his ancestors for help. These were deceased men whom he had known. As in Chinese ancestor-worship religion, these intervened between man and God. The personality of God was, according to him, unknown; man could only vaguely guess his power from the behaviour of that which he controlled, namely, natural phenomena. He had no anthropomorphic personality.

The attitude of the Pre Shakers towards nature /

was expressed by poets in their works. To them, Nature was of referential value in the descriptions of human life. She was no nurse for heart-broken babies. Any agony gnawing the heart was palliated by humanity. Take for instance, these verses taken from the Chopi lament:

'I will go and call Matikiti,  
Who will help mourn for my child who is dead'.

'The woman wept by the lakeside,  
Only you who have no sorrow can laugh.  
Of my child.' 13

A comparison of these verses with either 'Lycidas' or 'Adonis' shows clearly the difference in attitudes towards nature.

Many writers have quite wrongly alleged that the African is unaware of the beauties around him. This is an inapposite criticism. It is a failure to understand what determines the African attitude towards nature.

The following examples are enough evidence to prove the love the Zulus had for nature, especially before the Shakan period. The reasons for this will be discussed in the ensuing chapters.

\* The Mkhize poets had outstandingly good nature imagery in their poetry.

Mavovo, the Mkhize leader, is referred to us:

'Inyoni abayibise ngamakhevelo emazibukweni  
Izindlu ziyosala amagobongo'.

This is indeed a metaphor worth boasting about. The leader is likened to a bird which responded to the whistling at the forts. The poet with great economy of words in the next verse, gives the result of the process initiated by the whistling - the houses were left as shells, empty and without occupants. Even the words seem to express rhythmically the speed with which

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13 'Chopi Musicians' Hugh Tracey, p.55, Published in 1948 by Oxford University Press.

a bird would fly from its nest to the fords. The poet continues the idea by stating that *lavovo* is:

'Udumud umu weamfula'.

The word 'Udumudumu' is ideophonic in origin and it aptly expresses the continuous closed sound of a river heard from afar. This 'afar' effect is further emphasised by the use of the highly descriptive plural form 'weamfula'. The poet, aware of the fact that any over-stretched metaphor loses effect, changes from the river metaphor to the plant image. He is:

'Umqubuka onjengezona'.

(Note: Mbuyazi's poet uses the same image slightly modified:

'Umbeduka onjengezona'.

The verb used by the Mkhize poet is still better, it gives more accurately the idea of restlessness.

Nothing can be more accurate than likening a sudden appearance of the hordes of people to the sudden appearance of the witch weed plants after rains! Unfortunately, the poem is fragmentary, but from the few verses available, one can deduce that the poem in its entirety must have contained many remarkable examples of natural imagery. Natural imagery is also used by the poet of the succeeding ruler, Gowabe. He calls his ruler:

'Umafu kawalingani nawaphansi nwaqhezulu'.

It is difficult to say what quality of the ruler's was referred to.

There were, besides the Mkhize poets, other poets

who drew their images from nature. The height of mountains greatly impressed the traditional poets. They saw the rugged grandeur that in their minds compared well with the might of the object of praise, namely the king.

Dingiswayo is referred to as:

'Owehle ngentaba ende,  
Kamashokololo ebingehle-nkomo,  
Yehla imhlambi yamasongololo'.

The word 'Mashokololo' might or might not be the name of the mountain; it might be merely a deideophonic noun suggesting the precipitous nature of the mountains.

Of Ndaba his poet says:

'Obeyelala wangangemifula,  
Obeyavuka wangangezintaba'.

The image in the first verse accurately describes the might of the sleeping King. When he awakens, he is said to be as great as the mountains.

Certain abstract qualities are described by a reference to concrete objects as, for instance, the outstanding greatness of Masingwane, the Chunu ruler. He is:

'Usiduli esintusi kwezindaka'.

The poet makes a very striking contrast referring to him as a white ant-hill amongst black ones. The white ant-hills are often seen in the grazing lands. Herd-boys burn these to make fires. The burnt ones become almost snowy white when it rains, thus making a remarkable contrast with the black unburnt ones especially if seen from a distance. If this image superficially refers to his greatness in general, then it is not an outstanding image. If the poet was aware of the implications of the image, namely, that the grilled ants of the ant-hill can be

likened to his/...

likened to his bitter experiences, then the image is of a very superior order.

There are, besides these natural images, that have been analysed, others which are of outstanding character, which abound in Pre-Shakan poetry.

Mkhokheli Cele:

'Isiqunga esihle sakoNobhedu,  
Eshingahlalwa-nyoni,  
Sihlalwa ngamazinyane amasakabuli'.

Dingiswayo:

'Ungqashi obonva wawahlakanyana,  
Omabala azizinge angathi abekiwe'.

(Note how in the Shakan era, Dingane's poet expressed the aggressiveness of the age by his use of the same image modified to show the dynamic conditions of the time.

Dingane is:

'Uvenvane olumabala asibadu,  
Engabe ngiyaluthinta lwahwasabala'.)

Dingiswayo:

'Umdaxube ongandima zomidaka'.

The deideophonic word 'Umdaxuba' very accurately describes the nature of mud.

Jama is said to be:

'Ubeqo owamila amakhanjekhanjana'.

Jobe:

'Umshoshobi obangxha lesilimela'.

This image in which Jobe is likened to the cluster of the pleiades is of a high order.

Dibandlela:

'Umdanda ngemade amathafa'.

This again, as the image in Mavovo's praise

poem, refers to the trekking habits of the Celes.

The following image is a good example of obscurity in Pre-Shakan poetry:

Montshiza Zondi is referred to as:  
'Umzungulu uhlozini'.

Unless one gets to know the events leading to the image used, it is almost impossible for one to appreciate and understand the implications of the image. Montshiza Zondi killed an enemy in the bush and the poet, with stark economy of words, makes no reference to the historical facts which inspired his poetry.

(7) Analysis of Imagery in Pre-Shakan Poetry:

The visual image occurs with greater frequency than any other type of image in Pre-Shakan poetry. That is, of course, generally true of all poetry. Poets write about their impressions and the bulk of these are communicated through the eyes; a man sees more things than he hears.

The Zulu poets attempt at all times to make concrete visual images of all abstract facts. Take, for instance, the description of Zwile's qualities:

'Azindleleni ufana nayiphi na?  
Ufana nevundlayo.  
Zithini ufana namughi na?  
Ufana nonayawathi.  
Eziyokeni ufana nayiphi na?  
Ufana nenyandezulu.'

The three outstanding abstract qualities of Zwile are made into concrete visual images. The poet does not want to say that Zwile is unique, or has in him



the greatness of the gods. Thus his uniqueness is likened to a path that cuts across others; his dignified personality is likened to a magical tree, and his greatness, to the snake that incarnates ancestral spirits.

There are very few examples of olfactory and auditory images in Pre-Shakan poetry. There is noticeably a large number of taste images. Where the taste image is used, often the taste, <sup>referred to</sup> is bitter, as, for instance the reference to Ndaba:

'Luqaphela imihlambi yezidlakubi',

or the reference to Jama as:

'Chaba ihlaba elikuMahongo'.

Dingane's poet later said of his king:

'Obaba njengesibaha<sup>h</sup>'.

Cattle played a very important part in the life of the Zulus, providing them with clothing, food, weapons and bags. It was only natural that the poets should make use of images derived from this important domestic animal. The following examples will suffice:

Phakatwayo:

'Inkomo ekhal' emthonjaneni,  
IZizwe zonke ziyizwile ukulila,  
Iye yazwiwa nguMacingwane kaLuboko eNgonyameni,  
Wathi: 'Leyonkomo ikhayaphi na?  
Bathi ikhala emthonjaneni,  
Umyomo iwubekise eYangeni'.

(Mpande's poet later repeated the idea in almost the same words).

Mbengi is:

'Isithole ebesiyosiswa eNgqonqo,  
Lapha inkunzi yakhona ibizeka nomdudukozena'.

Zwide:

'Umakhubalo kawadliwanga nganguba yenkomo,  
Adliwa nganguba yengonyama'.

Maqhoboza:

'Usilevu singamashoba ezinkomo'.

Macingwane:

'Umkhokhobi ngankomo iy'ehlangeni'.

Dingiswayo:

'Umadlekezele inkomo yangenene'.

With the change of times, appropriate imagery derived from animals was used according to <sup>the</sup> relevance in the expression of that change. Animals were always symbols of certain qualities in poetry. In Pre-Shakan poetry, the creatures that formed the greater part of this imagery were birds, (the swallow, amongst all birds, had a special appeal to poets), buck, sheep and snakes. When the national character changed as national consciousness was awakened, more aggressive animals such as the lion and the mighty elephant were used in imagery. Zwile's poet for instance, accurately depicts this change when he says:

'Umakhubalo kawadliwa nganguba zankomo,  
Adliwa ngenguba yezingonyama'.

The 'inyandezulu' snake which was believed to be the incarnation of ancestral spirits, symbolized in poetry, divinity. The 'mamba' snake symbolized aggressiveness. The buck symbolized gentleness, as when the poet says:

'Unehlo ambulunga njengawenkonkoni,  
Ushiwashiwu njengomlobokazi'.

The swallow symbolized fletness.

A great deal of Pre-Shakan imagery is static, that is, it derives from fixed objects such as mountains and trees. Shakan imagery is dynamic in the sense that even images taken from fixed objects are used in such a way as to become interwoven into the verse to express

action. Most of the images in Pre-Shakan poetry are decorative rather than functional. This can be demonstrated by a comparison between Pre-Shakan verses and the Shakan verses that are similar, for example:

(Pre-Shakan)

Dingiswayo:

'Uzulu elidume-futhi kabi kaNdaba,  
Lidume kabi eNhlanguwini kubaThembu'.

(Shakan)

Mpande:

'Uzulu elidume phezu kwamaQongqomabili,  
Laduma lazithatha izibhangu zeziNyosi,  
Laduma lazithatha izibhangu zenKhuyutshana'.

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Chapter IV

Pre  
Phase I of the Shakan Era  
Pre-Dingiswayo Period

Introduction:

The poetry of the first phase of the pre-Dingiswayo Era has a character of its own. It is composed of simple lyrical pieces.

INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS

Under this head an analysis is made of representative individual poetry which is characteristic of the age. Historical background is given in each case in order to portray the individual eulogist and also to clarify the content of the eulogies.

NDABA (1691 - 1763)Life History:

Ndaba was the son of Mageba. Very little is known about him except that he was the first of the Zulu Kings to be known as the rain-maker. This magic power was bequeathed, as amongst the Lovedu, to all the succeeding Zulu Kings. In time of drought, Zulu rulers would go to Ndaba's grave with a herd of young oxen to make a sacrifice. After the sacrifice and the singing of Ndaba's song 'The milk of heaven descend à seaux to feed and fatten the land'. 14

Another event in Ndaba's life was the formation of the Gazini clan. After he had given his daughter to a clansman he conveniently selected for him a different surname. His capital was at amgekwinini. At this time the Zulus were a small clan. As has been shown above, wars on a large scale were rare. Hunting was almost the only situation in which bravery could be demonstrated. Ndaba was one of the great heroes of the hunt. The theme of his eulogy centres around this fact, apparently his only great/...

his only great achievement.

### ANALYSIS

The poem is loosely knit and somewhat prosaic. It sounds uninspired. The ideas do not spring naturally, they are disjointed. Ndaba is depicted as a hunter rather than a great national hero. There is no correlation between the docility depicted in the first stanza and the exaggerated greatness of Ndaba in the last two stanzas, in which Ndaba is said to be as great as the rivers when asleep, and as great as the mountains when awake. There is nothing in the poem or in the life history of Ndaba to justify so great a praise. Greatness is, one feels, falsely bestowed on an unimportant man.

The poem does not give a clear picture of Ndaba's character. There are repetitions which are monotonous and seemingly attributable to lack of material rather than to the failure of the <sup>poet.</sup> On the whole the poem lacks a clear vision. There are some striking word pictures but these are isolated rather than characteristic of the poem.

### SIMAMANE (1650 - 1741).

#### Life History:

He was the great-grandson of Malandela, the first Swabe ruler about whom something is said, after the break with the Zulus. There is little that is known about him.

### ANALYSIS.

His praise-poem is fragmentary. It is mainly laudatory, nothing specific is said about his character. There are, however, two qualities that come out of the analysis of the symbols used in his eulogy.

(1) he was aggressive and temperamental:

'Simamane sengwe/ ...

'Simamane sengwe, sengonyama'.

(ii) he was unique and unpredictable:

'Inkonyane ebuwaba busephikweni,  
Ezinye zibuwaba busemhlane'.

These qualities, are characteristic of most of the important personages of this period, <sup>they also</sup> recur in the praises of other later rulers such as Zwibe.

#### MAVOVO (1718 - 1788)

##### Life History:

Mavovo was the Moses of the Mkhize tribe. The tribe had been settled near Lubombo Mountains. They were a scion of the Swazi royal family. Under Mavovo the tribe trekked down until it finally reached a place between Ntsuze stream and Qhude forest where it settled.

##### ANALYSIS

His praises are fragmentary. There are, especially in the first verse, some vulgar phrases. The poet makes a reference to his trekking habits. He is:

'Inyoni abayibize nganakhwelo emazibukweni,  
Izindlu ziyosala amagobongo'.

The poem, though short, has the flow and the force foreign to the period. The poet seems to have had images in plenty; one does not feel that he struggles to make them, but that they come out naturally.

#### JAMA (1727 - 1781)

##### Life History:

He was the son of Ndaba, of whom A.T. Bryant says: 'He belonged to the small, tough, wiry breed, active, sharp and bold. He was of fiery temperament, fierce in the fray and skilful in the use of the assegai, which, in the earlier part of his reign, he was disposed

to wield freely/ ...

to wield freely on his own people till apprised by his elders that even Kings are subject to the laws of justice and reason'.<sup>15</sup>

#### ANALYSIS

These qualities appear in his praises. The poet says of his slenderness:

'UJama kaluthwana kangakanani,  
Nasenhlamvini yomkhonto angonela,  
Nasemagatsheri angaphetnola'.

Of his bravery he says:

'Isiduli esiphahlwe ngamakhanda amadoda,  
Obengamango wangitshelasezihlale,  
Ibelingalayeza ngabaphath'izinhlendla,  
Thira bamaklwa singathath'ichoba sophule'.

Of his cleverness he says:

'Ubuchakijana bakithi bakveSicelozi'.

The poet did, one feels, portray the character of Jama with a certain degree of accuracy. Even if one had not read Jama's portrayal of Bryant, one could still know how he looked and how temperamental he was.

The portrayal, though good, does not make the poem outstanding; for although we do now and then come across beautiful images yet the poem falls short of the required standard of a good poem. The reason for this is that the poet seems to be struggling for images. The ideas in the poem do not logically connect. The poet jumps from one idea to another. It is also somewhat prosaic, the verses for instance:

'UJama kangakanani,  
Nasenhlamvini yomkhonto angonela',

or

'UJama ubengabonswa ngabalandakazi,  
Ubedonswa yinjenje yaseKqokwini'.

(How different the last stanza from the verse of a later poet:

'Ofana nodwendwe lwamancsakazi'.)

### KHONDLO (1753 - 1813)

#### Life History:

He was the son of Incinci of Lufutha of Simamane. He is one of the most popular ancestors of the Swabe clan. His clan at the time of his reign is larger than that of the Zulus to which it was related. He fought against Dingiswayo and lost through the craftiness of that great ruler of the Xhethwas.

#### ANALYSIS

Khondlo in his praises is depicted as brave and powerful. He is:

'Osongobese wanene!  
Owadi'amadoda ngogebhedu -  
UNodungandaba onyama,  
Onsiba zimaecya zidi'amadoda'.

He is also crafty:

'Ozibuko limadwala abusholezi,  
Iisheyeye umbizya nendodana'.

This poem is an inspired one. The poet takes reference to the situation from which praise originates:

'Banzi useDengwini kawaphuzwa,  
Kweentshwa izinwele zikaNjobisa'.

or the stanza

'Oze nomgomodo kaNohlanya,  
Keza nombanga wawoNcenyakazi,  
Intambama kayenza-ifula,  
Wayiphika ngamakhande amadoda'.

The poem has an easy natural flow. Ideas connect and develop logically into a unit. The poet seems confident. He has the mastery of words. Numbers seem

to flow without/ ...



to flow without the halting tendency characteristic of the poems of this period. The poet achieves ideational coherence, whilst using a variety of ideas. There is in it the heroism and the characteristic romanticism of the age:

'Isando sokubethwa sikampangaziha,  
Tsiganole uMabi athandwe yinjenge,  
Noyamaxubhukazi nobimaya'.

### JOBÉ (1707 - 1807)

#### Life History:

Jobé was the Mthethwa ruler against whom his two sons, Godongwana and Tana conspired. Jobé had ruled for a long time and his mind was impaired. He appeared as an obstacle to their assuming the governorship of their country. Hence they decided to get rid of him. On hearing of this, Jobé made up his mind to instal Tana as heir, but Tana refused. This infuriated Jobé who decided to kill both of them. Tana was killed. Godongwana (Dinziwayo) escaped. Jobé himself died very old.

#### ANALYSIS

In Jobé's very short eulogy, an interesting fact is revealed, namely, contact with Europeans, possibly shipwrecked. Jobé is said to be:

'Owanlathwa yinkwantsha yakoKhuzwayo'.

His poet does not, however, take a serious view of this; he continues to praise him as a brave hero, calling him:

'Isempu elidla ngomkhonto oyingqam'.

The comparison he makes of his king and the cluster of the pleiades is, indeed, beautiful. He falters in the following stanza by using a vulgar metaphor:

'Uragana lwelanze,  
Oluphala abantwana ezibunjini'.

The poem, though fragmentary, does not have the prosaic inclination found in the praises of Ndaba, for instance.

It is / ...

It is comparatively more poetical. It is, nevertheless, too general to give a clear picture of the character described. The bravery of the praised is inferred rather than stated as having occurred in a particular situation. As a result the poem is unconvincing and sounds insincere and laudatory.

Comment :

The poetry of this period is fragmentary. It is on the whole weak and sounds uninspired. The fact that endless praise is conferred on the individual, without any satiric remarks on what he does, makes the poetry of this phase the most eulogistic of all Sikh traditional poetry. Frequently, there are obscurities which indicate the lack of poetic ability. Poetry on the other hand has not widened to include subjects of national importance. The fact that there are no references to events makes for obscurity.

One great achievement of this poetry, however, is the deft manner in which nature images are used. The Akhize poets bequeathed to posterity not only beautiful nature images but also the moving spirit that makes poetry musical in the same sense that Milton's poetry is musical.

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CHAPTER V

PRE-

PHASE II OF THE SHAKAN ERADINGISWAYO PERIODIntroduction:

It has already been stated in the previous pages how Dingiswayo, the Mthethwa King, embarked on a policy of empire building and formed a state of many tribes and clans. The formation of the Mthethwa Empire changed the hitherto quiet, settled life of the Nguni tribes.

Although there was nothing violent in his campaigns except only occasionally when a tribe refused to be incorporated, the very existence of the empire generated a new type of thinking. It demanded new adjustments in the relations between smaller and bigger groups.

People were to bid a long adieu to the old quiet life. Bravery was no more to be merely a gift from the eulogising poets, but a virtue to be paid for by deeds of courage and self sacrifice. The poets themselves were soon to be salvaged from the unpoetic depths of bestowing non-existent virtues on docile rulers. This then was the transitional stage of Zulu traditional poetry. It acquired the strength which had hitherto been lacking. The change was, as stated above, gradual, for even in the Dingiswayo era poetry still had the defects of the pre-Dingiswayo era. In fact, in some cases, certain unpoetic traits reached their heights during this era, as for instance reference to the bodily qualities extolled.

The tribal head became a real leader of the people, who needed to have his wits about him in warding off oncoming danger. Hunting was no more the only place

place where bravery was revealed. War was the crucible in which a man proved his mettle. There is thus a note of sincerity in poetry owing to the existence of practical situations in which the ideal became expressed. Poetry dealt with themes of nation-wide concern.

### INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS

#### DINGISWAYO (1748-1816)

##### Life History:

After a narrow escape from death Dingiswayo left his home and went into exile. He went to the Mzandla district and thence to the country of the amahlutshini, a place along the upper Mzinyathi, a hundred and twenty miles from the Sea. This country was ruled by King Buzane. There Dingiswayo sought shelter at the house of Ngavasha. The most remarkable instance of his bravery is that at amahlutshini country, single-handed, he killed a lioness and brought home the cubs. By this act he became renowned as one of the bravest men in the tribe.

After a long sojourn there, he chanced to see a white man who wanted to know the way to Delagoa Bay. Dingiswayo, who already had heard rumours that his father Jobe was dead, decided to leave with this man. On the way the man was killed and Dingiswayo decided to return to his home. His arrival caused a great sensation in the country, for he rode on an animal hitherto unknown in Mthethaland - a horse. He also carried a gun. His half-brother Mawewe was on the throne. Malusi advised Mawewe to flee in face of the rightful heir, Dingiswayo. Mawewe was obdurate, he stayed on. Dingiswayo killed him thereby removing the obstacle to his birthright.

"Dingiswayo ..... was a quite exceptional character, a decidedly capable man, observant, thoughtful, imaginative, pushful - and by no means wholly engrossed in wine and women. His early trials and travels had proven for him a fruitful and appropriate education." <sup>16</sup> A.T. Bryant. This is the man who brought about changes in Nguniland which had far-reaching cultural and political effects.

#### ANALYSIS.

There is a note of heroism right through his praises. He is not depicted as a romantic figure but as a hero of the nation. The poet is concerned with the issues that affect the people rather than those which affect the person. Of the eulogised poetry is without the eroticism of the Jobe period. In the first verse the poet makes mention of the reappearance of Dingiswayo after a long period of absence. He calls him:

"Umavavuke njengedungabano".

He does not elaborate on this fact because he realizes that Dingiswayo's role as a national leader was more important than his role as the romantic adventurer.

His gentleness, albeit, a quality of greater national importance than his physical appearance, has strength; it is not, <sup>a</sup> weakness, for, though gentle, he is brave and always prepared to fight if need be.

"USobangeya kasoze atshelwa izindaba,  
Uyatshelwa ugijimela ehawini,  
Ulaka lunganhloko ngingashe inkomo,  
Lona luphezulu ezimpondweni".

The last two verses aptly describe the disciplined bravery he possesses. He is not like the bull that blindly rushes to its opponent, but is an intelligent schemer.

16. *ibid.* 11, page 96

He is the conqueror who had overcome traditional rulers for he, the bravest of Kings, has conquered nation after nation:

"Ngithe ngicadla ezinye, ngataye ngadla ezinye",  
He has also confiscated their wealth. One outstanding fact about the praises of Dingiswayo is that the poet makes definite reference to situations which he is describing. One does not have the feeling that the King's qualities are merely hung upon him. The poet says:

"Ilanga elimdfoza likaMahlala,  
Maphuma amakhwesi abikelana,  
Makazi"ke abase ruMahlala".

He is likened to the sun, which when it rises, the two stars (Zwide, King of the Mkwandwe, and his chief wife, Makazi, named each other.

The achievement of expanding his kingdom is described by the poet as the long-stretched paths that lead to Tshone and Entument, and also as:

"Ingqungqo ebhulu usweni,  
Ukhalo lukaZazo lusamngole".

Apparently his armies went past the grassy hill of a man called Zazo, after which the highly grown grass was flattened by the feet. He disgraced Jukuzela by taking his wife, and he conquered Vondama of Vonda, Mlovu of Ngongwana.

The praises of Dingiswayo must originally have been longer, judging from the abrupt ending.

The poetry bears a tone of aggression instead of the old pre-Dingiswayo resignation. Dingiswayo is shown as going to war rather than sitting down passively awaiting for the outbreak of war, like Ndaba:

"Utshekizana lwakitini lwakwaSeabache,  
Luya lukhlozi, ludlondlobele,  
Labahe izihlangu emadol'eni".

There are however still some outstanding defects in this poetry. Repetition lowers the poetic effect of his praise poem.

In certain parts the poem tends to be prosaic.

Despite these defects it is <sup>a</sup> poetry of a higher order than the poetry of the Pre-Dingiswayo period. National consciousness begins to express itself in a national type of poetry.

### SENZANGAKHONA (1757-1816)

#### Life History:

Senzangakhona was a ruler over a small clan called amaZulu. He was surrounded by powerful enemies. The only King whom he could count upon as a friend was Dingiswayo. There was the mighty and powerful Macingwane by the Mzinyathi stream and, on the other flank, Pungashe, the Buthelezi chief, who once captured him and made his family pay cattle-ransom for <sup>his</sup> release. This ruler also demanded that Senzangakhona should pay tribute to him.

Senzangakhona is depicted everywhere as a play-boy King. He was not outstandingly intelligent; his ambitions were humble. He was one of the numerous minor rulers of Nguniland. He was not even as intelligent as his father, Jama, nor, perhaps, as brave.

#### ANALYSIS

The praises of Senzangakhona are in part an embodiment of the defects of the Pre-Dingiswayo personal type of poetry. The poet takes pains to describe in the most elaborate fashion, his physical appearance. No doubt he was handsome, but what has that to do with the national welfare? There is a non-aggressive tone in his praise poem. He is:

"Inyathi ehamba isingama amazibuko".

(Contrast that with the verse in Shaka's praise poem:

"Inyathi ejama / ...

Inyathi ejame ngemkhonto phesheya koMzimvubu,  
 Ningayihlabi nani boFaku nani boGambushe,  
 Nothi ningayihlaba niyobe senihlabe,  
 UPhunga nabhlaba uMageba".)

There is also a resigned element which, coupled with the runaway elements in his eulogy, express aptly the attitude of his society. He is:

"Uthi lwempundu lwakwaNongabi,  
 Obeluhlala izikhova,  
 Obeluhlala uPhungashe wakwaButhelozi,  
 Lihlala uKacingwane waseNgonyameni,  
 Lihlala uDladlama wakwaMajola".

- - -

"Ubaba kamame heba sinuke".

His praise poem abounds in descriptions of romantic adventures associated with women; he is depicted as essentially a domestic man whom all love. He is like the sun that "likes everybody to bask on".

"Langa eliphuma linsizwa,  
 Lathi liphezulu lansasa".

he is a man of peace who would like to provide food in abundance for his people.

His praise poem, though bearing some characteristics of the poetry of previous ages, is definitely an improvement on it. The language of the poem has greater force and comes out more naturally. It does not, as do some of the poems of Pre-Shakan era, tend to be prosaic. It abounds with poetic beauties. The poet uses words with rhythms that are sweet and pleasant to the ear. There is also the tendency to complete the stanza. The poet states the idea, shows it in action and gives the result of the action:

"Oye ngonyama koMazolo,  
 Wabuye ngonyezi;  
 Amadoda aphenduka umbejakazana".

or the stanza

"Ungezwa bethi valala njalo Sonjalose,  
 Kabasho wena babula unyoko uMbulezikazi;  
 Yena evalela ingonyama endliri".

(Senzangakhona's poet / ...)



Senzangakhona's poet also gives many historical facts that are associated with the hero, unpleasant though they may be. His poetry shows the desire of the people to have a name and to live immortally, and poetry trumpets the message across the ages:

"Ndaba bayosala beshumayezana,  
Nabasezitheni nabasekhaya".

(A later poet uses the same words, but more specifically:

"Ndaba kuyofa abantu,  
Kuyosala izibongo;  
Yizona eziyosala zibadabula emanxiweni".)

### MACINGWANE (1775 - 1820)

#### Life History:

He was one of the mightiest rulers in Dingiswayo's time. He was ferocious and ruthless in dealing with an enemy. He is one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of the Chunu rulers. He systematically killed his own children as soon as they attained man's state lest they should murder him. He was the dread of many tribes.

The Ndlovus, after an attempt on his life, decided to run away and annex themselves to the Mkhizes. It was Shaka who finally forced this Mchunu lion to seek refuge elsewhere.

#### ANALYSIS

Macingwane's name features in the praises of many powerful chiefs; even in Shaka's praises he is said to be the man whom Shaka always wanted to overcome.

Macingwane's poem accurately expresses the aggressive tone of the emerging heroic age. He is depicted as a national hero, fearful and unapproachable at his royal house at Nkonyameni. He is crafty and brave. He weeps mockingly over the fall of his victims. Everybody runs away from him except those who are weak-

winged: / ...

winged:

"UZulu lizayo khwezani abentwana,  
Ngabadala bodwa abayakuzibalekela".

He is like the collection of rocks at the Inkandla forest in which even the most powerful of animals- the elephant - finds refuge in time of danger. Indeed, says the poet, so powerful is he that he does not need to plant anything for he can confiscate any ruler's food reserves. The ties of kinship which appeal to those chiefs who need protection do not appeal to him.

This praise-poem has the powerful voice of confidence. However, the tendency to praise without criticism leaves much to be desired. The poet does not, as Shakan poets did, make any comment on his cruelty and mercilessness. Dingane and Maphitha kaSojijisa did not find poets as lenient to them when eulogistic poetry became a true vehicle for the feelings of the people. The less pleasant characteristics were mercilessly attacked.

In this poem there is a very good example of bestowed qualities. Macingwane, amongst the many other chiefs, is said to have captured Sukuzwayo and his son. Some chiefs are said to have captured the wife, some the father and some the son; who actually did the capturing remains unknown.

### ZWIDE (1757 - 1822)

#### Life History:

Zwide was the ruler of the Nxumalos. He was one of the most powerful rulers in Nguniland. He once threatened to destroy Shaka's armies calling him an upstart. He was duly punished by the young brave Shaka. He fled northwards towards the Transvaal, and there conquered the armies of Pulwana the Pedi ruler. He finally died in 1822, as the legend goes, through the deadly charms / ...

the deadly charms of Ujantshi kaThobala.

#### ANALYSIS

There are few events of national importance in his poems; in parts it has the puerility of Pre-Dingiswayo Poetry:

"Ezindleleni ufana nayiphi na?  
Ufana nevundlayo.  
Emithini ufana namuphi na?  
Ufana nomnyamathi.  
Ezinyokeni ufana nayiphi na?  
Ufana nenyandezalu".

He is depicted as cunning and as having outwitted Dingiswayo. The praise poem on Zwile is fragmentary and too short for so great a ruler. It has, however, the characteristic fire of the inspired poetry of later poetry of the Dingiswayo period.

#### MINOR CHARACTERS

Of necessity an overall analysis must not only deal with kings, but also with minor characters. Though it would have been a good idea if poems on minor characters were dealt with in as great numbers as possible, that possibility is excluded by the fact that praise poems on minor characters are always short and, consequently, obscure and unrepresentative. They are also more likely to be lost since they are seldom recited.

#### SOMPISI KAGUQA

##### Life History:

He was the meat-dresser of Senzangakhona and subsequently became the father of one of the greatest heroes in Zulu history - Ndlela. He was of the Ntuli Clan.

#### ANALYSIS

In Sompisi's eulogy the poet makes mention of the fact that he / ...

fact that he was the youngest of the sons of Guqa. He was brave, for he was the captor of Diadlana and is said to be :

"Uqhuma ziphethwe ngomgabelo".

MBENGI

Life History:

He was the ruler of the Mhlongos and the father of Nandi who was Shaka's mother. He was a minor chief.

ANALYSIS

He disappeared, according to the poet, for four years. He is depicted as weak and cowardly, once hiding himself in a cave and on another occasion lured into a trap. There is nothing heroic in his praise poem. One suspects that when the poet says he disappeared for four years and came back on horseback, he is merely using the Mthethwa sensation of Dingiswayo to boost up the ego of his master.

WOMEN CHARACTERS

Frequently, <sup>were on</sup> eulogies, the princesses who detested being controlled and whose masculinity drew the admiration of poets. They built their own houses from which they wielded great influence in the affairs of the country. Nandi, Mkhabayi, Mawa are some of these princesses.

NANDI KAMBENGI

Life History:

Nandi is one of the most famous women in Zulu history, not only because she was the mother of Shaka but also on account of her own personal qualities. She was a woman of iron will. Isaacs says of her, "She was said to have been a masculine and savage woman, ever quarrelling / ...

ever quarrelling and ever enraging her husband, that he was compelled to exercise some salutary authority and reprimand her for the impropriety of her behaviour." 17.

### ANALYSIS.

These qualities are revealed in her praise poem. She was talkative and quarrelsome, the poet says of her:

"Ugedegede lwasenhla nenkundla".

The poet also states that she looked down upon other people. Perhaps, this was on account of her bitterness about life which had not treated her very kindly. She had developed a suspicious nature on account of this as the poet says. She had indeed a masculine character for the poet again says :

"Mfazi ontongande zingazandoda".

There is a vein of eroticism, as exemplified in the verses:

"Umathanga kawangeni,  
Ahlangane ngokubona indoda".

### MKABAYI KAJAMA

#### Life History:

She was the sister of Senzangakhona. She played a very important role in shaping Zulu history. When Jama died it was she, as the crown-princess, who along with her cousin, Mudli, looked after the kingdom whilst Senzangakhona was still a minor. She is often described as the terrible woman of antiquity. She, together with her nephews, Dingane and Mhlangane, planned the murder of Shaka.

Desirous to put Dingane on the throne, she later devised the murder of Mhlangane. Later when Captain Gardner went to Dingane on missionary work, he found her old, but still very powerful. She had her own district called

eBaqulusini.

### ANALYSIS

The poet depicts her as crafty; calling her:

"USoqili,  
Iqili lakwaHoahoa,  
Elidla umuntu limyenga ngendaba".

She is also depicted as powerful:

"Inkomo ekhale eSangonyama,  
Yakhala umlomo wayo wabhoboza izulu".

The poet further makes reference to the fact that she influenced the history of the Zulus:

"Imbibhakazana eyaqamba imigqa kwamaMalandela,  
Yathi ngabakwaMalandela,  
Ithi yikhona bezoganzanxa ngazozonke izindlela".

He gives her the credit, as many would, of having had the national cause at heart. It seems traditional Zulu poets were particularly good in delineating women characters, as it shown in her character analysis and that of many others.

### General Criticism:

Pre-Shakan poetry differs from Shakan poetry not only in sentiment but also in semantic structure. Most of the poetry of this era lacks a coherence and is unsystematic in treatment. Parts of this era lack the sure touch of the Shakan era, the voice of the poet trembles with uncertainty. The poetry for the most part is uninspired.

There is also an element of immaturity in this poetry. The following example for instance seems more like a nursery rhyme than a eulogy:

"Ezindleleni ufana nayiphi na?  
Ufana nevundlayo.  
Emithini ufana nayiphi na?  
Ufana nonnyamathi.  
Eziyokeni ufana nayiphi na?  
Ufana nenyandezulu."

The same / ...

The same is true of Ndaba's praise poem:

"Czingela smahlathi,  
Azasathi: Hhiya Hhi,  
Nambhlanje akunyamazane".

The poetry is mainly local in tone. It is not *primarily* concerned with the welfare of mankind but rather the welfare and happiness of an individual. Thus events of history which affected the group are only casually mentioned.

Blackman says in his book "Composition and Style" - "Metaphors should never be drawn from objects which are mean and disagreeable." The use of vulgar metaphors kills the pleasure that springs from poetry. This does not mean that poetry should not deal with subjects which are unpleasant. Poetry being a synthetic philosophy of life should deal with all subjects except those that are "mean and disagreeable". Mean and disagreeable metaphors are found in abundance in Pre-Shakan poetry. This further lowers the general standard of Pre-Shakan poetry.

Pre-Shakan poetry has, however, its own merits; on account of its method of dealing with an individual as such, and not in relation to the group, it was able to make intimate portrayals of characters. There are some characters which we seem to know intimately because their looks and their behaviour has been described adequately. *29* Jama, Senzangakhona, Nandi, Macinzwane etc.

Poets drew numerous metaphors from nature, solely as a background for human activity. Shakan poets generally speaking, drew their metaphors from human action. Naturally so, for, as Horace says, "Haughty knights dislike dull poems," and poems on nature are dull to soldiers.

Praise-poems of rulers such as Zwibe though falling in between the Pre-Shakan and the Shakan eras

chronologically / ...

chronologically have been classified under the Pre-Shakan era on the basis of their characteristics.

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CHAPTER VITHE SHAKAN ERAIntroduction:

An attempt has been made in the previous chapter to show the changes both political and social which influenced the type of poetry in each phase of development. It was made clear that there was a gradual change from the quiet, settled life of the early pre-Shakan society to the late pre-Shakan times. The increase in numbers influenced the people to think in terms of states rather than in terms of family groups. This amalgamation of tribes into one single state was carried out by ambitious rulers who thereby activated a rivalry for supremacy in Eguniland. This rivalry resulted in military clashes. These clashes had their useful aspect, as far as poetry is concerned. They broadened the outlook of individuals who, as a result stopped to think in terms of the locality in which they were settled, but also in terms of other distant localities occupied by other tribes. The ever-present danger of attack gave rise to tribal nationalisms in which unbending courage was required to defend the country against invaders. Literature began to realise that it had, more than ever before, to praise realistically, any individual who had served the community in battle.

Towards the end of the pre-Shakan era one encounters the realism that had hitherto been wanting. Romanticism gradually goes to the background and its place is taken by a thirst for something related to human action. At the dawn of the Shakan era there were signs of the volcanic changes that were to take place

both in the political organization and the literature of the country. There is a sudden preference for metaphors drawn from powerful animals, and awe-inspiring natural objects. The measure for friendly relations is no more kinship but power. Hence Macingwane kaLuboko is said to disregard his parents-in-law, Dingiswayo is said to have been killed by his brother-in-law, Zwide. Shaka himself is said to have attacked and killed his maternal uncles.

### Political Organization:

The expansion of the states demanded new laws for the regulation of state affairs. In previous years, if a chief acknowledged allegiance to a superior chief he was left unmolested. With the rise of the Zulu power, dangerous chiefs of the conquered tribes were killed and the followers of such chiefs incorporated into the state. The tribes who resisted were annihilated completely or made to flee to other countries.

The King was the sole head of a state made up of numerous tribes. In some cases the King made the conquered chief administer the area in which his people were settled.

It will be remembered that Dingiswayo made no attempt to make people part of the Mthethwa nation. Unlike him, Shaka forced them to become part of the Zulu nation. The effects of this complete assimilation were far reaching in literature. It meant that in the place of various tribal literatures, there was one literature which drew inspiration from the might of the newly formed nation. The hitherto weak poetry of the different tribal units gained in strength to the extent that even today it retains the same tremendous gallop which characterized the power of this large state.

The territorial boundaries of the once humble kingdom of Senzangakhona were extended to the far ends

kingdom of Sensangakhona were extended to the far ends of the country. This process of self-realization developed in the conquering nation a pride that can best be expressed by the poet when he says: "Moo, thou cow of Zululand, you will never moo anywhere else in the world". The nationalism was equal in force to that nationalism of France which, caught up in the ideologies of freedom, went out to the world to make a France of the world.

The pride and conceit of such tribes as the Butelezis, the Ndwandwes was crushed for good and for ever.

#### Historical Background:

The little territory occupied by the Zulus and ruled by Sensangakhona would have remained nothing but an adjunct of the bigger states had it not been for Shaka. He was the product of the times. When he was young, he suffered humiliation after humiliation on account of his being an illegitimate son of the playboy chief Sensangakhona. Fortunately he was a man of exceptional intelligence and prowess; growing up in this atmosphere of nationalisms and the burning desire of each state to realize its ambitions, he infused into himself the great national spirit. He made up his mind to build one of the greatest empires ever known. He received his military training from the great Mthethwa country, after he had been adopted by <sup>the</sup> Mthethwa ruler Dingiswayo.

When Dingiswayo died, Shaka amalgamated the Mthethwa and the Zulu tribes and thus became ruler of combined state. He had made himself popular in Mthethwaland by his great bravery (the most sought after honour at the time) so that when Dingiswayo's

sons quarrelled/...

sons quarrelled over the throne he easily cast aside the disputants and became the ruler of the Nthethwa.

[ His first task was to consolidate his kingdom. Instead of a loosely knit union of tribes, Shaka wanted a state in which everybody paid allegiance to him. He realised that such ambitions would evoke resistance. He therefore set out to reorganise his army, and to make it strong and formidable. ] He divided his army into various military divisions and emphasised the fact that bravery was the greatest virtue a man could hope to attain. He prevented young men from marrying early because he maintained that family life weakens a man's fighting spirit. He rewarded the brave with eulogies and cattle.

He personally conducted his own campaigns which carried their mission of conquest as far as the Cape. All the chieftains who ruled their countries as powerful potentates stood in fear for their thrones at the mention of Shaka's formidable armies. The Ndwandwe, the Buthelezis, the Xosana, who had been powerful tribes were conquered and made part and parcel of the Zulu Empire. The hitherto complacent life of the Pre-Shakan era was changed into the period of continuous bloody battle. The tribes who were pursued as for instance were the Nguni's, drove those before them still further. Freedom of movement was gone; chiefs who had watched immigration into adjacent territories unconcernedly tolerated them no longer. They had become irritable and warlike. The expansion of the Shakan Empire resulted in population shifts which went as far as central Africa. Shaka's internal policy was to have one law, one state and one ruler.

His external policy was to make a complete

conquest of the other tribes and to have no military rival.

The Zulu nation emerged powerful and dreadful, fired with fierce pride and confidence. One of the national songs celebrates this spirit: "Shaka, thou hast conqueréd the nations, whom shall you fight?" This spirit of confidence is expressed in music, and in the prolific poetic compositions of this era. Change has this in it that it makes even the dullest mind critical of its dullness. Poets were eager to produce the best in response to the national spirit, In their lives there was no dullness; new forms of poetry were developed, inspired by the great change that made their country the greatest of all.

#### Methods of Fighting:

Instead of the armies, on encounter, throwing long spears, resort was made, *on Shaka's orders*, to short spears which were used in hand-to-hand combat. Gone were the days when women witnessed the fighting armies. War became a serious business in which both armies depended upon good organization and training in order to emerge victorious in battle. Fleeing from the combat was a crime punishable by death. If armies were heard to be advancing to the attack, children and women had to be taken to a place of hiding, hence Shaka's post says:

"Uzulu lizayo khwezani abantwana,  
Ngabadala bodwa abayakuzibalekela".

#### Characteristics:

##### 1. The philosophical outlook of the Shakan poets:

The change brought about by the military conquests of Shaka brought about a new philosophical outlook. The expansion of the Zulu Empire meant contact with people of other lands and countries. This contact developed a critical outlook / ...

critical outlook which presented life in much broader perspective than ever before. The belief hitherto held that the voice of the elders was the final wisdom was shattered by the study of different customs and of other peoples. These facts brought about a new realisation to the people of the Zulu state, namely that customs and traditions were subject to faults and therefore capable of change or correction. This new attitude had great repercussions on poetry. The tendency of eulogising of the pre-Zulu era was replaced by a realism that demanded a truthful representation of life.

There was a great awakening of interest in human relations. There was contact or tie of the individual realities based on personal achievement rather than on tribal status. There was a new degree of philosophical depth in poetry which showed its concern with what was of universal application and importance. The idea of nation (*izwe*) instead of a nation (*isizwe*) constantly appears in poetry:

"Ntshona izwe ezinye (i izwe) wedle ezinye".

The second type of poetry developed in order to cover a wide area of human life. The poems were filled with content, so that in place of simple theatrical songs and dances to the accompaniment of the *isigaba*

"Ntshona izwe ezinye  
 Ntshona izwe ezinye  
 Ntshona izwe ezinye".

and songs across the land that exalted in full the triumphs and ambitions of the nation, etc.

"Izwe ezinye ezinye, ezinye,  
 Izwe ezinye ezinye,  
 Izwe ezinye ezinye,  
 Izwe ezinye ezinye,  
 Izwe ezinye ezinye,  
 Izwe ezinye ezinye,  
 Izwe ezinye ezinye".

The grandeur of this age is fully expressed by the epic treatment of the <sup>and the concentration on</sup> eulogies / all the subjects relating to human life. This was not in terms of personal reaction but in terms of universal social reaction. Thus in these eulogistic epics one comes across not only praises of admirable deeds but also criticism of hateful deeds. In some cases the poet projects himself into the situation in order to express fully the feeling of those affected, e.g.

"Kanti ngangabaleka mandulo,  
Mka Fileyo mka Bezwayo, Mka Moyo,  
Mka Hululu-ngesisu-caba".

## 2. Bravery in relation to a situation:

It has been stated that in Shakan poetry mention of bravery was more concrete.

The following stanzas are examples in hand:

"Itshana elisendleleni,  
Elakhuba uBumButha oYengweni,  
KaManziphambhana libaneka;  
Lidla uFacanga noMagezana".  
Phakathwayo.

"Ih. lelehele likaNgobe,  
Elihlelele amanye amadoda,  
Lihhlelelele uzimisi ezalwa nguSoholoza".

A comparison of Pre-Shakan and Shakan poetry clearly reveals the difference:

"Inyoni abayibize ngamakhwelo esizibeni,  
Izindlu ziyosala amagobongo".  
Mavovo  
(Pre-Shakan)

"Inyoni ebizwe ngamakhwelo aseNgome,  
Nansumhla ukhalo lukaDlaDlana lusamangele;  
Lumangele lungasawaboni amaqoqo akwaMajola,  
Selubona awakwalandela".  
Dingane  
(Shakan).

The importance of bravery was further enhanced by the fact that the man who dominated the scene was himself brave and loved bravery almost to the degree / of fanaticism. Those who had displayed bravery were not only the talk of the country but received special poetical praises from people and the King /

the King / ...

the King, in addition they were assigned special privileges. It was only natural therefore that poetry should extol bravery, thereby developing a degree of superb heroic poetry. The Shakan era, by expressing these national glories in the songs, in the poetry and in the folklore, raised heroic poetry to a high degree of excellence. Thus the Shakan era became the golden age of Zulu traditional poetry.

### 3. National Tone in Shakan Poetry

In the Shakan era, poetry became highly sensitive to national glory.

It elaborated on historical facts and became at once the preserver of facts relating to national growth and an inspiration, not only to living members of the Zulu Empire, but also to posterity.

Never before had Zulu poetry assumed such epic lengths. The available part of Shaka's praise-poem runs into some 400 verses; Dingane's is 380 verses long and Mpande's 500 verses. Even sub-chiefs and princes at this time have very lengthy praise-poems compared to the short praise-poems of princes in the Pre-Shakan and Post-Shakan eras.

Shaka impressed by the plenty that was available at his Royal House, composed an ode to his House of Embelebelani. His Royal House at Dukuza also became the subject of an ode.

Such acts encouraged the development of the arts; inspired poets to laud the glories of the newly-formed nation and record its triumphs in the most picturesque language.

The individual as an individual, did not matter



as such. He mattered only as part of that force which had driven many who opposed it to the remote parts of the country. Physical toughness ceases to be a personal quality and becomes the instrument used for the glory of the nation. One never comes across photographic descriptions of personal appearance as is the case with Pre-Shakan poetry.

The poets seem too occupied with thinking of the triumphs of the nation to expend efforts on romanticisms: hence there are a few vulgar comments which, as stated, arise out of the personal nature of poetry.

Even the founder of the nation could not have his way with the precious possessions of the nation. Whilst the heroes were fighting for the country, poets were providing a unifying philosophy that emphasised the universal good to be gained from national triumphs. Even the conquered after incorporation, were given scope in poetry to express themselves as part of that greatness which was sweeping the country. Hence they were also praised if proven to be brave.

4. The Aggressive Tone in Shakan Poetry:

It was only natural then that poets should interpret the spirit of the age in the most representative tone.

Unlike Pre-Shakan poetry, Shakan poetry bears a continuous aggressive tone. Its persistence throughout Shakan poetry alone, makes it remarkably different from the poetry of the previous era. The praised is depicted as instilling dread when he approaches, and his enemies are depicted

fleeing from him:

- Phakathwayo: "Induku yomtungwa onzima,  
Abezizwe abayibuke bayibalekela".
- Sambela: "Ugaga libomvu ngekaphathweni,  
Ngokugwaza imihlane yamadoda".
- "Kwathiwa gijimani niyotshela  
uBudaza ngaseMdakeni,  
Avale amasango".
- "Kanti ngangabaleka mandulo,  
mkaFiyo mkaBezwayo mkaMgayo,  
Mkahululu - ngesisu-caba".
- Zihlandlo: "Ulobole ngezinkomo kuNzombane,  
UmtakaTomela wazilanda ngenkhonto".
- Langalibalele: "Inkosi enamanzeba emkhonto,  
Sembathe umkhonto njengobedu".
- Magaye: "Umahashula onkundla-zibomvu".
- Dole: Indlovu ethe imuka bayilandela  
abakwalanga,  
Ibuyise inhloko yadla amadoda".

These are only a few examples showing heroic enthusiasm of the Shakan era. This enthusiasm gave power and strength which elevated poetry from prose-like pieces of the Pre-Shakan era to the highly poetic pieces of this era.

The soldiers of the King went out eager to be praised and honoured for their achievements. Poets were not satisfied with just cataloguing events without pointing out their national significance. They used events as a symbol of the national ideal and in <sup>so doing</sup> developed their art to perfection.

The myriad migrations at this time were no more due to a need to get pastures but forced migrations of people fleeing from Shaka's armies. <sup>Amongst these armies</sup> / strict military discipline was kept. All cowards were killed and any division of the army that Shaka felt had betrayed was mercilessly punished. The custom of circumcision was discontinued because it hampered the mobilising of forces. These great social changes were bound to have their impact on the thinking of the people.

Further / ...

Further evidence of the aggressive tone in Shakan poetry is shown by the continuous use of the verbs meaning to destroy, to conquer, to confiscate, to drive away etc. Note the following examples:

Sambela: "wadla uMokombo wakwaHlele,  
wadla uNosengelwayo khona kwaHlele,  
wadla uNodludle eMabovini,  
wadla uThonga kaSusa khona eMabovini".

In some cases the aggressive tone is expressed by the use of the imagery derived from aggressive animals, e.g.

"Indlovu ethi ukukuka bayilandela,  
Yathi ukubuya yadla amadoda".

Note the difference between the two verses:

Pre-Shakan - "Omabala azizinge engathi abekiwe".  
Shakan - "Uvemvane olumbala azibadu,  
Ongabe ngiyalutninta lwanwag-bala".

#### 5. Symbolisation in Shakan Poetry:

In Zulu poetry some poetical symbols are derived from animals. Animal symbolisation is to be found in all works of poetry, as for instance in Spencer's "Fairy Queen". There are numerous examples of animal symbolisation found in both Occidental and Oriental literature.

There is a difference in the handling of animal symbols between the pre-Shakan poets and the Shakan. The pre-Shakan poets used animal symbols with reservation. The praised is identified with harmless animals like the ancestral snake, the buck, the swallow, the cow and seldom the elephant. Shakan poets/frequently used symbols of animals that have strength, power and the ferocity identical to the aggressive spirit of the age. The praised were often identified with lions, elephants, leopards, wolves, mambas and hyenas.

Phakathwayo: "Imamba igcwalele ngoantimona,  
Isini lalo esilugede phezulu,  
Ungaba uyindlovu un'asisindesinda,  
Sona siyo singabangwa munyanda".

"Imamba yenyutsi Nsenyeni;  
Uba iyavuka,  
Iye ngoNtintwa kaMtungase".

"Indlovu kaPhambane yangoba ezinye,  
Indlovu ebuye ngomboko eNtwashini,  
Waye wayizwa uMande weseMfakusaba".

Maqhoboza: "Yimpungushe eyehlule amazongwe ezinja"

Sambela: "Ludonga lukaKhabazele nomavovo,  
Lokulala izingonyama".

Maphitha: "Impungushe eyeqa imgibaniso"

Mapholoba: "Owehle ngombluhluwe wezimvubu,  
Indlovu ethi ukuguka bayilandela,  
Yathi ukubuya yadla amadoda,  
Yadla umnuzwane ezulwa nguGeza,  
Yadla uSicawuzane kaGcaba".

Sihayo: "Indlovu enyutnele itshe laguqa,  
kamapholoba Kuguqa uMshiyane obezalwe nguShuku".

Magolwane, Shaka's court-poet, uses all the ferocious animals to indicate Shaka's great power:

"Uyisilo! uyingwe! uyingonyama!  
Uyindlondlo! uyingandlovu!"

(Note that whilst other characters are compared to an ordinary mamba, Magolwane aptly compares Shaka to a black mamba - one of the most aggressive reptiles).

Power and strength were the things that counted in Shakan society. Those rulers who desired to be as great as the rulers of the other states felt no shame in being identified with them. The relation being purely on that basis; so that these great rulers with whom they were identified stood as symbols of greatness. <sup>Sometimes</sup> One comes across this type of symbolisation in Dingiswayo era.

Bungane the King of the Hlubi's is identified with Mpanzazitha, the son of Jobe:

"Mpanzazitha kaJobe".

Langalibalele is identified with the great Dingiswayo:

"UMdingi kaJobe".

In pre-Shakan poetry the name of Ndaba frequently appears in the praise-poems of different Kings, until one feels it is more a salutation than anything else. It is not like "Bayevue" in that it could have been originally the name of a person.

#### 6. Portrayal of Character in Shakan Poetry.

Mention has been made of the fact that in pre-Shakan poetry poets tended to deal only the good aspects of human character. Poetry maintained strength and felt it its duty to grapple with human problems. By perceiving the evil in man it developed an ethical centre essential in great literature. Man was seen as possessing both good and bad qualities. The following examples will show that Shakan poets did not just praise but where necessary sanctioned:

Shaka: "Ikosi umabi ngoba kawakhetli,  
Ngoba nabakwanyokolune uyababulala"

Dingane: "Umthakatli usibindi sianyane nakwabakayise,  
Uze noNhlengane ezalwa nguYise,  
Uze noNgqanjana ezalwa nguYise,  
Uze noMungazwe ezalwa nguYise,  
Uze noSomaJuba ezalwa nguYise,  
Uze noSiphano ezalwa nguYise, etc."

The poet enumerates seventeen princes who were murdered by Dingane. Nobody could openly criticize Dingane for the black deed; it lay upon the poet who had poetic liberties to state the crime. The deed is so dark that the mere mention of the names, without any attempt at varying the verse form, is in itself sufficient. The mind is startled each time a new name is mentioned, until used to the idea, it groans under the pressure of the deed made darker by the addition of crimes committed.

#### 7. General Analysis of Imagery.

Shakan poets used images to express certain moods and the temperament of the individual described. The

handling of imagery in the Shakan era was much more intricate and it required greater skill in use than in the previous era. Take for example the following verses:

Pre-Shakan Era: "Omabala azizinge angathi abekiwe"

Shakan Era: "Uvemvane olumabala azibadu,  
Cngabe ngiyaluthinta lwahwaqabala".

Shakan poets made it a point that the image used must <sup>fit to</sup> / the action described in the poem.

The great amount of imagery derived from human action indicates its relation to the poetry of action. The following verses beautifully express the mightiness of the praised and his swift deadly strokes by which the poem is inspired:

"Indlovu ethi ukusuka bayilandela,  
Yathi ukubuya yadla amadoda".

The following examples also indicate the use of imagery:

Dole: "Umahashula onkundla-zibomvu"

Phakathwayo: "Itshana elisendleleni,  
Elakhuba uBumbutha oYongweni;  
Kamanziphambana liyabaneka,  
Lidla uFacanga noMagezana".

"Induku yomtungwa onzima,  
AbeZizwe abayibuke bayibalakela".

"Usozice indlovu edla ngonokondo".

There is a metaphor used in connection with Dingane, Phakathwayo, Zihlandlo and other rulers which does not seem applicable to any situation.

Phakathwayo: "Unzaca oncsikhanda phambili,  
Owashaya amansi kwavela udaka".

"Induku emnyama kaNdaba ishaya isizibe,  
Kwaze kwaphetha udaka phansi".

Dr. Bryant states that this myth is also prevalent in the poetry of other African peoples. It seems strange, that it should suddenly appear in the Shakan era.

One would have expected it to be in pre-Shakan poetry; but that is not the case. What resurrected the idea is impossible to speculate.

There is another practice that became common in the Shakan period, namely the personification of ideas:

"Kanti ngangabaleka mandulo,  
MkaFileyo mkabezwayomkaMonyo  
MkaHululu - ngesisu - cada".

The names of people in the last verses do not refer to any existing person but to ideas relating, perhaps, to the idea of failing to perceive the on-coming danger in time, i.e. lazily lying on one's stomach like a woman.

### 8. The Shakan Stanza Form.

The development of different types of verse form is a pointer to the fact that poets were becoming conscious of the skill required in their art. They were striving to express their ideas in the most effective manner possible. It was not just a matter of saying something; the poet had to consider how best he could say what he wanted to express. You wished as a poet to communicate a certain impression and you used everything in your power to whet the senses of the listener for an accurate reception of that impression. <sup>hence the various stanza forms.</sup> The Shakan stanza is a highly developed form of stanza. It is commonly made up of three verses. The first verse introduces the subject, the second develops on the idea and the third concludes it. There are, of course, other stanza forms, but this seems to be the most frequent.

Pre-Shakan poets had the tendency of leaving ideas unconcluded. One gets the feeling that the poet had ideas whose significance he was not aware of, thus their

verse is incomplete and it lacks the philosophical summary of the last verse so characteristic of Shakan verse. These are some examples of Shakan verse form:

"Owehle ngentaba ende uPhakathwayo,  
Intaba ebingehli muntu,  
Ebiyehla izimbube namashongololo".

(Note that the contrast is not only in thought, but also in the length of the verses. The verses one and three which convey associated ideas, indicating the deed or feat achieved by Phakathwayo, are of the same length. Verse two emphasising the contrast with attempts made by others is short in comparison with the other two verses).

"Inkonyane kaMjobela,  
Ekhwele phezu kwendlu,  
Bathi ibanga umhlolo".

The poet relies on the superstitious associations of the word "umhlolo" to bring about the significance of the event dealt with.

Sambela: "Kepha uNtithi engakaya wayangaphi?  
Wamshaya ngomkhonto wambeka phansi,  
Amakhubalo azadliwa nguNzila  
kwabakwa?ingelwayo".

"Isililo esigaqaze phezu kwamathongo  
ngezandla,  
Samthatha uNomaka wakwaMemela,  
Amakhubalo azadliwa nguJambeshu  
waseKuseni kwaNgoongo".

Langalibalele: "Ingqungqulu engalali ngengubo,  
Ingalala ngengubo  
Sekonake .....le".

Phakathwayo: "Ongiphamba emzini wamaNkusa,  
Ungiphamba emzini kaTebisi,  
Ngagubuya ngaya kufohla emaNtenjini,  
Ngaye ngafumanisa izivunda ziphangana".

"Ibhungane likaNgobe,  
Elimlomo unkelekethe,  
Izinkomo nabantu ziyakuweya".

"Ogadagada umbango ungowakwaNyuswa,  
Kwakungabangwa lutho,  
Kwakubangwa izinhluva emanziweni".



There are two important types of *stanza* that must be noted, namely the varied type and the unvaried type. In the former type the operative verb alternates with a verb of a different meaning in each verse, e.g.

Dingane: "Wadla uZihlandlo,  
Ethi "ukuwela" "ukukuweya",  
Wadla uMagaye kaDibandlela,  
Ethi "ukuwela" "ukuweya",  
Wadla uMashukumbela kaGwabe".

In the second type the poet enumerates the feats of bravery without introducing any verse-variant in the stanza. In this case, the poet after making an unvaried verse states the general, or philosophizes on the greatness of the praised or the events of the time. Thereafter he again re-enumerates the events which justify the greatness of the praised without verse variations.

Sambela: "Udlodlwane lwakwaGcwabe,  
Kade lwaludlodomela amanye amakhosi,  
Wadlodomela ezikaMomanaka,  
" ezikaMandle wakwaCele,  
" ezikaMandaba wakwaShezi,  
" ezamaBovu,  
" ezamaChunu,  
" ezikaKhoza waseMnambithini,  
" ezikaMkhize kaThozza."

Note that even in this form variety is achieved by the enumeration of surnames of the victims, mention of different places and mention of the begetter in the last verse.

Shaka's poet further introduces another type of verse in which no mention is made of any name but using the usual verb "wadla", he plays on the words. In ten verses he repeats:

"Wathi edle ezinye wadla ezinye,  
Wathi esadle ezinye wadla ezinye", etc.

Repetition in Zulu, skilfully handled, does not

result in monotony on account of the possibility of varying pitches and sometimes tones.

There is still another variety found in Ngoza's praise-poem in which the poet uses repeatedly the enclitic "na" with great effect:

"Uwuzwile umkhosi na,  
Bewuhlaba na - eSilutsheni na,  
Bethi amadoda ayaphela no".

The poet, in the characteristic Snakan stanza, introduces the subject, deals with it in the following verse and in the final verse concludes. Acquaintance with the semantics of the Zulu language will show that "no" in the last verse suggests the urgency of the matter consistent with the idea in the last verse.

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#### INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS.

Praise-poems of the Kings, of minor characters and a few lyrics composed on birds and royal homes shall be analysed in order to give a comprehensive idea of the poetry of the age.

#### Phakathwayo (1783 - 1818).

##### Life History:

Phakathwayo succeeded his father, Khondlo, after he had successfully defended his right to rule against his brother, Nomo, who claimed that seniority of age implied seniority of rank. He was one of the most powerful rulers of Nguniland. When Shaka was threatened by Zwide, after calling the Ndwandwe King

an old cow-hide, he sought the protection of Phakathwayo. When Phakathwayo refused him that protection, Shaka invaded his country. He had, moreover, insulted Shaka by calling him an immature boy. Shaka won the battle. A mysterious thing happened, his neck was thereafter twisted and his brothers, who hated him, finally killed him. The following day it was announced, by Shaka himself, that Phakathwayo had died, and he blamed Phakathwayo's brothers for it.

### Analysis.

Phakathwayo was also a rainmaker. Although he was on the Qwabe throne before Shaka, his praise-poem belongs to the Shakan period in spirit. It falls on the borderline between the pre-Shakan era and the Shakan era. Qwabe poetry is, especially from Khondlo, essentially heroic and full of poetic force.

The hero of the poem is depicted as going to war and always ready to fight; his enemies are afraid of him, for he is:

"Induku yomntungwa onzima,  
Abezizwe bayibuka bayibalekela".

The poet relates his military campaigns in which he conquered almost all the tribes. The events related are all of a heroic nature. He is:

"Imamba igcwalele ngoMntimona,  
Iya da umkhondo kaNjonjo".  
"Indlovu kaPhambana yangoba ezinye,  
Indlovu ebuye ngombhoko eNtwashini".

The heroism related is referred to definite situations. It, however, <sup>still</sup> lacks the characteristic flow of the mid-Shakan poetry. The ideas are incoherent. The eroticism (vulgar type) of the pre-Shakan era appears in his praise-poem in the form of an inherited

phrase from Ekondlo's praise-poem. The metaphor used in some verses is decorative, e.g.

"Omabala azizinge sengathi abekiwe".

This idea bears no relation to the preceding set of ideas or the succeeding.

Phakathwayo's praise-poem retains the romanticism of the previous age, e.g.

"Uyanga phuma ngoJubisa bakotho,  
Abazindla hodwa bazokugayekoya".

Note the difference between this stanza and the  
mid -  
stanza of the Shakan era:

"Langa phuma bakotho abakwaZulu,  
Abazizwe kodwa bazokubalekela".

#### PHAKANE KAMACINGWANE (1792 - 1845)

##### Life History:

He was the son of the powerful Macingwane. He was born . . . after . . . his father had been expelled by Shaka's armies from the Mhunu's original district. After wandering amongst hostile tribes, his father, Macingwane, decided that they should go back to their original home as Shaka's vassals. Macingwane was eaten up at eLangeni hill by those who had become cannibals during the Zulu wars. Mfusi and

Phakade finally settled in their original home. Shaka, however, was unappeased. He killed Mfusi, and Phakade was saved only by changing his identity. He was finally crushed by a punitive expedition sent by Mpande.

Analysis:

The poet starts by mentioning the fact that Phakade was intelligent. His praise-poem is loaded with the aggressive spirit of the age. Throughout the poem his bravery is extolled. It also contains many facts of history. The poet uses the form of the third person to establish the happy distance between the praiser and the praised.

He enumerates a number of people whom the poet says were killed by Phakade. It was this Phakade who was said to be:

"Weza naye uNgotshana kwaFayintaba,  
Weza naye uMaqandela kwaFayintaba,  
Weza noNzakana ngaseMabeleni,  
Weza naye uBucubucu ngaseMabeleni,  
Weza noNyonyoba khona eMabeleni,  
UPhakade odla izinkomo zabaHwebu,  
Waye wazethula kwaHanise ngaseMabunwini".

The poem, nevertheless, tends to be subtle without being very poetic and has a negligible number of striking images.

Another interesting aspect of this praise-poem is the identification made of Phakade and the members of the Zulu Royal family, who had become supreme in Nguniland. He is like Senzangakhona:

"Ilanga likaJama liphume linsizwa  
ngakwaMpingana,  
Lathi liphakathi kweNdiki noMaphopho  
lansansa."

"UNodumenlezi onjengowakwa,engwa".

The poet enumerates all historical events which occurred during his reign without appearing to be cataloguing them.

### SHAKA (1790 - 1828).

#### Life History:

Enough has been said about Shaka to give the reader an idea of what kind of a man he was. He travelled widely enough and suffered long enough to develop a broad mind. He was proud and sensitive. Continuous humiliation in his youth fired him with the ambition to "devour" all the rulers and make himself supreme in Nguniland. His greatness can only be appreciated when we consider that at the time he assumed kingship of the Zulu clan, the Zulus were a small tribe, depending on others for protection. His task was titanic. By great military skill he managed to conquer territories near and far. He made himself one of the greatest rulers in Africa - comparable to Attila in military skill or to Alexander the great. These great military achievements stimulated poetry and music.

#### Magelwana.

A word should be said about Shaka's court poet, whose name, at least, happens to be known to us. Magelwana is the greatest traditional poet. There is very little that is known about him except that he was Shaka's court poet. It is related that whilst reciting poetry he used to beat the ground to emphasise the rhythm of his poetry. His contribution to Zulu literature

cannot be overestimated. He perfected the stanza-form. His poetry contains much that is admirable, as the analysis of Shaka's eulogy shows.

Analysis:

The poet in a highly pictorial language extols the bravery of Shaka and those national events associated with him. Note that although the poet praises his bravery, he is not praising Shaka the person, but Shaka the national hero. Thus he does not give tedious details of how Shaka killed those he killed. He gives their names and says just enough about the events.

Shaka's conquests are like a wild fire, says the poet. Nobody can stand this fire, even powerful chiefs like Phakathwayo have been destroyed. As soon as armies appear, women leave their hoes and grain baskets in the fields and flee. He is:

"Uzulu lizayo khwezani abantwana,  
Ngabadala bodwa abazozibalekela".

He is depicted as spreading his influence everywhere. He is the asylum of the powerful Kings like Zihlandlo. He does not fight like former rulers who left their enemies if they fled, but he is:

"Umxhoshi womuntu amxhoshele futhi,  
Ngimthande exhosha uZwide ozalwa uLanga,  
Emthabatha lapho liphuma khona,  
Emsingisa lapha liphala liphona khona".

He is the dread of the country:

"USiSwane - hQalele".

The poet gives a series of names of the people whom Shaka conquered, Phungashe, Sondaba, Macingwane,

Mangcengeza, Dladlana, Xaba, Gambushe and Faku. He realises that it would be monotonous if he enumerated all of them at the same time. After all, they too were conquered at different times. He talks about Shaka's merits. Thereafter, he constructs the most artistic and most effective stanza in all Zulu poetry, deriving it from Dingiswayo's verse:

"Ngithi ngisadle ezinye ngadla ezinye".

He does not say specifically which nations were conquered, but to show how numerous the conquered were, he repeats the verse (ten times):

"Othe edle ezinye wadla ezinye,  
Nathi esadle ezinye wadla ezinye".

(Note that the poet no longer refers to conquered individuals but to nations. Shaka was 'eating' nation after nation).

The poet is carried away in ecstasy and freely indulges in romanticisms:

"Umesongo-mahle! Inkanyane Yenkomo!"

There is no time to waste on such personal references, the poet hurries to extol Shaka's elusiveness and his bravery that has been a boon to the nation. He has conquered Makhondo, Mzikazi, and Myanga. He leaves all houses of his enemies ablaze wherever he passes:

"Omba ebasa echiya anaklaba".

He confiscated all the cattle at Zwide's and drove them to his house at Bulawayo:

"Kwakungasakhali-nkomo kwaNtombazane,  
Inkomo yayisikhala kwaBulawayo".



The poet likens Shaka to a thunderbolt that brought untold destruction to Zwile's troops. He enumerates twelve relatives of Zwile whom Shaka captured. The poet builds up Zwile's prestige by garlanding his name with the names of the famous relatives. The idea being that if Zwile was so powerful Shaka was almost super-human to have been able to destroy him. He calls on Shaka to halt, using the negative technique actually implying that he should go on.

The poet frequently varies domestic scenes with national events. This he does, no doubt, in order not to tire the mind with the narration of military events. The poet says Shaka became 'married' to Zwile's sister, whom he had captured after conquering Zwile.

The infinity of Shaka's conquests is inexhaustible, now and then the poet returns to them. The enumeration of the conquered pleases the poet and also fills the nation with pride and reverence for the King.

Note that there is frequent use of compound nouns, e.g. USihlangu-vuthuk' indaba, uSiphepho-shunguza, uMasukwana-kuze. Note also that the poet uses different verbs in the stanzas pointing out those whom Shaka conquered. The verbs used are 'eat', 'venture forth' and 'come with'.

After a long interval the poet repeats his perfected stanza referring to endless conquests. He achieves variety by the use of a different subjectival concord in the first word of each verse:

"Yathi isachla ezinye yadhla ezinye,  
Ithi isadhle ezinye idhle ezinye".

The poet realises that if he goes beyond five verses the stanza would lose its effect because our minds are no longer as startled by it as when we first heard it. He realises, however, its artistic merit hence he repeats the stanza.

In the next stanza his voice is almost suffocated by the greatness of Shaka. He says of him:

"Ongangezwe lakhe omkhulu kakhulu!!  
Ongangezintaba ezinde!  
Ongangezondude!  
Ongangesihlala esisokhalwenik kuMakhwazi!  
Esasihlal'uNdwandwe namaNxumalo".

Thereafter the poet breaks the monotony of <sup>the</sup> usual direct method by making an address to an imaginary figure. The poet breaks down and weeps with inner joy that springs from the feeling that he is in touch with infinity. He says in the most tender words:

"Ungisize Maphitha noNgqengelele,  
Umnike-nkomonye ... afunde ukukleza  
Umnike ukhanda lokuzimbela".

The joy of looking after infinity as if he possessed it as his own cannot last long, soon he realises that he is a dot in the universe, he is suddenly filled with fear:

"UNdaba ngiyameba, ngimuka naye,  
Ngimbuka kwehla izinyembezi,  
Kube sengathi ngibuka isihlala somdlebe".

The poet builds up for the climax by mentioning that Shaka symbolises infinity:

"Ongangezintaba ezinde".

Even after the climax of his ecstasy he cannot get over the greatness he has beheld. He desperately tries to recapture it:

"UNdaba ulududu emanzulumeni,  
 Ugungubele njengolwandle,  
 Lona kuze kuse lugubhelana,  
 Isidlangudlandlu esinjengendlebe yendlovu,  
 Ongangencumbe yamabel'angadliwa,  
 Ongangembiza yamashongololo,  
 Uyisilo! uyiNgwe! uyiNgonyama!  
 Uyindlondlo! uyindlovu!"

His attempt fails because greatness cannot be recaptured, he is drowned in it. It is only when he gains control of his emotions again that we feel greatness rumbling under his verse. Shaka is:

"Sidlukula-dlwedlwe siyadla sidlodlobele,  
 Sibeke izihlangu emadolweni".

In these verses one is able to perceive at least the outline of Shaka's form.

When the poet says:

"Izulu eladuma emampondweni,  
 Phezu kukaFaku umntakaNgqungushe",

he is depicting Shaka's greatness with such skill that one is deluded into thinking that his sympathy was with Faku. Technically it is true, for he is implying that his sympathies are with him when he has to meet so dreadful an enemy. In Zulu 'mtaka' is used with the feeling of affection.

The characters in Shaka's praise-poem are shown as running away or being completely wiped out by the armies of Shaka. There are unpoetic repetitions which it is clear were not made by the original composer, but by the reciter from whom the author recorded them. The repeated stanzas are not according to any artistic law, but merely stanzas which the reciter might have forgotten that he had already recited.

The poet never runs short of facts, in fact he has continually to provide breathing space and to

avoid crowding his material. He composes with confidence and originality. One never feels that the praise is unjustified because the poet substantiates his assertions. The poem became an eternal inspiration to the nation and the youth of the country.

### DINGANE (1807 - 1840).

#### Life History:

Dingane succeeded Shaka as the King of the Zulus. We know nothing about him as a young man. He did not have the same trials as Shaka, nor did he have the same sharp intellect and military ability. One thing certain about him is that he was ambitious. It was he, together with Mhlangana assisted by Princess Mkabayi, who planned the murder of Shaka.

He later, together with the same aunt with whom he had planned the murder of Shaka, treacherously planned the murder of his accomplices, Prince Mhlangana and Mbopha. The latter did the actual killing of Shaka. After that he carried out an unprecedented type of purging. He killed many members of his family to avoid any possibility of rivalry. He also killed those of Shaka's friends, whom he could lay his hands upon.

He took up the throne at the time when the dark cloud of European invasions was imminent. Shaka had realised that Europeans had superior arms and had made attempts to learn from them. The Boers had arrived and were asking for land. The missionaries had asked for permission to preach the Gospel. The

English had already established themselves in Natal. All these factors needed a great statesman to manipulate events to the best advantage of the country. Dingane was not such a statesman.

There was something panicky about all his actions. He died an unhappy man, pursued and hated by his own people. If Dingane had been as statesmanlike as Dingiswayo, his country would have survived the dangers of the times.

#### Mshongweni:

There is nothing known about Mshongweni except that he was Dingane's court poet. He was a great poet as the eulogy on Dingane shows. His main contribution to Zulu literature is the highly analytic style. He was a brave poet. He criticised Dingane for his misdeeds without fear of gaining disfavour from him. In so doing he voiced public opinion.

#### ANALYSIS

The poet starts off by commenting on the deed that made <sup>Dingane</sup> win the throne. Dingane is depicted as tall and dark. He is not like Shaka who fought his own battles. He is in fact a coward.

"UNomashikizela uMahly<sup>9</sup>'impi yakhe".

He is not just a decorated butterfly like most pre-Shakan rulers, but an aggressive type.

The poet points to Dingane's treacherous nature:

"Isiziba esinzenzo sinzonzobele,  
Siminzisa umuntu ethi uyageza".

He is like a quiet, deep pool that drowns a man who is innocently bathing.

Dingane is not very aggressive for he is:

"Imbuzi kaDambuza benoNdlela,  
Abayibambe ngandlebe yabekezela,  
AyinjengekaMdlaka ngaseNtshobozeni,  
Yen'ayibambe ngadlebe,  
Yadabula yaqeda amadoda".

Here a comparison is made between Dingane and Shaka. Dingane as the poet says is not as aggressive as Shaka.

Dingane is likened to a bitter plant. The fact that he was not aggressive does not necessarily mean that he was docile. He conquered Mgqeheni and Mandeku of the Mlambo clan. The poet makes reference to the fact that he allowed his people to marry when they chose to, contrary to Shaka's policy.

"Umalamulela!  
Owalamulela abafazi namadoda,  
Walamulela izintombi namasoka".

These events, important as they are socially, are not of great national importance. The element of rejection runs throughout the poem. Dingane is:

"Indiha lebabayo njengesib<sup>h</sup>aha".

OR

"Uvezi ngimfumene bemzila ngafike ngamudla,  
Kanti ngizifa~~ka~~ iloyi esiswini".

The poet states that he had a big and opulent body even during the time of great famine. Times were indeed changing, and changing rapidly, if the plenty that there had been in the previous reign could now be threatened by famine.

Dingane's gigantic size interests the poet; it is physical hugeness rather than heroic greatness.

The heroic greatness of Shaka cannot fade so soon, the Zulus are still a powerful nation. So he says of Dingane, who still holds control over huge armies:

"Ofingqe amehlo ethunzini lentaba,  
Ebengangabazingeli bakwaMavela,  
Ebebezingela izimbongolwana".

Nevertheless, gone is the security of the old days. Gone is the voice of confidence. The Boers had already sent an emissary to the King asking to be allowed to settle; the very 'swallows' of whom Shaka had prophesied. Indeed Dingane was under these circumstances justifiably uneasy:

"Indlovu ekulala kuqwanbayiya,  
Ezinye ziyalala ziyathokoza".

He has not been paralyzed, however, he still can fight effectively, hence:

"Uphondo lwendlovu uMashiqela,  
Lushiqela uMadianga ngasoPasimba,  
Inhlabathi yoNdi noKhahlamba,  
Ngifice abakwaMalandela beyihlela,  
Nami ngafika ngahlala phansi ngahlela".

Note the use of 'lowering' consonants 'ndo', 'ndlo', 'dla' to express a hard and forced action. Dingane is unfortunate. He is:

"Umsuthu owadla izinyosi zemukela,  
Abanye bezidla ziyazalela".

In the characteristic Shakan triumphal stanza the poet enumerates the names of all the great people who were related to Mashobana, whom Dingane captured. Women were not spared, unlike Dingiswayo, who commanded his soldiers to take women back to their homes for, as he said, he did not fight women but men. The wives and the daughters of Mashobana were captured. There are in the stanza thirty-one characters enumerated

in a stretch whom Dingane is said to have captured and killed. Although the poet tries to vary the stanza by the use of the verb "za" in the first five verses, and using the verb "dla" in the rest, the stanza is too long to be without monotony. He has made a cult of enumerating the names of the victims. It is no more an effective poetic technique combining form and meaning.

The poet is not unaware of the beauties of nature. He says of his King:

"Umancwaba wezwe lamaphethelo".

This gives special reference to places occupied by Mashobana and Nzwane of Zikodze, King of the Swazis. The Swazis, says the poet, were attacked very early in the morning and many prominent national figures were killed.

The poet also refers to the fact that he came back to kill Shaka whilst the armies were going to fight at KwaSoshangane, where they were killed by the poisonous plant - undlebe:

"Inkomo eyabuya yodwa kwaSoshangane,  
Obeyaye ngapha wabalekelwa,  
Nzokuswela qqqq elimsithayo".

He does not have the bravery of his brother, Shaka, for he is:

"Umalunguza izindonga kande ukuwela".

He is afraid, he does not, like his brother, plunge himself fearlessly into danger trusting his skill in fighting; he carefully examines everything before he commits himself. The poet continues in this strain wavering between praising Dingane and satirising him.





"Umjobadeli onjenjobubesi,  
 Odonswa ngezintaba ezimkhelekethe;  
 Injonjolo ezizibizolwandle,  
 Uvezi, uabhakazela!  
 Owobhakazela inkunzi yokwaziwayo,  
 U, amana! Umndawende wamakhaso".

There are a few passages which could be removed with good effect. On the whole the poem is good, the poet uses beautiful word pictures, e.g.

"Uathunduluka waseMqoma,  
 Izimpangele ziyawulabababela".

OR

"Insimu ethe ukuvuthwa, yakholoba,  
 Yakhanga izinyoni; zathi ukusuka,  
 Layidla amanhla, zashiya amazansi".

The structure of the poem though not as neatly interwoven as that of Shaka's praise-poem, is superior to the pre-Shakan type. It is 'relaxed' without being too simple or prosaic.

The sure and confident voice begins to falter. There is a note of doubt and a lack of trust that now and then appears in his eulogy.

Mahonjweni has aptly described the character of Tintane. He accurately draws the picture of the times in the most poetic language. He has a highly forceful style. The tremendous force of his personality manifests itself in his highly impressive verses. He is a poet of the age without being local in attitude. He is original and has the qualities of a great poet.

#### MINOR CHARACTER

It has been mentioned that minor character's praise-poems tend to copy the style of the praise-

poems of the prominent rulers of the time. Ideas from the major poems of the time were freely used in the minor poet's works. The wave of heroism penetrated all sections of society, hence poets of even minor people proudly mention the names of the victims of the praised.

Sihayo: "Indlovu eyanyathela itshe laqoka,  
Kuguqa uShiyane obezalwa uShuku,  
Kwabuy'amaHlubi".

Note <sup>that</sup> the first verse is taken from Shaka's praise-poem. Note also the desire for identification with the great figures in the following stanza:

Sihayo: "Ingonyama ebizwe ngezinye izingonyama,  
Obizwe nguShaka embelebeleni,  
Nabizwa nguDingiswayo wasoLuyengweni,  
Nabizwa nguMakanyane wasoNgonyameni".

#### SIHAYO KAMAPHULORA.

#### Life History:

Before he became ruler of the Nycobo tribe he had to fight for his right against his brother, Mzibi. Shaka installed him as a chief, but his brother eager to revenge himself against him, secretly told Shaka that the snuff that had been sent to Shaka by Sihayo was poisoned. Shaka sent an army to attack him, he fled and was drowned in the Tugela river.

#### Analysis:

His praise-poem has all the characteristics of the Shakan period. It has the characteristic force and the heroism of the age:

"Ingwane bayiknuze ngamaphandle ezimlondla,  
Yabangazeka,  
Bayinalaba ngamenxéba esijula,  
Bobe bayibangile".

There is much in Sihayo's praise-poem that is taken from Fiazano's praise-poem, e.g.

"Mnunduluka ovutse phekathi kompisi  
noThukela,  
amaqhikiza akwajulele ayawulalabelo".

OR

"Usindindwane sunginsimu yenxiwa".

OR

"Unyama yentini yawoSifangubo,  
Ngifike maNgcobo eyisila,  
Ngafike ngayidla mina sithandi senyama".

His praise-poem is full of beautiful images some of them very skilfully handled, e.g.

"Inyoni esuke nsonge yanlala nsonge,  
Ngisho ngezinsonge ngezoThukela".

#### XESIBE KANGWANE ZONDI.

#### Life History:

Nothing is known about him except what appears in his praise-poem.

#### ANALYSIS

His praise-poem has a heroic force. He is:

"Isilo esivuka enqabeni eSiholweni,  
Sabonwa nguNgoza umntakaMkhubukeli,  
Wasibone njalo ngoba sidla amadoda,  
Ngoba kwabo kakusavalwa,  
Kuvalwa ngamakhanda amadoda".

It must have been very flattering to him to hear the poet addressing him as:

"Umqandi wezindwendwe eziza kuye,  
Ngoba enqand'uShaka kaSenzangakhona".

He is the brave that killed other braves, braves like Nomazinyane of Nkole. The poem moves fast and the poet does not anywhere seem lost for appropriate words. However, the poem is fragmentary.

NOZINILANGA KASENLANGAKHOMA.

She was the daughter of Senzangakhona and was Shaka's half-sister. She was given to Mlandela of the Mthethwa tribe by Dingane.

In the single verse available, it is stated that she had beautiful eyebrows and as the daughter of the King she was allowed to sit at the assembly. She must have been intelligent, judging from her interest in what was then men's affairs only. The verse is a good example of the excessive economy of words that sometimes results in obscurity:

"UMashiya amahlelasemkhandlwini".

MSICHALANA UNINA KANALHOBOMA

The little that we know about her is what we can deduce from her praise-poem. She must have been a very generous woman. She was kind to the poor as well as to the rich.

UMOZI KASHAKA EMDELEBELWNI

This was one of the largest of his Royal Houses in Zululand. It is said that this poem was composed by Shaka himself. In this short piece, Shaka talks of the plenty that was at his Royal House:

"Umpondo zobekwa-phi,  
Zinga ziyabekwa phezu kwendlu ziyasinda,  
Zinga ziyabekwa phezu kwesibaya ziyasinda".

Shaka does not pretend to be a great poet, his verses are choppy and he tends to use the proverbial style.

UMUZI KASHAKA KWADUKASA

This was one of the principal Houses of Shaka. It is where he lies buried.

There is only one verse available. The verse which is composed on things other than man shows a developing interest in all possible subjects of poetry.

GENERAL CRITICISM.

The style of Zulu poetry differs in pre-Shakan poetry from the style of Shakan poetry. In pre-Shakan poetry the poets do not take much trouble in their choice of words, hence their poetry is prosaic.

In Shakan poetry the style is vigorous and venement. The verses roll on to each other in a rhythmic sequence. The poets are more careful in the *arrangement* of words, selecting them on the basis of their effectiveness.

The abundance of material that necessitated lengthy poems confronted the poets with the need for style and variation in the composition of long poems. The poets answered this by introducing various forms of verse. In the following the poet varies his address from oblique to indirect, e.g.

"Umxoshi womuntu amxoshe futhi,  
Nginthandile exosha uZwide ozalwa uLanga".

Here the poet is talking as an observer; he is not addressing Shaka directly. The same is true of the stanza:

"Uyajabula mfazi waseNsuse,  
Wena uyawubona uManyelele,  
Ayobulala izitsana Zasencinaneni".

He addresses the happy woman of Mauze, to show that it is not only the poet who loves the praised person, but also others.

Note how poets use words with stark economy:

"Uvivi lungumnyama wokusa".

OR

"Uqambi lankomo uba zilahlekile,  
Ziyodliwa umdlebe kwaSoshengama".

The poet does not go to any trouble in explaining how the herd of cattle were lost. Note the use of the unusual form of the possessive "lankomo" instead of "lezinkomo", which would be colloquial and unpoetic; note also the use of "uba" instead of "uluba".

Poets also used unusual compound forms, e.g.

"ulpha-nkomo", "umdlala-andlovu". In order to set the material apart and avoid crowding the facts, the poet introduced laudatory stanzas in between factual stanzas.

The frequent use of repetition as a poetic device in Shakan poetry arose out of the need for artistry in the construction of long poems. The repetitions made were carefully placed so that they might serve a specific function in the poems.

The poet had to know a very large amount of historical facts. Dingane's poet, for instance, had to know all the people who were captured by the King's armies in his (Dingane's) campaigns against Mzilikazi, even including their personal histories.

Such historical changes made an impact on all members of society. Even ballad makers were filled with the same spirit of pride and nationalism; they celebrated national triumphs in their ballads:

"Ngahlangana noQebelengwana,  
Ephethe izinkongane ezakwalanga,  
Zingibona ngingenangubo,  
Sengibangwa nayizinjakazana".

It seems that the once powerful Langas were now a despised group and the lady of the ballad could not bear the humiliation from the "Langa dogs".

In gaining strength Shakan poetry lost the sweet mellowness of pre-Shakan lyricism. It lost contact with tender things.

These changes in style and in thought placed Zulu traditional poetry on a different poetic level. They followed a course of national development, which was succinctly expressed in poetry.

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CHAPTER VIITHE POST-SHAKA ERAIntroduction:

The golden age of Zulu poetry did not find conditions in the periods that followed favourable to its continuation. The manner in which Dingane assumed kingship of the Zulu nation was not in accordance with the high ideals of bravery. The act was one of treachery rather than of bravery.

Dingane did not kill Shaka because he wanted to perform a duty to the nation, nor was the nation behind him in what he did. It was for that reason that his reception by the people was cold. He had not endeared himself to them either by deeds of bravery or personal contact, as Shaka had. As a person he lacked the quick wittedness of Shaka and was primarily motivated by burning personal ambition.

His purge estranged the people from him.

He is:

"Uthakathi usibindi sanyama nakwabakvabo".

The poet sensing this fear in him, and the hatred of the people, dubbed Dingane a witch and a coward.

The people would rather have had Prince Mhlangane who, though not exceptionally brave, was more humane than Dingane. Conditions were such that a man who was more humane and more statesmanlike would have done greater good than a bloodthirsty soldier of mediocre intelligence.

Shaka did not have time to consolidate his conquests; his policy had not matured to one of peaceful conquest by diplomacy. He was young and hot-blooded. Such effete methods did not appeal to him; moreover, Shaka was an out-and-out soldier. Soldiers seldom make good statesmen. Had he lived longer, perhaps, he might have realised that bravery and heroism must be mellowed by a sense of proportion.

When Dingane came to the throne, his greatest fear was that of the Europeans. Campaigns that were carried out against other tribes were regarded by everybody as mere military exercises. Instead of dealing with the threat resulting from European pressures and internal dissensions tactfully Dingane antagonised everyone. These antagonisms finally brought disaster to the Zulu empire.

There is, in the poetry of this period, an escapism reminiscent of pre-Shakan poetry. Mpande, like his father is:

"Ubeba kalambe beba simuke,  
Singayi ebulguni, singayi ebulgunyana,  
Bapho abantu befa emziloni,  
Lapho abantu beyofa ukuluphala,  
Bafise okwezinyamazane".

The empire lost its all-powerful nature. Those who had been filled with restive fear of the Zulu armies

were afraid no longer; thus the song of Liphande runs:

"Inyoni yaphezulu, ualindazwe zinyane leNgwe,  
OMswazi kabasakwazi ukwethuka,  
Yeka izimpiso zakho".

The people's leadership was weak; as a result there was strife and uncertainty throughout the country.

#### Political Organisation:

Dingane made no revolutionary changes in the administration of the country when he ascended the throne. The Zulu state remained the same as in Shakan times. The King still remained the absolute ruler with the same tribal councils assisting him. There was no administrative machinery developed to cater for the vast state. Things remained essentially the same.

#### Historical Background:

The breakaway of Mphande from the Zulu kingdom in 1839 was the first great blow to the great Zulu state. The defeat of Dingane's armies at the Blood river battle was not so disastrous because, though defeated, he was still not crushed. The breakaway, however, meant that a large section of the Zulu army had increased the might of the enemy forces. This well-organised and well trained army that broke away became a potential danger to the Zulu state. The undivided loyalty of the members of the Zulu state now seems to be broken by the existence of the two sections. Those who were dissatisfied could easily take refuge across the Tugela where their friends were settled.

Dingane was harassed and pursued, so that those who remained loyal to him had to have very strong convictions. He was finally killed by the Swazis in 1840.

On his own instructions, those who were his followers joined the Mpande section. Three years after the installation of Mpande there was another breakaway when Prince Ngqungu was accused of sinister intentions against the King. Those who supported him fled into Natal with Mpande's aunt, Princess Mawa.

Mpande himself was a weak King, he utterly failed to maintain discipline in his own house. The result was that Prince Cetshwayo and Prince Mbulazi quarreled in his presence. A bloody battle was fought in 1856 at Ndondakusuka between the uSuthu party, adherents of Cetshwayo, and iziGqoza, Mbulazi's supporters. The uSuthu party was victorious. Prince Cetshwayo encouraged by this, further showed disrespect for his father by killing Mpande's wife for adultery. Her two sons, Mtona and Mgidlana, fled to Natal. There was further weakening of the Xulu kingdom on account of these family quarrels. These were very trying times, especially for a people who had been proud and confident and looked upon their rulers for leadership and good example. The undivided unity of the Shakan era was gone.

During the latter part of Mpande's reign, Cetshwayo virtually became the ruler; Mpande's "old age and feebleness had long made his kingship little more than formal" <sup>18</sup>. In 1861 the Natal government recognised Cetshwayo as the heir-apparent. In 1872 King Mpande

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18. Zulu Battle piece - Isandlwana by Sir Reginald Opland,

died and Cetshwayo asked Shepstone to come and install him. He was duly installed by Shepstone on condition that he did not kill anyone for minor offences and without trial, and he did not indulge in any aggressive acts. His installation by Shepstone was a significant act. It implied that he was subordinate to the laws imposed by an external power.

It is doubtful whether Cetshwayo himself had any intention of adhering to these conditions or even understood their implications fully. Instead of keeping them, "Cetshwayo set himself to revive and perfect the fighting machine which Shaka had created"<sup>19</sup> Marriage was strictly regulated, nobody could marry until he had "washed his spear in blood".

"In the early seventies, the instability of the existing equipose of white and black began to manifest itself beneath the peaceful surface. In Natal, especially, uneasiness deepened into anxiety, and anxiety into fear"<sup>20</sup> There was restlessness caused by land hunger, famine and droughts. In 1873 Mpende died.

Shepstone made the Boers in the Republics believe that Cetshwayo was thinking of invading the Republics. The result was that he was able to occupy the Republics without a single shot being fired.

In 1879 the famous battle of Isandlwana was fought between the British troops and the Zulus. Though at first the Zulus were victorious, the British troops finally won. Cetshwayo was banished to the Island of St. Helena

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19. op.cit. p.23.

20. ibid., 18, p.21.

Meantime his country was divided into small districts. "Wolsely, set about selecting his thirteen kings, his natural choices were mostly people whom the Zulus considered as traitors or renegades as they had served the British; and for this service they were rewarded by appointment to high positions".<sup>21</sup>

This was no encouragement to a poetry that had freed itself from blind eulogising of the individual. If an individual had to be praised, he had to be worthy of praise. It was obvious that the national cause was not served or furthered by these events. When Cetshwayo returned he could do nothing to change this state of affairs. He was apportioned his part of land like other kinglets, who were not even of royal blood. In these circumstances poetry declined in output. It had to rely even for its inspiration on the glories of the past, hence the frequent identification with heroes of the past in this era.

Dinizulu made an attempt to carry out his father's policy and claim his right as the ruler of all the Zulus. He was unsuccessful. The 1898 war broke his power completely. He was banished to the Island of St. Helena, and later returned to administer a part of the Nongoma district. Even in his father's reign, the ruler's powers were curbed and a Resident Commissioner was installed with magistrates who had the power to summon even the King himself, a thing unheard of in Zululand.

When Dinizulu died he was followed by Solomon as the Paramount Chief of the Zulus. The 1906 uprising gave the old national spirit a chance to express itself but it did not last long. However, it did stimulate heroic poetry.

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21- "Shaka's Country" by T.V. Bulpin. p.186.

Characteristics:

(1) Imitative Nature of Post-Shakan Poetry:

Traditional poetry after the Shakan era began to lose the outstanding originality it had had in the Shakan era. The poets of this period tended to imitate the poetical pieces of the Shakan era. The incidence of borrowed verses is extremely high. Imitation in itself is not a great sin in poetry, provided that it is creative. In that case poets do not merely copy poetical pieces word for word, but improve on the poetry from which they imitate or develop new ideas. This is exactly what Post-Shakan poetry failed to do. Poets in this era tended to reproduce the heroic verses word for word. In some cases the difference between the borrowed verse lies in names mentioned only.

There was a tendency to copy not only ideas but also form, without any attempt at reconstruction. This was sometimes extended so far that in short pieces, poetic techniques justifiable only in long poems were used. They were used merely because they happened to be impressive in the long poems.

The existence of this tendency to imitate should not be exaggerated. It springs from a desire to identify the praised one with prominent figures, a desire not unknown even in Shakan poetry.

Imitation and plagiarism as such occur very frequently in the post-Shakan era, e.g.

Post-Shakan: "amshaya phansi koludumayo,  
Amakhubalo adliwa nguGubazi;  
...eza noThobela indodana kaSilosengubo,  
amshaya phansi koludumayo;  
Amakhubalo eze adliwa nguGubazi".

Compare with the stanza on Zihlandlo:

Shakan: "Wadla uBodeyana kaDlomo,  
Amakhubalo adliwa nguMazongwa;  
Wadla uMashukumbela kwabakwaGwabe,  
Amakhubalo adliwa nguZeyise adliwa nguNsele".

- - -

Post-Shakan: "Wadla indlovu enesihlonti kwabakafise,  
Amakhubalo adliwa nguye kwabakaMpande;  
Wadla uShonkweni obezalwa nguMpande,  
Amakhubalo adliwa nguye kwabakaMpande,  
Wadla uMantantashiya obezalwa nguMpande,  
Amakhubalo adliwa nguye kwabakaMpande".

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Pre-Shakan: "UDaba kangakanani,  
Ngoba nasenhlamvini yomkhonto angenela".

- - -

Post-Shakan: "UDinnzulu kangakanani,  
Ngoba nasenhlamvini yomkhonto angenela".

- - -

Post-Shakan: "Umzimba kangakanani,  
Negatsheni lomuthi angenela,  
Ngisho nenhlamvini yesihhamu angenela".

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Post-Shakan: "Wamudla ubani ezalwa ngubani,  
Angithandi ukumusho,  
Uma ngimusho kungaduma isililo", etc.

- - -

Shakan: "Yathi isadle ezinye yadla ezinye,  
Ithi isadle ezinye yadla ezinye", etc.

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## (2) Pre-Shakan Affinities in Post-Shakan Poetry:

The post-Shakan era shows strong affinities with pre-Shakan poetry. There is a sudden emergence of ideas of the pre-Shakan period. It is not only a matter of the ideas but also the lyrical spirit resembling that of the pre-Shakan period that permeates the poetry of this era.

One often comes across romanticisms of both a vulgar and an amorous type. The heroic spirit begins to suffer a decline. The result is a lyrical-heroic type of poetry. The following examples clearly illustrate this fact:



Heroic:

"Ilanga elimdondoza likaMadlala,  
Elaphuma amakhwezi abikelana,  
NakwaNtombase nakwaLanga".

Dingiswayo  
(Pre-Shakan).

"Inkwenkwezi ephume izilwane zabikelana,  
Kubikelana ikwezi nesilimela".

Mpande.  
(Post-Shakan)

Romanticisms:

"Udada dabula amanzi mangezimpiko".

"Unkomo zidla ifabe ziliphindelela,  
Ubuhlalu obuhle bawoNomthimba,  
Ithusi elihle lawoButhikane".

"Yoza ngange umlomo,  
USomnandi kaName".  
Dibinyika.

"USomnandi woza ngange  
Ngange umlomo, umlomo uyongiwa kithi  
kwaMelandela".  
Mpande.

"Weza nezindwendwe ezintathu,  
Olunye olwezintombi,  
Olunye olwabafazi,  
Olunye olwezingane".  
Mganu kaNocada.

OR

"Weza neqhikiza ngaseLangeni,  
Weza neqhikiza ngaseLangeni,  
Weza neqhikiza ngaseLangeni".  
Msholozzi kaMentomela.

"Thanga mbukwane,  
Umathanga asibukwa Zulu".

Physical Characteristics:

"Usitho zimpungu zimpomponono,  
Ngizifenisa nezikaMaduna,  
Obezalwa kini kwaZulu".

"Madevu ayingoqe ngokugoqa".  
Cetshwayo.

"Ubafuphi!  
Ubafuphi ongube zinyathelwakho,  
Ingathi nezabade ziyanyathelwa".  
Dibinyeka.

At a later stage of the post-Shakan period poets show preference for ideas, not from the pre-Shakan period, but from the Shakan period. This

was on account of re-emergence of the spirit of nationalism which desired a return to the Shakan type of life.

(3) The Nostalgic Feeling for the Past:

Post-Shakan poetry is characterised by a nostalgic feeling for the past. This is especially true of the poetry of the Cetshwayo period. It was natural that poetry should interpret the conditions this way because the Zulus were attempting to rise again under the leadership of Cetshwayo.

There are accordingly numerous cases of identification with the heroes of the past. All along people had waited for someone to lead them and make them a powerful nation once more, hence the poet says of Mphande:

"Ingcuma elele phansi,  
Kanti #saciya izimpondo".

Cetshwayo himself is identified with Shaka:

"Umzingeli kaShaka benoDingane,  
Uze uzingele ubuye neno mtakaNdaba".

"Igqamqamu likaShaka,  
Elingamlilo oshayo,  
Bethi kusha umlilo,  
Kanti kuvutha umuzi waseKuweleni".

He is as ferocious as Shaka:

"Impunzi kaNdaba,  
Bayibambhe ngandlebe ende,  
Phezu kukaLangakazi,  
Yadlamuka yadla amadoda".

It was the frustration that the realities of the situation presented that drove the minds of the people back to a happy past when they were a free and proud nation.

Poetry indulged in exhortations and cajolements to induce people to remember their great past. Even in their music one comes across such pieces as:

"Izwe lakithi lizulelwa zinyoni,  
Izwe lakithi lizulelwa ngamanqe;  
Wo ibaye, wo ibuye".

Even after the power of the Zulus had been broken the poets praise any efforts, however meagre, made to restore the glory of the past:

"Ithole lakoMsweli,  
Elenyise liguqile".

#### (4) Animal Symbolisation in Post-Shakan Poetry:

It is significant that in Post-Shakan poetry identification is made with both gentle and ferocious animals. There is a greater preference for symbols of gentle animals than in the Shakan era.

Note the following examples:

Of ferocious animals:-

"Ukhozi olumnyama-luzalele,  
Phakathi kwamahlathi amabili,  
Phakathi kweDlinza neShowe".

"Isilwane esimyama naseshobeni".  
Mpande.

"Ukhozi lukaNdaba olumaphiko abanzi,  
Amafushane luyawasibekela".

"Uqhamu njengelangabi,  
Ithole eliphuze phezu kwendlu kaNandi,  
Layishisa imizi yemaVimbela".

"Impungushe eyeqa umgibaniso,  
Ezinye zibanjwe ngayizolo".

"Ingwenya engenamazinyo ngoba ebushелеlezi,  
YawoMhlamvuse".

"Isilo esimaduna sakoTshana,  
Esikhangala abantu badamuka nolwandle,  
Nanemuhla basadukile".

Of gentle animals:-

"Inyoni esuke kwaZulu,

"Impunzi kaNdaba,  
Bayibambe ngandlebe ende,  
Phezu kukaLangakazi,  
Yadlamuluka yadla amadoda".

"Inyoni emhlophe ihlangabeza inyoni  
emhlophe iza nomagagana".

"Inkonyane ebuwaba busegilweni,  
Ezinye izinkonyana zibuwaba busemaphikweni".

Unlike the pre-Shakan romantic images, the poet uses images that depict aggression or some type of action, e.g.

"Igwalagwala likaMenzi elisuka eNtumeni,  
Kwaye kwabeja iNdulinde kwebeja uThukela".

(This refers to the movements of his armies that spread destruction and bloodshed from Ntumeni to Ndulinde).

The same could be said for the following verses:

"Impunzi kaNdaba,  
Bayibambe ngandlebe ende,  
Phezu kukaLangakazi,  
Yadlamuluka yadla amadoda".

Note that romantic picture images such as the use of "impunzi" are now related to action.

##### (5) The Poetical Philosophy of the Post-Shakan Era:

There are two things that are obvious in post-Shakan poetry, namely, a tendency to appeal to the past for inspiration; not just inspiration to compose but inspiration to fight against existing conditions. Poetry transcended the existing conditions in so far as it nurtured the hope for better times, so that man was not left in a state of utter despair. It provided a unifying philosophy which made the individual act and feel as one with those who thought and felt like him, thereby generating feelings of common sympathy.

Thus poetry of this period gave confidence to those who remained loyal to the state by constantly idealising the past. It assured the heroes that

that those ideals would at one time or another be actualised. Its note was by no means apologetic, it merely voiced its disappointment at the state of affairs, and believed very strongly that the people for whom it was speaking had a future.

In addition it assured those who remained loyal that the things for which they had made <sup>a</sup>sacrifice, were precious and valuable. Those who were unfaithful in these trying times were held up to ridicule and scorn.

In the chaotic disturbed interim period between the great Shakan period and some time when the Zulu nation would once again arise, poetry nurtured a memory of the ideal Shakan personality; for these were trying times requiring immense readjustments in society.

The highest achievement of the post-Shakan poetical philosophy is that it became a synthesis of the pre-Shakan and the Shakan ideas. The lyricism of the pre-Shakan period was strengthened by the heroic spirit of the Shakan period. The basic cause of this lyricism was that the King from whom all poetry drew its inspiration was of a peaceful type. He was therefore almost identical to the romantic pre-Shakan figures.

He was like them:

"Inkosi yakwankosikazi".

He is frequently associated with woman and not with war, hence he is:

"Ubeba kamame beba simuke,  
Usomnandi woza ngange,  
Ngange unlomo, unlomo uyongiwa  
Kithi kwaMalandela".

The result of these two powerful forces i.e. romanticism and nationalism was a synthesis which fused them into a heroic-lyrical concept of life. Whilst poetry was not original as in the Shakan period, it still was not as lacking in ideas as in the pre-Shakan period.

(6) Foreign Objects and Foreign Vocabulary in post-Shakan Era

There was an increase in the use of foreign vocabulary, indicating contact with the Europeans. At this stage, however, foreign literary forms had not influenced Zulu poetry. The foreign vocabulary that is used merely covers foreign objects. Note the following examples:

"Umhlophe wakithi waseThawini,  
Ekade liwagingqa amanye amathole".

"Usinakanaka sazincwadi,  
Ziye zalotshwa kwabamhlophe,  
Ngoba ziye zalotshwa kuLukazi emaBunwini,  
Isinakanaka esazi izincwadi eziphuma oThaka".

"Uphuza umlaza ngameva"

"Imamba ehamba igijima,  
Phezu kwamapansela".

Usimele ngebuku eMpembeni".

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PHASE I OF THE POST-SHAKAN ERA

MPANDE PERIOD

Introduction:

The poetry of this phase differs from the poetry of the second phase in that it is mainly lyrical. It lacks the vigour and heroic vehemence so characteristic of the Shakan period.

MPANDE KASENZANGAKHONA (1840-1872)

Life History:

It was Mpande who, of all the sons of Senzangakhona, lived to perpetuate the line of the Zulu Royal family. He was the youngest of the two sons of Sengangakhona, who sat on the Zulu throne. He was physically weak. It is said that it was for this reason that Dingane did not kill him when he was killing all his brothers. Incidentally Gqugqu also was spared.

When Dingane heard of the invading armies of the Boers, after he had killed the sixty-nine Boers, he sent a messenger to tell his brother, Mpande, to send all his troops to him. Mpande did not feel disposed to do this. He fled across the Tugela with his followers and took refuge at the Boer Camp. In 1840, Pretorius proclaimed Mpande the King of the Zulus. He had no great military ambitions. After Dingane's death he became the ruler of a united Zulu state. He died a natural death, unlike his two brothers, Shaka and Dingane.

ANALYSIS

The poet begins by mentioning the most outstanding event in the life of Mpande, namely, his trek across the Zululand border:

"UNowelamuva wawoShaka,  
UMsimude owavela ngesilulu,  
Phakathi kwamaNgisi namaQadasi".

He goes on to say Mpande is:

"Umdayi owadaya izwe ngommese".

In many parts the poem resembles the prosaic praise-poems of Ndaba:

"UNdaba kaSonani bathi 'Wonani',  
Abantu bahlezi nemihlambi yabo,  
EyawoMagabela wakoGabela".

The poet does not take much trouble to make the verses poetic. There are obvious repetitions that are unpoetic. However, he beautifully likens Mpande to a coppery staff that remained whilst others were being broken.

The poet mentions only a few events of national importance. There is a growing sentimentalism as symbolised by the word "tears". The enumeration of the rivers is monotonous because the crossing of the river is of very little national significance, and is not associated with any national event. In another verse of the same type, he enumerates the different Houses he raised up, indicating the constructive policy of Mpande. The poet does not vary the verse, <sup>but</sup> uses the repetitive verse form. (Note the difference between the two stanzas, indicating a change in attitude).

"Ilanga elimudondoza likamudlala,  
Elaphuma amakhwezi abikelana,  
NakwaNtombase nakaLanga".

Dingiswayo.  
(Pre-Shakan)

"Inkwenkwezi ephume izilwane zabikelana,  
Kubikelana ikhwezi nesilimela".

Mpande.  
(Post-Shakan)

In the second example romanticism for its own sake is indulged in. In the first example, the verses have a concreteness that relates metaphor to facts of historical importance. The desire to recapture the fading enthusiasm of the heroic age is aptly depicted by the poet when he calls on all to run in all directions to announce that:



"Ukhozi olumnyama luzalele,  
Phakathi kwemahlathni amabili,  
Phakathi kweDlinza neShowe".

He would like to see Mpande a brave and heroic character, so he depicts him as such. He almost falls into the pre-Shakan error of indulging in unverified statements about the bravery of the praised <sup>person</sup> / He continues in this self-deceptive manner and composes verses that refer to characters that desire war rather than characters that are triumphant in war.

"Nithi impi ayibizwa yithi,  
Nithi ibizwa nguMadela ngowakithi kweMalandela".

Taken up by this enthusiasm he uses a very beautiful action-image to point out the potential strength of the Zulus. He says of Mpande:

"Ingcuma elele phansi,  
Kanti esacija izimpondo".

He feels that a great nation cannot fall so quickly, so he assures himself that it will still rise again to its former greatness. There is still hope that the glory that now seems to be fading is only temporarily covered by a cloud, which will clear later. It is obvious, nevertheless, that dwelling on hopes means dwelling on generalities. The once mighty Zulu kingdom was by this time beginning to rely on faith rather than on its strength. The poet does not, as we would have expected, recount many heroic exploits. Some images, one feels, are merely decorative. They are not descriptive of qualities of the character praised, e.g.

"Isilwane esimnyama naseshobeni".

In the stanza that follows the poet expresses the heroic deeds with almost the same power and strength as

the Shakan poets. The occasions in which the soldiers showed their bravery were enthusiastically celebrated:

"Gqayi gqayi ngezulu elidumayo!  
 Lidume phezu kwaMaqongqo omabili;  
 Lazithatha izihlangu zeMajaha!  
 Lazithatha izihlangu zeNgcobinga!  
 EzawoDulela zodwa lizithanisele!  
 Lazithatha izihlangu zoMbelebele!  
 Lazithatha izihlangu zoDlambedlu", etc.

This refers to the war between the Mpande supporters and the supporters of Dingane.

In the characteristic heroic verse of the Shakan period, the poet enumerates about forty great heroes of the Zulu kingdom whom Mpande's armies "ate up". The enumeration of names from the same army regiments shows how little heroic material there was available. In Shaka's praise-poetry the poet enumerates names mostly of rulers of different countries whom he "ate up". In Dingane's praises the poet tends to enumerate names of the heroes and their relatives, e.g. Mzilikazi, and the Swazi King. In Mpande's praises the poet enumerates names of victims from the same expedition, not victims from different expeditions. The slightest deed of heroism carries the poet away uncontrollably. No wonder then that where the poet relates military campaigns his poetry excels in beauty and strength:

"Wethi: 'Bantabami ningisize,  
 Ningiphathele indoda emtshamude!  
 Kanti indoda emtshamude uMalambule  
 emaNgwaneni!  
 Othe esabulele ingwe kwavuka impisi,  
 Impisi uMalambule kaSobuza.  
 Lalelani nangu umuntu umemezayo,  
 Umemeza sengathi uyalila,  
 Kanti uPhenduka uphuma eFihlweni koMalambule,  
 Uthi: 'Ngiza nayo mtakaJama ngiyibelethe".

Mpande's praise-poem has at certain points the excellencies of both the pre-Shakan poetry and Shakan poetry. One feels that the poet was doing all he could to capture the heroic spirit of the passing period. There were few military expeditions embarked on by Mpande, but of those few the poet makes full use. Mpande is no longer all-powerful. He has to respect the rights of the Boers. He is:

"UMpande ekazithandi izinkomo ezilotshwe  
ngencwadi,  
Ngoba izinkomo ezilotshwe ngencwadi  
ngezamaBhunu".

He belongs to the House renowned for bravery, so that whatever deeds of bravery he does are immediately associated with the great deeds of the House to which he belongs:

"Waphangela esihlangwini, wahloma,  
Ngoba eyiNkosi yakwaSihlangu".

OR

he is: "UKhozi lukaNdaba olumaphikw'abanzi,  
Amafushane luyawasibekela".

Mpande, besides being a heroic figure is a romantic figure. He is:

"Usomnandi waza nqenge umlomo,  
Umlomo uyongiwa kwaMalandela;  
Ngingaze njibe nomngandeni".

Like most kings of the heroic age, Mpande is identified with mighty animals like elephants and lions. He is unlike the aggressive elephant (Shaka) that is said to have turned and killed everybody, but is a more 'sensitive' elephant, says the poet.

The poet makes capital of the battle between King Dingane and Mpande at Maqongqo to show how brave Mpande's soldiers were.

The poet exhorts Mpande:

"Shaya ulahle wena ongangezulu,  
Lona lishaya lingabe lisaphinda;  
Uyabonakala uzalwa nguJama".

The praised is identified with a buck, and where identification is made with the lions and elephants one feels the aim is merely to laud rather than to make factual assessment of the King's worth. Mpande is a King of women:

"Inkosi yakwaNkosikazi".

and he does not like war for he is:

"Ubeba kaMame beba simuke,  
Singayi ebuNguni zasebuNgunyana,  
Lapho abantu beyokufa ukuluphala,  
Lapho abantu befela emzileni;  
Bafise owezinyamazane".

Mpande's eulogy is in parts of very high standard. The poet uses powerful language, and the poem has many impressive images. Throughout the poem is manifest an exhortatory spirit which frequently calls on all to bear in mind that they are members of a great nation.

#### DIBINYIKA KADLABA NAKWATONDI.

##### Life History:

After Dlaba, the father of Dibinyika, had been slain by the Boers, Dibinyika became the chief of the Zondis who were settled at the Zwartkop region. This is about all that is known about him.

##### Analysis:

His praise-poem contains the beauties of Shakan heroic poetry. His poet says he killed Nyengwa and Suntwa. There is, however, nothing extraordinarily heroic about him. The poet borrows a stanza from Mpande's praise-poem:

"Yoza ngange umlomo,  
USomnandi kaMame".

This poem bears some characteristics of pre-Shakan poetry. There are in parts beautiful romantic images and also a tendency to laud physical features.

Physical Features:

"Ubafuphi!  
Ubafuphi ongubo zinyathelwako,  
Ingathi nezabade ziyanyathelwa".

Romanticism:

"Udada dabula amanzi nangezimpiko".

"Unkomo zidla ifabe ziliphindelela,  
Ubuhlalu obuhle bawoNomthimba,  
Ithusi elinle lawoButnikane".

It is no compliment to Dibinyika that he is said to be:

"Usigubudu singamtungwa lo-nzima,  
Ongasazi angasibalekela,  
Thina bakwaKhangela sihleke silale phansi".

The poem is on the whole unconvincing, <sup>the sequence of</sup> ideas is broken. There is no attempt at linking them up into a comprehensive unit.

MAPHETHA KASOJIYISA

Life History:

He was King Mpande's chief induna. He was also the King's cousin. He is generally known for his viciousness. When Mpande died, he wanted to kill all Mpande's intimates to lay a "rag for the King"

ANALYSIS

The poet depicts him as brave:

"Uzishuqulu kaziqnikwa".

and wily:

"Impungushe eyeqa umgibaniso,  
Kziye sibanjwe nnyakolo".

He is vicious:

"Uhabula mhlehlo,  
Umhlehlo usibonwa yilanga".

The poet dwells on generalities, especially when he refers to his bravery. He nowhere makes mention of a particular situation wherein the type of quality that the poet says he possesses is derived.

This avoidance of historical events associated with individuals shows that historical material based on national triumphs was beginning to diminish. His praise-poem is shorter than the praise-poems of lesser figures of the post-Shakan times. The praise-poem is undoubtedly a fragment. It leaves much to be desired in its form and content.

#### Siyingili kaZinlandlo.

#### Life History:

After the death of his father, he settled in the southern part of the Illovo. He there built a house, which he named esiYehleri.

#### Analysis:

Like all Xhize poetry the praise-poem on Siyingili has the characteristic freshness of imagery.  
He is:

"Uqhamu njongelengabi!  
lthole eliphuze phezu kwendlu kaNandi,  
Layishisa imizi yamaVimbela".

The poet using the old Mkhize metaphor calls him:

"Inyoni esuke kwaZulu,  
Zayilandela zonke izinyoni".

This refers to the trek of the Mkhizes from Zululand, when they fled Dingane's wrath.

The poet then enumerates all the victims whom Siyingili killed, but they are not many. The days of large-scale war were gone. He is:

"Ingwenya engenamazinyo ngoba,  
ebushelelezi,  
YawoMalamvuse".

In beautiful word pictures the poet tells us how he escaped from his pursuers:

"Imlahla lomqawe nelonbelobele,  
Bathi bayaligawula, isimalal  
Bathi bayalichizela,  
Sepnuna-celeni inhubele lakitni".

The poem lacks the heroic dynamism so characteristic of the Shakan era. Although the names of victims are enumerated, the poet does not convince us that they were slain in battle. The word he uses seems to imply that he outwitted the victims rather than killed them in battle. They appear to have been driven to the precipice and not killed in a hand-to-hand combat.

"Wamshaya phansi koludumayo,  
Amakhubalo adliwa nguGubazi;  
Yeza Nothobela indodana kaSilosengubo,  
Wamshaya phansi koludumayo;  
Amakhubalo aze adliwa nguGubazi".

Compare with the stanza on Zihlandlo:

"Wadla u<sup>h</sup>odeyana kaDlomo,  
Amakhubalo adliwa nguMazonqwe;  
Wadla uMashukumbela kwabekwaGcwabe,  
Amakhubalo adliwa nguFeyise adliwa nguNsele".

Note the use of "dla" instead of "za". No doubt he could have been brave for the poet says he is:

"Ubejane lukaMuhle,  
Olubeja izandla kwabeja umlomo,  
Njokuphuza izingazi zamadoda".

but we have no way of telling because his bravery is not related to any situation.

POEM: KANA LALA

Life history:

He was the son of Nedada from the major branch of the Nthembu folk that are up to now in Northern Natal.

ANALYSIS

His praise-poem contains a large amount of borrowed verses. That the verses are mere poetical clichés is evidenced by the fact that they also appear in Sizingili's praise-poem:

"Labathatha abantabala" and "iri,  
Labasana phansi keli'ndaba".

It is possible that the two could have been brave, but highly doubtful that they could have done the same thing with their victims, namely, drive them into the waterfall. He is also said to be:

"Lashisi wezinkhotha".

Like Sizingili, he is said to be:

"Coase ikloba eMnyama,  
Wafani iMawundweni, eMnyama eMnyama".

(Note the similarity between the two verses)

"Umile wothathe ka'jokwane,  
Owakhisa izinkotha kweze kwayosha  
kweze kwabedlana".

Grande.

Poets still take pride in recounting the victims of the praised:

"Wahlasela esahlutshini,  
Weza noMbayimbayi ebezalwa nguLangalibalele,  
Weza noLangalibalele ebezalwa noMthimkhulu".



The great difference between the Shakan and the post-Shakan eulogy was the pride taken in the type of victim and their number. The Shakan's took pride in having captured great men, the post-Shakans, on the other hand, were indiscriminate. Women and children captured were part of the poet's store from which he drew his material. One gets such comments as:

"Weza nezindwendwe ezinthathu,  
Olunye olwezintombi,  
Olunye olwabafazi,  
Olunye olwezingane".

OR

"Weza neqhikiza ngaseLangeni,  
Weza neqhikiza ngaseLangeni,  
Weza neqhikiza ngaseLangeni".

Msholozzi kaMantomela.

The post-Shakans also often use the <sup>less</sup> aggressive verb "za" instead of "dla", e.g.

"Weza noMawephula ngaseManseleni".

The praise-poem of Mganu is characteristic of the poems of this age; it lacks in originality.

### MINOR CHARACTERS.

#### NOMATSHALI

##### Life History:

She was one of King Mpande's wives.

##### Analysis:

Her praise-poem is short. It is characterised by an eroticism characteristic of all poems composed on women. She is:

"Thanga mbukwane,  
Umathanga asibukwe Zulu".

PRINCE DABULAMANEILife History:

He was one of the sons of Mpande.

Analysis:

He was brave, he killed Nompondo in Swaziland and captured the attendants of a Nyawo chief. He was also a very good marksman. He was always the first to kill in battle:

"Umqali wangwazi".

GODIDE KANDLELALife History:

He was the son of Ndlela, the great military leader of Dingane's armies, who sacrificed himself so that the Zulu Royal line might continue.

He was one of the leaders of the Zulu section that went to join Mpande after Dingane had been killed. He was stubborn, irritable and temperamental, and physically strong.

Analysis:

"Usikhumba esahlula abasongi".

His praise-poem is characteristic of the age, being partly heroic and partly romantic. It lacks a vigorous style. The poet is more concerned about his physical make-up than his national contribution.

COMMENT.

This then was the immediate post-Shakan period. There was a tendency to mourn the past. Unlike the simple poetry of the pre-Shakan period, post-Shakan

poetry was more forceful. The reason for this was that it was still closely influenced by the whirlwind heroism of the Shakan period. There were still occasions where the brave could display their bravery.

Mpande was the weakest of all Zulu kings. He sheltered under the wings of the Boers without feeling it uncomfortable to leave as a refugee King. This unaggressive attitude of the King did much to influence the nature of poetry.

The poetry of this period does not have the outstanding heroic drive and originality of the Shakan era.

The heroic-lyrical nature of the poetry of this phase has its beauty. The poets, as much as possible, avoid crowding consonants in a verse, so that there is a mellowness in sound in post-Shakan poetry. Note the following examples:

"Uvezi nonyandela  
Ungabadeli owagabadela  
enkundleni yakwabulewayo".

Compare with Dingane.

"Umsimude owawela ngesilulu  
phakathi kwangisi nawaqadasi".

Mpande

## PHASE II OF THE POST-SHAKAN ERA

### THE CETSHWAYO PERIOD - 1870

#### Introduction

The peaceful period of the first phase of the post-Shakan era was not conducive to the development of great poetry. The glories and triumphs of the Shakan era were still too fresh in people's minds.

They wanted to fight great and historical battles for the country. It was Prince Cetshwayo who, fired with the spirit of nationalism, set out to satisfy their need for something that would bring glory to the country and raise its prestige once again.

These developments gave a new impetus to Zulu poetry. The poetry of this phase as a result has spiritual affinity to the Shakan heroic poems. This resurgence of heroic poetry extends right to the end of Dinizulu's reign. From then poetry declines and becomes highly eulogistic and commentary. It would be noticed too that at the tail end of this era borrowed verses abound.

#### Life History:

Cetshwayo was brave and daring. At the time of his accession to the Zulu kingdom had enjoyed a period of peace during King Mpande's reign. The only great military upheaval had been a civil war between Mbuyazi's and Cetshwayo's followers. The seeds of dissension had been planted. When Prince Cetshwayo was crowned King the grumbling voices of Prince Zibebu and Prince Mnyamana cast the shadows of things to come.

When Shepstone crowned Cetshwayo, he laid down regulations that were bound to lead to a conflict, especially because Cetshwayo considered these as inimical to the smooth running of the state. It was a clash both of personalities and of cultures. Cetshwayo could not for long have been expected to adhere to a code laid down by the authority of someone whom he regarded as having no right over him. Moreover, he did not believe in the superiority of /...

of law above the ruler. The clashes that ensued stimulated poetry by giving expression to the old heroic spirit.

Analysis:

The poet begins by mentioning the part played by Cetshwayo in the civil war. He was at first his father's favourite, but later fell into disfavour with his father, who wanted to instal Mbuyazwe as his successor. Most of his brothers backed Prince Mbuyazwe, thus the poet says:

"Thamkakeka wena maliwayo,  
Uze wewuse iNtambanana nangezinyembezi".

He further relates an incident in which Cetshwayo got spears from a Mlaba man who said:

"MtakaNdaba uz'ubahlabe nasemehlweni".

One notable thing about all the <sup>epic</sup> eulogies, especially those of the Shakan and post-Shakan era, is that they all begin with the early events in the life of the praised. They are almost biographical; hence in Cetshwayo's eulogy the poet begins with the early events that occurred in his life. The iziGqoza Section, which favoured Mbuyazwe, had hoped that they would prevent Cetshwayo's armies from crossing the river, but Cetshwayo crossed "on the heads of men".

The poet describes Cetshwayo's journey to the battle-field in detail:

"Edondolozela ngenhlendla yakhe,  
Eyoshona ngesikhâla sikaMphehlela  
noJwabakazi;  
Fya ngoNohadu obezalwa nguMsweli,  
Uyakukhokha umnyatheliso,  
Iqabi lakwabo lezinkabi ezimpunga,  
Uya ngoGawozi obezalwa nguSilwana;  
Uyakukhokha umnyatheliso.  
Iqabi lakwabo elinkone lezinkabi".

The type of refrain that he introduces is not impressive, perhaps because we do not know its emotional significance. The detailed description of Cetshwayo's march to battle, and the description of places he passed spoils the poetic effect. The poet, however, beautifully concludes the idea by saying Cetshwayo is:

"Igwalagwala likaMenzi elisuka eNtumeni,  
Kwaye kwabeja iNdulinde kwabeja uThukela".

He uses beautiful word-pictures:

"Umthunduluka ovuthwa eNdulinde,  
IziGqoza ziyawulabalabela".

The poet using the aggressive form of verb "dla", enumerates all the victims of Cetshwayo. The victims, it should be noted, are of different tribes. The poet uses the characteristic post-Shakan refrain in which the significance of the actions described in the stanza is stated.

"Wamudla uMashiyayishukule obezalwa  
ngusiphingo,  
Washaya phansi ezizungeni koludumayo,  
Akwaba ndabazalutho.  
Wamudla uSigombe obezalwa nguMtshana,  
Wamshaya phansi ezinkambeni koludumayo;  
Akwaba ndabazalutho". etc.

(Note the skilful use of the aggressive verb "dla" and unaggressive "shaya").

The poet eulogises the Shakan heroism which Cetshwayo displays:

"Umzingeli kaShake benoDingane,  
Uze uzingele ubuye neno mtakaNdaba".

He warns him that across the Tukela there are whites with whom the Zulus have past grudges:

"Ngaphesheya kukhona abamblophe,  
Uze wesabe imlando emdala,  
Eyenziwa ngab'oyihlo".

The poet does not merely laud Cetshwayo, but shows a keen sense of realism. Like the poet of King Mpande, he makes capital of the events of the civil war to resuscitate the heroic spirit of conquest. He enumerates all the brothers of Cetshwayo who were killed in battle, leaving him sole ruler:

"Wadla indlovu enesihlonti kwabakaYise,  
Amakhubalo edliwa nguye kwabakaMpande;  
Wadla uShonkweni obezalwa ngukaMpande,  
Amakhubalo edliwa nguye kwabakaMpande,  
Wadla uMantantashiya obezalwa ngukaMpande,  
Amakhubalo adliwa nguye kwabakaMpande".

The resurgence of the heroic spirit is revealed by the frequent use of symbolic animals like the lion, the elephant and the leopard. The sight of fighting men drowning in the river or struggling to come out must have moved the poet deeply, for he says:

"Isiziba sikaMama benoziwedu,  
Esibukudise izihlangu zomkhwenyantaba,  
Ilanga liyawushona".

OR

"Ubhukudisa abantu bengathandi ukubhukuda,  
Ngoba ebukudisa amadoda amadala;  
wabhukudisa uFemane ezalwa nguNohaye,  
wabhukudisa uMgebisa obezalwa nguJokwe,  
Wabhukudisa uMatshokazana obezalwa  
ngukaMqoboza".

Cetshwayo is brave:

"Unozilakudla kwamagwala,  
Amagwala adle ububende;  
Yaphela imibhobho yamapholisa,  
Yaphuka ubunoklomoklo".

OR

"Igqamugqemu likaShaka,  
Elingamilo oshayo,  
Bathe kusha umlilo,  
Kanti kuvutha umuzi waseKuweleni".

Though very brave he cannot be as great as Shaka, who has almost become a national god. Compared to Shaka Cetshwayo is said to be like a buck, as Shaka was like an elephant

an elephant. The poet using the same verses from Shaka in a modified form says of Cetshwayo:

"Impunzi kaNdab.,  
Bayibambe ngandlebe ende,  
Phezu kukalengakazi,  
Yadlamuluka yadla amadoda".

He is unlike his docile father, he listens to nobody but the heroic spirit within him:

"UNdela kulaywa!  
Angani naboyise bayayelwa".

The poet constantly compares him with both powerful and aggressive animals. He is not like the docile elephant his father was identified with, but an aggressive leopard which scatters everything before it:

"Isilo esimeduna sakoTshane,  
Esikhangele abantu bedamuka noIwandle,  
Nanamuhla basadukile".

OR

"UHlohloloza ngendlovu enohlanya".

OR

"Wathi: 'Ningayihlabi leyondlovu,  
Ningayihlaba nobe niyibanjile".

He defies his father and Sontsewu. Though this does not please the defied, it pleases the braves who are eager to fight and renew the glory of the Zulu might. He is the man they want. It is war they want and Cetshwayo: "USakhamuzi ngenkhonto", must give them an enemy to fight. When given a chance Cetshwayo's braves prove their worth against an enemy. They proved their worth against the Swazis, against the dreaded police, against the whites and against the opponents within the Kingdom, the poet says. The poet proudly enumerates Cetshwayo's victims



Though Cetshwayo could in certain ways be likened to Shaka, he did not have the resourcefulness of Shaka. The troubles that were infesting the Zulu kingdom could not be easily overcome. The old national unity was gone, some had fled to Natal, some had turned Christian and to them fighting was taboo unless they fought against the 'barbarians'. Some hated the very idea of another blood-bath. Though it pleased some patriots to see Cetshwayo enthusiastic about re-establishing the might of the Zulu kingdom, there were many who were displeased. These difficult times demanded great tact and a high level of diplomacy.

Though Cetshwayo's praise-poem has a lot of metaphoric beauties, the conditions were no more as favourable to great poetry as they were before. The poem has an aggressive nationalistic spirit of a different kind. It is of secondary inspiration. It is essentially exhortatory rather than triumphant in tone. The poem still does have great poetic force.

The mention of Cetshwayo's blackness does not merely mean physical blackness, but has become symbolic of the aggressive spirit of nationalism. His blackness is associated with a symbolic bull:

"Ujininindi omnyama".

MTSHAPI KANOSHADU

Life History:

He was a poet, once honoured by Cetshwayo with the gift of a spear. He reported Ziwedu Ngcobo to

Cetshwayo whom he held had bewitched him (Itshapi). We do not know the results of the case, but this does show how intimate he was with the King.

#### ANALYSIS

He was a typical poet for he wore long hair on his head and was sensitive. He parried the attacks of the enemy from all sides and killed the man who thought he had overcome him. The poet says of him:

"Unoxhaka obamba omunye unoxhaka".

He was handsome and powerfully built, and he was the only boy in his family; even the vultures respect his body, the poet says. Women loved him although some hated him.

The poet gives an interesting portrayal of this poet's character. He is brave and yet he does not have the savage ruthlessness characteristic of most soldiers. He has a motherly tenderness. He is also said to have been highly irritable. The poem is too full of obscurities to be appreciated without explanatory notes.

There is something domestic about the poem, even romantic. The poet says of his bravery:

"Intinyane yemikhonto".

#### MZHUNGO KAMANGONDO WAICWAMAGWAZA.

#### Life History:

He was short, so short that his dagga pipe was taller than him. He fought for the King at Sandlwana and was wounded in the leg.

ANALYSIS

His praise-poem is short and it has<sup>a</sup> lyrical-herbic spirit. The poet does not state exactly the circumstances under which he was shot nor where. Is it that the old pride in the events of history was losing favour? Or were the events of history so unpleasant that they had to be omitted? This is significant when it is remembered that even the defeat of Cetshwayo by Zibedu is nowhere mentioned in his praise-poem.

NUANTONI (JOHN DUNE)Life History:

He was a white man who went "native". He had sixty-four wives and one hundred and thirty-one children. He betrayed his friend Cetshwayo during the war against the British.

ANALYSIS

The poet gives an instance in which he betrayed Sitimela:

"Uknozi luka Musidoni,  
Oludla umuntu lomyenga ngendaba;  
Njoba ludla uSitimela,  
Ebethi ngowakwamthethwa".

His praise-poem is short. The poem is of the same group of poems<sup>as these</sup> that were composed on prominent European figures who possessed outstanding qualities, e.g. H. Fynn, Sir Theophilus Shepstone, Sir Melmoth Osborn, James Stuart, etc.

The praise-poems on these whites are not in any way inferior to the praise-poems of the Zulu heroes. The poets were only concerned with eulogizing those qualities they considered admirable whether in a friend or an enemy.

SONTSENJU KASONZICA (SIR THEOPHILUS SHEPSTONE)Life History:

He was the governor of Natal when Cetshwayo ascended the throne of the Zulu state. It was he who crowned Cetshwayo in 1873. Shepstone was respected by the Zulus for his manliness and bravery. He did not always agree with the King. He was a very important figure at the time and he several times stood for Cetshwayo when the whole administration favoured a punitive expedition. The Zulus got to know Shepstone well. Those who had benefited through him regarded him as great, those who suffered through him were resentful and felt that they had been humiliated by him.

ANALYSIS

Although Shepstone was an enemy, he is not held up to ridicule, but is praised for his bravery; for to people who so loved bravery, a man is brave even if he be an enemy. He is:

"Ithole elinsizwe likaSonzica,  
Ekade liwagingqa amanye amathole".

They feel he is one of them:

"Umhlophe wakithi waseThawini,  
Qwafika nemikhumbi emibili".

His bravery nourishes that eternal yearning in poets to see a brave man and a great leader. He is indeed great for he is:

"Ohlambe izandla zomela enadodeni;  
Zomela kuNgoza kaLudaba,  
Zomela kuMfulathelwa kaLudla,  
Zomela kuNomsimekwana umtakaNeeseli.  
Zomela kuMzimba kaDibinyika,  
Zomela kuMahlangu kaMabohoyi".

The poet enumerates a number of victims whom Shepstone overcame, in the characteristic Shakan verse. His greatness is felt everywhere; he was regarded as a "King" by the Zulus who could not understand the idea of a governor.

Throughout the poem there is that convincing realism which does not, like pre-Shakan romanticism, merely decorate the poem with heroic deeds but gives factual situations under which they occurred. The use of the aggressive verb "dla" is also significant. He is identified with a hawk on account of his swiftness, the swiftness of which Cetshwayo was the victim. The claws of the hawk symbolise his tremendous power, which in the eyes of the Zulus clutched with ease the most powerful King in the world.

He is identified with an elephant, and with the powerful horn of a rhinoceros. The poem essentially belongs to the heroic type of poetry. It, however, does not have the richness of the Shakan imagery. The poet crowds historical events and catalogues them without attempting to elaborate on their value socially and politically. The famous verse "Beba kaMame beba simuke" is more decorative than factual.

The poet uses syllabic metre in the following stanza:

"Ubuza umlalazi - ewazi, ezenzisa,	(14)
Inza ngabomu ngoba eyinkosi,	(11)
Wabuza ukkhomazi - ewazi, ezenzisa,	(14)
Inza ngabomu ngoba eyinkosi,	(11)
Wabuza umzinkhulu - ewazi, ezenzisa,	(14)
Inza ngabomu ngoba eyinkosi".	(11)

ZIBEBU KAMAPHITHA.Life History:

He was related to the Zulu Royal family. He was the great-grandson of Jama's adopted child, Ngwabi. He is said to be the greatest war general since Shaka. He was reputed for his bravery. In the battle he fought against Cetshwayo, he came out victorious. He allied himself with Prince Mnyamana against King Cetshwayo. Even after Cetshwayo's death he did not hesitate to fight his way up in an attempt to fulfil his personal ambitions. He got the sympathy of some white officials, so that even when he was technically a prisoner, he rode about free. He further made life unbearable for Dinizulu and his great uncle Prince Ndabuko. He confiscated some heads of cattle belonging to Dinizulu and further claimed some of Dinizulu's lands. He was regarded by the protagonists of the Zulu kingdom as a traitor.

Analysis:

His praise-poem moves with heroic force, and the poet at once extolls his bravery:

"UMabala ahlome kadinwa kuhloma,  
Usinge sangi-mbube yekwaSekane,  
Emakhala engena udaka".

On account of his bravery and ruthlessness he is said to be:

"Usibindi simnyama sonke nenyongo yaso".

The poet echoes the same censure that was directed against Dingane for killing his brothers. He is identified with the great Shaka and the temperamental Jama:

"Isihlangu sikaShaka noJama".

The aggressive word "dla" is used frequently to indicate those whom he conquered, namely, Ndwandwe, kaMlaka, Sihayo kaXhongo, Sekethwayo of Nhlaka, etc. In a string of ten repeated verses:

"Wamudla ubani ezalwa ngubani,  
Angithandi ukumusho,  
Uma ngilusho kungadama isililo", etc.

the poet reproduces in a modified form the great original verse of Magolwana. The ideas are characteristic of the age, the spirit of melancholy puffs out threads of sentimentalism. Unlike the spirit of the Shakan era that trampled unmoved over its victims because it felt, <sup>that it was</sup> beyond censure, the semi-heroic spirit of this period lingers and doubts and buries its victims in a rain of tears.

Although the poem does move with the characteristic swiftness of the heroic age, it has at times, the halting movement of uninspired poetry:

"Hhiya-bo-hhiya,  
Hhiya thula kayize kanye,  
Uhhiya-bo-hhiya; Nampo sebefikile,  
Babambeni zinsizwa ezinkulu".

This stanza sounds like a war song, and in it, commonplace phrases are used.

### DINIZULU.

#### Life History:

When Dinizulu became the ruler of the Zulus, he inherited the many troubles that were facing the Zulu kingdom.

In 1898, there was another battle between the Zulus and the British troops. It was on account of

this that Dinizulu was convicted and banished to the Island of St. Helena.

In 1905 he was involved in the Mambatha rebellion. No wonder then that the poet feels that had he lived in better times he would have been a great nation builder:

"Ithole lakomsweli,  
Elenyise liqulile".

He employed all his energies to achieve the dream of his father, namely the revival of the Zulu power. The divisions in the country continued to be obstacles on the way towards the realisation of his goal. Some loyalties were directed to the Queen, some to Dinizulu, some to the missionaries (these could be classified with those loyalties directed to the Queen of England) and some to the petty chiefs that were in all Zululand. The result was that the Zulu kingdom was so reduced that finally the authority of Dinizulu was equivalent to that of a local chieftain in Shaka's times.

If Dinizulu was to save anything of his depleted kingdom, he had to abide by the law of the new rulers. But how could a King of a Zulu nation bow down to such humiliation? How could he tolerate an equal status with the "dogs" of the Zulu kingdom, who were now elevated to the position of rulers? All these questions occurred to his mind. He had an ancestry of great heroes of whom he was very proud. Thus prompted, he attempted to rise against the British. His attempt resulted in "the judgement delivered on the  
/...



27th April, 1889, which found Dinizulu guilty of High Treason giving him the sentence of ten years. Even before the sentence was passed his lands were confiscated and divided between other chiefs. He was harassed from all angles by the mounted police, the Zibebu Party and Mnyamana's. The latter had the blessing of a number of white officials like Mr. Osborn", says Harry Escombe in his Book "Remonstrance on Behalf of the Zulu Chiefs, 1889". He further says "the unequal treatment of Dinizulu and Usibebu (Zibebu) is in itself sufficient to show that the special court was not a Court of Law, but was a political expedient to shield Sir Arthur Havelock and Mr. Osborn from the consequences of their mal-administration in Zululand".

The many faction fights between the followers of the different Zulu princes finally ruined the country. Despite all the troubles and worries inherent in a disintegrating kingdom, Dinizulu handled the situation with considerable tact and displayed very great courage. But he was facing too strong an enemy, too wise, too persistent for his broken power. The poet, always aware of the involvements of the situation, seeing through all this, says of Dinizulu:

"Umpondo zamila enjeni, uma zamila enkomeni,  
Sasiyekwenza ngazo amagudu okubheme".

Indeed had he been born in better times he would have raised once more the name of the great Zulu nation, but like King Lear, he was more sinned against than sinning. No ruler of the Zulus ever suffered as he did.

ANALYSIS

Dinizulu's praise-poem is a poem based on the heroic tradition. It has a melancholy tone which clearly distinguishes it from Shakan compositions. The poem starts with a very powerful stanza:

"Umamonga kabulali uyasizila!  
Uqotha imbokodwe nesisekelo".

The poet calls on everyone to run in all directions to warn the people of Sidladla and Vuma, that they should not drink from the Mkhize river because there Dinizulu had performed a miracle. Unlike the stanza from which it is derived, this stanza lacks the rich meaning contained in the stanza:

"Gijimani ngazonke izindlela,  
Niyobikela umaphi tha nothokotho,  
Nithi lukhulu luyeza, silubona,  
LunjengoPhunga noMageba".

In the former the operative verb conveys a 'static' idea. In the latter the operative verb "gijimani" indicates action and hence has more dynamic implications. Dinizulu in the characteristic heroic manner, 'eats up' his enemies. The poet enumerates a number of victims killed by Dinizulu. After stating concrete historical events the poet freely indulges in generalities:

"Ohlasele ngenkhonto njengomuzi wase-  
Mkhontweni,  
Ohlasele ngamakhashi njengomuzi wase-  
Makhashini".

The poet using the most powerful and the most pictographic words says of him:

"Udlothovu kabekeki,  
Ufana namisebe yelanga".

After these generalisations the poet remembers that the general must be based on particular truths. He therefore enumerates other victims of Dinizulu whom he "ate up".

The historical significance of the many letters that were written by Dinizulu to the British officials, and those that were written by the officials to Dinizulu is stated graphically:

"Usinakanaka sazinowadi!  
Ziye zalotshwa kwabamhlophe,  
Ngoba ziye zalotshwa kulakazi emabhurwini,  
Isinakanaka esazi izinowadi eziphuma eThaka?.

There is a note of self-pity indicative of the sorry state of affairs in which the kingdom was. Dinizulu is not the powerful thunderer but:

"UDinuzulu kangakanani,  
Ngoba nasenhlamvini yomkhonto anganela".

He has many enemies:

"Lalelani lomuntu ememezayo,  
Ebememeza njalo ethi:  
'UDinuzulu angimthandi?  
Mlomo owodwa suka ukhulume,  
Uyayibona imilomo eminingi iyavunana  
phakathi kweZwe,  
Ngoba kuvunana uZibhebhu beNtshu amu".

The poem illustrates that his greatness is undisputed, despite changed circumstances. He is held in high esteem. He is not afraid of the dreaded Mounted Police. He braved the hatred of both the whites and the Zulus. He is, the poet says, renowned for his bravery:

"Indaba engiyizwe ngimcane,  
Ngaze ngakhula ngayibona ngamehlo".

or

"Umphangela-linga lingakaphumi kwaNdunu,  
Lithe liphuma laliphuma kwezinqazi zamadoda".

or

"Umagamele!  
Inkunzi yakithi ekhontweni".

He is like a dreadful lion. Dinizulu is a national hero. He proved himself brave despite the fact that the whole world was against him, as the poet says:

"Wathiya #zizwe zonke zingaka zomhlaba  
zimhlanganyela".

His country was being divided by the officials:

"Ufunyanise beliphethe belihlinzisana,  
Belibekisa ezansi belibekisa phezulu,  
Waze wabamba umlomo izwe limampengumpengu".

Although he is shown as fighting bravely, circumstances are such that he cannot extricate himself from daily humiliations.

There are some personal references in the poem which are symbolic, <sup>These are derived</sup> in some cases, from body characteristics; e.g.

"Hwanqa lakithi oSuthu,  
Elifana nelaseMgungundlovu, uDingage".

OR

"Uzitho zimpungu zimpononono,  
Ngizifanisa nezikaMaduna,  
Obezalwa kini kwaZulu".

OR

"Zitho zimbombo zinjengezendlovu,  
Ezendlovu zona zinjengezikaMkabayi,  
EzikaMkabayi zona kade ziwagwinya amadoda".

OR

"Madevu ayingoqe ngokugoqa".

OR

"Ubemadevu ebomvu zingazi zamadoda".

There is also a note of self-pity and a feeling of inadequacy running throughout the praise-poem:

"Beza bahlaba ngenxa zonkana,  
Bahlabe ngemuva nangaphambili,  
Kungapha bayahlaba,  
Kungapha bayahlaba".

OR

"UNdaba uyindinda bemshiya,  
Unjengebutho likaSambane,  
Bethi bemndi nda bebebemshiya".

OR

"Unkomo iyaphuza ukuhlakanipha,  
Bethi kungaze kuhlakaniphe ekaZibebu  
ozalwa nguMaphitha".

OR

"Sibhaxa abakhulu ngaso abakwaMbikiza,  
NabakwaManaba nabakwakatha".

The hero is identified with both ferocious and gentle animals, e.g.

"UFana nendlovu emnyama yasoNdini".

OR

"Udlothovu onjengebhubesi".

OR

"Silo esilwe ngomsila eKhothongweni,  
Silo esilwe ngomsila kubeSuthu".

OR

"UDinuzulu unjengendlovu emnyama,  
KaManqoba izintaba".

OR

"Ithole elixebule amadoda".

OR

"Inkunzi yakithi eMkhontweni".

OR

"Thole elimpunga lakokaMsweli lingamashoba  
eMbuyangezi,  
Yona ithi ikhonkotha ihefuzele".

OR

"Inyoni emhlophe ihlangabeza inyoni  
emhlophe iza namagagana".

There are also besides these identifications, two common ones, namely, those of the sun and the river.

The style of the praise-poem is very forceful and sounds inspired. There is a cry of despair at the final realisation that the Zulu state has been destroyed. The poem has a large number of borrowed words from Kibi, Pitoli, Dilidi, MusiGilandi, Pewula, Volontiya, Poyisa, Musimese, etc. showing increasing contact with the Europeans.

MZIMBA KADIBINYIKA (1843-1898).Life History.

He was the chief of the Zondi clan of Zwertkop region near Pietermaritzburg. Nothing is known about him nationally. Locally he might have done some good or perhaps showed himself brave.

ALLIYS

The praise-poem lacks originality. It has a number of repetitions of stereotyped stanzas, especially those taken from the pre-Shakan era. He is like most pre-Shakan rulers:

"Inkonyane ebuwaba busegilweni,  
Ezinye izinkonyane zibuwaba busemaphikweni".

OR

"Umzimba kangakanani,  
Negatsheni/omuthi angenela,  
Ngisho nenhlamvini yesibamu angenela".

He is lavishly identified with cattle. Sometimes characters in the poem are identified with cattle also. The poem is somewhat prosaic and does not have the burning poetical power of the heroic period:

"Ngonyaka omkhulu wendlala,  
Wafika wasivuna lesosifane wasiqeda,  
Ngisho isifane leso-nje ngisho uNonhliziywana".

The second part of the poem contains eulogies on his bravery. He has to his credit, a large number of victims. But it is significant, <sup>that</sup> none of them except Ngeabu are shown as having been "eaten up" by him.

BAMBATHA MALANCIZALife History:

He was a chief of the Zondis. He is well-known

in history for having been the chief organiser of what is commonly known as the Bhambatha Rebellion. This revolt was organised against the paying of taxes.

In this rebellion <sup>h</sup>Bambatha showed himself a brave and resourceful leader. In him was expressed the revival of the fast-dying heroic spirit. He is loved and respected by the Zulus who regard him as the last of the ancient Zulu heroes.

#### ANALYSIS

His praise-poem is too short for a hero of his stature. The poet talks of him generally, without making any particular references to his military exploits. The poet indulges in pre-Shakan romanticisms:

"Ulanga phuma sikothe,  
Kede sikothele emafini".

Bhambatha is identified with a hawk. The poet says he has the fleetness of a buck, as when once he showed on being chased. The poet does not specify the circumstances of his flight. The poem is too domestic for so great a hero. Identification is made with tender animals like the buck and the calf. Bhambatha is identified with women characters rather than great ancient heroes. He is only accidentally credited with having confiscated the cattle of the Boers, like Voyizana, Misikeve and Fabyaba.

#### SOLOMON KABINUZULU.

##### Life History:

When Dinuzulu died, Solomon, alias Maphumuzanza, ascended the Zulu throne. Times had taken a big stride from the old traditional way of life. He had to face up to a new situation with more limited resources than his predecessors.

He is said to have been gentle, polite and intelligent. He realised that education was important for all those who were to be chiefs. He therefore built a school which was to be an educational centre for all the Zulu Royal House offspring and the sons of chiefs. The school's project was however a failure. He also collected funds for the erection of Shaka's Memorial Tombstone; but he died before this project had materialised. He was mourned by thousands who liked him.

#### ANALYSIS

The Zulu might had by this time become a thing of the past. Solomon is said to be:

"Inkayishana encinyane".

Poets voice their regrets at the fall of the Zulu state. The unambitious execution of this poem shows the declining enthusiasm in traditional institutions. The poetry is simple and does not inspire to any verbal excellency.

Solomon could read and write so the poet makes reference to this:

"Uphuza umlaza ngameva".

OR

"Imamba ehamba igijima,  
Phezu kwamapensela".

OR

"Usimele ngabuku empembeni".

Poetry has become laudatory and general. Solomon is not a national figure; the poet seems to be looking at him through a crevice. There is very little association between national aspirations and the exploits of the praised in the poem.



Solomon is identified with a bird of the smallest size. He is also identified with a rabbit. He is a King only in name for the whites have sworn that he will never be restored to his former greatness:

"Inkosi efungelwe ngabamhlophe,  
Bathi kayisekubekwa koSenzangakhona".

#### CYPRIAN KASOLOMON.

##### Life History:

He is the son of the late Solomon. He attended school at Umphumulo Day School. There has been nothing of national significance that has occurred during his Chieftancy so far. He won the right to succession after a minor dispute.

#### ANALYSIS

There has been a number of eulogies on Cyprian that have appeared in the newspapers. His praise-poems are on isolated events in his life. They are usually short and tend to be highly imitative of Shakan poetry. In some of them there are vulgar romanticisms that are reminiscent of the pre-Shakan poetry, e.g.

"Ngithi umathanga abushelezi  
njengawedikazi".

Notable in the eulogies on him is a highly eulogistic tone. He is praised in most cases because praise of the ruler is customary and not because of any particular event warranting poetical comment. His eulogies differ slightly from the traditional type in that they are recorded down, as a result each one of them is a complete poem.

HLOMELA FYNN.Life History:

He was a chief of the Zembeni tribe. He was one of the very few chiefs who are Coloured. There is nothing of national importance that occurred in his life. He was, like most modern chiefs, of no royal ancestry.

ANALYSIS

His praise-poem has nothing that is important either as a work of art or historical record. It is only important as an example of a poetry of type, i.e. a carefree praise style that borders on frivolity. His poet Jeqe merely lauded his physical appearance. He says of him:

"Unadevu abomvu aphula inkomishi,  
Nakuba uwela nkosi siyowela nawe!  
Wena mehlo antshece njengomnese,  
Mpululu mzimba-mbokodwe".

MINOR POEMS AND THE DECLINE

With the decline of Zulu epic poetry, the eulogies on minor characters also declined. At first it was the poetry of the major characters that was affected by the changes. Poetry on minor characters continued in the same heroic vein. The reason for this was that the epic required elaborate treatment and greater dexterity in handling its material, whereas the minor poem suited the condensation of material that the circumstances imposed. It tended to be highly personal in its approach because it dealt with particular events only.

Poets of the late post-Shakan era did not only compose in the traditional style, but also borrowed foreign forms and style. Their poetry, though slightly.

different from the traditional poetry in that it is recorded, shows strong affinities to traditional poetry. There are poems composed on dancers, football players, sportsmen or any one who has distinguished himself in any field. The most ambitious compositions of this type are E. Made's "Bambatha kaMakhwatha" and A. Champion's praises. A few examples showing this type of poetry will suffice:

Dance Praises: "Phuzo, umeleko".  
 "Ugongolo olulala amankane".

Sport Praises: "Haleluya Amen"  
 "Sakaza Mthombo".

Some praise-poems of this nature are often heard on gramophone records as a background to a song, e.g.

"Yisho mfo kaMkhize obomvu,  
 Yimi lowo isoka likaTilayifina,  
 Owazibiza kwa Mai-Mai".

These bear relationship to the traditional self-praises.

#### GENERAL CRITICISM:

The clash between the rising Zulu nation and British expansion resulted in the triumph of the latter. The traditional ruler under the new administration was nothing more than a civil servant. This greatly affected the prestige of the ruler.

Another factor that weakened the prestige of the King was the new religion which did not, like the former, place the ruler in a position of a demi-god. In fact all that belonged to the old traditional Zulu life was regarded as savage and almost sinful.

The result was that even those who still cherished traditional culture were hard put to continue living a life shorn of all that had worth in it. Poetry suffered a blow when the very basis from which it drew its inspiration was destroyed.

One gets numerous repeated phrases which are in fact nothing but mere conventionalisms which are applied to more than one character. Despair and self-pity ring throughout the poetry of this period. At first poetry entreats men to rise to their former greatness. When that fails it ceaselessly mourns for the past:

"Izwe lakithi,  
Libuswa yizizwe,  
Ngeke lisabuyela kithi".

At last there came the realisation that the past was gone with all its glory so the idea of the famous saying was reversed:

"Moo thou cow of Zululand you will never  
moo anywhere else".

to

"Moo thou cow of Zululand you will never  
go back to Zululand".

The soldiers of the King had all gone to work in the mines and in kitchens as kitchen boys. The youth of the country had become like scattered leaves far away in the white men's farms. The voice of old Zululand ceased to be the primary form of literary expression.

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PART II.Chapter VIII.THE MODERN ERA.

The modern *era* of Zulu poetry differs markedly from the previous periods that have been so far analysed. It differs not only in its treatment of the subject matter but also in subject matter itself.

Since in the modern era all the poetry is recorded literary compositions are preserved in their entirety. Poets of this era are well known figures. There are important facts which accrue from this. The incidence of fragmentary poetry is very small. Poetry of this era is usually complete and its structure is comparatively solid, i.e. there is a general coherence of ideas in the poem. If they are not the fault is usually with the composer rather than that parts have been lost.

Although there is still no organised form of literary training, nevertheless, most poets make it a point that they make a study of their art from various sources. In this way they discover new methods of expressing themselves. By adapting these to the Zulu literary idiom they enrich the language.

Modern poetry is a poetry composed under different conditions. The poet is today no more in the same position as the traditional poet. Cultural contacts

have not only changed life conditions almost completely, but also drastically changed the attitudes of the people. The modern industrial society by its encouragement of individuality, discourages a strong emotional attachment to group representatives. Lauding the deeds of an individual, though natural in all societies, was sometimes exaggerated in traditional poetry. At its worst it became a requirement that had to be fulfilled by the attribution of deeds or qualities for no reason other than to flatter. This insincerity in poetry was eliminated in modern Zulu poetry by a more critical attitude towards the deeds and actions of the individual.

Industrialisation broke down the traditional way of life. The menfolk moved from tribal areas to the cities and there came into contact with a different culture which gradually changed their values and their loyalties. Cultural change occurred amongst those who were educated as well as amongst the rank and file. Change of thought-expression was only natural. Those poets who explored new vistas of poetical expression were only responding to a need. A need that made the traditional forms of expression inadequate. The traditional form of thought-expression was essentially local in attitude. The new conditions introduced a wider world concept which demanded of the poets new terms of thought-expression. Poets borrowed what was best in traditional poetry and also what was best in form and philosophy in the literature with which it came into contact.

As would be expected there were two schools of poetry that developed as a result of these circumstances. One school attempted to write a type of poetry that tended to be traditional in style. Another school tended

to write a type of poetry that showed a strong influence of foreign literary forms and philosophy. The former school includes poets like Made (in his longer compositions like the eulogy on A.W.G. Champion, and the elegy on Vilakazi), J.C. Dlamini, Muso Jali, Theo Mthembu, Elliot Mkhize and J. Matsebula. The poetry of the Traditional School is written by poets who acquired foreign forms by casual study of English poetry rather than its full-time study. On the other hand the Academic School as represented by Vilakazi, A. Kunene and Made (in his shorter compositions) shows a strong bias to the English poetical tradition.

Strictly speaking the schools are but trends in modern Zulu poetry. Amongst some poems of Vilakazi and J.C. Dlamini, for instance, there is an attempt at a synthesis of the two tendencies and amongst some of Kunene's poems there are works of traditional inspiration. The analysis is based primarily on the fact that there is a dominant influence of major English poetical works in the Academic School, whilst in the Traditional School there is little or no such influence. The Traditional School tends to be freer in expression whilst the Academic tends to be more cramped by foreign literary forms. The latter, however, has made the greatest contribution to Zulu literature, both in form and style because of its eagerness to experiment.

Modern Zulu poetry is mainly influenced by three principal forces, namely, traditional poetry, religious poetry and 18th Century romanticism. These shall be treated separately in order to assess the extent of their influence.

The Influence of Traditional Poetry on Modern Zulu Poetry.

In dealing with the influence of traditional Zulu poetry on the modern type of poetry it should be borne in mind that modern Zulu compositions do not form a <sup>completely</sup> separate era. They are not the works of poets consciously revolting against literary traditions of the past but of poets caught up in between two strong forces, namely, the traditional and the foreign. In making this examination one is examining how far traditional poetry has been modified into a new form of literary expression.

Though traditional poetry has markedly declined, it is still the sole form of literary expression in the countryside. Even in these areas, isolated as they are, foreign literary traditions have had their impact through schools and churches.

The most significant change in the poetic literary expression is shown in the works of modern Zulu poets. In these works the influence of traditional poetry is prominent. In some cases popular traditional themes are used. Note Vilakazi's "Shaka kaSenza ngakhona." If a poet of the modern literary tradition uses a traditional theme he often adds his own ideas about the hero of the poem. These ideas are inevitably echoes of another era differing fundamentally from the ideas of the olden times. The poets who write in this style find these traditional themes satisfying to that escapism which has characterised modern Zulu poetry.

The names of popular heroes are used both for sentimental reasons and poetical expediency.

The influence of traditional poetry is strongest amongst occasional versifiers.

It is, in



most cases, in the form of a direct address to either a hero of old or to anyone who has achieved something. The general tendency is to laud these characters as present-day figures rather than heroes whose achievements are of lasting value. The praised is usually someone by whom the general public has benefited, e.g. poems on teachers, priests and inspectors.

X An analysis of modern poetry will show clearly how poets like Mado, Vilakazi, in some of their poems, wrote a traditional type of poetry whilst deviating from the strictly traditional by being more philosophic and adopting foreign forms. Traditional influence differs in the works of these writers from that of occasional versifiers in that it is more controlled and directed. This direction of the poetic idiom requires a thorough study of both Traditional and English poetry, and a more conscious effort to develop a new type of poetry.

#### The Influence of Religious Poetry on Modern Zulu Poetry.

The coming of the missionaries did not have an effect on Zulu culture until late in the post-Sakaka era. In the same way that the Bible had an influence on the literature of all those people who adopted the Christian religion, so it was with Zulu literature.

The principal influence was mainly exerted by religious songs. The translations into Zulu was done by all the Churches. The most prominent translations are those of J.C. Bryant, Bishop Callaway, G.S. Milder, E. Gumede and Ngazana Luthuli.

In their translations they "adapted the music of the songs to the rythm of the Zulu language" (preface 'Zulu Hymnal'). These songs had a very popular appeal to Africans. The most popular translation was that of the "Zulu Hymnal" which was made in 1887. Owing to its rhythmic appeal many religious sects adopted it, amongst them the Zionists, the Full Gospel, and others. The music was sung to the synchronous clapping of hands. In some cases it showed the influence of traditional dance rythms.

In translating the hymns the missionaries used the syllabic metre and a rhyme scheme. This type of metre was suitable for the simple hymns in which each syllable commonly corresponded to a musical sound. The following examples will serve to illustrate the point:

Hymn 3.

"Sondelani masivume	(8)
Simdumise uJehova	(8)
Size ebusweni bakhe	(8)
Ukumkhonz'endlini yakhe.	(8)

Hymn 6.

"Nkosi sihlangene	(6)
Sisendlini yakho	(6)
Yiza nawe sesingene	(6)
Ebusweni bakho	(6)

Besides these hymns there is a second type of hymn which though strongly influenced by these religious songs, show close affinity to the traditional songs. These hymns are adaptations rather than translations so that even the metre tends to be more flexible. Religious songs of this nature are compositions by one of the most widely spread African religious sects, namely, Shembe's followers. Whilst keeping the Christian principles the

Shembites have retained some of the traditional customs and practices as part of their religion. The result of this is that in their lives and in their religious hymns an attempt is made to synthesise the Christian hymn with the traditional song. A few hymns from this sect will illustrate the point:

Hymn 1.

"Nkosi sikelele ubaba	(1)
Noma ezule ezintabeni	(10)
Engenayo indawo yakhe	(1)
Elala emanlathini"	(1)

Hymn 6.

"Sakubona Kuphakama	(1)
Sakubona Judia	(7)
Ubabekephi abafowetnu	(10)
/batnunyelwa kuwe?	(7)

There is another aspect of this influence which is more important namely the philosophical influence. The Christian religion is, by its very nature, suitable for a people torn by life and harassed everywhere by cruel reality. It found a fertile soil in the hearts of all those whose minds had tired of the constant wars, who wanted peace and happiness. However, it was offered by a stronger group that made life secure, at least physical. There were, however, mental conflicts which arose from the situation. For though the Christians found life safe and secure they could not escape the feeling that they sheltered under foreign rule, and that amongst their people they were despised and regarded as traitors. They were, in addition, still dogged by their cultural background. The only solution for all this was the solace offered by religion, the religion that talked of a better world beyond this one of troubles. The wave of sentimentalism in poetry that has up to now remained high, originates from such circumstances.

These converts found themselves belonging neither to the European group nor to their own people. The missionaries discouraged anything that was connected with traditional way of life. It was for the missionary, therefore, to define the converts' new way of life. When he did so, it was in terms of strict Christian principles and Western European cultural values. The tendency was bound to be an extremely artificial life; artificial because the converts did not live a life which took cognizance of the local situation and accordingly adapt itself. The result was a type of person who attempted to live a life precariously in between the traditional and the European patterns.

These converts were found to be extremely sentimental, because they had no practical field in which to express their new philosophy. To them the expression of life in terms of the new religion meant merely the acceptance of a solace that it offered.

It was not as if the new Christian ethic taught service and self-sacrifice to mankind, but rather as if Christianity meant the palliation of personal suffering and the creation of a world outside reality. It is this spirit that has nourished modern "blue" poetry. This is manifested in the highly lyrical modern compositions which in some cases derive their subject matter from Biblical stories. Amongst some poets the influence of religious poetry is so dominant that poetry seems to be cramped down by it. At times it destroys an otherwise good poem. Amongst the Quakers, where Christianity is adapted to the traditional way of life, religious poetry tends to have a universal moral

outlook rather than a sectional religious one, e.g.

Hyan 7.

Verse 1.

Selithethiwe icala	(c)
Emlabemi wonke,	(s)
Sukumeni nithokoze	(s)
Nina bantu nonke.	(s)

Hyan 8.

Verse 1.

Ngiyazikhumbula izeluleko	(11)
Engelulekwa ngazo	(7)
Kanti namla sezikude	(3)
Nenhliziyoyami	(6)

The reason for this expansiveness is that the Shembeites have achieved a balance between the western forms and the African forms. Moreover, their tolerant attitude has given them the full advantage of both streams of culture.

The statement that religious poetry had a negative effect on Zulu poetry sounds paradoxical when it is realised that the idea of a broad brotherhood of man and the high virtues of self-sacrifice brought by this new religion, should have given Zulu poetry a system of high moral values necessary to make literature broad and tolerant in its outlook. The fact is that the African who took up religion as an escape from cruel reality was unable to separate ethics from a sectional religious morality. The result was that religion, instead of broadening the traditional ethic, became a mere instrument useful only in a therapeutic sense. It demanded little from the convert, except mere conformity. It justified a hostile attitude towards the non-Christians and thereby narrowed the

boundaries of an humanitarian attitude. At its worst it became the projection of a conflict between the 'civilised' and the 'uncivilized'. Whatever the case may be, there is no doubt that religious poetry *did* have some favourable influence on the development of Zulu poetry. It introduced a broader morality into Zulu poetry. For though it is not the function of poetry to instruct, it is true that a poetry that combines the teaching of high ideals and high artistry always wins the highest acclaim on account of its mature tone.

Humanity no more meant the local group, but the whole of mankind. It is only when man is aware of this greater world that the immortality of his work is assured, for thereon he decentralises his whole being so that even if he writes on local subjects they tend to have a universal application. Missionary poetry achieved this by preaching the idea of selfless devotion to the welfare of mankind more emphatically than any philosophy before.

Another aspect bequeathed by missionary poetry, though incidental, is the critical spirit. The missionaries armed their converts against the "irreligious" practices in traditional life, by condemning practices they considered barbaric. By so doing, they made the converts look critically at their past. Though temporarily criticism was directed against the traditional way of life, after some time it was directed against Christian religion itself. There was a realisation that after all Christianity is a system of moral principles that must be applied to present life. Moreover, they found out that those who taught it were

not without fault. This change from servile acceptance of new ideas to the revolt that sees some good in traditional life is evidenced in poetry. One comes across a critical questioning of religion, e.g. J.C. Dlamini's "Ngifuna ukwazi". The critical attitude varies from sincere questioning of religion to sacrilegious comment:

"Mina angifuni ukufa ngesonto,  
Funa ngifike uJesu nomalume wakhe,  
Bedlala umlabalaba;  
USutana ewunompempe,  
UTHixo eluza".

From the Mine Singers.

Religious poetry, by expanding the boundaries of hope also saved Zulu poetry from a fatalism that was inevitable. It was thus part of a stream that gave rise to a new type of poetical expression.

#### The Influence of 18th. Century Romanticism on Modern ZULU Poetry.

It was Romantic poetry of the 18th. Century that had the most marked influence on Zulu poetry.

There are various reasons for this type of influence. First and foremost, it was Vilakazi, the first great modern Zulu poet, who popularised pieces of poetry from the 18th. Century Romantic poetry. But even Vilakazi himself was responding to a need.

Romantic poetry of the 18th. Century influenced Zulu poetry because it has for a long time been the only type of poetry read in the High Schools. It appealed to the Zulu poet because of its melancholy and personal nature. It, in a way, interpreted his

state of life. He felt that his whole life was sad and somewhat insecure. He escaped from this state of affairs into a pleasurable world of romantic melancholy and self-pity. This ~~personal~~ nature of poetry characterises all modern Zulu poetry. It is in most cases even more ~~personal~~ than eulogistic traditional poetry. In its study of life personal sorrow predominates. The Zulu poet's Romanticism bears a relationship to that religious ecstasy which, as stated above, provided a solace to the sufferers. The modern Zulu poet, <sup>gradually</sup> diverted the religious passion in which he had hitherto been engrossed, into an analysis of immediate realities of life.

In Romantic poetry nature <sup>has</sup> ceased to be of referential value as in traditional poetry, but is a spirit responsible for poetic ecstasy. She is loved for her own sake. Religious poetry and the 18th. Century romanticism had one thing in common - a passionate attachment to a Being. For the Romantic poets nature was the manifestation of this Being, and for the Christian this Being manifested itself in Nature.

The spirit of Romanticism pervades all modern academic poetry. In Vilakazi's poetry one comes across romantic imitations of popular poems, like an "Ode to a Skylark", "Niagara Falls", etc. In some cases, romanticism merely shows its influence in the poem, e.g. "Ilanga liphumile", by Made; "Ubuhle bemvelo", "Ulwandle", by E. Mkhize, etc.



Characteristics of Modern Zulu Poetry.

This type of poetry is characterised by the use of foreign forms like the syllabic metre. In some poems like "We Moya",

"Inkondlo" the number of syllables is the same throughout the poem. In some poems the poet varies the number of syllables so that in one verse there are ten syllables and in another, eight, and these may alternate till the end of the poem as it suits the poet. There are poets who have also adopted a rhyme scheme in their poetry. The rhyme scheme may be a b, a b, or a a, b b. Sometimes the poets use heroic couplets.

Modern nature poetry is mainly a poetry of mood. It is also a poetry of reflection, either on death or personal experience. It is more individualistic than ancient Zulu poetry, hence personal idiosyncrasies distinguish each poet.

Poetry of this period is also written by well-known figures, like Vilakazi, J.C. Dlamini, S. Dlamini, Made, Kunene, Mkhize, etc. This means that the writing of poetry is now a more specialised work requiring a special skill. Consequently it has greater unity and consistency of thought than traditional poetry which, as a communal work, had different levels of artistry.

It is primarily composed to entertain, and its social significance has gradually become secondary, except in the case of didactic poems.

There is also a tendency towards classification on the basis of type, e.g. narrative, lyrical and didactic.

THE MODERN POETS.DR. E. S. VILAKAZI.

Dr. Vilakazi was born at Groutville. He was educated at Marianhill where he passed his T4 and through correspondence courses worked himself up the educational ladder until he obtained the B.A. degree, after which he studied at the Witwatersrand University where he obtained the Doctor of Literature degree. He was the first African in South Africa to hold such a degree. He together with Dr. Doke wrote the most up to date Zulu dictionary. Besides writing poetry, he wrote a number of novels.

He, however, won his fame mainly through his poetry. His influence has been felt even among Xhosa poets. Most of modern Zulu poetry is modelled on his poetry; he has several imitators. He has not been surpassed even up to this day. His death in 1948 was a great loss to Zulu literature.

"INKONDLO KAZULU."

This was Vilakazi's first volume, and as would be expected it has many amateurish defects. Like English poetry which at its early stages of development imitated French poetry, Zulu poetry could not resist this temptation of imitating its models.

Most of the poems in this volume are imitations of poems of the 18th. Century Romantic poets. There are, however, a few original ones like "Inkelenkããe yakwaXhosa", and "UShaka kaSenzakhona". Some, only derive their inspiration from English poems and are therefore not exactly

imitations. Accordingly, the poems in this volume are divided into two types, imitations and those that are of foreign inspiration.

Imitations:

"Impophoma yaseVictoria".

Here the poet makes a direct translation of the poem "Niagara Falls" written by Lydia Huntley Sigourney (Golden Leaves). Part of it, especially the last few stanzas, is original. The "Victoria Falls" has been acclaimed as one of Vilakazi's best poems. It has force and rolls on from verse to verse in a swift rhythm. It is truly impressive in parts that are original. It, however, lacks a romanticism of African origin which would make it even more original and interesting. Its beauty is too suspended for it to have the solidity inherent in the poetry that has human interest. It is a pretty poem. The vision is relative rather than absolute and the poet seems rather engrossed in filming his own feelings rather than depicting the waterfall as part of the phenomena of life. After reading the poem we still have no idea of the waterfall, except in a vague sort of way. Some metaphors are not appropriate to the sublime beauty of the waterfall.

"Mamo ubani ongase asukusele,  
Phezulu answinize njengentethe,  
Yomhlabathi weshongololo ... "

"Nkathi-mbe luyalala luthi daka,  
Njengosuntu osedakwe wacobeka,  
Ilanga nawumsebenzi onzima".

The poet does at times use beautiful metaphors taken from the African way of life.

"Unjengesandle somzanyana ekhanda,  
Selula iminwe sithungatha unwele,  
Silulelisa, siluvusa paan si".

The poet shows great appreciation for beauty. The beautiful is <sup>at times</sup> depicted in full detail though its symbolic significance is not fully grasped. However, the poem is definitely a lyric of a high order. The poet is entranced by the sublime beauty of the waterfall.

### INqomfi:

This poem is an imitation of Shelley's "Ode to the Skylark". It does not, as in the case with all imitations, come anywhere near the original in merit. In fact in parts it is extremely prosaic and puerile.

"Ma uthi ntinini phambi kwalowo oyindlela,  
Bathi abadala izindaba zimi kahle".

African superstitions are used without realising their full emotional significance. The poet fails to weave the superstitions into the poem with good effect. By forcing a rhyme scheme the poet kills the natural flow of the poem.

"Unothando olumangalisayo alikhethi,  
Mathethe law'akhiwa emandwaleni emile nkathi,  
Unothando kodwa alukagazingwa wusizi,  
Uthi noba ulele nob'uguvil'ubungazi,  
Ungacabangi ngekusasa nangalangashona,  
Kuwena imini nobusuku bufana nentwana".

There are a few beautiful verses in the first two stanzas but on the whole the poem is of secondary merit.

### "Sengiyokholwake".

This beautiful poem is a translation of a poem of the 16th. Century by an English poet. It is full of poignancy and is one of the most popular poems of Vilakazi.

The poem though an imitation shows depth of feeling and some original ideas. Perhaps the reason for this is that the poet is dealing with a subject that moved him deeply, namely, the death of his father. Vilakazi handles the subject of death with great dexterity.

#### Of Foreign Inspiration:

Amongst these the poet has his own original ideas, but the source of the inspiration for the poem is traceable to some known work.

#### "Unkufa":

This is inspired by Grey's "elegy". The poet successfully frees himself from slavish imitation. The result is that his poem has force and poignancy fitting to the subject of death. He is not merely concerned with the death of his brothers and relations, or his own father, whose death he most graphically describes, but the nature of death itself.

Though the poem must be regarded as one of Vilakazi's best poems, it has its great defects; the most apparent being its lack of a logical arrangement of ideas. The poet merely rambles along without giving the poem any solid structure. His pessimism is nowhere relieved, for him there is no salvation from death. He does nevertheless capture the tragic sorrow of death, the horror being made more powerful by a description of the death of the one so intimate to him, namely, his father. His personification of death captures the imagination. The poet says because of death's mercilessness, it gives one no chance. It wanted to overtake him suddenly in the

streets of Durban. There is only consolation from all this, namely that his father was a great hero, as such his greatness will be an inspiration to posterity. The influence of traditional poetry is apparent in the attempt made by the poet to depict his father as great a hero as the heroes of antiquity.

"Ngomazi omdala kaGroot"

This poem is inspired by Cliver Goldsmith's "Deserted Village". This is not a fully inspired poem. Vilakazi's cause of failure in long narrative poems is that he does not weave his material around a hero. He rather makes general comments which though not and then show sparks of genius, yet are not laid on a good structure. The basis of his inspiration in this poem is the village of Grootville in which Shaka, the great national hero, once stayed. There are objects which remind the poet of the great hero, like the stones where he sat. His appreciation of the village and the accompanying associations has a local tinge. The hero does not have universal stature. The poet rather relies on the fact that Shaka is well-known. Hence Shaka is a shadowy figure whose value in the poem is to give importance to the village. The poet rather gives descriptions, which show his great appreciation of nature.

"We Moya"

This is inspired by Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind".

The poet <sup>has</sup> personified the wind. His personification does not have a great poetical effect because of its inaccuracies.

"Ngifisa ukukuphamba,  
Ngiqonde ukukuphuba".

Such personification sounds rather ridiculous because of <sup>its</sup> inconsistencies with the subject. It is unthinkable, for instance that the wind could be tripped even in its personified form. It is a light poem which has at times beautiful metaphors as when he compares grass to a hairy cloth. The syllabic metre and the rhyme scheme tends to make the poem artificial. It is one of the poems which would be classified as uninspired.

"Ukhamba Luka Senkomose".

This is inspired by Keats "Ode to the Grecian Urn". Vilakazi makes quite an admirable adaptation of the poem. He introduces entirely new ideas taken from African life.

The clay-pot for him has a symbolic importance; he has sentimental attachment to it. The poem, unlike the original poem, is not inspired by beauty, but by the glory of the heroic past. He sees the owner of the clay-pot as a great figure of the past. His clay-pot, therefore, reminds the poet not only of him but also of the great heroic age of the past.

Of Original Inspiration:

"Umcabango wasekuseni".

"Umcabango wasekuseni" is a philosophical poem. The poet is inspired by the quiet of the morning; he reflects on life and attempts to solve many problems. On account of the fact that the poem is philosophical it is abstract. The poet does not attempt to relate his

abstract ideas to concrete reality, hence the obscurity. It is essentially a metaphysical poem. It does not have any great original ideas.

"Inkelenkele yakw<sup>a</sup>Xhosa".

Background:

The subject of the national suicide of the Xhosas has received attention from musicians, poets and dramatists. Nongqautze was informed by the Ancestral Spirits that if the nation wanted to drive the Europeans to the sea, they should first kill all the cattle and destroy their crop. Then on a certain day the lost possessions will be restored. The old will be young again and the sun will appear from the West instead of the East. The people were persuaded to believe and disaster ensued.

Vilakazi, like other writers, is also inspired by the subject of the national 'suicide' of the Xhosa people. He beautifully builds up for the climax by giving a description of the nappy scene when the old are humourously depicted as practising for the day when they shall be rejuvenated. The old man asks his aged wife what she shall say when he makes love to her again.

All the people are eagerly expecting the great day. The poet, by a clever change of mood, aptly describes the suddenness of the misery that ensues. The people and their great heroes are depicted on the Great Day waiting for the sun to rise from the West. The sun did not change its daily course. The poet does not dwell on the misery of the people, because such a description would be too horrible. He leaves it to the reader to



imagine it, but says:

"Bheka izibaya nezinkulama,  
Kukhamisile ....."

"Phendukisa amehle uzobona,  
Amango izinyoni zaphezulu,  
Zizitika zilale zingembethe".

The poem is full of pathos, especially when Tsili is shown consoling the despairing crowds. The horror of the impending disaster is accurately conveyed. One feels, here is a people fighting to save their country and finally led to believe that they could save it through the help of the ancestors; only to find after everything had been destroyed, that what they believed was not true.

The poem, though good, suffers from an untimely climax. The poet has built up very well for the climax. His description of what follows the tragedy lowers the tragic atmosphere he has created, on account of <sup>its</sup> inappropriate diction. He further errs in summarising with the strange philosophy that Nongqawuz was a prophetess who, as H.I.E. Dlomo also depicts her, killed to save. On the whole, however, the poem is good.

#### Comments:

The first volume of Vilakazi has a lot that is immature. The poet has not full confidence in himself as a writer of Zulu poetry. He still relies for his inspiration on the works of the 18th Century Romantic poets. In those poems in which the inspiration is original the poet shows great ability. Besides, the poems mentioned there are others that are of original inspiration, like "Thongo Lokwazi", "Khalani Mazulu", and "Langificwa ykufa", which show great poetic merit.

The first one is an acknowledgement of Vilakazi's indebtedness to H.I.M. Dhlomo, the second is an elegy on the death of Solomon kaDinuzulu. Mourning for the heroic past occupies Vilakazi's mind, each occasion connected with the Zulu royal family arouses sad thoughts about the past. The poem "Mangificwa Ukufa" has a great influence on modern Zulu elegiac poetry. Its imitations have often appeared in the "Ilanga laseNatal". It is characteristic of Vilakazi's treatment of the subject of death. To Vilakazi death is too real a tragedy to be flattered with soft phrases, it is clear that he gets pleasurable melancholy from it.

#### "Wena Uyothini"

This poem is a translation of J.S. Cotter's poem "What will you Say". It was specially chosen by the poet because it has a relationship to the problem that was facing him. He feels that those who are colour prejudiced have to answer for it before God. The translation is good and it conveys fully the ideas of the original poem.

#### "AMAL'IZULU"

This is the second volume of Vilakazi's poetry. In this volume the poet emerges a successful master of his art. He has realised the value of original inspiration. He almost successfully fuses the Zulu and English poetic idioms. Much as he mourns for the past he has realised that the past is not very important unless it has principles or ideas of present application. Such poems as "Ugqozi" show now successfully Vilakazi has

done this. He is not so much concerned with the memories of the past as with the reflections on the past or ideas arising from such meditations. He sees Princess Mkabayi inspiring him and urging him on to write. He makes a symbolical picture of the long waiting he suffered at the Royal gates until at last he was accepted as the darling of the past heroes for what he had written about them:

"Vuka wena kaMancinza,  
Kawuzelanga ukulala'ubuthongo,  
Nanku unthwal'engakwethwesa wona".

The poet writes on a variety of subjects. Most of the poetry in this volume is free of mechanical metrical arrangements. It flows naturally from the poet's heart. He is inspired by Schubert's song, by the ephemeral things of this world, by philosophy, by the suffering of his people and by the pure beauty of the moon. In all these subjects he writes with a sure hand of an inspired poet.

Vilakazi is at his best when he writes short lyrical pieces, especially if combined with Zulu history. In the long poem he still does not realise that a long poem must be based on a story around which a philosophy might be woven. His long poems as a result are weak and incoherent. They tend to be didactic and dull, because the poet has not rid himself of the habit of observing his own feelings. He is sometimes too concerned with the desire to push in his personality to be effective in a narration. This concern with the self blurs his view of life. Take for instance, "Imfando ePhakeme". He makes a general complaint that education does not give him wealth. In promising to write poetry

he is unconvincing because he is not persuaded to do so by any lofty ideals. It is in this turning to the self that results in Vilakazi's pessimism and localism; he is essentially a Zulu poet, not a world poet.

He does, however, break through the local boundaries when he writes most realistically of the sufferings of his people, e.g. "Wo Ngitshela Mtanomlungu", "Ngoba Sawuthi", "Ezinkomponi". The last one is the best of all his poems and the most moving.

There are in this volume some beautiful lyrics, for instance, "Inyanga", "Ukuthula", and "Ukuhlwa", "Mamina". They seldom describe the object of inspiration. It is often merely of symbolic significance. The poem "Inyanga", has a splendid introductory part, but the poet thereafter makes an unfortunate comparison between the pure celestial beauty of the moon with the mundane character of a medicine man. His appreciation of the beauty of the moon gives rise to thoughts about his ancestors. He assumes that we have felt what he has felt, so that before he communicates his ideas to us, he expresses an immature surprise at the beauty of the moon. The last stanza has some lovely verses:

"Ngibone ucansi lwamasimu akamoba,  
Engiwakhumbula maqede ngibheke,  
Phezulu ngikubone uliqand'elimhlophe,  
Ngikhothame: ngabe ngiyakwanga".

The poem "Izinsimbi" has some very beautiful verses. The bells of St. Paul become the source of ideas about the lost glory of the Zulus. The poet is inspired by the changes that have occurred. He realises that the world is no more the same:

"Khalani zinsimbi kusemandi,  
Ngizwa izwi lenu libubula,  
Libika unhlab'oguqukile".

The bells also remind him of the modern great Zulu heroes like Mafukuzela, Champion, and Lutauli. It seems the use of decasyllabic metre gives him better scope for free expression. This is the type of metre used in this poem.

The poem "Ezinkomponi" contains a lot that is of human interest. The poet aptly communicates the feelings of a mine worker by identifying himself with him. The poet's sympathy is not from above, he treats them as fellow human beings with feelings like everybody. Their troubles are deeply felt by the poet:

"Abanewenu bayagwala,  
Ngapakathi ezinkomponi,  
Bakhwehlele, balale bafe,  
Pho nina anikhwehleli ngani?"

The compounds are symbolic of the suffering of his people:

"Sivumile ukuphuma eqhugwaneni,  
Sazoluswa njengezinkabi,  
Sashiya amabele namasi nobisi".

Vilakazi has in this volume achieved a balance between form and content. His second volume contains many poems that show a gradual development of his genius. He shows in many of them originality and great artistry.

#### A. E. MADE.

##### Life History:

Made is a teacher by profession. He has written a number of books. Besides the novels he has written, he has also written a book of poems entitled "Umuthi wokufa Nezinye iziNkondlo". He also wrote a long elegy on the death of Vilakazi, entitled "Bambatha kaMakhwatana".

"INDIHI WOKUFA NEZINYE EZIFAKONDLO"

This book has Mado's longest poem, from which the title of the book is derived. It is one of those poems whose inspiration is drawn from the Bible. It is on the story of the fall of man. The poem does not show much originality. The poet follows the story rather too closely and does not cover it with the dressings of the imagination. His treatment of the subject of the fall of man is too childish for so serious a theme. What destroys his poetry is also the forced syllabic metre. In this example one sees clearly the lack of a serious tone fitting to the subject:

"Makuhamba wena-ke dimoni-ndini,  
Yana khona le emhlabeni,  
Angeneliwa ngumlomo,  
Ukhlakanipha kwakho,  
Kwekhanjana namehlwana akho,  
Kufakazelwa buqili,  
Bakho hokusithi dili,  
Isintu lesa esikhonzile,  
Imiyalo siyephule,  
Lakhothama idimoni,  
Kumholi wamadimoni,  
Selibase lwakhe umlilo,  
Wal'omkhulukazi wehlawulo lalo".

Lack of imagination, a forced syllabic metre and unnatural rhyme scheme do great damage to the poem. This is true of almost all Mado's poems. Like most Formalists he raises form above the meaning of the poem.

Mado has written poems on a variety of subjects. He has no particular model. He derives his inspiration from subjects of a romantic type, e.g. "E! Ilanga Liphumile", "Uthando", "Sithandwa Soze Siphumulephi", "Mhla Ngindiza ngeBanoyi", and "Nginganikele ngokwani konke".

Made's poems could be classified into three types:

1. Of National character - "Afrika Ngingekudele", "Hlanganani 7izwe zamaAfrika", "Alele ama,hawe", "Ngaphandle kwakho nami".

Amongst these the best is "Afrika Ngingowakho". In this poem the poet feels that it is the beauty of the country that has attracted the nations of the world to Africa. Africa is the mother that loves everybody, even the creatures that inhabit it. Made's heart is too light to depict the grandeur and vastness of the continent of Africa with its mysteries.

He has not freed himself from the habit of most modern poets of mourning for the glorious past instead of writing about it:

"Lapha ngiphendula amenlo sami,  
Ngizindla ngamandl'owabunawo,  
Nangongon'owubekile,  
hengasekh'oSizakele,  
Wenake usunguDingindawo,  
Fzweni lawoKhokho bakho nebami".

Made's national poetry is of a highly lyrical nature. There is a poem on the Boy Scout Movement in which Made is very much interested. There are also praise-poems on prominent figures like Mr. D. McMalcolm and A.W.G. Champion - the one on the latter is not in the book but was published in the "Ilanga lase Natal".

2. The Personal type - in which there are poems like: "Nhlebindini", "Sithandwa soze siphumulephi", "Ngamensela okuhle", "Kumngane ongenagama", "Nhle ngindiza ngeBanoyi", "Nolwandle", "Ngitshela Mtakwethu", "Ma - lo", "Sithandwa sami Nomsinga", "Ma Ngivulele", "Sebekubonile", "Qiniseâââ sphemfulo Wami".

The poet in most of these poems indulges in self-pity of the most sentimental type. He sometimes flings himself into the hands of his mother when he feels he cannot face cruel reality, e.g.

"Ma! Wena-be ngivulele,  
Nginethile sengimanzi,  
Vula wena sengigodole,  
Amakhaza nohumanzi".

In some he ridicules his enemies and occasionally feels that he should patiently bear the attacks of life and his enemies, for many have suffered like him.

He sometimes writes on bugs, lice and fleas in a humorous manner.

"Izintwala namazenze,  
Imbungulu namaphela,  
Sekwashiya amahlanze."

the poem expresses his characteristic light mood.

3. The third type includes riddles woven into poetry and light philosophical reflections - "Siyadiula kulelizwe", "Ungasheshi ukwahlulele", "Nginganikela ngokwami konke". These are usually of a didactic nature. There are <sup>some</sup> poems that show religious influence - "Nkosi ngingowakho", and "Nkosi Angizidalanga". The last-mentioned shows the poet's attitude to racial discrimination.

Made is not a great poet. He cannot successfully write great epic pieces, as his spirit is essentially lyrical. He seems to write poetry as a pastime. In most cases his poetry is sentimental and he freely indulges in one of the greatest poisons of poetry - self-pity. In the long elegy on Vilakazi he does not show himself sincerely moved by the death of Vilakazi!

Vilakazi's death is no



doubt a great national loss, but not Mde's personal loss. As a result, his poem lacks poignancy. He does not mourn his death but weeps generally with others. ViBakazi's death reminds him of the great heroes of the African nation.

Thos. Mthembu.

Thos. Mthembu was a teacher by profession. He was born at St. Wendolin, Karianhill. He wrote only one book of poetry.

"UMyalezo:"

This volume contains thirty-five poems on different subjects.

Mthembu is very religious, his poetry is mainly written for Christians or those who understand Christian morality. He tends to be dogmatic, and accepts religion without critically examining it. The result of this is that his poetry is didactic. Generally speaking, Mthembu writes an abstract type of poetry - many people find it dull and uninteresting. His poetry reminds one of the poetry of Francis Thompson. To Mthembu everything is symbolic of some virtue or vice. Even the sun that rises must chase away evil darkness:

"Phuma kkhululi phuma,  
Phuma wena ntsholontsholo,  
Kushabalal'ubumnyama,  
Nethunzi lenkolakalo".

In practically all Mthembu's poetry one traces a strong influence of religion. One comes across such poems as "Ukuvuna", "Inhliziyo", "Indodana yefintu", "Umculo", "Ukuzalwa kukaJesu", etc. His method of

writing religious pieces is by the direct method, i.e. we do not derive a moral lesson from the events but we are informed directly so that the poet seems all the time to be standing on the pulpit. Take for instance "Ubuvambe":

"Lowo wenza elikhulu iphatna,  
Nanciphis'almfuyo yomhlaba,  
Wachithisinkwe ezingene sakhe,  
Nanyanz'umdadhi wakhe,  
Waqalekisa isandla esinesisa,  
Eselulekiâ'ekondleni intandane".

His beauty is not the beauty of nature but the beauty of the spirit:

"Konke kunguthando nobunle,  
Ngentando yakhe ongubunle,  
Bothando lubuhle beqiniso".

OR

"Izidalwa zonke zikuswele,  
Zifunz'lon'igugu elingubuhle,  
Wapnela igugu leli liyisifo".

There are a few poems that are of a secular nature, like "uThekwane", "Impophomâ", "UGodongwane", "Isipi ya-kwaZulu", "Izintaba-zondi". In all these Mthemba writes with force, characteristic of all his poetry. His words are usually so packed that the meaning runs the risk of being obscure.

He is at his best when he writes an elegy. It is then that his characteristic abstraction receives some feeling. His elegy "Isililo sabaThembu kwaSanti", is one of the best Zulu elegies. He, in the true African style does not appeal to nature to ease his grief, but to the people around him. He draws a graphic picture of the scene after the funeral:

"Ea, ngibikelwe ngalesisalukazi,  
 Ngisetshethe siyan'isanda kabi,  
 Isibani siciwile kwethu ngawe,  
 Indlu yakweth'inyama swahle,  
 UMakhoz'uhlezi engosini lapha,  
 Ubuso bakhe budumele buyalile;  
 Igundane ligijim'eziko kwethu,  
 Amath'abuyele kwasifuba mfowethu,  
 UCansi lwakho alubekeki lingengobuso bako".

His word-pictures are of a very high order.  
 Note how he compares grief to an old woman. Other  
 good word-pictures used in the poem with good effect are:

"Zenla zishisa okwamanz'abilayo,  
 Ngekhanzi olusinqe sineziabobo".

OR

"Sengiyihloba ngeshoba elimnyama lomhlaba".

He is at best where he expresses his sorrow  
 without trying to praise the dead.

Mthembu offers us no philosophy, we rather get our  
 philosophy from his stoicism.

His other elegy, "Imbali eyabunela eNdonyane",  
 has a touching poignancy. He says:

"Mhlaba uvunule uyaconsa,  
 Inhliziyo yakho yidwala,  
 Ayinasihle nasihawu".

Mthembu's poetry has some *out standing* merits. He does not  
 tie himself to the fashionable syllabic metre. He is  
 sometimes very original in his ideas, though he has not  
 the imagination to depict them clearly.

His poetry often lacks feeling. His language is very  
 powerful, he sometimes uses words with great dexterity.

#### Elliot Mkhize.

Elliot Mkhize is a teacher. He struggled hard for  
 his education. This volume is his only contribution so  
 far.

"IMBONGI YAKWASELU"

His collection of poems includes poems on nature - "Ubuhle bemvelo", "Imvula", "Umoya", "Ubusika", "Ilanga", "Ulwandle", etc. - on the African reaction to racial prejudice - "Umbala wami", "Isigqili" - some are of national character - "Iqhawe le-Afrika", "Kvuka uJama", "Thina maZulu", - some are on mechanical objects that have come with western culture like trains, wireless, aeroplanes, etc.

Mkhize's poetry is not of a very high standard. He catalogues platitudes without attempting to put his ideas into poetry. He has apparently not studied his art. Most of his poetry is didactic and commonplace, as for instance the following:

"Inhlabathi ayidliwa ayikudla,  
Iyimpilo ezintwenizonke,  
Inhlabathi ingathombo wokudla,  
Okuphilisa umhlaba worke,  
Ziyesutha izikhuthali kuyona,  
Ayalamba amavila kuyona".  
- Inhlabathi.

He is absolutely devoid of originality, his poetry is further weakened by the ever-present note of self-pity and sentimentalism:

"Umoya wami ukhetnazeKile,  
Abazali bami bangishiyile,  
Ngisele ngedwa esikhuleni".  
- Isililo.

He has no philosophy and generally does not have a wide outlook of life. He has a fairly comprehensive vision of the general which is not referred to any particular situation. His ideas as a result hang in the air and remain for the most part unconvincing.

He tries in some of his poems to write something that appeals to the heart. His lyrics are simple and perhaps could be enjoyed by those who prefer light poetry.

Abner S. Kunene.

Abner S. Kunene is a teacher by profession. He comes from the Northern districts of Natal.

"KIZIBONGO EKIZITHOPHO"

Kunene writes different types of poems ranging from nursery rhymes to poems on serious national subjects.

The influence of English poetry in his poem is shown in his free translation of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" ("Viliviliza Nkanyezi). The latter part of the book is devoted to poetry derived from biblical subjects.

Kunene's poetry is not of very high order. He does now and then show some sparks of genius. His poetry is spoiled by the imposition of form. In most cases this is done at the expense of meaning. He is, indeed, the extreme example of a poet who would even be ridiculous if only to get form. Note the following examples:

"Sikhwele ngaphezu kwabantu ngabantu,  
Singenanhluzelo yomusa nokhuntu,  
Isitha esingaka ngezenzo zakhona,  
Singenabugatha sidumbu sakhona,  
Ngamehlo nolimi weyaka isitha sami".

- Ulimi.

OR

"Sengengatni ngabe ngiyingelosi,  
Ngihlale ngemvilophi".

OR

"Langeni ihlobo,  
Nobuhle bentobo".

In these verses the poet forces words to a rhyme scheme. It is not only rhyme that kills his poetry, but the witch-weed of Zulu poetry - syllabic metre.

Like most Zulu poets Kunene has written poems on national subjects - "Afrika", "USaka kaMlambo", "Izibongo zikaShaka", "EyaseSandlwana", - poems on nature - "Ehlobo", "Ubusika", "Entwasahlobo", "Netha Mvula", "Phuma Ianga", etc. and poems of religious inspiration. The poet has included in his collection traditional nursery rhymes. Some of his poems are scarcely worth the name, e.g. "Imidumbu yoMuntu", "Lafelible kakhulu".

One gets the same didacticism in Kunene's poetry as in Mkhize. He does not teach by illustration. His morality is of a Christian type. His poetry is bound to appeal only to a very pious section of the community.

Kunene's poetry is, however, of a higher order than Mkhize's. There are some attempts made to bring in new ideas. In so doing Kunene is not always successful, he sometimes forces words into what he wants them to be. One get such queer words as "Imbaliso", "Bangacondi". There is an art in word formation. The invented word must fit into general terminology of the language. This Kunene fails to do.

He makes some attempts at writing narrative poetry. He relates the story of creation. This he bases on the Zulu theogenic myth. His ideas are rather obscure

and he does not realise the significance of the myth of creation. This poem is, however, one of his best.

J. S. Matsebula

"ILOLO LEZINECNDLO".

This anthology compiled by J. S. Matsebula is the first of its kind. Matsebula is a teacher and a graduate of the University of South Africa.

He has collected poems from the works of Zulu poets, but has left out poems from the most famous and the greatest of all modern Zulu poets - Dr. Vilakazi. This would have enriched his anthology. He has collected not only poems from poets who have published their works but also from poets who have not yet published. Not all the poems included in this anthology are the best in Zulu poetry. The compiler should, for instance, have left out "Ii Ii Kule Kwethu", and included instead "Nginganikela ngakokorke okwani". He should also have included "Isililo sabaThembu", one of the most beautiful Zulu elegies.

He could also have included more poems by "Bulima Ngiyeke", who deserves a greater place than any of the poets in the anthology.

Matsebula has also left out poetry of the eulogistic type. Had he included some of the best of them from pre-Shakan era to the present day, he would have done the language a very great service.

The arrangement according to authors rather than according to type is not the best arrangement.

There is no doubt, however, that Matsebula has done admirable work by compiling this anthology. Some of the poems in the anthology are quite good. His own "Iphupho" is of a very high order.

#### GENERAL CRITICISM

Modern Zulu poetry heralds a new era in Zulu poetry. In making a criticism of it, one must be very tolerant, on account of the fact that modern Zulu poetry is essentially at an experimental stage. Poets are experimenting with the new forms of poetry.

There is no doubt that soon Zulu poetry will liberate itself from a slavish imitation of English poetry. For it is clear that "very rarely a poem in one language may inspire a poem of comparable poetic value in another language" - (Herbert Read). Until this is done no great works can be expected from Zulu poets.

Poems whose inspiration originates from other poems can only be justified if they contain new ideas not contained in the original.

The analysis of modern poetry shows that Zulu poetry is developing. There are indications that the Zulu poets have the ability to compose great poetical pieces of all types. Their ability to handle all types of poetry is more to be admired if it is realised that there is no literature available in which the principles of Zulu literary art are dealt with. They are therefore writing with very scanty material serving as a background for their works.

Although modern Zulu poetry is scarcely 25 years old,



yet the poets have made remarkable contributions to African literature. It would be an exaggeration if one claimed that Zulu poets have already produced works of world class. Nonetheless, trends show that soon they will produce some of the world's greatest master-pieces.

Modern Zulu poetry is a great advance in the development of Zulu poetry. The very experiments that have been carried out in metre and rhyme, unsuccessful as some of them are, show how seriously the poets are taking their art. These experiments are an indication that the poets are trying to find some form through which they can better communicate their ideas. Modern Zulu poets have contributed a regular stanza form to Zulu poetry. In this form ideas are arranged according to a specific order.

They have made one of the most marked advances in Zulu poetry by composing a lyric that is totally dissociated from music. This new lyric has become very popular and it has taken the place of the traditional nursery rhyme. This has meant that a new type of poetry with a more universal appeal has replaced a type that was confined to a small circle only.

Further, modern Zulu poetry is more refined, vulgar references are almost never used. It has also become more philosophical and less dependant on the present day events. Hence, it is more universal than traditional poetry.

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## PART III

### SYNTHESIS

#### CHAPTER IX

##### Trends in Zulu Poetry:

The study of several manuscripts of unknown poets like Kuso Jali, E. D. lamini, B. Eloso, etc., reveals that Zulu poetry has a very great future.

There is a general trend towards the dramatic and narrative forms of expression as several manuscripts studied indicate. Nature lyrics though found in large numbers seem to belong to a fashion rather than being products of temperament. They are in most cases inspired by the poetry of prominent poets like Mado and Vilakazi. Some of them are of a very high order, as for instance, those of Seth D. lamini. In most cases, as has been indicated, they are characterised by self-pity and some amount of religious sentimentalism. Poets like E. D. lamini have written lyrics of very high standard.

The poets seem at their best when they write on historical subjects. These poems have a wider appeal than nature lyrics, on account of their wider cultural associations. Since Nature, as a subject of Zulu poetry, has <sup>always</sup> appeared as a symbolical expression of human action it seems modern nature lyrics will take some time to be popular. Indications show that the symbolic treatment of natural phenomena is preferred. Though at present such symbolism is confined to moral values. These lyrics are comparable with Indian lyrics. Amongst these the ecstasy derived from observing

natural objects as beautiful in themselves, is foreign to the concept of nature held. A story is related of a highly educated Zulu who once said he detested walking with "sophisticated" women because they keep telling him of the beauty of blackjack and witch-weed. The same man would enjoy a metaphor derived from such "despicable" things if it were associated with the deeds of the heroes. He would love a verse of this type:

"Umqubuka njengesona".

Many modern poets prefer writing on the heroes of either the past or the present. Few poets consider themselves great poets until they have written about the heroic past in a heroic style. They differ, however, from the poets of old in that their style is not strictly eulogistic, being just between the eulogy and the narrative.

Modern Zulu poets have also written dramatic poetry on the Shakespearean model. Many of these dramas remain unpublished. Though good in parts, they show a tendency towards a subjective type of drama. Some are so violently political that their publication today is unthinkable. Nonkamfela is one of these dramatists whose subjectivity in writing drama results in long speeches that tend to mar the action of the drama.

It is clear that with more education in their art Zulu poets will gradually develop a poetic idiom that will be expressive of a broad Zulu poetic concept.

A few Zulu poets and dramatists have a remarkable knowledge of their art. Most of them prefer to learn their art from biographies of English romantic poets and also from critical introductions on the works of such poets. These poets tend to identify themselves with those poets they admire.

Modern Zulu poets are not influenced by modern English poetry. This is because they scarcely ever come in touch with it. The reason for this is that the low living standards do not allow literate Africans to have a large collection of books. The fact that the modern Zulu writers' market is constituted only by the schools means that his works suffer. In writing for the school market the poet is writing for a special age group and his works must fulfil the requirements of that age group. They must also have a specific 'moral' standard in order to pass the literary board of censors. The result is that most of the works are immature.

The immaturity of these works also originates from the fact that there is no organised form of literary criticism whose function would be to set <sup>up</sup> the standards.

#### The Legacy of Tribal Poetry:

Mention was made of the fact that it is a mistake to suppose that tribal poetry is something formless, inferior and composed of meaningless noises. It shall be proved here that such opinions are nothing but what Paul Radin calls "Academic intolerance".

Poetry had a very significant role in tribal societies. One of the most significant functions is that of conditioning the mind to face disaster without flinching. Stoicism of tribal peoples is proverbial.

From babyhood the young are trained to be brave and honest whatever the price. Amongst the tribal Japanese it is customary to take the young boys to see a dead body, or somebody being executed. Amongst some African tribes during the initiation ceremony the boys are tormented and taught to face death without fear. There are endless examples of this type of education in tribal societies.

What is important to us, however, is not the practices and ceremonies associated with the training but with the poetry that is developed under such circumstances. Paul Radin says the primitive people "can face fortune and misfortune objectively and with equanimity, they can accept life in all its realities and still enjoy it."<sup>22</sup> He further says "The critical insight into life, the inexorability of fate and the philosophic acceptance of human nature in all its aspects comes out clearly in the remarkable proverbs that form so integral a part of literature of the African Negro, the Polynesian and Malayan".<sup>23</sup> These attitudes are revealed in poetry as the examples below will illustrate:

"The tide of life glides swiftly past,  
And mingles all in one great eddying foam;  
And thou earth, awake, exert thy might for me,  
And open wide the door to my last home,  
Where calm and quiet awaits in the sky".

This poem contains a philosophic resignation to death and the undaunted hope that after the tragic drama of life there is happiness and peace thereafter. There is an admirable

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<sup>22</sup> "Primitive man as a philosopher" by Paul Radin, p.96. Published by  
<sup>23</sup> op.cit. p.102. /D. Apleton & Co. New York & London, 1927.

conviction that death is nothing but the gate to eternal bliss. Death is accepted as inevitable; as Paul Radin says "the theme of the inevitability of death pervades the proverbs and poetry of practically every tribe".<sup>24</sup> The poems below clearly illustrate this:

"Death has been with us from all time,  
The heavy burden long ago began.  
Not I can loose the bonds,  
Water does not refuse to dissolve  
And so to the world of the dead,  
The good too must descend".

- Maori New Zealand.

"O baningō Ngosi, O baningi,  
Abangaphansi konyawo,  
O Emhlabeni, .....  
Baningi abangaphansi konyawo".

"Uma ngifa ngifela emhlabatini weshongololo,  
Zizobe zingilindele izintuthane,  
Yini ukufa igwalakazi elilwa licimele".

That tribal people live in a world of fear, full of inimical forces personified into devils and demons, is an exaggeration. It is true that in tribal societies there is a lot in natural phenomenon that is inexplicable, but because psychic fortifications are so numerous the fear of the unknown is scarcely as great as it is supposed to be. The gods are not fear-inspiring. To most tribal communities they are nothing but mere forces that can be called upon to aid man when he fails. They are as vulnerable as man is and as dependent on him as he is on them. If they fail him, like the Brahmin of India, he can starve them or destroy them. Note the following poem for instance:

"O God Thou didst fail me thy promise of life,  
Thy worshippers were to be as a forest,  
To fall only by the battle axe in battle.  
Had it been the God Turaga -  
That liar! I would not have trusted him,  
Like Him, you are man-eater!  
May thy mouth be covered with dung.

Slush it over and over,  
This god is a man after all".

The close relationship between man and the gods is shown in this poem.

In tribal societies, friendships have a greater value than in modern societies.

Amongst some West African tribes there are blood brotherhoods which are formed by the people concerned mixing their blood and each one drinking the mixed blood. These friendships are celebrated in poetry:

"Friend, whatever hardship threatens,  
If thou call me,  
I'll befriend thee.  
All enduring, fearlessly,  
I'll befriend thee".

"Buya njalo Mangwebela, buya,  
Ngikhalela igazi lakho,  
Elasálela emthini".

In the second poem the poet mourns the death of his friend who was killed by an enemy. He swears to avenge his death.

The appreciation of nature in some of the so-called primitive poems is astounding. In the following poem the poet shows great imaginative powers and a great love for beauty:

"The minor stars now westwards troop in majesty,  
The satellites of Rehua go on in a drowsy mood,  
The path they ever went,  
But Ue-nuke-popaku the bent, the decrepit god,  
By them shall be sustained.  
But what may it avail since he,  
Rushed reckless to the battle front,  
Nor heeded that the great, the peoples' power,  
The guardian and protector had succumbed".

- Maori New Zealand.

Dramatic poetry mostly occurs in song form. The soloist introduces the theme, the chorus deals with subject and also philosophises on it. The primary function of the soloist is to provoke the chorus into giving more information on the subject. Note the following extracts:

Solo: Alas, Fangawi the case is hopeless,  
The case is lost.

Chorus: O God Thou didst fail me thy promise of life,  
Thy worshippers were to be as a forest,  
To fall only by the battle axe in battle.  
Had it been the God Turaga -  
That liar! I would not have trusted him,  
Like him, you are man-eater!  
May thy mouth be covered with dung  
Slush it over and over,  
This god is a man after all".

Solo: "laster him well friends ha! ha! etc.<sup>25</sup>.

#### A Tribal Lyrical Dramatic Fragment.

##### Characters:

- A. An Induna represented by a leading warrior who talks and dances in front of the choral ballet.
- B. The chief represented by one card wao, together with a leader struts about before the choral ballet.
- C. A scout (inhloli)
- D. Choral ballet, consisting of warriors.



- A. As I crossed the river I saw a white smith carrying bundles of sticks.
- B. Then Ndaba will err and attack us.
- A. You shouldn't have done it - this your quarrel with him. Behold thou hastrolled a boulder; people will die.

(Enter scout perspiring)



- C. Here comes the scythen-men, the Tulu warriors to mow us down.
- B. Ah! Exile is our lot! To new lands we must fly. Could I had power to fight these roaring Tulu lions. Alas! I am not what I used to be.

(A pause)

So! heyiya nhe!

- D. (i.e. Chorus taking up the theme, harmonising and dancing to it:)

"A bundle of spears,  
Then Ndaba will be rised and will attack,  
People will die; here come the scythen-men,  
Exile be our lot,  
I am not .... etc.  
So neyiyah nhe!" 26..

The End.

Arranged by H.I.E. Dhlomo.

In one drama of a West African tribe the singers first proclaim that their friend is dead, he has been slaughtered by death. The second part is taken by the deceased who tells his friends that he has been overcome by death and they should not mourn him. The third part is taken by death singing triumphantly that it has won the battle. In such a drama the chorus would appear first, sad and down-hearted. Then someone standing representing the corpse of the deceased would appear singing the second part. Finally someone wearing as weird a mask as possible would rush up and down singing the third part.

Tribal poetry as has been shown cannot be written off as a type of poetry below the required standard of great literature. In fact tribal poetry by its intense interest in man acquired a sympathetic appeal that is lacking in some of the modern lyrics.

Tribal Drama differs from modern drama in that it tends to

26 H.I.E. Dhlomo Vol XIII - 1939. p.181.

"Nature & Variety of Tribal Drama".

emphasise the spectacle. Action is usually of symbolical significance, so that <sup>or</sup> thorough appreciation of tribal dramatic poetry demands full knowledge of the symbols used.

There are various patterns of symbolic movements whose meaning is known to tribal audiences. These guide them to the understanding of the concentrated dramatic pièces found in tribal societies. The intricate use of these symbols is part of the great contribution of tribal communities.

#### C O N C L U S I O N .

It cannot be claimed here that the last word about Zulu poetry has been said. In fact in a work of this length it is not easy to deal with all the questions and theories involved in the subject. Each of the periods dealt with here require a detailed individual study. Many topics could be dealt with separately, and form a full-time research project. In this study information about various aspects of this work remain elementary.

Some sections in this work can be regarded as containing mere speculations rather than proved facts. The reason for this is that instruments for research-work on the various aspects are either not available or are imperfect.

It was found impossible to study the manuscripts of various poets because some of the poets lived far away from the centre of this research project. Only a few people have interested themselves in the study of Zulu literature. Perhaps on account of the inavailability

of funds for research work on the subject. As such an intensive study of Zulu literature is not possible since this would involve travelling long distances to obtain information.

There are several interesting facts which were observed in the course of this study. It was found that the study of Xhosa phraseology stand any Zulu poet in good stead. There are a number of phrases carrying the same meaning but having a different significance in each language. A phrase might be commonplace in Xhosa but when transferred into Zulu poetry it assumes a beautiful novelty. Whilst, for instance, one would say in Xhosa "Ilizwe lintombazana" without being original, the same phrase transferred into Zulu would give something fresh and improve a Zulu text tremendously.

Note the two stanzas:

Xhosa: "Ndavuka ilizwe lintombazana  
Ndeva amanzi ekhwaza iintaba,  
Ndanxamela ezintlanjeni ezinemilambo.

Zulu: "Ngavuka ilizwe lintombazana,  
Ngezwa amanzi ekhwaza izintaba,  
Nganxamela ezigodini ezinemilambo".

Though the stanzas have practically the same meaning if analysed word for word, the Zulu stanza has greater poetic effect on account of the novelty of the use of words. This also applies to deideophonic Xhosa words, which can also be used in Zulu. A study of other related African languages is also important in developing the best poetical expression.

The poets who have used their own style are to be admired as Sidney Dark says: "every poet who is a poet, will be artistic in his own way". Quoting Anatole

France he says: "When a poet allows himself to be bound by accepted fashion it becomes .... too plain that he burns the midnight oil, that he works on paper; that he is a grammarian rather than a singer"<sup>27</sup>

Form is important on condition that the poet realises that it is not composed of inflexible principles to which words must be subjected. In all cases there should be balance between ideas and form.

Zulu poets, it seems will have to discover their own poetic form. There might be some English forms that can be used in Zulu poetry, but because Zulu is basically different from English, wholesale transportation of English poetic forms spoil the cadence of the Zulu phrase.

The study of Zulu poetry shows that each era has its own beauties and its own particular contributions. The pre-Shakan era though not an age of fluency was nevertheless an age of grace. The Shakan era though an age of varied contribution, lacked the grace of the pre-Shakan era. Contributions in this era are mainly to form and style. Post-Shakan poets tended to combine grace and a forceful Shakan style. Modern Zulu poets have contributed a framework for high intellectual and moral values. From all these ages a poet might choose what best suits his temperament, or select the best in each period in order to develop his own style and make his own contribution. For the literature of a people is not made up of one monolithic form but of various types of literature.

The development of Zulu poetry depends very much on the expansion of the market and the rediscovery of the traditional works. It also depends on a synthesis of both Zulu and the foreign literary styles. The tendency in Zulu poetry has long been to mourn for the

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27. 'After Working Hours' by Sidney Dark p.90-91.

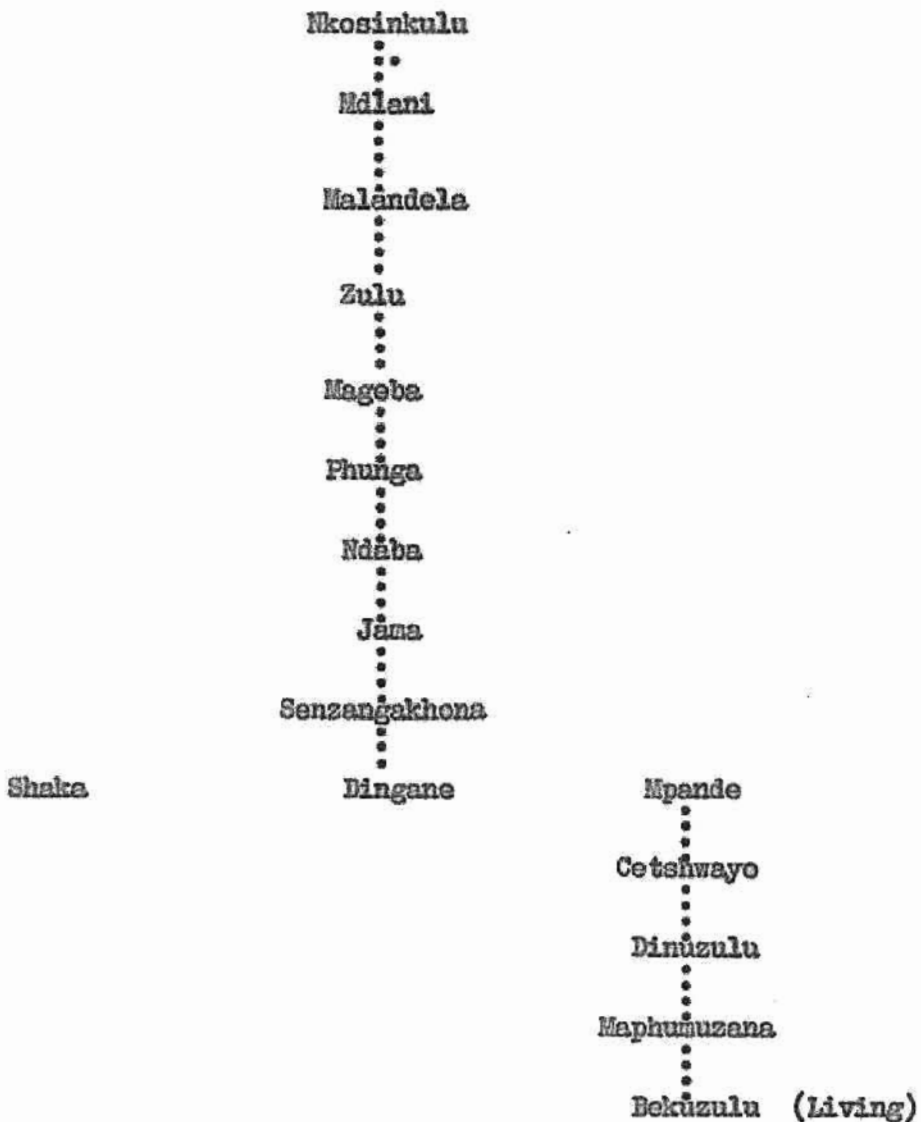
Published by Hadder & Stoughton in Hadder & Stoughton's Peoples Library, 1929.

past rather than to write imaginatively about it.

Finally, it is hoped that Zulu poets will make a study of the principles of their literary art and utilise only those that are suitable to the language. If and when Zulu poetry discards its sentimentalism one hopes to see great literary works produced.

More research is required on this subject. Such research work would stimulate Zulu poetry and shorten the period of error. Critical studies of modern and traditional Zulu poetry are an indispensable part of Zulu literary development.

THE GENEALOGY OF ZULU RULERS.



## NOTES

### "TRIBAL POETRY"

The use of the term "tribal poetry" in this work is by no means meant to be descriptive of the political or social organisation. To talk of the Zulus in the same breath as one would talk of the lesser politically organised Eskimo societies seems to me not only wrong, but unscientific. The Zulus were a fully matured nation with a highly centralised state, a multi-tribal social character, and a feudalistic type of economy. But because fundamentally their poetry bore the same characteristics as all unwritten poetry, and since this type mostly prevails amongst small preliterate tribal communities, it was found convenient to use the term tribal.

### PERSONAL

This term is used mostly in relation to Pre-Shakan poetry. Its use has no relation whatsoever with the personal type of poetry in which the poet portrays his feelings <sup>about life</sup> in a highly emotional language. It merely describes a type of poetry in which the poet eulogises the physical aspect of the individual praised *or deals with a subject personally*.

### MODERN ERA

It was absolutely impossible to deal <sup>in detail</sup> with all the different eras in a work of this size; this work is a general study of all the Eras. Perhaps the Modern Era has specially suffered from this type of treatment, in that the assumptions made could not be fully substantiated. In the study of the works of modern poets it was only the most representative works that were quoted. Vilakazi's "Mamina", sometimes regarded as one of his best lyrics was, for instance, omitted because other lyrics of the same class or type had been analysed.

The views held about modern poets are, according to my judgement, correct, having been formulated after a thorough study of their works.

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The Poetic Potentialities of the Zulu Language

Poetic techniques vary according to the language in which they occur. Hence Bantu Languages bearing a similar grammatical structure have poetic techniques which are basically common to all. A study of these show that though similar fundamentally, there are variations arising out of regional linguistic differences. Other variations are due to artistic inventiveness.

In the study of Zulu poetry it is essential to know the language characteristics on which poetic techniques are based. Tone is one of the most important of these language characteristics. Zulu can be described as a tone language, in the sense that pitch patterns are important to the meaning of words. Each syllable is a tone bearing unit. The relationship between these tone-bearing units is such that alteration affects the tonal structure of the word and in some cases its meaning.

In Zulu recitation tonal intervals can be modified to conform to the requirements of the tone patterns appropriate to poetry. A detailed study needs to be undertaken in order to indicate clearly the circumstances under which these changes occur. Suffice it to say here that the reciter, in changing these tonal intervals, does it with the intention of producing tone patterns which are considered correct or beautiful. Sound variations thus produced should be acceptable to the audience and determine whether a reciter is good or bad.

Besides altering the tonal intervals the reciter may prolong the length of the syllables making possible a greater tonal range. He may also shorten the length of the syllables giving a staccato effect to his recitation. Here again the shortening and prolonging of syllabic length follows specific principles which need investigation.

The following examples give some indication of the tonal changes that are possible. Low tones are sometimes raised to the level of mid tones and mid tones to the level of high tones. Under certain circumstances speech tones retain their normal level despite the demand made by the general high pitch level of the recitation.

(Speech)

(a)

ngingahamba

emthini

phezulu

(Poetry)

(b) i.

ngingahamba

emthini

phezulu

(b) ii.

ngingahamba

emthini

phezulu

As has been stated a more detailed analysis is required to substantiate this theory. It should be noted for instance that in order to get a particular pattern from some words they should be considered in their full form during the course of recitation or be given as such, e.g. in order to get the pattern of "ngingahamba" in (b) if it is necessary to use the patterns of the full form or to use the full form as it is - ngibengingahamba. It is also important to note that changes in tonal patterns go hand in hand with changes of syllabic length so that, in some cases, having changed the tone it is essential that the length be either shortened or lengthened. A radical change in tonal level usually requires a shortening of the syllabic length.

Finally it should be noted that in making these patterns in recitation the poet takes into consideration (i) the whole verse (ii) the patterns of the verse preceding (iii) the patterns of the verse succeeding and (iv) the word sequence in terms of tones. There is therefore a great amount of word selection in poetical compositions not only on the basis of their meaning but also on the basis of their tonal structure.

### Alliteration

Alliteration is another form of the language which must be considered. Doke defines alliteration by stating: "Words grammatically corresponding with the noun assume an element, usually prefixal, in harmony with the prefix of the noun." (Zulu Grammar, page 310, 5th Edition). Alliteration may occur between the subject and verb, and under certain circumstances, between the object and the verb.

As a poetic technique, it has two aspects: A poet can, by clever manipulation of the corresponding, concordant, make infinite varieties which may further enhance the meaning of the poem, if however he fails to use alliteration wisely the result might be sheer monotony or mechanical regularity.

Alliterative concords sometimes have associations with a particular class of ideas as is the case of the class 1 concords which arouse associations connected with "human" ideas as represented by this class. The importance of alliteration in meaning is shown in the following lines:

1. Kusile kusti:anabanana kwampuzalanga,
2. Lusile lumthanbanana kwampuzalanga,

the first verse has a wider application on account of its impersonal class 10 concord; whilst the second verse needs elaboration to have the same effect. The concordial significance should not be exaggerated. Its



importance is limited by the fact that in itself it cannot mean anything except merely to elaborate the meaning.

Where ideas used are meant to indicate continuity and regularity there is always a tendency either in speech or in poetry to repeat the alliterative concord with unswerving regularity, e.g.

Ngihamba ngironi, ngibusa,  
Ngindinga ukuthi bantu nibuyaze ne?

or

Ngahamba, ngicela, ngikhala ngineenga  
Tena adli cwamala anlehlela nyova  
Ngaye ngafurana iside ebomvu yokasa.

The subjectival concord plays an important part in bringing about the idea of emphasis that is intended. If the subjectival concord is omitted as it sometimes happens the force of the emphasis is minimised. Note the following examples:

Uthakathi unguwe, uthakathe unguwe  
Umlaba ululimi, umhlaba ululimi  
Uyazibuthela amabibi abawethakayo.

Compare with

Uthakathi nguwe, uthakathi nguwe  
Umlaba lulimi, umhlaba lulimi  
Uyazibuthela amabibi abawethakayo.

The alliterative concord may also keep the reader aware of the important idea by the repetition of the element associated with it, e.g.

Isulu labazimpilo lesivile  
Lenabela kwamayebabo ezintabeni  
Iapho lingenakungandwa - wponic.

Derivatives:

Another important aspect of the poetic potentialities of the Sulu language is the use of derivatives. These enable poets to express shades of meaning which can only be expressed in a round-about way in other languages. The original word is extended in meaning by an addition of a suffix which gives a definite slant to the meaning of the word. Words as a result attain a holophrastic meaning, i.e. a secondary meaning in addition to the original meaning. The type of suffix added determines whether the derivative is perfect, reciprocal, applied, causative, etc.

The derivative suffixes have fixed meanings, i.e. they imply a specific idea in any word used with them. This inflexibility in meaning wherever a derivative form is found results in an understanding of words which though their meaning might be obscure is made clear by the use of the derivative forms, e.g.

Gugulukisa insingo phezu kwezaba  
zabalutha imchilo yamathemba ethu.

compare with

Guguluka insingo phezu kwezaba  
zabalutha imchila yamathemba ethu.

In the case of the first word underlined the meaning of the word is brought out by the use of a causative suffix. This is a very significant point in poetry where the poet might invent words which would be meaningless without some relationship to an understood form of the word.

(1). Verbal Derivatives

The flexibility of the verb in Zulu is made evident by the fact that a verb can be made to have several shades of meaning by suffixal change. Note the verb "bona" in the following stanzas:

Nzibonile ukuconsa kwegazi,  
Ezinhliziyweni ezigwaziwe;  
Ngafunda imibhalo yezinyembezi zezwe.

.....

Ngakubonela ukuconsa kwegazi,  
Ezinhliziyweni ezigwaziwe.  
Ngasengazi umhlaba ongene kuwo.

.....

Bonisa ukuconsa kwegazi,  
Ezinhliziyweni ezigwaziwe,  
Ufunde lapho, umgomo wesitatu.

.....

Ukubonana ukuconsa kwegazi,  
Ezinhliziyweni ezigwaziwe,  
Yikho okuyosiduduza.

.....

Sekuyabonakala ukuconsa kwegazi,  
Ezinhliziyweni ezigwaziwe,  
Ngoba naku ufihla izandla mthakathi!

Thus the sense can be varied by the change of the form of the verb. The above stanzas illustrates only a few of the many possibilities that can be obtained.

(ii) Derivative Nouns

As a poetic device their value is undoubtedly superior to the verbal derivatives. Note the difference between the two following verses:

Yena owathanda abezizwe,  
Wabathandisisa ongathi ngabakwabo.

Yena owathanda abezizwe,  
Unomathanda ongathi ngabakwabo.

The second stanza is of greater poetic value than the first. It covers greater range of meaning. One can love intensively but not necessarily fully. The emotion of love is personalised by the use of "No" (a shortened form of the word "Unina"). This symbolises the nature of the love being described. In the case of the first stanza there are not many associations involved, thus the use of the derivative verb does not expand the idea but merely directs it further along the original lines of meaning.

These shortened forms, "SO" and "NO", though grammatically referring to male and female qualities respectively, do not in poetry adhere to that grammatical principle. The male form uSo - might refer to a masculine character trait in a woman, e.g.

USomajozi odunga amadoda,  
MtakaShonkweni! somaqhawe,  
Nasezinkundleni zamadoda.

Mkabayi kaJama, though a female, is depicted not just as the mother of the crafty ones but as the father.

"USoqili,  
Iqili lakwaNoshoha,  
Elidla umuntu limyenga ngendaba."

If a man has a female quality, he would be described in the same way, e.g.

Unomagwala oshiya amadoda ekulweni,  
Abalekele emanxiweni ezitha.

The Ideophone

The ideophone is a peculiarity of Bantu languages. It is descriptive of manner, sound, motion, colour, position, etc. in relation to the verb with which it is used. It is a very useful poetic device. Even in its natural form, it gives the sentence or verse a crystal clarity which is otherwise difficult to express. Note the following examples:

Imnyama tsuku indlela yami Nozihlangu,  
Sengathi ngingagwema ngiye kwa bha,  
Kodwa ngesabela igama lawobabamkhulu.

If one were to translate this stanza literally, the stanza would be:

May way is very dark Nozihlangu,  
As if I could take a round-about way  
to paths that are as clear as daylight,  
But I fear for the name of my forefathers.

The translation "very dark" *completely* fails to give the fullness of the idea expressed in "tsuku" which, besides meaning the deepest state of darkness, is associated with travel. It also fails to give the idea of the type of lightness expressed in "bha". "Bha" does not mean just lightness; it expresses a particular type of lightness, which is associated with sudden surprise. There are five types of ideophones in Zulu all of which have specific tonal systems. These are monosyllabic, disyllabic, trisyllabic, quadrisyllabic, and quinesyllabic. The most frequently used, however, and the largest in number, are the monosyllabic. The most favoured form of the ideophone in Zulu poetry is the derivative form which usually has the rhythmic flexibility that fits into the pattern of the verse and also gives scope to poetic inventiveness. Zulu poetry has many examples that show that one can invent a number of words basing them only on the conventional ideophonic tones. Note the following example:

Unguduma wezilwandle unakhonkotha,  
Wagosomebela amahlwa eziwa ezimadwala.  
Imnyungube kuligama lakho Mna-ngoma,  
Engingasahlonizi ngalo kwanzogqololo wezimphoma.

A poet if acquainted with the tonal form of ideophones, can invent a large number of words useful and highly descriptive in poetry.

#### POETIC DEVICES AS USED IN ZULU POETRY

Having indicated the basic characteristic of the Zulu language in relation to the types of poetic techniques employed, it is important to examine these as they occur in poetry. These should indicate how the poets utilise the poetic potentialities of the language.

#### Alliteration

Although poets were sensitive to the sounds produced by the alliterative concord, its appeal as a form of literary device did not have the same importance as what one could call non-class alliteration. This type of alliteration does not depend on class concord but it based on similarity of syllabic sound. The following example illustrates this point.

"Imbuzi kaDambuzi, benoNdilela,  
Abayibambe ngandlebe yahekezela,  
Ayinjengekamdleka ngasetshobozeni,  
Yena ayibambe ngandlebe  
Yadabula yaqeda amaododa.

Many such examples occur in Zulu poetry.

### Vowels of the same Quality in Poetry

There seems to be a conscious selection of vowels in Zulu poetry according to whether they have the same quality. Open vowels and closed vowels are sometimes used on the basis of their quality to express light or serious moods respectively. They may also be used in contrast in order to give sound variation. Ideas associated with serious subjects are usually expressed with closed vowels and those associated with light ~~and~~ subjects, <sup>are</sup> expressed with open vowels. The use of vowels of a particular quality can only be important where it is obvious that such vowels are consciously selected in order to clarify or emphasise a particular idea.

"Ungabadeli onjengebhuhesi,  
Odonswa ngezintaba ezimakhelakethe;  
Injonjole eziziba zolwandle,  
Evezi uMabhakamsia,  
Owabakamela inkunzi yakaBulawayo." (Dingane)

### Consonants of the same Quality in Poetry

As in the case of the vowels, consonants of the same quality are often selected to produce a similar sound quality in a verse. The most important consonants in this respect are the nasal compounds. The following examples are a case in point.

"Isando sokubethwa sikampangazitha  
Esiqandula uMabi athandwe yinjenje,  
Rej~~ma~~subhukazi nebinaya.  
 or  
Yona ngange unlomo  
Somnandi kamame." (Mpande)

### Parallelism:

Some writers have stated that the "oriental" mind thinks in parallelisms. If this is true of the oriental mind, it is also true of the African mind. However, it is safer to think of this phenomenon as a linguistic phenomenon rather than a mental trait. The method of making an idea in the first line to parallel the idea in the second line is one of the most characteristic features of Zulu traditional poetry. The most typical of all forms of parallelism in Zulu poetry is the one in which the noun that initiates the first line has the same root as the verb that initiates the second line. The idea is thus parallelled in a novel way and also extended in the second line, e.g.

Unedla-ndoda ngamkheto emancika;  
Odle u Fhika kaMdaba wakwaZondi.  
 or  
"Uteku lwabafazi bakwanongabi  
Betekula behlezi emlovini." (Shaka)

Parallelism aims at balancing up ideas so that it, in effect, has two aspects of the same idea.

Linking: Another important Zulu poetical device is that of linking ideas. This is achieved by repeating the final idea, slightly modified, in the verse that follows. This ~~emphasises~~ the continuity of the idea or action contained in the previous line, e.g.

Umagamela obakaba kwaSohlaba,  
KwaSohlaba njalo kungamadikaoz amadoda;  
Ugijimana ongalukhozi ngamandla,  
Amandla aphephetha umizi nemizanyana.

or

Intandane yabamba iyeka insika yegazi,  
Igazi lelabakhongi bempi bawaSiyako.

Sometimes linking is obviously meant to weave the name of the individual to the sense of the verse. This is possible because names of people in Zulu society are derived from known facts, events or places. Note the following example:

Wathathela kude uSomkhonto,  
Emkhonto ungazi,  
Wawola amadoda namadojeyana.

### Repetition:

The most universal characteristic of all tribal poetry is repetition; of repetition Franz Boas says: "I believe the liking for the frequent repetition of single motives is in part due to the pleasure given by rhythmic repetition" 19. He gives an example of a poem from the Australian aborigines which is not unlike the repetitions in Senzangakhona's praise poem:

"Spear his forehead,  
Spear his chest,  
Spear his liver,  
Spear his ear, etc."

In Zulu poetry repeated verses or stanzas are never exactly the same; variety is provided by either body movements or changes of pitch. If a Zulu poet says, for instance:

"Wathi esadle ezinye wadla ezinye,  
Wathi esadle ezinye wadla ezinye."

He utters the second verse with a different pitch, and demonstrates his poem by different body movements.

In most cases it is the ideas that are repeated, although in some cases it is symbolic syllabic sounds, e.g.

“ Ubaba uhambile geke,  
 Uyofuna ukundla geke,  
 Ehlethini geke,  
 Uyubuya akuseni geke. ”

Repetition may be of a word, or a verse, or a whole stanza,

e.g.

Mkathini uyobuyela emalawini othando,  
 Uhale phansi nezithandani zonke;  
Uma usfundile iqiniso.

Mkathini uyolahleka udlulele ezenzweni ezimnyama,  
 Eiyoye sikwenzele umhenge wokufa,  
 Uyovuka ubuyele emuva;  
Uma usufunde iqiniso.

Uyobaleka ezintabeni nasemaweni,  
 Impampe ubusuku nemini;  
Ukukhwezele umlilo kanothanda,  
Isintu obusidicela phansi.

Uyokhula mihla ngemihla,  
 Uze ugwale izindlu zonkana;  
Ukukhwezele umlilo kanothanda,  
Isintu obusidigela phansi.

The recurrence of the repeated words or verses emphasises the importance of the idea that is repeated. It thereby focuses attention to the central idea which as it recurs gives unity to the whole poem.

#### Derivative Nouns in Traditional Poetry:

There is no form of poetic technique so skilfully used by Zulu traditional poets, as the derivative nouns. Most derivatives nouns are formed by prefixing class 1 (a) prefixes <sup>to the verb stem</sup>. The final vowel is in most cases changed into "i". Note that in some cases the final vowel "a" is retained. The following examples are some of the forms found.

"Umandiza ungintendele."

"Umphangela-linga lingakaphumi."

"Umabi kaqinwa njengowasengonyameni!"

"Umqandi wandwendwe." Siyingili

"Umqali wangwazi." Dabula kaMpande

"Umashwabada kaMaqanda noNsele." Senzangakhona

Note the poetic rule on which the unusual form of the derivative

nouns is based (i) The derivative nouns of class 1 assume the

class 5 <sup>form</sup> e.g. umakazi becomes inakazi(a)

umqakazi " inqakazi(a)

Umthandi " intandi(a)

(ii) Class 3 nouns assume class 4 prefixes, e.g.

Ikhanda becomes isikhanda  
 Ibala " isibala.

Note the following examples from traditional poetry:

"Inakaza yakithi kwaNobambha,  
 Ehamba iwabanga amacala." (Senzangakhona)

"Inzama bayibuza inzukamithi,  
 Kuyosala iziphunzi." (Dibinyika kaMdaka)

Although according to the grammatical rule the final vowel "a" of a deverbative noun of class 4 and 5 must change into -i, in these poetic forms it remains unchanged. The words underlined would normally be used with class I prefix, in which case they would be: "umnakazi" and "umzami" respectively. The poet's love for novelty drives him to use these unusual but highly poetic forms.

#### Deideophonic nouns:

Deideophonic nouns were extensively used by traditional poets. As the name suggests these nouns are derived from ideophones. They were very successful as descriptive devices. The examples below show clearly this point.

"Uggamu njengelangabi."

Zulu kaNogandaya

"Ubhu njengomlilo."

"Uwiyiyazane"

"Ibhicongo elimizimba ubuthaka."

Sensangakhona.

"Umsindo wobuntlingwe."

Cetshwayo.

"Isihazane esingumoya."

"Ungudu wazindhlela ziya eNtumeni."

Utshwitshwitshwi kaNonquda kaMdaba.

#### Denominatives:

These are derived from other nouns. They were also frequently used by traditional poets. Note the following examples:

"Ubuchakijana bakithi bakwaSiklozi" Jama

"Ungelengele kalingani nantaba" Senzangakhona

"Uningizimu vimbela inyakatho" Nzibe kaSenzangakhona

"Utukuntuku yezinduna sakwaDlungwana" uSotobe

kaSenzangakhona.

"Uluvalo lwabezayo" Songiya uma kaMpande

"Ungwababa zinezinyembezi" Zulu kaNogandaya.



Denominatives with reduplicated stems were made use of by poets in order to put a particular emphasis on ideas.

"Untshobantshoma ngexabiya"

"Ugedegede lwasenhla nenkandla" Nandi

Compound nouns, especially of class 12 were used with great poetic effect, e.g.

"Inukamini kuMjokwane" Cetshwayo.

"Udlemvuzo!"

"Unggo-mbonjeni" Mbengi.

"Usakha-lukhalweni longwahamba" Siyingile kaZihlandlo.

#### Idiomatic usage:

In idiomatic usage, verbs take idiomatically as objects nouns which in ordinary circumstances would be used adverbially as adverbs of time or as locatives. Traditional poets often used idiomatic forms to express abstract ideas in a concrete form, e.g.

Wangenza sifuba sami,

Wangena indhlu kababa ngomkhonto;

Kunamuhla sihamba amacala enzondo.

Nzihamba ubusuku

Isililo sibelethe kimi emhlane mantantashiya!

#### Demonstrative pronouns:

The demonstrative pronoun was used to specify reference to a particular thing or individual, as shown in the following examples:

"Muthi lo osiyenge ngasemphezulu."

"Dlondlani le engasawabuli amaphiko."

Undingilizi lo onobutha emehlweni.

Mikhosi leyo ibikwayo kobantu.

Buthakathi lobu obudha imizi,

Ogugu-kamusa usho uba lowo uphindiwe.

#### Unique Poetic Forms:

The Zulu poet coins words and in doing so expresses ideas in a fresh form. The examples given below will illustrate the beauty of some of these coined words.

"Isivande esintenentene (esithenwe sathonwa)"

Kagidi.

"Omvukazi zinonye (sinonya) Zala ukuwela".

Jama.

"Uqabi kwezameva entendemuzi (emva komuzi)"

"Ungijima (umgijimi) aye afike eyiNkilibeni"

"Ufutha lasegumeni (lisegumeni)" Lufutha.

"Ubhudula-hlungu lazitha (lezitha)"

Zulu kaNogandaya.

"Ungqwashiya (uzangqwashi) obonvu"

Phskatawayo.

"Lubaha izithumbu (amathumbu) zadabuka"

Mbenzi.

"Usinqe sangimbube (sinjenzembube) yakwadekane"

Zibhebhu kaMapitha.

"Usonyasela (sonyama) kunganene (sonquthi unomusa)"

Mphithakazi kaNsele.

"Undaba ngama nqanji (ngya) kuDlungwane enbelebele."

Zulu kaNogandaya.

Isifube eninqununu (eninqununu) ngamadoda."

Phuzulu.

Note the use of old forms in the following verses. These forms are today only found in Xhosa:

"UNomaxhonxho asele utshwala" Zulu kaNogandaya.

"Owamitha amazinyane amaningi

Anda nemilambolambo"

Mbuyazi.

#### Poetic Devices (of Foreign Influence):

The modern Zulu poets came under the influence of English literature. They borrowed literary techniques from that literature. Various experiments in form and style have been carried out by different poets in their works. Some have made attempts to adapt English poetic forms to the Zulu language forms.

#### Syllabic Metre:

The Missionaries who translated the Hymns into Zulu used a syllabic metre and thus began the first experiments in Zulu metrical system. Dr. Vilakazi was the first to use this type of metre in Zulu poetry, though Xhosa poets had used this form of metre before. Vilakazi was particularly fond of the decasyllabic form of metre, although in some of his poems he used the octosyllabic type.

There are two types of syllabic metre that are used by Zulu poets: (a) varied type and (b) the unvaried type. The examples below will illustrate the point:

(a) Unvaried syllabic metre

"Sengachith'isikhath'esiningi, (10)  
 Ngiphendulana namaqabunga, (10)  
 Ezincwad'ezibalwa ngumlungu. (10)  
 Ngihlezi ngedwa busuku bonde, (10)  
 Kuze kuqith'ukuphuma ilanga, (10)  
 Nathla ngisaga anjelwa emhlo." (10)

(Vilakazi)

(b) Varied syllabic metre

"Owesifszan'u'va wab'eyedwa (10)  
 Ebabaza ubuhle bodwa, (9)  
 Bezihlahla nezameva, (8)  
 Engakabujoki aneva. (8)  
 Konk'okunwabuzelayo (8)  
 Nakho konke okuqhakayo, (10)  
 Imizungulu neminye (8)  
 Konke kusekulunga. (8)

(Lade)

Syllabic metre is unsuitable for Zulu poetry. Many highly poetic forms have to be sacrificed in the process of trying to fit words to it. Poetry tends to be mechanical and artificial.

Regular Stress Metrical Form:

This type of metre has been tried by only one poet, Mazisi kaMabuli w'Ekunene, in his manuscript entitled "Idlozi Elingenan-tethelelo". It is based on the fact that the main stress in Zulu falls on the penultimate syllable almost in all cases. Regularity is achieved by making all the syllables of the words after the first one less one syllable. This arrangement results in the main stress falling at regular intervals, e.g.

(6) (5) (5)  
 Ngiyokukhumbula kwanaphakade sifuba-sihle,  
 Ngiyokubekela imthalabazo engubumnandi;  
 (5) ' (4) (4) (4)  
 Ngiyosheshe|kufika ililanga lenzakusa  
 Lisabashile engojeni yamadlambi.

This type of metre can only be used with polysyllabic words, ideophones and all words in which the main stress does not fall on the penultimate syllable are excluded, e.g. monosyllabic words and perfect forms of the verb. Selection of words on the basis of their metrical usefulness hinders the expression of ideas in a rich and varied manner. Words assume an artificial and monotonous regularity. Note for instance the following verses:

Khulule thina sonke wena msizi,  
Umoya-mubi wehla natni phansi.

(compare with)

Usikhulule Kobasizi ngamunye ngamunye,  
Nanku umoya-mubi usidonsela ezazaleni.

The second version provides scope for accurate expression of ideas and it has a natural word rhythm lacking in the first stanza.

There are other forms of word arrangement that are closely related to the type above as, for instance, in the example below.

Udaka lunyama lavutha kuphela. (3)  
Insinyezi elokoza ubungaba; (4)  
Imimoya inyenyeza endlebeni yamahlathi. (4)

The assumption made in this case is that since each main stress is on the penultimate syllable enunciation of words produces the stress at the same point in all the words used, thereby bringing about metrical regularity.

Jordan Ngubano's theory, as stated in his essay "An Examination of Zulu Tribal Poetry", that Zulu metrical system is based on heart beats, though highly technical, has no basis in fact.

### Rhyme:

Modern Zulu poets have also used rhyme in their poetry. The usual forms are: a b a b, c d c d; a a b b, c c d d. In longer poems poets like Vilakazi rid themselves of the restrictions of rhyme and use blank verse.

End rhyme is unsuitable for Zulu poetry mainly because changes occur chiefly in the prefix rather than in the suffix, e.g. ubulwane, isilwane, uBulwane, uSobulwane. Some poets unaware of this fact

have made the most fantastic verbal constructions. They have twisted words, coined them without consideration to their poetic effect merely because they wanted to produce a rhyme scheme, e.g.

"Ngiyonlala odwanini nasemthini,  
 Ngiviyoca otshanini emkhwunini,  
 Buyobe buwa ngamakhauda;  
 Ngiligade holoja wa ngithenda  
 Bangazi ngokuthi ngiyinkendhla-madolo  
 Ngingamazolo."

(Abner Kunene)

Besides the fact that most of the ideas are ridiculous, as for instance likening the dew to a sod in the air, the stanza lacks a natural flow of words.

Comment:

These are the important poetic techniques found in Zulu poetry. Besides poetic techniques dealt with in this chapter, there are others that are used only occasionally. The following are some of them:

- (a) The use of the enclitic -yo in an unusual manner

e.g.    Inlathi chengiyayo holo,  
           Inthe swahle ngamaviyo akhona hlo.

- (b) The names of mountains and places are sometimes linked up with some idea in the poem,

e.g.    "Inonkwenkwezi wezulu eliphezulu,  
           Ubaca ezileni zibuya uNkomo."

I Zulu Metrical Theories:

(a) Mazisi Kunene's Theory By metre is meant here a quantitative arrangements of words in such a way that rhythmic regularity is achieved by the regular fall of rhythmic points at regular intervals.

In traditional poetry this regularity was imposed on the words so that words were fitted within rhythmic units. It follows that if words were fitted within these rhythmic units there had to be a certain amount of word selection. In nursery rhymes this selection was more arbitrary. Words had stresses imposed on them, though where possible the stress was made to fall on the penultimate syllable.

Note the following example:

"We mfazi ongaphesheya  
 Uthi búb'ini ná?  
 Ngithi búb'isidwaba.  
 Isidwaba yininá?  
 Yindwangu lafeca," etc.

In traditional praise-poetry the imposition of the stress was done with a great consideration to the nature of the words. The rhythmic units in the eulogies are much more sparsely and the syllabic lengths of words are commonly prolonged or shortened to allow the stress to fall at a required point rather than interfere with meaning, e.g.

"U íí vézi nonyanda'  
 Umgabadelí'owa': gabadela  
 Ekundleni 'yakwa bulawa : : yo." (Dingane)

Note that the "stress" may under certain circumstances fall in between words. This subject deserves a more thorough treatment than is possible here.

(b) Jordan Ngubane's Theory (from the July/August issue of the African issue of the "African Drum", 1951 - "An Examination of Zulu Tribal Poetry.")

Mr. Ngubane makes an attempt at a synthesis of metrical theories of Dr. Vilakazi and Mr. van Warmelo. He says in his essay: "The human heart beats involuntarily and fairly regularly while the poet recited his primordial breath-group..... In one respiration the human heart beats four times. This means that four heart beats are separated from one another by three intervals or diastoles. We may put it this way: Normally there are about three intervals or diastoles in one respiration. If twelve syllables are recited in one respiration and there are three diastoles in this period the four syllables are recited in one diastole.

Four is therefore the number of syllables the prehistoric poet could recite with convenience in two heart-beats."

The theory is a highly improbable one. Mr. Ngubane assumes that in one primordial breath-group there are twelve syllables. In fact in a traditional verse the number of syllables varies from eleven to seventeen. There is no consistency in the number of syllables. In long poems the syllables are seldom less than ten, in shorter poems the number varies from nine to eleven. The flexibility of the syllabic length further excludes the possibility of having a specific number of syllables determining the verse on the basis of mechanical diastolic arrangement. Note the following verse:

Ngangiyokhangela ukusa kwazansi.

Though this verse has twelve syllables it would be naive to think that it necessarily has three diastoles; for the obvious reason that the poet can control his breath at will.

Mr. Ngubane further assumes that metre depends on the human physical mechanism rather than being intrinsic in the language itself.

He talks as if the enunciation of syllables occurs mechanically between diastoles. It is obvious that the more excited a person is the greater the number of syllables in one respiration. It is not as if a speaker waits for a diastole to enunciate the syllables.

#### Suffixal Stress:

The suffixal stress falls, according to one theory, on the first syllable of the suffix. Note the following example:

Sengazihambela izinyangakazi zasemazweni,  
Ngiithi ngiyolubuyisa lolothandokazi lwakho,  
Ngilusekele eziphengwaneni zemimoyana.

## APPENDIX III

2. The Number of Syllables and the Expression of Movement

In order to express the different types of movements the number of syllables is usually taken into consideration by poets.

(i) Fast Movement: In order to express a fast movement the Zulu poet sometimes uses words with as few a number of syllables as possible. Note the two examples:

Yaphulukundlela yayonyamalala  
Emathafeni asofasimbeni impunzi.

Compare with:

Yadlula umoya impunzi yeduka  
Emathafeni ankunga ibusuku.

Note also the following:

"Ihlahla lomqawe nelombelebele,  
Bathi bayaligawula, iSimahla!  
Bathi nayalishizela,  
Laphuma-celeni ibubesi lakithi."

Note how "Laphuma-celeni" accurately expresses a side-stepping movement by its very construction.

(ii) Slow Movement:

A slow movement is expressed by the use of multisyllabic words, e.g.

Umamemezana osezintabeni,  
Esihamba simlandelile.

In this case the use of the full form of the perfect in the second verse expressed persistency of the movement described. Traditional poets often used verses with a contrasting number of syllables in words in order to express contrasting movements or ideas, e.g.

"Usingubudu singamtungwa lo-nzima,  
Ungasazi ngasibalekela,  
Thina bakwaKhanga sihleke, silale, phanzi."

(Note that the emotion of laughter is so accurately expressed by the arrangement of syllables in the last verse that one feels almost tickled to laugh. The poet's use of the number of syllables corresponds to the physical jerks of laughter).

"Inyoni esuke kwaZulu  
Zayilandela zonke izinyoni."



"Ingqongqo ebhula ukwena,  
Ukhalo lukaZaza lugamangele."

"Umabizwa asabele,  
Abanye bebizwa imyakanyaka."

### 3. The Nature of Vowel Sounds and Meaning:

There is a definite correlation between vowel sounds and meaning. In certain cases some vowel sounds are expressive of specific ideas so that by changing the vowel the word assumes a slightly different shade of meaning, e.g.

Fehlafahla: of crushing the twigs by walking on them.

Fohlofohlo: of crushing the twigs with your feet deep into the thicket.

Fehlefehle: of crushing the twigs with a sharp sound.

Fihlifihli: of crushing a cartilagenous object.

Fuhlfuhlu: of pushing through a thicket with a heavy weight.

Traditional poets made capital out of this fact as shown in their poetry, e.g.

"Inyoni esuke nsonge yahlala nsonge,  
Ngisho ngezinsonge ngezoThukela.

The frequent use of "o" accurately expresses the idea of the dark shady places described.

"Uteku lwabafazi babwaNongabi,  
Betekula behlezi emlovini,  
Bethi uShaka kayubusa kayuba-nkosi,  
Kanti kunyakana ezakunethezeka."

Note the contrast between the high forward vowel "i" and the low vowel "a":

"Usiduli esintasi kwezindaka."

"Inkonyane ebuwaba busegilweni,  
Ezinye izinkonyana sibuwaba busemaphikweni."

Note that in the case of the latter example the poet uses the vowel "a" in the final syllable in contrast to the vowel "e" of the word "Inkonyane".

### 4. Contrast

Contrast is a common feature of traditional Zulu poetry. It is variously used. Sometimes the contrast is made between either the verbs in parallel positions or the nouns as for instance in the

following examples:

"Oye ngomnyama koMazolo,  
Wabuya ngonyezi;  
Amadoda aphenduka umbejakazana."

"Obeyelala wangangemifula,  
Obeyavuka wangangezintaba."

"Usiduli esintusi kwezimdaka."

"Uvezi ngimfumene bemzila,  
Ngafika ngamudla mina sithandi senyama."

## 5. Assonance

Assonance frequently occurs in Zulu traditional poetry. Assonance does not always come about as a result of the class alliterative concord.

"Ongangezwa lakhe omkhulu kakhulu!  
Ongangezintaba ezinde!  
OngangoSondube!  
Ongangesihlahla esisokhalweni kumaqwakazi!  
Esasihlal' uNdwandwe namaNkumalo."

- - -

"Imbuzi kaDambuza benoNdelela,  
Abayibambe ngandlebe yabekezela,  
AyinjengekaMdlaka ngaseNtshobozeni."

- - -

"UNovelamvuva wawoShaka,  
UMsimude owawela ngesilulu,  
Phakathi kwamaNgisi namaQadasi."

- - -

"EzawoDulele zodwa lizithanisile,  
Lazithatha izihlangu zombelebele,  
Lazithatha izihlangu zoDlambendlu." etc.

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APPENDIX IVPoets whose works are found in Manuscript: (page 285)Bethuel Blose (alis Nonkamfela):

Nonkamfela whose name was mentioned in the study of Zulu drama (p.266) is a teacher by profession. He was born in Durban, (Clermont). He is now thirty years old. He has written several poems, and about two dramas. His poetry is of a very high standard, and he has a remarkable command of the language.

Set' Mlamini:

Set' is from Swaziland. He is at present teaching at Piet Retief. His name came into prominence when he won in the Bantu Literary Competition, sponsored by the Afrikanse Pers Boekhandel. He is perhaps the greatest living lyric poet. His book "Izhe Lesivivane," will soon be published.

J.C. Mlamini (alis Bulima Bwiveke):

He is a teacher by profession. He is a former student of the University of Natal. He won the Third prize in the Bantu Literary Competition mentioned above, for his book of poems "Inzulwane". He has published many poems in the "Ilanga laseNatal" and in the "African Teachers' Journal". Some of his poems are included in Masebula's Anthology. He is regarded by some as second only to Vilakazi.

E. Mlamini:

He is a teacher by profession. He was born in Durban (Clermont). He began <sup>writing</sup> poetry in 1950 and from that time, he assured the research worker that he had written about 200 poems. He has published some of his poems in the "Umla'rika" and it is no exaggeration to say they are of a very high order. Their only great defect is that they tend to have religious dogmatism. He uses the eulogistic method in some of his compositions.

Raymond Kanene (alis Mabin' kandaouli w'Khunene):

He is a student of the University of Natal. He has written several poems both lyrics and narratives. He has also written a number of dramas. He won in the Bantu Literary Competition for his book of poems "Idlozi Elingenantethelolo". He has also had his poems published in the "Ilanga laseNatal" and the "African Teachers' Journal". His

book of poems will soon be published. His name was cited in connection with metrical theories dealt with in this work. His poetry is definitely of a very high standard.

Muso Jali:

He is the youngest of all living Zulu poets. He is a clerk at the Native Affairs Department. He has written a number of lyric poems which though they contain a lot that is immature, deserve a place in Zulu literature.

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Other Recommended Books

Heritage of British Literature  
Heritage of American Literature  
The Holy Bible  
The Ramaiyana

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