

## Chapter 3

### Pedi Psalm-like Songs

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

It is not unusual to begin the description of the culture of a people with a discussion of their religious texts (Nurnberger 2007:174). Several aspects of their life, their economic activities, the socialization of the individual, their political organization, the functioning of their legal system, are so interpenetrated with ritual that nothing can be properly understood without a proper understanding of its religious system. Moreover, Rikotso (2003:30) contends that Africans, like all other cultures, have their own heritage of legal ideas, beliefs and social life. Africans are proud of their culture, which is always inherited from generation to generation. Rikotso (2003:30) states that, though many Africans do not pray to God directly, they believe that the world has its owner. Agreeing with Mbiti (1969:1), Rikotso (2003:30) states that, though many Africans do not pray to God directly, they believe that the world is owned and governed by God.

The *Pedi* is a Northern Sotho tribe in South Africa with their Northern Sotho language. *Pedi* psalm-like songs and music as such cannot be discussed without their relationship to the *Pedi* culture<sup>37</sup>. Several researchers have investigated African religions and philosophy in the

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<sup>37</sup> In the *Pedi* tribe music may be examined in terms of its use within the context of social activities. Since music forms an integral part of many social and religious occasions, its use is generally quite obvious. Music may be labour-related, associated with a birth or marriage ritual, used to accompany a dance, death, and so forth. Speaking of the universal use of music, Merriam (1964:210) says "When we speak of the use of music, we are referring to the ways in which music is employed in human society, to the habitual practice or customary exercise of music either as a thing in itself or in conjunction with other activities."

African context. Mbiti (1969:2) for example, acknowledges that, to be human, is to belong to the whole community. This involves participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of that community. In this chapter, the emphasis is on the types, characteristics, and analysis of some of the *Pedi* traditional religious psalm-like songs. *Pedi* traditional songs reflect the heart of the *Pedi* culture and tradition. Akuno (2005:52) describes African music as an expression, a work of art and performance. In his view, African music is a human behaviour involving people with their communities. It is an agent of socialization. He is convinced that since African music reflects and expresses culture, it embodies a people's total existence: beliefs, philosophy (worldview), religion, norms, mores, language, expressions, relationships and aspirations. The *Pedi* society considers life as a continual process of favourable circumstances for the promotion of life, health and fertility in house and field. Ancestors are closely bound up with the shepherding of their people. They are part of the family, clan, or lineage, it uses their names, they govern the social order among the living and the ancestors, though dead, are present and continue to influence life in their erstwhile communities on earth.

*Pedi* psalm-like songs are used to express success (joy), happy times (thanksgiving), times of sorrow (laments), protesting (liberation), the inauguration and funeral of the chief (royal), telling stories (wisdom), emotional expression (rituals), ancestor veneration, pouring of libation and communication (security and survival), irony (imprecation), instructions (law), as well as prayers of trust.

## **3.2 PEDI TRADITION**

### 3.2.1 Introduction

*Pedi* tradition, by definition, is like other African traditions always undergoing modification. It does not remain fixed; it grows. The *Pedi* psalm-like songs contain expressions about who ancestors are and how ancestors influence the living, but these cannot be reduced to an absolute set of propositions on the *Pedi* religion. *Pedi* psalm-like texts demonstrate that tradition is a continually developing process of dynamic interaction with the living dead (ancestors). In bad times, when bad things happen, some people question ancestors, themselves, and others. In good as well as in bad times, ancestors are supportive and protective.

Prayer is a vehicle for increased congruity. In a variety of ways, relationship or interaction with ancestors brings life and hope for the future, even when the features of this future are still undisclosed. The question 'Why do the innocent suffer?' can be transformed into 'how does history work?' One possible answer that the *Pedi* society knows well is that history works through social processes. Those social processes are either legitimated by ancestors or not. The ancestors operate either equitably or unjustly, either for the well-being of the community or for its destruction. That is how history works.

*Pedi* psalm-like songs are not systematic prescriptions of perfect words uttered to ancestors; they are rather models of dynamic prayer that encourage prayer in particular circumstances and in the words suitable to the *Pedi* society's needs. *Pedi* tradition is playing a prominent role in

shaping and forging the life of the *Pedi* people. In *Pedi* songs the culture is reflected. The fact that the youth shows lesser respect to their elders and culture is deeply regretted (Hall and Diallo 1989:45). They associate culture with uneducated people. Therefore they do not want to be associated with their culture and traditions. An older generation should be proud of their culture and learn their tradition so that it can be passed on to their children. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999:202) observe that communities in Africa have traditionally communicated information by word of mouth rather than in written form. They advocate that the older members of the community are considered to have wisdom and it is their obligation to pass on this wisdom to the younger generation. Nurnberger (2007:39) aligns himself with Mugenda and Mugenda by stating that the elderly have received the communal traditions from their forebears and are expected to hand them down to their offspring. He further mentions that it is the elderly that determine the life of the community while the youth has to keep quiet and obey. The younger person has to listen and obey the older person. There is not a single person who rejects all indigenous songs in the entire *Pedi* tribe, but particularly the youth is ignorant of their culture. Mbabi-Katana (2001:93) observes that indigenous music of a society is a phenomenon of life that gives historical depth to the musical art of the society.

As Simon Sete<sup>38</sup> explained his view on *Pedi* tradition (22 July 2003), he singled out his notion that any African tradition is the way of life of a specific people. He is of the opinion that tradition includes people's customs, traditions and heritage. Sete endorses that culture applies to all human beings and ethnic groups, and that an African sensitive

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<sup>38</sup> Simon Madikedike Sete is the President of Sekhukhune Contradosa (i.e. Congress of Traditional Doctors of South Africa – Sekhukhune branch).

perspective is one that assesses all things from the traditional worldviews of indigenous Africans rather than from other people's eyes.

### 3.2.2 The role of songs in African (*Pedi*) culture

To sing is a way for the *Pedi* society to express themselves with regard to how happy or sad they are. There are many rich indigenous religious ideas occurring in the *Pedi* songs: trust, hope, praise, love, survival, etc. These songs have a directness in language; they speak to ancestors and of ancestors; and also to the *Pedi* people in their reflection on human nature. These songs have kept or retained their actuality down through the centuries. *Pedi* religious texts reflect life with its depths and heights, life lived in the context of the vastness of history, which extends from the era of the forefathers to the present time. These texts reflect individuals' joys and sorrows between birth and death, their toil and celebration, sleeping and waking, sickness and recovery, losses, anxieties, confidences and temptations to despair.

These songs even reflect the grievous problems that life presents, when the righteous should live in the midst of evildoers, and into whose hands they have been delivered. Praying, recognition of the ancestors, sacrifice and other exercises in *Pedi* religious rituals are enriched by musical activities. It is inconceivable that *Pedi* psalm-like texts could ever disappear from the (esteemed) forms of ancestor worship.

*Pedi* traditional psalm-like songs are categorized for this study. The categories are distinguishable according to the form and language use, content and context as well as functions in which they are used in life.

To Africans and the *Pedi* tribe in particular, their psalm-like texts express life itself. These psalm-like songs are used to express success, happy times (thanksgiving), times of sorrow (laments), protesting (liberation), the inauguration and funeral of the chief (royal), telling stories (wisdom poems), *malopo*<sup>39</sup> cult, cohesion and emotional expression (rituals), ancestor veneration, pouring of libation and communication (security and survival), irony (imprecation), instructions (law), as well as for prayers of trust.

The *Pedi* tribe freely uses their songs for various purposes, namely to instruct, attack, ridicule, support, educate, clarify, warn, and comment on events or persons, etc. As a form of oral communication, both stories and songs play a great role in the *Pedi* society. Ekweme (1996:6) states that functionality is a known feature of music in Africa and in the functionality, communication becomes a primary objective. Through *Pedi* psalm-like songs people express their views on all aspects of life. Because of their nature, *Pedi* songs have more authority than stories. One song can be used at many different occasions, and can also carry several applications and interpretations. Nketia (1974:189) observes that in African music, themes of songs tend to center around events and matter of common interest and concern to members of the entire community or the social groups within it. They may deal with everyday life or with the traditions, beliefs and customs of society.

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<sup>39</sup> *Malopo* is an illness, which can only be terminated by a ritual called *malopo*.

*Pedi* culture is largely based on oral tradition and the popular use of songs. Merriam (1964:187) concurs with this view by stating that music is a human phenomenon produced by people for the people existing and functioning in a social situation. Nannyonga (1995:9) agrees with Merriam's postulation when he states that music does not exist in isolation from the people who produce it. He further mentions that to understand music of a given people, the basic knowledge of the cultural factors behind the production of sound structure is important. People express their views about different issues of life through the word of mouth. In particular, they do this through stories and songs. For the people these are generally easy to learn and repeat. Songs circulate freely in society. Both stories and songs are public property. Anybody can use them as they wish (Purdon 2002:106-111).

Naturally the production of songs does not stop in African societies. New ones emerge with time, just as others are abandoned. Similarly, there are many songs that have been handed down over a long period. The wording of stories tends to change, depending on the storyteller. But the content or structure of a story does not change drastically in the *Pedi* society/African societies. Similarly, songs are consistent, both in wording and in content. Stories would normally be told at particular times, especially in the evening or at night, while *Pedi* songs are used all the time at various occasions and by everyone in this culture. Music is such a powerful medium in the *Pedi* society that even history and tradition are preserved in song. Oral tradition is the basic means of transmitting ideas to the next generation. The above observation is supported by Mugambi (1989:94) when he states that the African cultural and religious heritage was passed on orally from generation to

generation and the wisdom of the ancestors was conserved, not in written books, but in songs and oral traditions.

An understanding of the importance of culture in the *Pedi* society requires some insight into the way the *Pedi* tradition developed over more or less of three centuries. As should be clear from my own argumentation in this introduction, it is with the following authors, namely Mwamwenda (1995) and Nurnberger (2007) that I align myself in and on culture as manifested in the concrete ways. In particular Nurnberger (2007:174) observes that African traditional life is a package. He insists that there is no separation between culture, knowledge, technique and religion. This view is consonant with Mwamwenda's (1995:43) observation that it is apparent that many culturally determined beliefs and rites do not lend themselves to scientific and technological substantiation. Since this is not the basis of their existence, they thrive regardless.

From the moment people are born until they die there is constant conscious or unconscious pressure upon them to follow certain types of behaviour created by their societies in which they live (Hall and Diallo 1989:24). Culture is what binds people together.

Traditionally, from a *Pedi* perspective, life does not belong to the individual but to the clan. The experience of illness, for example, is consequently not so individualistic too. The individual is important because he carries the life of the clan from the one generation to the next. Life requires balance, harmony, health, and well-being.



### 3.2.3 Genre categories and evaluation

Gunkel's seminal work on the Psalms, *An introduction to the Psalms* (a translation of his 1933 *Einleitung in die Psalmen: die Gattungen der religiösen Lyrik Israels* (1998) advanced form criticism and its use in psalm study. This approach emphasizes genre analysis and the psalms' situation in life and cult. Hence, Gunkel proposes the following psalm genres: Hymns of praise, Thanksgiving songs, Laments, Royal psalms, Songs of Zion, Wisdom psalms, Psalms of trust, Imprecatory psalms, Torah (Law) psalms, Psalms at festivals, Liturgical psalms and Creation psalms. However, since Gunkel there was development in genre research. As a result the former categories are not always regarded universal genre classifications. Presently, Psalms Studies are not limited to fixed genre categories but also includes genre elements such as praise, petition, trust, etc. A lament, for example, consists of *inter alia* a cry, lament, prayer, trust and praise.

Identification of psalm genres in this study is important and serves as indicator of specific religious experiences in Israel. It identifies certain historical contexts in which psalms functioned in life, cult and literature. Genre categories are therefore suitable for analyzing language, phrases, contexts and functions. This study elicits comparisons in religious experiences between biblical psalms and Pedi psalm-like texts.

Given the distance between the two traditions and their contexts, categories are used because they mediate similar religious experiences. The aforementioned places emphasis on the functionality of both biblical psalms and Pedi psalm-like texts. While specifics of

structure and content may differ, both traditions mediate religious experience of believers and enhance their worship of the divine.

This study is not aimed at proving that the psalms and Pedi genre categories are exactly similar but that similar genre elements mediate similar or different religious experience. They effect parallel functions. On the other hand similar situations and contexts are sometimes exposed by different genre categories too. Therefore, within categories there are links between Israelite and Pedi psalm-like texts. Our research has identified the said links and demonstrated similarities and differences in the two religious experiences. Therefore some categories might seem appropriate and others not in the analysis of Pedi psalm-like songs (e.g. Songs of Zion versus Liberation Songs). These results are documented under the discussion of each category.

### **3.3 PEDI PSALM-LIKE SONGS: ANALYSIS OF SONGS**

#### **3.3.1 Praise songs (*Mogale wa marumo*)**

##### 3.3.1.1 Form

In most cases African praise songs are recited for the warriors who have gone to battle and proved their valorous worth. These songs are recited in praise of chiefs, cattle, clan, mountains, etc. In Africa, nearly every aspect of life is the subject of a song. Mbiti (1992:142) and Kekana (2005:63) observe that music is used in all activities of African life: in cultivating fields, fishing, herding, performing ceremonies, praising rulers and warriors, hushing babies to sleep and so on. African music and dance are one of the chief treasures of the African culture and heritage. Traditional praise poems are valuable in that they indicate the relationship that exists amongst the various Northern *Sotho* tribes. Idamoyibo (2005:7) confirms that African music

performs the functions of praise and commendation to deserving members, in order to encourage such persons who are doing well in the society to continue in their good deeds, as well as stimulate others to emulate them.

Praise songs at the birth of a child are rejoicing poems. They are recited by people of the same clan, normally the immediate family<sup>40</sup>. These songs are appealing to receive and welcome the newly born baby (e.g. *Mogale wa marumo*). Monnig (1967:98) conducted a study of birth and name giving and concluded that among the *Pedi* the birth of a child is an event of great cultural importance. In the song '*Mogale wa marumo*' neither God nor the ancestors are praised but the newly born baby. The poet and the clan welcome and praise the child with his forefather's name.

Praise poems in the *Pedi* culture are always accompanied by both singing and dancing. The *Pedi* are rhythmically inclined. They like movement. African music is centered around rhythm. Tablino (1999:142) states that rhythm and music, for the African comes very natural because it inundates every part of life. Africans are exposed to this unique rhythm at a very early age. Therefore, they do not sing without dancing. As one of the elderly people in the family recite the praise poem in respect of the newly born baby, other members improvise the poem by both dancing and singing. They are hocketing and ululating as a signal of a warm welcome of the baby in the family. In indigenous African societies every person has a chance to experience the social, moral, health and entertainment values of music and dance on a daily basis. These values become richer if a person

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<sup>40</sup> Among the *Pedi* people music also provides an opportunity for interpersonal relations.

takes part as an active performer. Proverbs, folktales, wise sayings and oral discussions are methods of intellectual explanation and reflect indigenous theory (Nzewi 2005:vii).

*Mogale wa marumo* is a praise name of a newly born baby who is a boy. The boy is named after his grandfather whose praise name was *Mogale wa marumo* (hero). In the *Pedi* culture, the first born (boy) in the family is named after the father's father (grandfather), while the first born girl is named after the father's mother (grandmother). This statement is perhaps best motivated by Mugambi's (2005:529) view on name giving after birth in Africa. Mugambi notes that in the African heritage there are rituals of praise and thanksgiving in the process of welcoming the newborn child. The child would be named according to the established customs of the community. For example, a child might be named after an important event that had taken place around the time of birth (*Moiponi*), after the season or time of the day in which birth takes place. A child might also be named after a relative in the family of its father or mother (Mugambi 2005:529). This is the case in this praise song. The following text is one example of *Pedi* praise songs that comments on a newly born baby who is named after his grandfather who was a hero.

### 3.3.1.2 Text and translation

#### **PRAISE SONG: MOGALE WA MARUMO (HERO)**

<b>Northern Sotho (Pedi)</b>	<b>English</b>
1. Ke a dumedisa wena Thobela morena.	1. I salute you, your worship.
2. O mogale wa marumo, mo o gatilego re bona seedi.	2. You are the hero, all that you have done, we are enlightened.
3. O motho wa bo molomo mmetla betla, motho yoo a betlilego monoko maropane.	3. You are a super star, who is always exemplary.

4. O sepipimpi se pipa molomo,	4. You are an unknown secret,
5. Se pipile mmakwele seremong.	5. You are also unknown to the birds You are water from the big rivers.
6. O meetse a noka tse kgolo, go ratana go etelana.	6. You are the water from big rivers which love to visit each other.
7. O di rwalwa ke moya, di thiba `etsa sa dinaledi.	7. You are carried by air and cover the stars.
8. O meetse o mong wa meetse, legoleng,	8. You are the water and owner of water in the land,
9. Go se go wena pula re tla e bona kae?	9. Without you, where can we get the rain from?
10. E hupilwe ke wena maleng a matelele,	10. It is contained within you from afar,
11. Mola dimela ka moka di lebeletse godimo.	11. While all plants are looking up on us.
12. O meetsefula a bokgomo, sera mathaba ka mpa go khora.	12. You are the flood of the cattle, the enemy that becomes happy when satisfied with food.

The song was recorded by the author at *malopo* ritual held at *Dingwane* village, *Sekhukhune* area-Limpopo Province in May 2003 (Refer to track 1, Audio CD)

### 3.3.1.3 Language (structural elements and characteristics)

For the *Pedi* society praise songs are characterized by joy. Joy is both an attitude and a most exciting divine gift. It is an attitude stemming from confidence and trust in their ancestors and God. Joy brings with it enthusiasm for life, determination to persevere on and a desire to encourage others. The poet in this song is directly addressing the newly born baby '*Mogale wa marumo*'.

Singing plays an important role in the *Pedi* life. Van der Hooft (1979:150) infers that to the people of Africa dancing and music making serve as a means by which they relax and enjoy themselves. In Africa dance and music are essential elements of life<sup>41</sup>. Praise songs in the *Pedi* culture are becoming the predominant style of music. Some celebrations, for example commemorations of important historical

<sup>41</sup> Hammond (2004:105) maintains that music, which acts partly on a conscious and partly on an unconscious or emotive level, is therefore frequently a way to articulate those aspects of our character of which we are not consciously aware.

events are lively with the singing of praise songs, drumming, clapping and dancing. This is confirmed by Levine (2005:143) who mentions that in the *Pedi* culture men chant praise songs (*direto*) resembling historical epics in the still of the night. They usually recall events pertaining to tribal chiefs and heroes. Levine further mentions that, while men use praise poetry to narrate the past glories of the *Bapedi*, women use folktales to explore their world. These tales are ancient stories that have been passed on through the generations. Indeed, these activities determine their style of living. Indigenous stories and songs are useful sources for learning about attitudes and values, cultures and generations (Burton and Chacksfield 1979:70; Potgieter 2006:vi).

Most of the *Pedi* rituals reflect joy. Joy is a stepping-stone to life above one's miserable circumstances. Rituals are highly flexible and not entirely mutually exclusive. They are multi-functional (e.g. certain songs can be used as praise poetry). In Africa, praise songs most often compliment an individual (or individuals) present at a performance; yet the vehicle for praise, and advice or challenges offered in the guise of praise, take the form of a song in praise of a historical or mythical person from the past. Texts with praise words include proverbs or references to proverbs; a brief narration or description of the current situation; commentary, advice or criticism; and bits of text, drawn from a much longer narrative, to which the praise song alludes to (Arntson 1998:488-489).

Praise poetry is characteristic of the *Pedi* people's life style. Births, with their promise of new life and continuity of inheritance, are marked by ceremony and ritualized singing. Even before the infant is born,

chants and incantations are used to guard the birth process and effect a speedy and safe birth (Matthews 1992:934).

#### 3.3.1.4 Content and context

In the *Pedi* tribe the birth of a male child invariably occasions far more joy than that of a female. Mbiti (1987:533) who has done research on the birth of children reported that the birth of boys in Africa is considered to be very important, both for inheritance and for the defense of the community. Men are important because they perpetuate and expand the family or clan. Mothers breast-feed male children for a longer period than they do female children. They more readily sing lullabies to males than to females. Female children are required to work at an earlier age than males. Their duties and responsibilities are more suitable to adults, e.g. looking after smaller siblings, housework and taking care of livestock.

The song is one of many that uses introductory praise as a point of departure, positioning the poet as subject in a narrative. The text is divided into two sections. It starts with an introductory praise '*ke a dumedisa wena Thobela marena*' ('I salute you, your worship', line 1). Thanksgiving praise is explicated from lines 2-12. The poet presents an idyllic picture of a hero, and explains the hero in favourable light. The expressions '*O mogale wa marumo*' ('hero', line 2) and '*molomo mmetla betla*' ('a super star', line 3) with the use of the diminutive to express admiration, accomplish that. The poet further presents a picture of a unique personality '*O sepipimpi se pipa molomo*' ('you are the unknown secret', line 4), probably alluding to reputation, respect, dignity and orderliness of '*Mogale wa marumo*' ('hero').

The dignified position that *'Mogale wa marumo'* ('hero') holds among the clan is demonstrated in line 5 *'se pipile mmakwele seremong'* ('you are the unknown to the birds') and line 6 *'O meetse a noka tse kgolo, go ratana go etelana'* ('You are the water from big rivers which loves to visit each other'). Acknowledging the negritude efforts of *'Mogale wa marumo'* ('hero') in lines 7 and 8, the poet depicts the newly born baby as the people's willingness to lend a hand in matters that affect others. In line 9 *'Go se go wena pula re tla e bona kae?'* ('without you, where can we get the rain from?') the poet is still hiding behind the intricacies of metaphor. He hereby continues to allude to *Mogale wa marumo's* potential of leadership and majesty, characterized by the realization of his dignity and integrity.

The significance of this song is equally personal. Lines 9 and 10 constitute a loud and clear call for *'Mogale wa marumo'* to provide rain for the clan. As can be seen in line 10 *'E hupilwe ke wena maleng a matelele'* ('it is contained within you from afar'), the poet's request is shrouded in this metaphor of hope and confidence. The austere dignity and integrity of *'Mogale wa marumo'* is recognized and acknowledged in this song text. The identification of hero and clan is established from the beginning to the end of this song. In line 11 *'mola dimela ka moka di lebeletse godimo'* ('while all plants are looking upon us') an earnest appeal is made to a supernatural helper *'Mogale wa marumo'* to provide rain for both the clan and the plants.

The song concludes by ironically expressing appreciation and confidence in the newly born baby *'Mogale wa marumo'*: *'O meetsefula a bokgomo, sera mathaba ka mpa go khora'* ('You are the flood of the



cattle, the enemy that becomes happy when satisfied with food' (line 12).

The description of the hero offers the reader a vivid picture of confidence the clan has in the newly born baby as their future leader. The role of '*Mogale wa marumo*' is encapsulated in the names that the poet assigns to him, thus enabling him to objectify the polarities of moral and social situation with the clan, as revealed in the song.

#### 3.3.1.5 Function

Not only do praise and thanksgiving poems *initiate and welcome* a new member into the clan. In the case of a first child, they confer on the mother the status of parenthood, which for the *Pedi*, is synonymous with *attaining the full status of a woman*.

While receiving a newly born baby in the family/clan, irrespective of whether the child understands and hears all that the poet is saying the song serves to *welcome the child* in his/her new world. *Love for* the newly born baby among the *Pedi* is shown throughout the above praise song (lines 1-12), by the immediate family and whoever is present.

*Pedi* praise songs are a *plea, request and praise* to the *Pedi* ancestors who are communicated to and pleased through song and dance. Praise songs are sung to ask *for rain and good life* for the *Pedi* people in general. These songs and dances are performed when *rain does not come* at the expected time of the year, which in Limpopo Province is usually September to October.

Praise songs are also sung to praise God and the ancestors as *Pedi* traditional *thanksgiving or appreciation belief*, especially during years of good harvest.

### **3.3.2 Thanksgiving Songs (*Kgoparara*)**

#### 3.3.2.1 Form

Singing is by far the most prevalent mode of musical expression among the African people. Although there exist genres of “instrumental music”, no such genre completely excludes song (Chernoff 1979:37; Oehrle and Emeka 2003:39). Many formal and informal activities are marked by singing, whether or not the occasion is designated a “musical occasion”. Although there are certain amount of private, solo singing, the *Pedi* people regard singing as essentially a group activity, an opportunity to express their “communal ethos”.

In the *Pedi* culture social and ethical values are communicated through Thanksgiving Songs, while the content is largely dictated by current concerns and the way people approach them. Musical cultures and societies in Africa are guided by complex sets of moral and ethical values and beliefs that are historical and cultural. Values are lived (normatively), perceived (in ourselves and others) and exhibited (as in a way of living, dress, or music), according to Mans (2005:16). *Pedi* Thanksgiving Songs provide opportunities for people to express their interpretations of society.

The use of Thanksgiving Songs in the *Pedi* culture helps the narrator to hold the listeners’ attention, and adds another dimension to the story. The narrator therefore dramatizes the ‘story’ through musical techniques. Kebede (1982:7) writes that ‘responsorial’ is a common

style of singing amongst the sub-saharan African cultures. It is a pattern of call and response that involves two or more singers, a solo or group response to the lead singer imitatively, duplicative or otherwise. Kebede defines 'antiphony' or 'antiphonal singing' as the call and response form that involves two independent groups that respond to one another, or two performers from each group responding to each other. Hansen (1993:58) describes the concept of antiphonal singing as a structure that comprises solo and chorus phrases with occasional overlapping. Arom (1991:18) discusses these concepts as follows:

*"Antiphonal and responsorial structures are the dominant characteristics of traditional central African music. In certain pieces in which the melodic material is more developed, the two techniques may appear alternately. But very generally a soloist is contrasted with a choir made up of the whole of audience. Musical repetition, in its simplest form, is responsorial or litanical. The soloist sings a series of phrases that the choir punctuates with a response, which is usually shorter than the solo utterance".*

The definition of Arom seems explicit, clearly distinguishing between responsorial and antiphonal styles. The former being call and response pattern involves a soloist and a chorus where the chorus response, whether imitative of the solo line or not, is shorter. The latter involves a note by note repetition of the solo line by the chorus. In *Pedi* Thanksgiving Songs there are these forms of call and response patterns. The kind of group versus group call and response singing defined by Kebede as antiphony does exist in *Pedi* performance

practice. In the following song the traditional healers are expressing their appreciation and thanksgiving to the ancestors.

### 3.3.2.2 Text and translation

#### THANKSGIVING SONG: *KGOPARARA*

Northern Sotho (Pedi)	English
1. Bo tate, go ja re jele,	1. Our forefathers, we have enjoyed the meals,
2. e fela re nyaka nama.	2. But we are still in need of the meat.
3. Re tsoma ga go nona, lekhura le kae.	3. We would appreciate if you give us enough meat full of fat.
4. Ga gesu motse o agwa ke basadi.	4. According to our culture, the household is built by women.
5. Banna ba fedile.	5. All men have passed away.
6. Nka be e sa le botala,	6. If it was a long time ago,
7. nkabe ke bitswa kgobadi pholo ya mmala.	7. I could be described as "Kgobadi" the coloured oxen.
8. Mpiletseng Tshumu,	8. Please call me "Tshumu",
9. Ramapantele se alafa batho.	9. "Ramapantele" the traditional healer.
10. Mpiletseng "Tshumu",	10. Please call me "Tshumu",
11. Ramapantele ngaka mosemanyana.	11. "Ramapantele" the young traditional healer.
12. Nkabe e sa le botala,	12. If it was long time ago,
13. nkabe ke bitswa mmate, mokane.	13. I could be described as a friend indeed.

The song was recorded by the author on a field trip at *malopo* ritual held at *Dingwane* village, *Sekhukhune* area-Limpopo Province in May 2003 (Refer to track 2, Audio CD).

### 3.3.2.3 Language (structural elements and characteristics)

Like in other cultures *Pedi* musicians perform prophetically by foretelling the future consequences of certain actions taken by men and women in the society. *Pedi* musicians, in their foresight,

investigate, evaluate, probe and foretell future events in the *Pedi* society.

In the *Pedi* culture there are fixtures at appropriate times of the year for religious festivals dedicated to the ancestors. There are also other annual religious rites of mass purgation, regeneration and thanksgiving like. These rites involve a particular clan or the entire community as a body corporate participant even though the process may select key celebrants and officials.

Thanksgiving Songs are used to conduct the religious aspects, which constitute the core event of the festival theme. The social celebration, which mandates the entire population to participate actively in the festive programmes secures the successful outcome of the core event. This entails feasting and secular musical arts performances. Clan songs are found in many societies (Kofie 1994:33). In those who support a moiety system it often happens that each of the two divisions supports its own songs. Kofie further mentions that even lineages sometimes have specific songs with regard to their own social grouping. MacGaffey (2002:12) confirms that music was and is thought to enable communication with the dead.

The *Pedi* community observes the practice of feeding or venerating the ancestors. The head of the clan performs this rite of communion. The essence is to invoke and share communion with ancestors that are emotionally close to the living, and whose intangible interventions are known to impact on the psyche and life fortunes of selected, and sometimes collective, living progeny. Such a communion, in the form of symbolic feeding, regenerates the energies of the ancestral spirits

for affective-effective performance of their roles in ensuring favourable fates and accomplishments for the living.

Ancestors are meant to protect, strengthen and bless their offspring, but they are not omnipotent (Nurnberger 2007:154). For every success ancestors' veneration is to be conducted as a signal of appreciation, acknowledgement, respect and honour to them. They are recognized as strong affective presences in the hierarchy of the affective supernormal essences (Nzewi 2007:129). They play palpable metaphysical supporting roles in the psychical wellness of the *Pedi* individual and community. Furthermore, they constitute cohesive forces in the affairs of family and compound units, lineage groups and the community at large. Ancestor veneration of the *Pedi* is based on the belief that the dead can influence the living but not vice versa (Tjabadi Mamagabe Michael, personal communication 23-07-2003). Ancestors have therefore to be respected, honoured and obeyed. They have to be thanked for their blessings, and have to be fed through sacrifices (Mbiti 1969:81; Staples 1981:68). The *Pedi* acknowledge whatever gift or fortune is received from the ancestors. Without any acknowledgement the ancestors have the power to withdraw their gifts or fortune. In addition, *Pedi* people believe that the spirits of departed ancestors have considerable power both for good and evil. Spirits of departed ancestors may cause all kinds of misfortunes if they are offended by any action of a living relative.

In such a case the offender must make a sacrificial offering to appease the ancestral spirit. It is not unusual at a burial ceremony for an individual to talk to the corpse, to persuade the spirit not to trouble the family or village (Rader 1991:25). In our modern time such

messages are normally conveyed through sympathy cards. Ancestor veneration is a widespread phenomenon among the *Pedi* people (Phibion 2003:148). *Badimo* (ancestors) play an important role in the lives of the *Pedi*. Ancestral spirits are generally believed to be benevolent and concerned about the welfare of their descendants. However, when offended, they can kill and maim their own protégés. Therefore, people always seek to maintain the closest possible relationship with these divinities. This includes heeding their requests and instructions.

Songs as expression of appreciation and thanksgiving is evident in the *Pedi* society. Appreciation is indeed an important part of the tribe's act in general. Music serves as an adjunct to religion, and is used for happy and sad purposes, for expressing ideals and emotions, and romantically, for describing scenery (Kofie 1994:99). In improvised verses and pre-composed songs, the *Pedi* single out those members of the community noteworthy for their accomplishments: *matona* (headmen) and other political figures and their descendants. They also include wealthy members of the community who are actively involved in the community development of the *Pedi* people.

The *Pedi* society employs thanksgiving songs to rally warriors, tuning up their morale, and generating public sentiments or moral support as well as pleasing their ancestors. At some festivals which have primary political orientation, thanksgiving songs are sung to celebrate and commemorate the founding of a community.

#### 3.3.2.4 Content and context

In this song text singers who are traditional healers are communicating directly with their ancestors. The text and melody play complementary roles in the communication process. The singers make use of words that are sometimes suggestive of double or multiple meaning. These conceptual words often form the basis for the themes and sub-themes in this song. The text falls into six clearly-defined sections: a) recognition of the deeds of ancestors (line 1); b) request and expressions of the singers' confidence in the ancestors (lines 2-3); c) tone of loneliness and frustration (lines 4-5); d) recognition of a traditional healer '*Tshumu*' who trained the singers to become traditional healers (lines 8-11) and f) imagery (lines 12-13).

The introductory statement (line 1) poetically announces the recognition of ancestors' deeds '*Bo tate, go ja re jele*' ('Our forefathers, we have enjoyed the meals'). The tone of the singers from line 2, '*e fela re nyaka nama*' ('but we are still in need of the meat') and line 3, '*re tsoma ya go nona, lekhura le kae*' ('We would appreciate if you give us enough meat full of fat') presents a dissatisfaction that the singers (traditional healers) are still in need of more meat full of fat. The message communicated to the ancestors by the singers is that they are thankful, but they would appreciate it if the ancestors could offer them some more meat. The belief that ancestors will respond positively includes a request as well as the singers' confidence in the ancestors.

In this song we observe the careful use of figurative words with powerful associative meaning. The text possesses variation in poetic



expression. The singers make use of several figures of speech, forms of imagery, idioms, parables and proverbs that require serious thinking and one's vastness in the language to fully comprehend. This is evinced in the fourth line which remarks that 'according to our culture, the household is built by women', and fifth line 'all men have passed away'. The tone in lines 4 and 5, reflects loneliness, despair and frustration because all men in the community have died. Taking melancholy of the lyrics into consideration, the focus in these two lines (4 and 5) is on relationships, the loss of men in the community and death-human concerns rather than upon the communication with ancestors.

Most themes in this song are derived from the sense of realism rather than from idealism. Songs such as '*Kgoparara*' are normally composed as reactions or responses to the realities of life (e.g. inauguration of the chief) that unfold in the *Pedi* society from time to time. They therefore had to reflect things that had occurred, which the musicians/traditional healers had seen or heard.

The song recognizes the traditional healer '*Tshumu*' (lines 8-11) who trained all the singers to become traditional healers. Because of the trust the singers (traditional healers) have in their mentor ('*Tshumu*'), as a signal of respect they call him with his praise name '*Ramapantele*', (line 1). It is not clear why they are calling '*Tshumu*'. It is possible that they might be calling him, with the sole purpose of thanking him for the good work he has done in training them to become traditional healers.

### 3.3.2.5 Function

Thanksgiving Songs in the *Pedi* culture express sincere *thanks to the ancestors* after every achievement, whether it is a good harvest or a patient's full recovery, etc. However, songs such as *mogobo* and *motholoane* may be sung for celebrating victory after winning the battle or war.

Thanksgiving Songs are sung to *thank, please and praise ancestors* after having responded positively towards the community's requests. Similar rituals take place in thanksgiving after harvest, a very festive occasion, especially if the harvest has been a good one (Bourdillon 1976:303). In some chiefdoms the thanksgiving ceremony occurs after a particularly good harvest and includes feasting on the meat of oxen killed by the chief for the occasion. If the spirit guardians have failed to provide a good harvest the previous year, they are not so lavishly honoured and the celebrations cease.

The *Pedi* are singing these Thanksgiving Songs to acknowledge *the good work or service* the above-named figures have done for them. In *Sotho* praises there is always the same aim, namely to glorify a person, a place, an animal or whatever the topic of glorification may be. In African culture music is used to praise worthy people, good deeds and achievements (Nzewi 2005:156). To attain this aim imagination of prominent leaders is an essential necessity.

To the *Pedi* mind ancestors are human and have acquired additional powers after death. Ancestors play a very vital important role in a person's life. They are protectors of society and can destroy it as a

means of punishment. Ancestors control moral behaviour because they are the moral agents. No serious misbehaviour or anti-life attitude escapes their gaze. They are authority figures who maintain the norms of social action, but cause trouble when these norms are not obeyed (Magesa 1997:48). Men seek to obtain their blessing or to avert their anger by bringing offerings. Therefore they thank the ancestors to *keep a happy relationship*.

### **3.3.3 Lament Songs (*Madi a manaba*)**

#### **3.3.3.1 Form**

*Pedi* laments are songs with a focus on a distinct, special range of topics. It includes: a) extolling the sex-specific subsistence skills of those who have passed on; b) death by drowning, accident, or ill health; and c) notable events and incidents in the *Pedi* community. Tchebwa (2005:15) observes that music and history are mutually supportive through a complete vision of the events that give rhythm to the life and to the journey of a people. Significant events in a person's life may be woven into a memorial or Lament Song. The crux of the argument rests on the African traditional worldview as one in which people recognize and experience many dangers and threats of life, even if they smile, sing and dance (Mbiti 1986:156). Life is seen as a struggle in the face of these threats, which are both physical and spiritual in nature.

In the *Pedi* society illnesses are believed to be caused by witchcraft. The family spirit (*modimo*) normally protects all family members from harm, but if one of them transgresses, particularly by omitting a religious ritual, the spirit becomes annoyed and punishes the family by causing an illness or the death of one or more of its members

(Ndemera, et al (1985:31). Kofie (1994:41) and Soko (2003:3-1) agree with Ndemere et al (1985:31) when they note that disease and misfortune are supposed to come as punishment from the ancestors who are believed to be very powerful. Ancestors are more powerful than any living being, and can bring about the death of a lineage member.

Most of the *Pedi* Lament Songs deal with some sort of trouble like adversity, experiences of enmity, oppression, and wickedness. Particularities of the situation of the supplicants are often difficult to discern. What is going on? Who are the enemies? Why are they hostile to the supplicant? What have they done that is bad? What is happening to the supplicant that is regularly described in extreme terms?

Complaint and accusation are directed to ancestors as well as towards enemies, and sometimes towards the lamenter himself. Ancestors play a crucial role with regard to life and death. Sorrow features in many *Pedi* songs are caused either by sentiments of lost love, desertion and poverty, or by the women's vocal quality, which reflects strained emotion. The phrasing of *Pedi* lament songs is determined on the basis of its melodic sequence, the repetition of note and rhythmic sequences, pauses for breath or short breaks, and by shorter notes marking the end of phrases<sup>42</sup>. In *Pedi* lament songs sentences end with a falling intonation.

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<sup>42</sup> In the *Pedi* tribe dirges and laments are accompanied with body rhythms (clapping and stamping), and not with instruments. Dynamic movements, gestures and textual and musical extemporizations are integral parts of dirges and laments.

*Pedi* laments normally end in the plea and confidence that ancestors will cause the enemy to flee and be put to shame. Newell (1976:87) states that the relationship between ancestor worship and society is complex: ancestor worship reflects the society, is determined by it, and at the same time shapes it.

The next song, "*Madi a manaba*", is an individual lament song. The supplicant is lamenting about the death of her parents. She is blaming the witches for having killed her parents. *Pedi* laments are characterized by both hope and despair. According to *Pedi* belief ancestors can turn the most impossible situation around.

### 3.3.3.2 Text and translation

#### **FUNERAL SONG: MADI A MANABA (BLOOD OF THE ADVERSARIES/ENEMIES)**

<b>Northern Sotho (Pedi)</b>	<b>English</b>
1. Ke dutse fase ka khutsa.	1. I sat down and rest.
2. Ka bala dipalo.	2. And started counting.
3. Kgwedi ya malofa.	3. A month of pessimistic persons.
4. E gana go fela.	4. It does not come to an end.
5. Madi a manaba,	5. The enemies' blood,
6. bosego ga le robale.	6. You are enjoying sleepless nights.
7. Le lala le dikologa metse ya batho.	7. You spend the whole night long walking around families' household.
8. Ke rwele morwalo ka magetleng.	8. I put on heavy luggage on my back.
9. Ke a imelwa.	9. It is heavy for me.
10. Ke a robegwa.	10. It is painful.
11. Lehu le tsere tatane mothommelegi.	11. Death has taken my father, the comforter.
12. Ke tshuana magolegole.	12. I am an orphan.
13. Lehu le tsere mmane.	13. Death has also taken my mother.
14. ka sala ke e kgonere.	14. I am bewildered.

The song was recorded by the author at a *malopo* ritual held at *Dingwane* village, *Sekhukhune* area-Limpopo Province in May 2003 (Refer to track 3, Audio CD).

### 3.3.3.3 Language (structural elements and characteristics)

Despair and helplessness are the underpinnings of *Pedi* funeral songs. Mourning can cause illness, and disruption in patterns of sleeping, eating and socializing. During a funeral ceremony, which usually lasts for one or two days, the manifestations of grief take a variety of forms. Mourners may cry, and utter expressions of pain and sorrow. Both in Christianity and African cultural heritage, the death of an individual causes great concern to the community of which he has been a member. "This is especially so if the deceased had favorable relations with the members of the community" (Mbiti 1972:535).

In African tradition, the death of an elderly popular individual is felt to be a great loss to the community (Mbiti 1972:535). Mourning is symbolized by black clothing. Moreover, for months, mourners may live a life of seclusion, and abandon all outward manifestations of joy. Such manifestations include listening to or performing what is regarded as *Pedi* traditional funeral songs.

Burying the dead, for example, is an important social occasion in the life of the *Pedi* tribe. While the wailing and the dirges furnish a socially patterned outlet for grief, the lament songs form the most dramatic part of the setting of display and celebration, which surrounds the occasion. Death rites are held to celebrate and mourn the passage to the afterlife. Music at funerals and most other occasions is there for whole making. African events consistently resort to music<sup>43</sup> (Uzoigwe and Tracey 2003:82). In Africa the death of any member of a

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<sup>43</sup> Along similar lines it is worthwhile to mention here Owomoyela's (1979:15) view that in traditional African community. Singing accompanied important periods or turning points in the life of an individual, such as childhood, marriage and death.

community, particularly the prominent or the accomplished members, attracts the rendition of music and in some cases dirges in honour of the deceased (Onyeji 2004:92). Sometimes such music is created and performed by the adult women of the community.

In the text, language variety associated with the mourning situation shows an exaggerated metaphor blended with euphemism. This is so because *Sepedi* speech community is inclined to respect the dead more than the living. Two things compared in a form of metaphor are bound to retain slight similarities in order to maintain this mutual identity. This is evident in the above song text.

In the *Pedi* culture witchcraft is evident and a reality<sup>44</sup>. A large percentage of the *Pedi* people living in the *Limpopo* Province still believe that personality disorders are due to supernatural causes (Van der Hooft 1979:147). Most of the disturbed individuals, or their relatives, consult tribal doctors (*dingaka*) for an explanation or the reason for their symptoms.

The basis of this diagnosis is that they attribute their symptoms to either the influence of their deceased ancestors (*badimo*), the interference of witches and wizards (*baloi*), or the hand of God, *Modimo* (Van der Hooft 1979:147). A *Pedi* is always conscious of the vicissitudes of life, particularly the incidence of witchcraft, which is to him one of the main causes of death (Mokgokong 1978:105). That is why some Northern Sotho speakers will answer a greeting by: *re sa*

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<sup>44</sup> Monnig (1967:71) concurs that, to the *Pedi*, witchcraft (*boloi*) represents all that is evil and destructive. It is loathed and feared more than anything else and is a force, which is even recognized by many who have become Christians.

*paletse baloi* 'We have still baffled the witches' (Mokgokong 1978:105).

The *Pedi* community has ancestral worship as part of their indigenous religion. This ritual activity is universally known as '*go phasa*' ('to venerate'). The head of the tribe or family, with the assistance of traditional healers, normally takes the lead in conducting this ritual. Sekhukhune (1988:48) writes that "*Badimo*" ('ancestors') are believed to be omnipresent and as a result they are worshipped everywhere but preferably where the dead are buried or in a brackish spot known as '*sebatlabadimo*'. Sekhukhune describes '*sebatlabadimo*' as a place that is believed to be prepared by the departed themselves. The act of '*go phasa*' is generally multi-purposeful. Among the *Pedi* people it is executed for the purpose of asking for rain in times of drought and famine, curing, and alleviating pain from any epidemic.

In the *Pedi* culture it is further believed that the living dead (ancestors) can influence the living generation but not *vice versa*. On the basis of the latter statement, the song warns the sorcerers who are responsible for the death of the supplicant's parents. Ancestors are powerful and shall avenge the death on behalf of the supplicant. The song is not an idle threat to the sorcerers.

#### 3.3.3.4 Content and context

This song is a passionate complaint to ancestors about suffering the supplicant is enduring. Like Job (6:4) the supplicant does not hesitate from attributing his sufferings to a source of origin. In our case it is the ancestors (lines 8-14).



The lament is divided into three sections: In lines 1-4 the supplicant is suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. In lines 5-7 he appeals to enemies to abandon him, while in lines 8-14 he appeals to ancestors for help. The singer explains his difficulties. He is persecuted or harassed by enemies, who remain unidentified. This situation is kept open so that any other petitioner could fill in his/her exact context of distress.

The supplicant establishes his theme in the first four lines that become the recurring refrain. The refrain reflects an element of an absolute lament. Over this thematic refrain the supplicant weaves series of proverbs to which the refrain is a response.

'*Manaba*' (line 5) means witch/wizard (witches/wizards) in the context of the text but literally it means "enemies". It is a term that has dual meaning; witch/wizard who belongs to the spiritual secret cult<sup>45</sup> and all people who seek and practice any form of wickedness against humanity in the physical world. The activities of the latter category could be a secret, but they are all performed in the physical world.

The term '*lehu*' ('death'-lines 11 and 13) in the *Pedi* culture has a dual meaning; the death where human beings stop breathing and the death which signifies that one is living wretchedly and hopelessly. In this song the supplicant refers to the real death (lines 5-7).

Life is short and everyone dies, but the supplicant does not accept it. He feels bewildered (lines 1-14), and thinks that the ancestors have

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<sup>45</sup> Spiritual secret cult refers to the cult instituted by those who possess powers to do extraordinary things from the spiritual world to control and affect the physical world (positively or negatively).

forsaken him. The supplicant is troubled by the witches/wizards: “You are enjoying sleepless nights” (line 6); and “You spend the whole night long walking around families’ households” (line 7). This implies that witches/wizards never sleep. For them to accomplish their mission of witchcraft they have to operate in the dark.

The text is presented in the form of a traditional funeral letter and reflects such stock phrases as *'ke a robegwa'* ('It is painful'-line 10) as well as the signature of the supplicant at the end *'lehu le tsere mmane'* ('death has also taken my father, the comforter'-line line 11 and 'death has also taken my mother'-line 13). The tone of the supplicant reflects despair and frustration.

The supplicant has lost confidence that ancestors will deal effectively with his enemies (lines 11, 13-14). We find a description of enemies who are attacking the supplicant: “The enemies’ blood” (line 5). There is neither doubt about the trouble this supplicant is in, nor about his underlying belief in the ancestors. He is scared stiff while uttering “I am bewildered” (line 14). Because of his enemies, who are indeed frightening, the supplicant feels insecure. In lines 11 and 13 the supplicant is lamenting about the death of both parents (father and mother). It is not clear whether both parents died at the same time, or whether they will be buried at the same time. All that the supplicant is lamenting about is the death of her parents.

### 3.3.3.5 Function

This typical *Pedi* lament song may serve to encourage people to *recognize ancestors*, as it is believed among the *Pedi* that things do not always turn out well for those who do not recognize ancestors.

Only if the supplicant's ancestors are pleased about the supplicant as the consequence of loving, respecting, remembering them and carrying out their instructions in the form of ancestor veneration and pouring of a libation, vengeance will be realized and protection experienced. The song serves therefore as a *warning* to the community. The community is made aware of sorcerers or witches who are walking around families' households during the night. They are on a mission of killing innocent people through witchcraft. Whoever prospers or is successful in life could become a victim of witchcraft according to *Pedi* culture. That is why most successful people prefer to settle in the cities for survival.

The reason why successful people settle in the cities is because in the cities there are many nationalities or people from different ethnic groups or cultural backgrounds. They do not know one another and jealousy does not prevail amongst them. Ndemera et al (1985:33) states that in actual life, feelings of jealousy are more likely to grow when people see one another regularly and know one another's affairs. A large number of people in the cities are successful or rich.

It is unclear what influenced the sorcerers to kill the supplicant's parents. In most cases witchcraft is influenced by jealousy or due to misunderstanding or conflict. Lament songs generally focus on *bewailing the beloved*, recognition of the ancestors, avoiding power of witchcraft as well as *creating a good relationship* between the living and the living dead. In Africa lament gives birth to an ancestral spirit, because without death there would be no ancestors (Porter 2001:156). Women therefore sing the dirge to bring life.

### **3.3.4 Royal Songs (*Kgoshi*)**

#### 3.3.4.1 Form

The *Pedi* express their ideas in songs, but in artistic music this kind of self-realization offers a highly limited truth that has been altered by convention. Two reasons are identified by Nzewi (1991:93) for the expression of ideas through music. Firstly, music has to engender a contextual atmosphere that promotes maximized social interaction at any given time and place. Secondly, music has to possess innate qualities. The *Pedi* tribe's chant of Inauguration Songs is symbolic, because it expresses the nature of their present state, that is, a cultured nature. Music and oral traditions are a way of consolidating collective will, symbolic of a thriving culture, and legacy (Mataira 2000:25). The communal way of *Pedi* life is central. Human beings hereby employ music and song to share joy, blessings, sorrows, and burdens. For the *Pedi* tribe harmony within oneself, one's clan, society, nature and the spiritual world forms the basis of a healthy society.

Inauguration Songs have played an important role in the history of the *Pedi* society. Msomi (1981:19) emphasizes the significance of folk songs: "*Music is the medium through which the African expresses all his/her feelings and emotions*". Music plays an integral part of the African tradition and of everyday life such as breathing, eating and sleeping (Liebenberg 1998:107).

Men and women who are remembered in a song are the important historical figures. These historical figures are famous public leaders of their day. People achieved fame as leaders, amongst other things, by establishing reputations as poets and in the case of both men and

women, also as dancers. Music and dance in Africa exist within an interdependent relationship with other forms of expressive culture (Kubik 2001:210). Music creates movement and leads to new ways of seeing things and, as Blacking (1987:53) suggests, gives people a sense of empowerment and confidence.

The chief in the *Pedi* tradition fulfills the role of a king. In this sense Royal Songs in the *Pedi* culture are well known. Inauguration Songs are such songs sung when a chief or a headmen in the *Pedi* tribe is throned. Like other African societies, the *Pedi* tribe has a strong poet-singer tradition. Accordingly, a wide range of poetry is chanted in a variety of languages and in contexts ranging from entertainment to religious practice (Moore 2001:274). Akpabot (1986:69) argues that an African musician, first and foremost, is a poet who unlike the Western poet does not write for different performers, but has his poems tied to special occasions where he reaches an audience:

“His output can be seen as a commentary on life styles, praising, protesting and cursing human foibles and fads, reminiscing on the exploits of national heroes; invoking the might of ancestral gods; imparting knowledge; arousing emotions and making suggestion for the common good” (Akpabot 1986:69).

A group of singing dancers performs with one or more leaders, sometimes accompanied by a rhythm instrument, *moropa* (drum) or leg rattles during this song. Most of the rhythms in the *Pedi* inauguration songs are subject to metric schemes, and the sounds reveal the rigidity of a pre-existing tonal system. Sadie and Latham

(1988:17) state that “The most basic element in music is rhythm” and some musical systems, in fact, use rhythm alone.

In Africa, Inauguration Songs are often integrated into story-telling. Such *chantefables* display remarkable, unitary behavioural patterns across Sub-Saharan Africa, from West Africa to areas of primary Bantu-language speakers (Kubik 2001:205). The next Inauguration Song tells about a leader who is born a chief and has the potentials of leadership and managerial skills.

#### 3.3.4.2 Text and translation

##### **INAUGURATION SONG: KGOSHI**

<b>Northern Sotho (Pedi)</b>	<b>English</b>
1. Ke moukamedi wa ditshabatshaba.	1. He is the overseer of the community.
2. Ke thobela Marena, ge re mmona.	2. We salute him when we see him, because he is the hero.
3. Dingaka di thinthathithebele.	3. Traditional healers are shivering too when they see him.
4. Bogoshi ke bja madi,	4. Chieftainship is heredity,
5. Ga se lekhekhwe ga bo fetele.	5. It is quite different from infectious diseases/sores.
6. Ke leabela thobela Marena.	6. It is really a heredity.
7. Etlang re ye mosate ga bo Shorwane, Mphepedimeng.	7. Please accompany me to the royal family at Shorwane village, Mphepedimeng.
8. Ga motho wa Seakalala, thobela Marena.	8. Where the chief is really born a chief.

Recorded by the author at *Shorwane* village, *Sekhukhune* area in *Limpopo* Province in July 2003 during the inauguration ceremony of *Kgoshi Shorwane*. (Refer to track 4, Audio CD)

#### 3.3.4.3 Language (structural elements and characteristics)

In the *Pedi* tradition the song *kgoshi* (chief) is commonly sung as an inauguration song. The song is characterized by social excitement.

During the chief's inauguration ceremony the *Pedi* people participate in the enjoyment by singing the song, *kgoshi*. As some are singing and dancing, celebrating their new chief, others will improvise by telling stories about *Pedi* history and tradition, all of which herald unexplored possibilities for the future. The use of stories with music and participation is not a new idea. Storytelling is part of many of the world's cultures (Levine 2005:143). Music and song add to the storytelling by providing a rich sound environment that helps to convey information to the listener. Musical stories motivate, increase attention span, provide an effective vehicle for learning a moral from a story, aid in language development, and help the listener learn about music in general (Flohr 1998:140).

*Pedi* Inauguration Songs are characterized by joy, interaction, concentration, expression, self-confidence and imagination. In this song the chief is praised. Repetition is clearly the key to the structure. Through repetition one of the most important compositional features in the *Pedi* Psalm-like songs serves as a useful means by which the performing musicians emphasize and project to the listening audience the principal idea of this song. In this song performance, '*Thobela marena*' (lines 2, 6 and 8) is the phrasal idea that constitutes the main theme. Repetition is a powerful, rhetorical and expressive device skillfully employed by poets to hammer key words home, in order to implant dominant emotions in listeners or readers' mind (Burton and Chacksfield 1979:115-116). In *Pedi* Psalm-like songs repetitions often appear in forms of chorus refrain or a frequent return of the narration to the principal idea at strategic intervals (see lines 4-6).

The use of the call-and-response method in *Pedi* music is seen as a performance style, non-comparable to the European verse form. It is more a performance style than a structural form, because a solo performance of the same piece does not show incompleteness of any sort. The song *kgoshi* only shows the complementary phrasing of the song itself, which in a group performance may be presented in complementary call-and-response style for aesthetic and labour distribution purposes. By far the most common form of group singing in most parts of Africa is the call-and-response style, different from the common European form of a verse of several lines followed (or not) by a chorus (Roberts 1972:9). Roberts asserts that European verse is complete in itself, while the African call by itself is only half of the equation; it needs the response before it is complete. Africans see music and song as a stimulus to dance. Both are inseparable sister arts (Brown 1989:128).

#### 3.3.4.4 Content and context

When a chief dies in *Sekhukhuneland*, for example, some stages in the funeral are marked by musical performance designed to perform various dramatic functions. For the inauguration of the new chief who succeeds a dead *kgoshi* (chief), a different type of performance is presented. Different stages of the ceremony are again marked by music. Various social events with which music is most usually associated, include the inauguration of chiefs and kings, religious worship, therapy, magic, work, children's games, sports, festivals and ceremonies pertaining to the life cycle, such as birth rites, infant rites, puberty rites, marriage and funeral rites (Euba 1982:232).



African music, dance and songs as embodied in the entire concept of African culture, are a cherished treasure and source of pride for African peoples. African songs are most meaningful and carry inspiring messages that convey the true picture and personality of the African.

This inauguration song falls into three clearly defined sections: a) introductory praise (lines 1-3); (b) circles of integrity (lines 4-6); and c) the song closes with praise (lines 7-8).

In the *Pedi* Psalm-like songs the performers sometimes open a performance with an introductory speech (lines 1-3). Spoken introduction informs the audience about the background of the theme or songs to be performed. It prepares the audience for the experience. This is an indication that poetry in *Pedi* music involves both elements of speech and song. *Pedi* songs are either short or long, in some thorough-composed narrative and varied verse forms. The simplest *Pedi* songs are composed in very short melodic sentences, as it is evident in this song. Here performing musicians emphasizes certain words and wise sayings. For example '*dingaka di thintsha dithebele*' ('traditional healers are shivering when they see him') line 3.

The performing musicians do not dispute the fact that chieftainship is heredity. In fact they acknowledge chieftainship in the opening lines of the song (lines 4-6). What they intend to communicate to the audience is that the inaugurated chief is really born a chief. They put this proverbially and ironically that 'chieftainship', as is known in the *Pedi* culture, is not an infectious disease but heredity (lines 4-6). This implies that not every *Pedi* qualifies to become a chief. One should inherit the chieftainship from either the father or mother.

The impression created in lines 7 and 8 is that the *Pedi* have full confidence in the chief who has full-time attention for his royal activities and who leads and govern his community by example. Expressions with roots in human experiences are also used for example '*Ga motho wa Seakalala, thobela Marena*', ('where the chief is really born a chief'), line 8.

A variety in the choice of words appear where the performing musicians insert new words that mean exactly the same as those used earlier or as those they replace. For example '*moukamedi*' (line 1), '*marena*' (line 6) and '*seakalala*' (line 8). The precise connection between the three words '*moukamedi*' ('overseer'), '*marena*' ('heros') and '*seakalala*' ('chief') is easy to ascertain. The combination of these words in the text refers to a leader who is born a chief and has the potentials of leadership and managerial skills.

This song is sung by the *Pedi* people (community) on behalf of their chief (*kgoshi*). This song originally celebrated the inauguration of a chief at "*Shorwane*" village (line 1), "Please accompany me to the royal family at *Shorwane* village, *Mphapedimeng*" (line 7).

This song expresses the situation of a capable chief (line 8), "where the chief is really born a chief." It adds to the evidence that there are *Pedi* rites of inauguration with a highly dramatic character. The song is specifically portraying heredity and respect: "chieftainship is heredity" (line 4). This statement is perhaps best motivated by Duncan's (1960:48) view on traditional successions when he states that traditional law in African traditions controlling succession might be

described as “heredity modified by expediency.” That is to say, normally succession would be by heredity.

With the phrase “we salute him when we see him, because he is the hero” the singers address the chief, praising his dignity and status. This characteristic marks him as the overseer of the community. They bid the chief to use his strength for the cause of truth. Noble qualities of heart and mind befit him in his lofty calling. Similarly, *Igoru* music in *Okpe* (Nigeria) is a powerful medium of communication, by which human actions and reactions are expressed (Agbese 1989:4). It provides a forum to mirror the society and its leaders so that members could understand themselves and their society better and learn more about life (Agbese 1989:4).

#### 3.3.4.5 Function

The song retains its value for people today, especially those of the *Shorwane* village in particular. It serves as a *reminder* of hierarchy and of the chief’s potential for leadership. The chief cares for his people. His people serve him and the whole community recognizes him as chief.

The song is not addressed directly to the ancestors but is a *testimony* offered to other people about the chief’s ability to serve his community. Therefore the song offers important evidence for the scene of humility in the inauguration sequence or related rites. This Royal Song may be related to a historical situation, but it functions to *praise* the chief. The song further functions as a means of *communication* between the singers and visitors who do not know the history of the community.

Historically, the performance of Inauguration Songs has served to reinforce knowledge about the community, its owners, and protocol for its usage. African music arises naturally and spontaneously from the functions of everyday life. The aim of African music has always been to translate the experience of life and of the spiritual world into sound, enhancing and celebrating life through cradle songs, songs of reflection, historical songs, fertility songs, songs about death and mourning, and other song varieties (Omolo-Ongati 2005:60). When the *Pedi* perform an inauguration song, they are making a statement about who they are. They establish the otherness of the original performers and *reaffirm* their cultural *identity*.

Furthermore the contemporary role of *traditional leadership becomes evident* in the Inauguration Song, which is normally performed at an inauguration ceremony.

### **3.3.5 Liberation Songs (*Ga e boe Afrika*)**

#### **3.3.5.1 Form**

Liberation Songs are not unique to a particular country or century. As long as inequity between people exists, those who feel oppressed will find strength and inspiration in these kinds of songs (Gray 1998:30). In the *Pedi* tribe, like in some African tribes, music serves as the medium of communication. The tactics and situations of liberation singers throughout the world change over the ages, but the goals remain the same: better working and living conditions without discrimination against ordinary people. In the South African context the black liberation struggle was paramount (Gray 1998:75). In this conflict one of the transforming forces, which manifested itself, was the extensive use of liberation or protest songs.

*Ga e boe Afrika* is a *Pedi* liberation song. This song is a “chant” and draws the oppressors’ attention to the inequality of wages. In this song the rhythm and melodic line are varied to fit the words of the song<sup>46</sup>. *Ga e boe Afrika* is said to be “*logo-centric*,” which means the focus of the song is on the words rather than on the rhythm or melody lines.

In this category music is a binding force amongst Africans. It is communicating the social solidarity among the *Pedi* people, while solving common political and social problems. Such music becomes instrumental for mutual support and confidence as well as for the rallying point for the *Pedi* people. Colonial governments in Africa feared the use of traditional music by natives because, it would foster political solidarity against the colonial leadership (Mindoti and Agak 2004:156).

In Africa many musical activities reflect and enhance political systems. Song and music are performed to emphasize and assert the importance of a socio-political structure (Levine 2005:189). In the *Pedi* culture the medium of song plays a significant role in expressing personal and communal views on how life affects society. Ironically, many South African sounds that have achieved recognition in the outside world are generally considered *passe’* back home. Musical taste in South Africa has often followed political events (Eyre and Barlow 1995:11). MacLeod and Harvey (2000:30) are of the opinion that music and song liberate listeners to express emotions without a need to disclose.

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<sup>46</sup> The chorus’s response is essentially in two-part harmony but occasionally includes a third tone, producing triadic chords. Intervals of major and minor thirds are used in the chorus part. The song makes use of the diatonic scale, and the setting of the text is syllabic.

### 3.3.5.2 Text and translation

#### **PROTEST SONG: GA E BOE AFRIKA**

<b>Northern Sotho (Pedi)</b>	<b>English</b>
1. Ga e boe.	1. Bring back.
2. Ga e boe Afrika.	2. Bring back Africa.
3. Go fediswe dipasa le melao e boima.	3. Abolish the pass laws and unbearable laws.
4. Re tsoma ponto,	4. We want a pound,
5. Re tsoma ponto,	5. We want a pound,
6. Re tsoma ponto ka letsatsi,	6. We want a pound a day,
7. Re tsoma ponto ka letsatsi.	7. We want a pound a day.

Recorded by the author at Jane Furse, *Sekhukhune* area in Limpopo Province in September 2004 during the National heritage day celebration (Refer to track 5, Audio CD).

### 3.3.5.3 Language (structural elements and characteristics)

*Pedi* liberation songs are not only historical records of popular memories shared by the *Pedi* people, but they reflect certain modifications that songs underwent due to deteriorating socio-economic conditions. Liberation songs contain powerful critique in the liberation struggle. Euba (1982:232) pointed out that kings and important chiefs in Africa usually had personal musicians whose duties include image making. Musicians are particularly gifted in the subtle use of praise texts designed to enhance the prestige of their clients while castigating the clients' opponents (McDaniel 1998:42-43).

*Pedi* liberation songs are antiphonal, repetitive and cyclic in nature<sup>47</sup>. Their improvisational character and their rhythmic patterns invite

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<sup>47</sup> Songs in this category feature cyclical melodic statements in responsorial form. The tempo is determined by the mood of the singers. Quite often though, they are presented in fast tempo. The presentation form is determined by the contingencies of given contexts. The atmosphere of such performances is usually charged. New

bodily movement. Biko (1978:60) asserts: *"The singing of liberation songs leads to a culture of defiance, self-assertion, group pride and solidarity. This is a culture that emanates from a situation of common experience of oppression and is responsible for the restoration of our faith in ourselves and offers a hope in the direction we are taking from here."*

Rhythms of liberation songs are both regular and irregular in the *Pedi* tradition. They are characterized by the chanters stamps, which relate to the drum pattern. The leader's part in these songs may be sung with slight variation, according to individual expression. Steve Biko (1978:60), the black South African activist who died in detention, corroborates this statement: *"To the African, music and rhythm are not luxuries but part and parcel of their way of communication. Any suffering we experienced was made more real by song and rhythm"*. Music and rhythm are indeed influential for effective communication, because it is inspiring, unifying, arousing and unlocks an exhilaration in one's soul. As powerful vehicle music expresses universal truths as well as individual emotions.

Africans turned from subsistence cultivation to cash-cropping (Machin and Morrel 1999:195). To prove that this was called for, at all national, provincial and municipal ceremonies the tribal, cultural and ethical dances, demonstrations, music/liberation songs have become the norm. As economic, social and political conditions for black South Africans deteriorated due to discriminatory laws by the white

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songs are sometimes introduced in the context of a performance. Singers with the ability to project voices that can be heard by all usually lead the performances of the songs. Because the performance is often done in motion, musical instruments are generally not used. If used at all, light instruments such as *dithlwathlwadi* (rattles), *leparapata* (African horn) and *dinaka* (reed pipes) are preferred (Stone 1998:7).

government, the style of the songs changed from indigenous to political to reflect the mood of the people. Any interpretation of dance, aesthetics, music, and literature of the African *diaspora* should begin with the assumption that religious practice, political struggle, and the search for social mediation and justice share similar metaphors in the thinking of oppressed people (McDaniel 1998:69).

#### 3.3.5.4 Content and context

The liberation song *Ga e boe Afrika* can be divided as follows: It begins with a) a prayer (lines 1-2); b) dissatisfaction and instruction (lines 3); and the song closes with c) a demand (lines 4-7).

A concern is raised by the chanters. Three issues are addressed: Firstly, chanters want Africa back in their own hands (lines 1-2). During the period 1840 to 1880 the major force affecting South Africa was British imperialism. Britain was the most powerful industrial and commercial nation of the period. Its leaders and businessmen wished to maintain their dominance and this was frequently reflected in colonial policy (Morrel and Machin 1999:189). Secondly, they are not satisfied about the pass laws (line 3). Pass laws were laws that restricted free movements and choice with regard to place of living, for example, separate residential areas and curfews<sup>48</sup>. The demand they put across is that they want at least one pound per day for labour (lines 4-7). In the past one pound was equivalent to two rands. As

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<sup>48</sup> Curfews refers to certain times that black people had to leave white residential areas. Country wide tours by black performance groups were unusual, as curfew regulations restricting concerts and passes required by blacks travelling outside their own provinces were major obstacles to ventures of this nature (Gray 1998:34).



Mminele Letladi Phillip<sup>49</sup> explained his view on a pound (21 May 2004), he singled out his notion that his grandparents and parents were earning five rands per month. Demanding at least one pound per day would benefit them the earning of 1 pound x 22 (working days), which is equal to 22 pounds (fourty-four rands).

Lines 4-7 are all about one pound per day (or 22 pounds per month which is equivalent to fourty-four rands). The reason why the South African currency was a pound in the 1950's is because South Africa was a British colony (Lamplough 1999:189). As a result, the *Pedi* were not happy with unbearable pass laws (line 3). Black people were not allowed to shop where white people shop; they were also prohibited to travel abroad as a result of suspicion that blacks would travel abroad to take action against apartheid. These were some of the unbearable laws in South Africa. Black people have really gone through difficult times. African societies have experienced unprecedented changes through the colonialists policies of westernization, industrialization and urbanization (Adeogun 2005:66).

#### 3.3.5.5 Function

Liberation songs recall a struggle for political freedom, and refer to the existential difficulties people had gone through. Some liberation songs are *praising political leaders* and *recalling aspects of the struggle* for the transformation to a new society. Music and song played a part in all aspects of culture (Bascom 1970:50).

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<sup>49</sup> Mminele Letladi Phillip is one of the subjects who resides at *Phaahla Mmakadikwe* village, Nebo area in *Limpopo* Province.

In political organization, for example, the functions of music are apparent in songs sung in praise of chiefs, but many other manifestations may also occur (Bascom 1970:50). *Pedi* liberation songs are thus used effectively as a positive strategy to *accelerate change* in the *Pedi* society as well as in the country, South Africa. Many times the use of music in political situations does little to solve the political problems, but it has a positive effect on the performers and the society (Kaemmer 1993:154).

African liberation songs such as *Ga e boe Afrika* are further used as a medium for *seeking equality and peace* as interlocking aims in a society. They are used politically not only by the ruling class in a society, but also by the powerless classes (Kaemmer 1993:162). These songs are used as a vehicle through which people learn about life and, amongst other things, recount current and historical events. Through liberation songs and dance people are able to share their burdens, triumph, sadness and gladness of heart<sup>50</sup>. Hereby, people are bound together and united for one common aim<sup>51</sup>.

Musical systems of African societies should therefore not be understood as static structures but dynamic ones. Intimate knowledge of the black and white liberation struggle was obtained, based on the content of the songs. In the past, these songs thus fulfilled the overall

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<sup>50</sup> People sing songs about the common oppressor or exploiter. Liberation songs can be used to draw people together and unite them in one common aim, goal and purpose (Gray 1998:30). This is often so when there is the need to protest or disagree with some political or economic impositions of the government, or to place social sanctions on an erring member of the community. In these instances appropriate music is used to express the opinion or effect of the action.

<sup>51</sup> I would like to declare that compassion, warmth, understanding, caring, sharing, humanness and such, are cornerstones of all the major tribal views, ideologies and religions of the *Pedi* people. Their moral order is characterized by having a feeling about other human beings, helping the needy, physically, emotionally, socially and spirituality.

functions of asserting cultural unity and assisting in societal integration in South Africa (Gray 1999:36).

Liberation songs are responses to particular experiences in the South African history, and changes in style which the songs underwent mirrored the black liberation struggle (Gray 1998:31). These songs played a vital role in the rise of black nationalism and the subsequent establishment of a new South African society. It is however, essential that these songs should also be transcribed and systematically classified for future reference and preservation for posterity (Gray 1998:75).

### **3.3.6 Wisdom Songs (*Mokgoronyane and Kgogedi*)**

#### 3.3.6.1 Form

*Pedi* Wisdom Songs' performance involves both male and female participation. In most initiation songs the chorus sections are performed in unison. *Pedi* Wisdom Songs are mainly vocal with instrumental accompaniment provided by *leparapata*, a percussion instrument that enriches the music by giving it a regulated beat and hence strict rhythm. However, performances are embellished by whistle blowing and occasional ululations. More often, songs that share the same meter are smoothly joined by a skilful soloist.

*Pedi* Wisdom Songs are teaching songs. They are more educational than for purposes of leisure or recreation. They are focused on how one should become a responsible adult. Some of these songs are confidential (Levine 2005:153). They are only taught at a specific place or arena like an initiation school for both girls and boys. Without attending the initiation school of either boys or girls, the *Pedi* youth

will not be familiar with these type of songs. Traditional music education in African cultures is a systematic process informed by the concept of music as a social experience as well as an agency for the management of people and society. Objectives of music education in African cultures are human-oriented (Nzewi 1998:139).

The *Pedi* initiation school for both girls and boys is far different from the normal schooling system under the auspices of a national Department of Education. The fundamental significance of initiation for the total African cultural life was not fully realized by most missionaries (Mugambi 2005:532). For some of the missionaries, the practices were considered to be unnecessary ordeals, causing great suffering to the adolescents. In African traditional life, however, the education and training, which is given during initiation, is vital for the community's maintenance of self-understanding. It provides every individual with the opportunity to learn what the community expects from him/her. Songs such as "*Kgogedi*," and others, help initiates not to feel lonely and to think of their loved ones from whom they have been estranged. These songs assist them to ease their minds to find their work easy and enjoyable.

#### 3.3.6.2 Language (structural elements and characteristics)

A circumcision rite is characterized by taboos and beliefs that are depicted in the actions of participants through various rituals. Initiation songs are used as a carriage that embodies relevant messages. The structure of most initiation songs entails various forms of short solo-response phrases. The language used is often metaphorical. A metaphor has hidden meaning, which has to be interpreted by the

targeted listeners. Some musicians use song texts with hidden meanings to convey special messages to mature members of the audience, but at the same time hide the meaning(s) from young members of audience (Merriam 1964:193). The reiterative nature of *Pedi* initiation songs serves the purpose of emphasizing the messages.

In general, therefore, the performance of *Pedi* initiation songs incorporates several aspects of artistic-aesthetic communication such as song, dance and various visual and verbal arts that are integrated. While the *Pedi* initiation dances for girls are characterized by movements that represent the development of the child in the womb, the songs are characterized by a vocal style in which the women sing in unison (Levine 2005:156). They are plucking their lower lips with their fingers. Furthermore, paramusical features such as whistling, yelling and ululating express their joy and enhance the aesthetic-artistic feel during the performance.

### 3.3.6.3 Content and context

#### 3.3.6.3.1 Introduction

Circumcision is a very important ceremony in the *Pedi* society. It is considered as one way of graduating from childhood to adulthood. In communities that participate in circumcision, anybody who avoids it or who is circumcised in hospital is looked down upon and rejected by the society (Akivaga and Odaga 1982:76). This behavior is against the cultural norms that direct and correct the behavior and life of the community (Nyang'oli 2000:39; Wanyama 2005:80). In most African societies, one has to go through the ritual of initiation at a certain age, in order to achieve manhood or womanhood. Until then, one is still

considered a child however old he or she may be (Nyang'oli 2000:39; Wanyama 2005:80).

Among the *Pedi* circumcision for boys is a sacred institution which is strictly taboo to women and the uncircumcised '*masoboro*' (Pitje 1948:72). Men are extremely reticent when asked questions about it. One who reveals the secrets of the school is punished in a way. The tuition received by the initiates is confidential. Respect and submission to authority are emphasized during the initiation ceremonies. Words of songs refer to rules and customs which have to be kept at all cost. Initiates must be humble and respectful to all. They have to use the special terms characteristic of the initiation school. There is nothing wrong with all the formalities as prescribed by the African traditions as long as they do not contradict the 'Word of God' (Mashau 2005:54).

The circumcision ritual in the *Pedi* society was traditionally a test of maturity and preceded marriage. It took place between the ages of 18 to 24 or even higher. Today, it is no longer a test of maturity and does not necessarily precede marriage. It is at risk of losing its religious value and becomes gradually secularized as the focus rests more on the physical than the social functions of the ritual. Today most initiates are circumcised at the age of ten to sixteen.

Circumcision of girls is rarely discussed in depth. Where there is commentary it is consistently within the context of marriage (Floyd 2000:92). Circumcision takes place as a necessary preparation for marriage, because an uncircumcised girl cannot give birth (Mitzlaff 1998:82).

Many poems and songs in the *Pedi* tribe are associated with animals and birds. Effective teaching in poems and songs is realized by employing imagery of birds and animals. The following initiation songs for boys and girls are illustrations of this feature.

### 3.3.6.3.2 Text and translation

#### INITIATION SONG FOR BOYS: *MOKGORONYANE*

Northern Sotho (Pedi)	English
1. Hela ... Hela!	1. Hallo ... Hallo!
2. Mokoronyane swaiswai,	2. Mokgoronyane is passing by,
3. Wa Mmaseakapilwanabotsha.	3. My mother's child.
4. Molongwana moswana.	4. With black lips.
5. ka morago ga kgoro tsa botsha.	5. Have a look at the back of the kraal.
6. Maswikana maswikeng.	6. On the stones.
7. meetse re ya go nwa neng?	7. Shall we be able to drink water?
8. Re yo nwa selalelo,	8. We shall enjoy an evening drink,
9. bjalo ka mosadi wa mesereteletsane.	9. Like a woman who is ignorant.
10. Sereteletsa boroko.	10. Who likes sleeping.
11. A re go go bona ba gagwe ba robala,	11. As she sees her children sleeping,
12. A re rekereke boroko.	12. She becomes excited because she can also sleep.

Recorded by the author at *Ga-Maloma* village, *Sekhukhune* area in *Limpopo* Province in April 2004 during the unveiling of the tombstone of *Lehumo Mmotla* (Father to *Matshekge* *Christinah Molangwana*). Refer to track 6, Audio CD.

"*Mokgoronyane*" is an initiation song for boys. "*Mokgoronyane*" is the name of a bird. *Pedi* people are under the conviction that the bird "*Mokgoronyane*" is one the most clever birds they know. (Mahlomola Majatladi Personal communication, 9 April 2004). The "*Mokgoronyane*" is the first to wake up early in the morning. She daily looks for food for her children. Before all birds wake up,

"*Mokgoronyane*" would be back with food. This song is associated with this clever bird "*Mokgoronyane*."

This Wisdom Song falls into six clearly defined sections: a) plea for a hearing (line 1); b) advice (line 2); c) appreciation (lines 3-4); d) advice (lines 5-6); e) belief (lines 7-8); and f) warning (lines 9-12).

Within this short song, we identify eleven successive metaphors than can be interpreted in different ways. To enable readers to make meaning from them, I have translated them interpretively. But for this discourse I give a kind of transliteration to enable readers to comprehend how these metaphors function.

The first metaphor in this song (line 2) translates well. The bird called *Mokgoronyane* is passing by. It means that the subjects, the initiates (boys), should imitate this clever bird, by waking up early, to look for food for their children daily when they are later heads of their families. In the second and third metaphors (lines 3-4) which read 'my mother's child' and 'with black lips', the literal meaning could be misleading. What could be misleading is that '*mother's child has black lips*'. The interpretation of the second and third metaphors is that initiates are handsome and beautiful.

The song presents other two metaphors namely 'have a look at the back of the kraal and on the stones' (lines 5-6). In most cases the initiation regiments are erected at the back of the royal kraal and is surrounded by stones. The metaphors 'have a look at the back of the kraal and on the stones' (lines 5-6) imply that in future if initiates might have social problems, they should not hesitate to come back to



the regiment's elders for advices. In this context the singers suggest that any grown member of the society who practices evil or imbibes very bad habits that have ill implications on him and the society, and fails to take counsel from the performances of *Pedi* initiation songs such as '*Mokgoronyane*', would certainly live to regret in the end.

The singers make use of two other metaphors in lines 7 and 8. They develop the theme in such a way that only those who can interpret them could comprehend the message completely. The sixth and seventh metaphors 'shall we able to drink water and we shall enjoy an evening drink' strengthen the belief of the *Pedi* people, that if one is in the forest and thirsty and does not know where to get water, you can just follow the clever bird '*Mokgoronyane*'. Then you will definitely get water. The belief is that the bird takes water very often. In this context it is expressed that initiates should take water very often. By so doing they shall not dehydrate.

The ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelve metaphors are a warning to the initiates that they should not behave like a woman who is ignorant (line 9), and likes sleeping (lines 10-12). Sleeping is time consuming and brings no reward. Hereby it is suggested that this song is taught to the initiates by their supervisors at the initiation school. It is initially sung by the initiates' supervisors and later on the initiates are afforded the opportunity to sing the song too. There is much wisdom in the above song. *Mokgoronyane* provides enlightenment to the initiates concerning accountability and responsibility. The enlightenment is significant in the society because very often, it is parents who suffer the blame and consequent attacks from their children and wards,

especially when the children are not successful in life. The following is an initiation song for girls.

### 3.3.6.3.3 Text and translation

#### INITIATION SONG FOR GIRLS: *KGOGEDI*

Northern Sotho (Pedi)	English
1. Kgogedi, Kgogedi.	1. Kgogedi, Kgogedi.
2. Ngwananoka Kgogedi.	2. River's child Kgogedi.
3. Ke ya le noka, Kgogedi.	3. I am flown by the river, Kgogedi.
4. Kgogedi ya Kwena Madiba.	4. Kgogedi who belongs to crocodile's lakes.
5. Ngwananoka Kgogedi,	5. River's child Kgogedi,
6. mme ntshware ke a ya.	6. my mother, please hold me, I am sinking.
7. Ke ya le noka, Kgogedi.	7. I am flown by the river, Kgogedi.
8. Kgogedi ya kwena le kubu,	8. Kgogedi of crocodiles,
9. Ngwananoka kgogedi.	9. River's child, Kgogedi.
10. sekwakwalala ngwananoka.	10. sekwakwalala, river's child.
11. Ngwananoka ke kgalegile.	11. River's child, I am thirsty.
12. Ke hloka le mogedi wa meets.	12. I am in need of someone who can fetch me water.
13. Ngwananoka ke kgakegile.	13. River's child, I am thirsty.
14. Sekwakwalala ngwananoka.	14. Sekwakwalala, river's child.
15. ngwananoka ke kgalegile.	15. river's child, I am thirsty.

Recorded by the author at *Ga-Maloma* village, *Sekhukhune* area in *Limpopo* Province in April 2004 during the unveiling of the tombstone of *Lehumo Mmotla* (Father to *Matshekge Molangwana* Christinah). Refer to track 7, Audio CD.

Synthetic philosophy is the original and traditional method by which human beings reach the knowledge of truth through reasoning, often referred to as rationalism (Ajah 2004:16). With some past experiences and synthetic approach, the older generations have passed down some values on the meaning of names in the *Pedi* culture like in most other cultures. *Pedi* people then follow and apply this synthetic philosophy in ascertaining truth about the meaning of names as they manifest in the lives of people in the society.

"*Kgogedi*" is an initiation song for girls. "*Kgooga*" is the name of a small, beautiful and slow moving animal which looks like a tortoise. The song "*Kgogedi*" is associated with this slow moving animal called "*Kgooga*." Therefore the tempo of the song "*Kgogedi*" is slow. Most ritual dances that are not intended for a trance are slow in tempo. They have the solemn mood of the contexts of the performance (Bakare and Mans 2003:223).

The initiation song *Kgogedi* can be divided as follows: a) It begins with an advice and enlightenment on co-operation and mutual relationship (lines 1-3 and 5-7); b) signal of appreciation (line 4); c) praise (lines 8-10) and d) request (lines 11-15).

In '*Kgogedi*' the poet depicts the small and slow moving animal called '*Kgooga*'. The term has two primary classes as follows. The poet addresses name of the song as well as the name of the character (line 1). The song was originally composed to educate and enlighten initiates about their behavior. Lines 2 and 3 present metaphors '*river's child Kgogedi*' and '*I am flown by the river Kgogedi*'. While the one implies that *Kgogedi* likes taking a bath and she is always clean the other literally means the poet is in a dire need for the person called *Kgogedi* to rescue her as she is flown by the river. The intention of the poet is to educate initiates that they should love and take care of one another.

The expression '*Kgogedi ya Kwena Madiba*' (line 4) indicates that *Kgogedi* is always clean. '*Kgogedi*' is associated with the crocodile which is always in the water. The expression suggests a signal of appreciation. In this context, the poet inspires the initiates to take a

bath as often as possible to be clean and beautiful like *Kgogedi*. The metaphors in lines 5-7 suggest a similar meaning as in lines 2-3. They imply that the poet is flown by the river and intend to remind initiates to love and care for one another.

The meaning of metaphors in lines 8-10 is clear. With repetitive praise they express that '*Kgogedi*' looks after herself and she is beautiful. With the expression 'river's child *Kgogedi*' the song reminds initiates to look after themselves to be as beautiful as '*Kgogedi*' or as the slow moving and beautiful animal called '*Kgooga*'.

The last four metaphors (lines 11-15) utter that the poet is thirsty. Initiates should go to the river to fetch water. Utterances in lines 11, 13 and 15 are forms of expression in the *Pedi* culture especially when one is thirsty. Lines 12 and 14 convey the same meaning. Repetition is clearly present in the structure of this song. It is evident in lines 2, 5 and 9 '*ngwana noka Kgogedi*' and lines 11, 13 and 15 '*ngwana noka ke kgalegile*'. There are two dominant ideas in the above song, namely, '*ngwana noka Kgogedi*' and '*ngwana noka ke kgalegile*'. The repetition technique is a clear emphasis of the central message of the song. Joshua Uzoigwe (1998:20) examines the use of repetition in song texts and writes as follows:

As repetition of musical phrase is one of the most important compositional features in *ilulu nkwa*, it often serves as a useful means by which the soloist emphasizes and projects to the listening audience the principal idea or ideas of the particular song. Thus, in *ilulu nkwa* song-performance it is the phrasal idea

or group of ideas with the greatest number of occurrence that usually constitutes as the main theme.

Burton and Chacksfield (1979:115-116) similarly write that repetition is a powerful, forceful, rhetorical and expressive device skillfully employed by poets to hammer key words home, in order to implant dominant emotions in listeners or readers' mind. In *Pedi* songs, repetitions often appear in forms of chorus refrain or a frequent return of the narration to the principal idea at strategic intervals (see the song *Kgogedi*, page 158).

Most *Pedi* themes are educative either by use of direct statements or by use of idioms, epigrammatise, metaphors and proverbs that are poetically structured to stimulate further reasoning and realization of meaning through deduction. The theme of the song, '*ngwana noka Kgogedi*' for instance, is metaphorically educative. It implies that initiates should take a bath as often as possible. The song has didactic significance. Similarly, the female initiates are taught different formulas that are intended to prepare them for womanhood. Most of these formulas are presented as songs, such as *Kgogedi*. Some of them are intended to be self-consoling in view of the hardships the initiates endure everyday (Sekhukhune 1988:186).

The song is sung during and after the girls have been circumcised. While singing the girls are ill-treated by their supervisors in different ways. For example, they administer corporal punishment on them, curse them, make them to work hard without rest or intervals, etc (Sekhukhune 1988:186). They are deliberately doing these unacceptable deeds to the initiates to show them that to become a

responsible adult is not an easy task. A girl will go through difficult experiences. Formal education is given to the girls in the initiation schools. This education plays a very important part in the life of every individual (Krige 1937:99).

#### 3.3.6.4 Function

Initiation for boys in the *Pedi* culture is divided into two distinct ceremonies: *bodika* and *bogwera*. The aim of *bodika* ceremony is to put to the test the initiates' strength, courage and endurance through various devices. The second initiation (*bogwera*) usually takes place after a year has lapsed since the first school. Its chief function is to help the initiated boys create lasting friendships with one another. Once again, the boys enter a lodge, but they are not completely separated from the rest of the community. During the day they receive further training in the initiation formulae. The second ceremony, *bogwera* ('friendship'), reinforces the bonds that were forged between the boys and the first school (Levine 2005:151-152).

Initiation for girls in the *Pedi* culture has two phases. During the first phase the daily activities of the female initiates follow a set routine. In the mornings, after they have washed in the river and eaten breakfast, they form a single, S-shaped line, and perform a dance-song with slow movements. They have formal training sessions during which the older girls teach them the extensive repertoire of initiation songs. They learn the school's formulae, chanting the short phrases over and over as well as using mime to learn the behaviour that is expected of them as women. And the duties that they will be obliged to perform as adults (Levine 2005:156-157). During the second phase of the initiation school, the girls are located at the head-kraal. The most important

activity throughout this period is the singing that takes place in the enclosure every morning and evening. In between, the girls work in the chief's fields, or are hired out to work elsewhere. Towards the end of the initiation, role-play and disguise are an important feature in their activities. In the evenings, mini-dramas are performed as a method of instruction. Disguised figures wearing reeds and leaves sing and dance for them, using symbolic gestures (Levine 2005:157).

Through the singing of these wisdom songs, in the *Pedi* culture the aim of initiation school is to *preserve the Pedi cultural heritage*. Other aims are to *inspire the initiates to be respectful* as well as to *reduce crime and divorce* rates. One of the main objectives of the *Pedi* initiation school is to train the boys in *courage and endurance* (Krige 1937:101). Boys have to sleep on their backs on the bare ground without covering, and are severely punished if unable to repeat the formulae and songs that are great features of the *Pedi* tradition. Boys receive a *good training in hunting*.

The function of an initiation school is *to test who has perseverance and who has not*. At times the initiates both girls and boys are made to suffer from hunger and thirst. They are compelled to spend few days without food. In traditional life, initiation was a long process involving the whole community and lasting at least several weeks. Initiation is an integral part of the life of the community. The youth of a particular age group would be initiated into adulthood together (Mugambi 2005:532).

*Pedi* Wisdom Songs contain a lot of wisdom in as far as virtues related to ideal humanistic creativity, sensibilities and meanings are

concerned. They therefore, embody the African philosophy of life, achievement and identity. A lot of ideas may be borrowed from virtues/lessons and philosophies embedded in the cultural practices. Music, therefore, being held high among the African societies plays a role of training and preparing the individuals to understand their societies and themselves better for the survival of the human race (Orawo 1998:142).

The function of the song "*Mokgoronyane*" is to make the initiates aware that sleeping is time consuming and brings no reward. Every evening most families in the *Pedi* tribe meet as family members of the same household to share good and bad news of that day. They then convey teaching to their children by means of wisdom sayings. The song also functions to alert the initiates of how precious time is.

The small and slow moving animal called "*Kgooga*" can be described as well behaved, beautiful, and as fond of water and honey. By singing this song the initiates' supervisors are urging the girls (initiates) to behave like "*Kgooga*". They should 1) sit properly and not expose their private parts; 2) take a bath very often to look beautiful like this animal and to avoid the bad smell; 3) look after their husbands by cooking them delicious food; 4) be friendly to other people like this animal; 5) respect their husbands and whenever the husbands are angry should be humble to calm down the situation; 6) walk slowly as that will make them secure their reputation.

The *Pedi* people believe that a woman, who walks at a fast pace, does not deserve respect. She is also associated with prostitution. The song is about teaching the initiates to look like "*Kgooga*". *Kgooga's* body is



covered with hard skin, which is not easy to break. When it sleeps, the head is also hidden, covered by this hard skin. With this song, the girls are advised to cover their whole bodies like "Kgooga" and not to be half-naked. This would result in people respecting them, especially their husbands and children.

### **3.3.7 Prayers of Trust (*Salane*)**

#### 3.3.7.1 Form

Both men and women in the *Pedi* society engage in prayers of trust. Nevertheless most of the *dingaka* 'traditional healers' found in the *Pedi* society are women. These *dingaka* attend to sick people through singing, and asking for the healing power from the ancestors. It is through these songs that *dingaka* 'traditional healers' have special powers to identify the source(s) of misfortunes, diseases and other negative things afflicting an individual. Singing, hand clapping, drumming and dancing are part of the prayers of trust.

*Pedi* traditional healers normally use drums during religious rituals since they regard them to be therapeutic. Dancing is only performed by traditional healers. The rest of the people who are present at the *malopo* ritual clap, sing and respond to what a *ngaka* 'traditional healer' is saying. *Pedi* traditional healers sing about their ancestors and their own social history in their prayers of trust. *Pedi* traditional healers confess their trust and confidence in ancestors by employing songs such as *Salane*. *Salane* is a song of trust which is sung during a ritual called the *malopo* ritual. *Malopo* is an illness, which can only be terminated by a rite called the *malopo ritual*, accompanied by the *ngaka ya malopo* (Olivier 1985:2).

3.3.7.2 Text and translation

**SONG OF TRUST: SALANE**

<b>Northern Sotho (Pedi)</b>	<b>English</b>
1. Re a tloga.	1. We are leaving.
2. Re boela gae.	2. We go back home.
3. Re ile go hwetsa bo makgolo.	3. We are going to join our forefathers.
4. Re a rola,	4. We now put off our rattles,
5. re siela ba bangwe	5. We give chance to others to participate.
6. kosa bo makgolo.	6. Our forefathers' dance.
7. Re tsoga ka yona.	7. We make use of it every morning.
8. mohla lehu laka,	8. during my funeral,
9. hleng le mpolokeng.	9. Please bury me.
10. le mphelegetseng ka yona.	10. Please employ this song to accompany me to my grave.
11. A retse, re bina malopo.	11. We are dancing the malopo dance.
12. Re bina kosa ya bo nkoko.	12. We are dancing our forefathers' dance.
13. Re ya go nyaka mabitla.	13. We are going to seek for our forefathers' graves.
14. Re ile go tsea Legwame, mokgalabje mohlabana ntw.	14. We shall take Legwame, the forefather, who is a hero.
15. Badimo ba gona,	15. Our ancestors are in existence,
16. re bone ka rena.	16. We are witnesses.
17. Re gopola modimo wa rena ngwato.	17. This reminds us of Ngwato, our ancestor.
18. Ngwato, modimo wa go tsosa rena.	18. Ngwato, the ancestor who rescued our life.
19. Bana besu ba ile.	19. Our brothers and sisters have passed away.
20. molapo moswana, ba tshaba ntlhwela kosa malopo le go epa digwere.	20. They defied the ancestors' instructions and did not want to dance the malopo dance and dig medicines.
21. Re gopola Ngwato,	21. We are thinking of Ngwato,
22. se apara nkwe le magoshi.	22. Who is always in the leopard's skin like the chiefs.
23. se apara nkwe masasane lerolane.	23. The one who is clad with the leopard skin.
24. Re tshaba go lwa le badimo.	24. We are not prepared to fight with our ancestors.
25. Letsatsi hlaba o re namolele.	25. The sun, please rise to relieve us.
26. Salang gabotse bo mmane baka.	26. Bye ... bye ... my dear grandmothers.
27. Salang gabotse bo makgolo.	27. Bye ... bye ... my forefathers.

28. Re tshaba go nyatsa dingaka.	28. We are not prepared to undermine traditional healers.
29. Modimo ke mpa, ke mmopa batho.	29. God is the comforter; He is the Creator of all people.
30. Re ya thapelong re tshaba go lwa le Modimo, AMEN.	30. We are going to pray because we do not want to fight with God, AMEN.

The song was recorded by the author at a *malopo* ritual held at *Dingwane* village, *Sekhukhune* area-Limpopo Province in May 2003 (Refer to track 8, Audio CD).

### 3.3.7.3 Language (structural elements and characteristics)

*Pedi* songs of trust are sophisticated and complex in structure. The degree of complexity in the *Pedi* Psalm-like songs, as in primitive music generally, is limited. The songs have to be remembered without recourse to mnemonic devices, such as musical notation.

The structural content of the *Pedi* songs of trust may be traced to *Pedi* origin, with their call-and-response patterning, voice and drum instrumentation, cyclephonic texture, reiterative statements, and integral association with dance. Allen (1993:4) writes the following on the cyclical structure in a South African urban popular music typology known as *Kwela*, a good justification of African identity for which Africans must be unblushing, but be proud of this character: "The repetitive nature of *Kwela*, so complained of elite critics, results from the styles cyclical structure". These elements are broadly termed "*African*". *Pedi* songs of trust are frequently responsorial. A soloist or small group is leading, while a larger group, responds. To activate or set any song rhythm in action *Pedi* traditional healers would commence with the beat of the drum or the clapping of hands. In almost all *Pedi* songs of trust there is a dominant feature of repetition.

Arom (1991:17) argues while discussing formal musical structures as follows:

All musical pieces are characterized by cyclic structure that generates numerous improvised variations: repetition and variation are of the most fundamental principles of all central African music, as indeed of many other musics in Black Africa.

This is developed from a dominant conversation with a clearly defined alternation, a swinging back and forth from solo to chorus or from solo to an emphatic instrumental reply. Manoff (1982:87) aptly remarked: "There are indeed musics which find in repetition or variation and consequently in non-development, their very accomplishment" (Rouget 1956:133).

During ceremonial and ritual occasions music making similarly goes hand in hand with set sequences of symbolic actions. These actions are performed with or without props by specified people<sup>52</sup>. These dramatic actions take place in the presence of participants and spectators. Rituals in which possession is considered to occur, where the spirits are active participants, are characterized by noise, by jumping, and by "dancing like crazy" (Howard 2000:62).

As in melody the spoken word influences rhythm in the traditional healers' music. In general the rhythm of a melody in the *Pedi* traditional healers' music follows the rhythmic pattern of speech, for the origin of music and the origin of language are inseparable. Singing

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<sup>52</sup> These dramatic actions take place in the presence of some participants or spectators. Expressive forms of culture such as music and dance create, maintain, transmit and emphasize people's cultural identity.

implies dancing and dancing implies speaking. All these actions become part of the religious experience. One of the most important aspects of the social content of music is that the community at large has ample opportunity to participate in music making (Euba 1982:232).

#### 3.3.7.4 Content and context

In the *Pedi* tradition, *Salane* is commonly designated a song of trust, though the tone of the language suggests a more appropriate description as a prayer of confidence. The song is employed in communal ancestor veneration. The lines alternate between prayer, confession and expressions of the singer's confidence in ancestors.

The song *Salane* can be divided into the following elements: The song begins with a) the intention to trust in the ancestors (lines 1-7); b) request for a dignified funeral (lines 8-10); c) testimony and confession (lines 11-16); d) trust, confidence in ancestors' goodness and warning (lines 17-24); e) prayer and expressions of the singers' confidence in the ancestors (lines 25-27); f) confession (line 28); and g) the song closes with trust in God (lines 29-30).

In lines 1-7 the singers begin with the intention to trust in the ancestors, which has its grounds in the succeeding extended narrative. In lines 1-2 the singers (traditional healers) declare that they are leaving the ritual place to go back to their respective homes. The expression "We are going to join our forefathers" (line 3) confirms how the *Pedi* society has ways of establishing and maintaining contact between the living and the living dead. The means of contact include

the pouring of libation of beer, giving formal and informal offerings (mainly food), making sacrifices, propitiating and fulfilling requests made by the ancestors. In some societies this is done daily, but most Pedi people do it less often. Such offerings are given to the oldest member of the departed, who may still be a living-dead, or may be remembered only in genealogies. This is done with the understanding that he/she will share the food or beverage with the other spirits of the family group. Words may or may not accompany such offerings, in form of prayers, invocations or instructions to the departed (Mbiti 1975:82). Graves<sup>53</sup> of powerful ancestors, especially of chiefs, become places of worship where meat and beer are offered to the spirits (Schapera 1937:255). The singers use the personal possessive pronoun 'We' to imply that the song *Salane* is a communal narrative song for ancestor veneration.

The expressions 'we now put off our rattles' (line 4) and 'we give chance to others to participate' (line 5) imply how the *Pedi* traditional healers employ drumming and songs to please and invite their ancestors. In line 6 the singers use the expression 'our forefathers dance' to refer to the *malopo* dance. The dead are never dead. Songs have always played a key role in the conversation between the living and the ancestors in Africa. The ancestors provide guidance and spiritual healing to those on earth in ceremonies where participation in the singing of songs help to open the channels of communication (Eyre and Barlow 1995: viii). The expression 'we make use of it every morning' (line 7) refers to the *malopo* dance and implies that, for the *Pedi* traditional healers the *malopo* dance is a popular therapy for the

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<sup>53</sup> Schapera (1937:255) indicates that the *Sotho* consider the grave to be the proper place for most sacrificial rites, but many of the other tribes have additional altars and do not visit the graves of the deceased frequently. *Salane* is one of the songs of trust sung in the *Pedi* culture during the performance of the above-named activities.

so-called *malopo* illness. The *malopo* dance is a significant adjustment reaction before and after illness and stress, not only of individuals in the *Pedi* society, but also throughout the African continent. Buhrmann (1984:62) testify to the therapeutic quality of Xhosa divination music. He refers to the exhilarating and stimulating effects of participation in *intlombe*<sup>54</sup>. Singing and dancing are very important in this ritual. "Participants who usually emerge from an *intlombe*, say that their physical aches and pains have disappeared, others, that they feel young in the body and mind, and others that they have been rejuvenated" (Buhrmann 1984:62). This kind of dance is a powerful means to restore and strengthen the contact between the living and the living dead with reality. This is evident in line 7. That is why the singers of lines 8-10 request the audience that during their funerals, they shall appreciate if the audience could sing the song *Salane* to accompany the singers to their graves.

The significance of the song *Salane* as a song of trust is once more realized in lines 8-10 'during my funeral' and 'please employ this song to accompany me to the grave'. The expressions in lines 8-10 suggest that singers have trust in their ancestors. They believe that, if they are accompanied to their graves with the song *Salane*, God and the ancestors shall welcome them in heaven.

Lines 11-16 exhibit confession and testimony. The singers confess that they are dancing the *malopo* dance, their forefathers' dance in lines 11-12. Repetition of these short phrases like those in lines 11-12 is a common feature in the *Pedi* culture. Repetition simply means that there is no limit to the length of a song. The length depends solely on

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<sup>54</sup> *Intlombe* refers to Xhosa divination music.

the energy of the performer. The expression 'we are going to seek for our forefathers' graves' (line 13) implies that the mission of the traditional healers is to venerate their ancestors because of the trust for protection they have in them (ancestors).

Besides veneration the expression 'we shall take *Legwame*, the forefather, who is a hero' (line 14) the traditional healers also express their mission of bringing home their forefather. The singers' trust and confidence in their ancestors are again shown in this statement. There are various reasons which can influence the traditional healers to bring home the spirit of the deceased who is buried far away from home. For instance, the ancestor might be harassing the offspring for abandoning him/her. The family does not remember, honour, respect and love the ancestor anymore. Seeking the forefathers' graves in the *Pedi* tradition is a signal of trust and confidence that the traditional healers have in ancestors. The expressions 'we are going to seek for our forefathers' graves' (line 13) and 'we shall take *Legwame*, the forefather, who is a hero' (line 14) imply that the traditional healers have hope that after visiting their forefathers and taking their ancestor *Legwame*, their lifestyle may improve. By the expressions 'our ancestors are in existence' (line 15) and 'we are witnesses' (line 16) the singers give testimony to the audience of how protective, powerful and helpful the ancestors are. The singers witness what their ancestors have done for them. The expressions are a testimony but also serve as a warning to the audience that they should not abandon their ancestors. The personal possessive pronoun "our" witnesses a vital, intimate submission by the traditional healers.



In 17-24 the singers express their trust and confidence in ancestors' goodness. The tone of the singers in lines 17, 18, 21, 22 and 23 suggests that ancestor *Ngwato* has played a prominent role in the lives of the singers. They express their sincere thanks to ancestor *Ngwato* who has rescued their lives. The singers recall that they were in danger of death. The expression '*Ngwato*, the ancestor who rescued our life' (line 18) suggests that the singers have full confidence and trust in their ancestors, *Ngwato* in particular, because they are the witnesses of how protective, powerful and helpful their ancestors are. Simultaneously the singers warn the audience about their brothers and sisters who have died as the consequence of defying ancestors' instructions (lines 19-20). The message is that ancestors are worth venerated. They deserve honour, respect and love by their offspring. The expression 'we are not prepared to fight with our ancestors' (line 24) implies that the singers are respectful and they love, remember, respect and trust their ancestors.

Prayer 'the sun, please rise to relieve us' and expressions of the singers' confidence in the ancestors 'bye-bye my grandmothers and grandfathers' are expressed in lines 25-27. As the *malopo* ritual takes place a whole night long, the expression 'the sun, please rise to relieve us' (line 25) literally means that the singers are tired of singing and dancing and would like to disperse to their respective homes to have a rest. In this context the singers use the expressions 'bye-bye grandmothers and grandfathers' (lines 26-27) to bid the ancestors of the visited family where the ritual was held good-bye as they (traditional healers) are dispersing to their respective homes. Simultaneously, the expression implies that the singers plead with the ancestors for safety and protection on their way back home.

Because of the trust the singers have in their traditional healers, they confess their trust and confidence in the traditional healers in 'we are not prepared to undermine traditional healers' (line 28). The expression signals the full confidence the singers have in the traditional healers.

The singers of *Salane* employed the figure of speech in lines 29-30. The figurative expression 'God is the comforter, He is the Creator of all people' (line 29) means that the singers have resolved to follow and trust the God of their forefathers who they believe is capable of giving them safety and protection. This is the climax and the heart of the song *Salane*. The song *Salane* is in itself not a complete song without an appeal to God through the ancestors for safety and protection. The conclusion in line 30 takes up words and ideas of the introduction, but adds here "AMEN". The song closes with an aspect of trust in God by the singers 'we are going to pray because we do not want to fight with God, Amen' (line 30). Thus the whole song is an expression of trust in God through the ancestors and traditional healers.

#### 3.3.7.5 Function

Not all the *malopo* songs have the same ritual value. During the *malopo* ritual a song like *Salane* is regarded as one of the most important vehicles to *summon the ancestors to draw closer* to the *Pedi* people especially when problems seem difficult to surmount. Other songs can be sung but in the *Pedi* mind *Salane* guarantees that ancestors will respond positively.

*Salane* is mostly sung when a traditional healer-to-be has met all the requirements of becoming a traditional healer. It may happen that, when a traditional healer-to-be is in the midst of dancing, one may hear this person singing *Salane*. This is an indication that his/her ancestors are on the verge of a diagnosis or that ancestors intend to make revelations through this person. If the ancestors want to reveal some problems, one will see the traditional healer-to-be occasionally falls down.

*Salane* is recited when problems are encountered by traditional healers with regard to divination bones<sup>55</sup>. For example, when the traditional healer is unable to interpret divination bones, the song would serve to summon the ancestors to assist the traditional healer to interpret the divination bones. When the traditional healer heals the patient, and the patient does not recover, *Salane* is sung as a signal of trust that ancestors will effect a speedy recovery. *Salane* can be recited during the first step (*go tielwa*) of the *malopo* rite when the traditional healer-to-be does not fall down on the ground and disclose what the personal ancestor demands from his patient. Then the song specifically summons all the ancestors to assist the traditional healer to enable him/her to prescribe appropriate medicine for the patient.

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<sup>55</sup> Quite often, in the *Pedi* tribe, some special music, chanting and incantations are required in the conduct of divination and traditional healing. Music functions as a means of connecting with the spirits and sets the mood for the activities of the diviners. In some instances, it enables the transformation of the diviner into a state of trance in order to communicate with the spirits on behalf of the client. It also serves anaesthetic purposes in traditional healing by soothing the psyche of the patient when he or she is undergoing painful treatment. Some traditional musical instruments such as the *dithlwathlwadi* (rattles), *meropa* (drums), *mekuduetane* (steel pipes) or *leparapata* (African horn) are used for accompaniment. The specialized music types are composed or extemporized by the healer or diviner in the conduct of the vocation.

*Salane* warns the traditional healers *to take care and to look after themselves*. When people had been trained as traditional healers and they have met all the requirements of this profession, they are likely to be bewitched by other jealous traditional healers. This is possible because traditional healers make a lot of money, especially if they are good and famous. The *Pedi* people believe that disease, death, and other misfortunes are caused by the work of witches and sorcerers. And this is influenced by jealousy.

When a religious ritual is finished, i.e. when participants disperse to their respective homes, *Salane* is sung while they go home. By singing *Salane* the singers *invite their ancestors to protect everyone* who attended the ritual on their way back home.

By singing *Salane* *Pedi* traditional healers of the *Sekhukhune* area show trust in their ancestors, namely that they shall come to their rescue. "We" shows that *Salane* is a communal narrative song. Traditional healers have trust in their ancestors because they witness how helpful their ancestors are. Thus the whole song is an expression of trust in God through the ancestors.

This *malopo* ritual has two important dimensions, which relate to the ritual's content and function: firstly, what the ritual says and secondly, what it does. Rituals have various functions. Kaemmer (1993:150) agrees that curing rituals are used as a form of medicine, but the view of most observers is that these rituals are functioning to relieve anxiety. In Africa rituals are performed to cure illness, to increase fertility, to defeat enemies, to change people's social status, to remove impurity, or to reveal the future (Parrinder 1976:27; Ray 1976:78).

These rituals contribute for example to how and why men communicate with the ancestors, to expel illness and to settle moral conflicts (Ray 1976:78). Schapera (1937:254) explains the relationship<sup>56</sup> between ancestors and their descendants, and notes that ancestor spirits have power to protect and to help their descendants. These spirits can also punish their descendants.

### **3.3.8 Imprecation Songs (*Leepo*)**

#### 3.3.8.1. Form

Imprecation in the *Pedi* culture is used with regard to alcohol, abuse, prostitution, etc. Apart from being an expression of disappointment, imprecation provides advisory information to the subject to improve on his/her living habits (Idamoyibo 2005:141). In African societies, narratives in imprecatory songs can be classified broadly into three, segmental narrative; incremental cycle and multiple recycle forms. The segmental narratives may have four sections, namely: introduction, development, recapitulation and coda or conclusion (Idamoyibo 2005:33).

In the segmental narrative themes are lyrically developed to enact a story. The story is built into segments that assume different forms. Each segment often introduces a new idea, though it might be related to the former part. The new sub-section could start with a solo statement and move to chorus, to conclude with strict antiphony.

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<sup>56</sup> Schapera (1937:254) does point out, however, that continued good fortune is attributed to ancestors' benevolence, while calamity may result from neglecting the ancestors.

The song 'Leepo' is an example of this form. Section A (lines 1-4) forms the introduction of the narrative. The soloist presents textual-melodic statements to firmly establish the theme of the narrative. Section B (lines 5-8) illustrates segments of the narrative development. Within this section (lines 5-8) we find recycling of the rhythmic and melodic themes recurring with variations as new lyrics are continually being introduced. In this section the poet expresses confidence in her traditional healer. Section C (line 9) has aspects of persona, lament and despair. Section D (lines 10-21) has the highest form of recycling where the poet sets different poetic lines to the same thematic idea. This section reflects strong irony. Section E (lines 20-21) marks the conclusion of the narrative, presented in a recycled solo and chorus responsorial style. The next imprecation song reflects strong irony about people who undermine traditional healers as well as their ancestors.

### 3.3.8.2 Text and translation

#### **SONG WITH IRONY: LEEPO**

<b>Northern Sotho (Pedi)</b>	<b>English</b>
1. Koi ya papa sele e etla, e tlele go ntsea.	1. My father's car is coming to take me.
2. Koi ya papa e na le motono,	2. My father's car has a big boot,
3. e bile e ya mmakatsa,	3. It is surprising to see,
4. e gana go tshuma mabone.	4. It cannot switch on its lights.
5. Badimo ba nteile.	5. The ancestors have punished me.
6. Ke ile go botsa mmame, Mmatshatshaila seapara tshwene.	6. I will report to my aunt, Mmatshatshaila, who is clad in baboon skin.
7. Ke ra wena maphutha ditshaba.	7. I am referring to you, the nation's comforter.
8. O tla sia mang ge o phutha ditshaba?	8. Whom shall you leave out in your mission of comforting the nations?
9. Ke motlokwa ke ngwana madimabe.	9. I am the Tlokwa, the bad omen child.



10. Tlogelang manyatsa dingaka,	10. Ignore those who are undermining traditional healers,
11. a hleng ba tlo sala ba e hwa.	11. They shall die.
12. Etlang le bone ngaka tsa go tsosa nna, kgole mabitleng.	12. Come and see traditional healers who raised me from the grave.
13. Lesaba la gesu le ile,	13. My friends and relatives are gone (dead),
14. ka go nyatsa mangaka.	14. Because of undermining traditional healers.
15. Ba ile masabasaba.	15. They are gone.
16. Lesaba la gesu le tshabetse tumelong.	16. Most of the people have gone to the missionary and indigenous churches.
17. Le tshaba go epa digwere.	17. They are scared of digging out medicines.
18. A hleng ba tshaba go ba disuputsane,	18. They do not want to be dirty,
19. dikolobe diepa digwere.	19. just like pigs as they dig out the roots.
20. Ba leswa ke go bea meeta hlogong.	20. They are fond of putting their pots on their heads. (solo)
21. Ba ile, ba tshaba go rapela mabitla.	21. They are dead, because they are scared of venerating their ancestors.

The song was recorded by the author on a field trip at *malopo* ritual held at *Dingwane* village, *Sekhukhune* area-Limpopo Province in May 2003 (Refer to track 9, Audio CD). Lines 1-20 (Solo) and line 21 (Chorus).

### 3.3.8.3 Language (structural elements and characteristics)

*Leepo* is an imprecation song reflecting strong irony. This is a characteristic of all kinds of imprecatory songs in the *Pedi* culture. *Leepo* is sung in irony about the people who do not love, remember, respect and honour their ancestors. Major characteristics found in this song are pun (lines 1-4), confidence (lines 5-8), persona, lament and despair (line 9), irony (lines 10-21), recycled solo and chorus responsorial style (lines 20 and 21).

In singing imprecatory songs *Pedi* singers do not conceive their poetic lines in writing, but follow the grammatical structure of the *Pedi*

language to ensure that the lyrics of their songs make poetical and melodical meaning.

#### 3.3.8.4 Content and context

The imprecation song *Leepo* can be divided as follows: It begins with a) introduction of the narrative (lines 1-4); b) confidence in the traditional healer '*Mmatshatshaila*' (lines 5-8); d) lament and despair: development of the narrative (line 9); e) irony: different poetic lines to the same thematic idea (lines 10-21); f) conclusion of the narrative, presented in a recycled solo and chorus responsorial style (lines 20-21).

*Leepo* is a poem in a narrative form. The poet is a woman. Pun is a figure that is used to express double meaning. In line 1 we find an expression 'my father's car is coming to take me'. This expression would normally be understood that the car is coming to fetch the poet. The second meaning suggests that the car which was supposed to come and fetch the poet could not come, assuming that it was night and the car could not switch on its lights (lines 3 and 4). In this context the poet implies that the traditional healer '*Mmatshatshaila*' is coming to rescue her from her failures and sufferings. The poet associates '*koloi*' ('car') in lines 1 and 2 with the traditional healer '*Mmatshatshaila*' and '*papa*' ('father'), her personal ancestor. This means that the traditional healer of my ancestor is coming to rescue me. In line 5 the poet discloses her problem to the audience, saying '*badimo ba nteile*' ('The ancestors have punished me').



In lines 5-8 the poet uses an ironical figure to suggest that her aunt 'Mmatshatshaila' is a powerful and helpful traditional healer. She expresses this (line 6) by saying 'seapara tshwene' ('who is clad in a baboon skin'). In the *Pedi* society only powerful or senior traditional healers could be clad in baboon skin while dancing in a *malopo* ritual or during the divination process. It is believed that from all the animals the baboon is the most important and favourite animal for traditional healers to perform their divination and healing processes. As *Madikedike* Simon Sete explained (22 May 2004) that, even though other animals are important, the baboon is regarded as the most important because its physical features look the same as those of a human being. That is why traditional healers make use of many divination bones from the baboon. Other bones used by *Pedi* traditional healers for divination are from the dog, pig, jackal, cow, goat and sheep (Mahlase 1997:66-77).

The poet in this context however implies that she is suffering from ancestral spirits. This is the consequence of the punishment by the ancestors. Therefore she will report her problems to her aunt 'Mmatshatshaila' to plead with the ancestors on her behalf for a speedy recovery. The poet is convinced that 'Mmatshatshaila' would draw her closer to the ancestors for recovery: 'I am referring to you, the nation's comforter' (line 7). The tone of the poet in line 8 'whom shall you leave out in your mission of comforting the nations?' indicates how powerful, famous and helpful 'Mmatshatshaila' is in the *Pedi* society.

In lines 6-9, 12 the aspects of persona, lament and despair are important. Burton and Chacksfield (1979:9) define the term '*persona*'

as a useful term to describe a narrator or a character of whom a poem speaks in the first person. They argue that the *persona* is not the poet, but functions as a mask or disguise that the poet puts on for the purpose of enacting a poem in a narrative form. The *persona* is a common and prominent feature in *Pedi* psalm like-songs and poetry. It appears in the first person pronoun such as 'I and We'. *Pedi* singers (performers) use either of these *personas* to narrate events that took place, as if they are right at the scene of the incidents. In this way it looks real and more effective in the presentation.

In 'Leepo' the poet uses the *persona* to create various effects. She uses it in line 9 to portray the narrator as the victim and reporter of what happened between her and the ancestors. She continues the narrative with subtlety. In line 12 she uses the third person pronoun 'nna' ('me') to suggest and transform the character of the narrator from being the reporter to being the protagonist who is involved in the encounter. In an ironical manner the poet adopts the *persona* again in line 7 by the second person 'wena' ('you') to reinforce the latter role.

The poet presents the narrative in the guise of the *persona* that changes roles. The opening 'ke ra wena maphutha ditshaba' ('I am referring to you, the nation's comforter' in line 7) presents the narrator as an observer and reporter, but she is subsequently transformed to the protagonist (line 9) who was narrating the story of her own experiences. This change of tone by which the narrator assumes the position of the protagonist in disguise is a poetic technique adopted to create the mood and effect of a narrative being narrated by the affected person. This technique often intends to arouse emotions that

could stimulate sympathy, in order to have more effect on the audience. Other people may then identify with the same role.

In lines 10-21 the poet uses irony to suggest that traditional healers are important, powerful and helpful. Irony is a style figure that means the direct opposite of what is said. The poet expresses this by saying that those who undermine traditional healers will die (lines 10-11). This implies that ancestors are not only protective but can also kill if their offspring defy their instructions. The family spirit normally protects all those in that family from harm, but if one of them transgresses, particularly by omitting a religious ritual, the spirit becomes annoyed and punishes the family by causing an illness or death of one or more of its members (Gelfand et al, 1985:31; Monnig 1967:54).

The poet also uses irony in lines 10-21. She tells the story of how traditional healers have rescued her from her severe pain and illness. The ironical statement 'come and see traditional healers who raised me from the grave' implies that the poet (patient) was in a coma or she was critically ill. 'From the grave' (line 12) does not really mean that traditional healers have rescued the poet physically from the grave, but it expresses in how a bad and serious state of death the poet was. The poem continues and state that her friends and relatives are gone (line 13). This ironical figure is employed to express her feelings and experiences as well as to describe the present situation. In traditional *Pedi* society when someone so dear to one's heart dies, particularly in a sudden manner, the grief is expressed as something very cold. The affected persons (close associates) would normally say '*bohloko*' meaning ('my condolence to you'). In the context of irony:

different poetic lines to the same thematic idea in lines 10-21, the singers narrate the biography of people who undermine traditional healers and ancestors. They tell the audience of the people who have died as the consequence of undermining traditional healers and ancestors or looking down upon their culture. The irony here is that the singers are neither expressing their heartfelt condolences nor grief to the deceased but urging the audience to observe all the cultures and never ever forget their own. The message put across is also ironically directed to the audience that if they do not respect traditional healers, consult with them and venerate ancestors, shall die.

The expression '*le ile*' ('are gone'- dead in line 13), does not mean to visit but provides more information on the real death as the consequence of undermining traditional healers (line 14). Her friends and relatives are really dead as the consequence of witchcraft because they do not want to consult with traditional healers for divination, prevention and protection (line 15).

Lines 16-21 reflect strong irony, which is intermixed with a plea for a hearing. The poet's expressions (lines 16-21) suggest that most people (in the *Pedi* community) are indoctrinated by the missionaries. They have forgotten about their culture and they have abandoned their ancestors. The expression '*le tshaba go epa digwere*' ('they are scared of digging out medicines') in line 17 implies that the indoctrinated people oblige and comply with their church doctrines (dogmas) which prohibit people from observing their tradition, like ancestor veneration, circumcision, polygamy, etc (Amanze 1998:52; Mugambi 2005:532).

A metaphor describes the indoctrinated people (line 18). The poet expresses in line 19 that '*dikolobe diepa digwere*' ('just like pigs as they dig out the roots'). This implies that the indoctrinated people do not want to be like pigs which are fond of digging the roots. She deliberately raises the characters (pigs), because pigs like digging. The poet personify the pigs as human beings. In the *Pedi* society personification is so common that it has become a commonplace expression in everyday language of the society.

In line 20 the poet uses of an expression: '*ba leswa ke go bea meeta hlogong*' ('they are fond of putting their pots on their heads'). The expression literally means that *Pedi* people very often fetch water with their pots. In *Pedi* society the expression suggests that the indoctrinated people are good in fetching water with their pots but cannot dig out medicines. The seeming contradiction is that 'digging out the roots' (line 19) has nothing to do with 'putting the pots on the heads' (line 20).

In line 21 '*ba ile, ba tshaba go rapela mabitla*' ('they are dead, because they are scared of venerating their ancestors'), the poet and performers (solo and chorus) express their disappointment ironically. Apart from expressing disappointment, the poet and performers provide advisory information to the audience, that they should honour, remember and respect their ancestors.

The climax of this song is the ending: those who undermine traditional healers and who are not willing to venerate ancestors, are and/or will be punished by death. They are dead (line 21). The aid of the ancestral spirits is sought because, the susceptibility of earthly

descendants to disease depends largely on their ancestral spirits (Krige and Krige 1954:61). Their favour could provide their dutiful descendants with immunity from the ill-effects of sorcery and witchcraft. Ancestral spirits are not only punishing ancestors but are also the guardians of morality in the family circle (Magesa 1997:48). Ancestors see to it that there is no permanent feud between earthly members of the family. They have unlimited powers over the lives of the living. There are no restrictions to either the chastisement or the blessings that they can confer on their descendants. Ancestors in the *Pedi* society, like in African traditions have power over life and death, over sickness and health, and over poverty and prosperity (Nthoi 1995:50; Parrinder 1976:58).

In Africa, *enswezi* cult members, like members of other spirit cults throughout Africa, regard it as necessary to communicate frequently with the spirits of their homesteads since neglect of one's familial spirits can bring misfortune to the home. Ancestors are believed to be so concerned about the destiny of men that, whenever the affairs of the living are not going on well, the ancestors send one of their kind, to be reborn in order to provide upright and deserved leadership (Assimeng 1989:60). The poet of *Leepo* was commenting on the people who do not love, remember, respect and honour their ancestors. Therefore the song *Leepo* is an imprecation song which reflects strong irony.

#### 3.3.8.5 Function

*Pedi* imprecation songs are deliberately sung to *advise*, to *insult*, to *mock* and to *provoke*. They are recited as the consequence of avenge or being bully, being selfish, naughty or jealous. In most cases

members of the *Pedi* tribe sing imprecatory songs to *build moral* in the society. For example, if a girl or woman is a prostitute, whenever people see her, they will sing an imprecation song, not necessarily to mock her, but to advise her to improve on her lifestyle. After listening to the song about her, she will hopefully change or improve on her lifestyle. Mataira (2000:28) confirms that the songs of adultery contain derogatory references, slanders and sneers directed at others. Mataira maintains that the songs use terms aimed to stir emotions and are composed with the deliberate intent to denigrate. Songs that touch on adultery are accompanied by facial gestures; gesticulative hand movements, provocative stances and intimidating stares interplayed with insults.

Imprecation songs can also be sung to a man who is an alcoholic, *advising him to reduce* his drinking habits. Monnig (1967:50-51) endorses this observation by stating that in the *Pedi* culture, when a man is under the influence of alcohol or wild hemp (*cannabis indica*), his *seriti* (dignity) and reputation are tarnished. People will say of a friend who is drunk: "*Thaka ya rena mamohla ga a tee, ba babedi*" This friend of ours isn't one, they (man and alcohol) are two. The expression simply means the man is drunk. In sum, *Pedi* imprecation songs are sung to change *peoples' behavior* as well as to build their *identity*.

### **3.3.9 Instruction (law) Song (*Bana ba Modimo thaetsang melao ya Modimo ka badimo*)**

#### 3.3.9.1 Form

'*Bana ba Modimo*' is most obviously an instruction (law) song. Not everyone in the *Pedi* tribe are allowed to sing the law songs to the community. Law songs are only sung by those few people who have close and regular contact with either God or their ancestors, or with God through their ancestors. Members of the community such as diviners, traditional healers and priests, after God and/or ancestors have instructed them about what to tell the community, can do so through either music and/or narrative. Joseph (1983:76) mentions the occurrence of songs being made known by ancestral spirits to diviners through dreams.

In the study of *Pedi* Psalm-like songs, we observe that the *Pedi* language, though tonal, is flexible when the words are set to music or narrative. The singers/narrators have liberty of setting the words with consideration of communication objectives. This is evident in the song *bana ba Modimo, thaetsang melao ya Modimo ka badimo*. Several forms of responsorial and antiphonal singing exist in *Pedi* performances. In the song *bana ba Modimo, thaetsang melao ya Modimo ka badimo*, there is a form we describe as solo and punctuation chorus response, where the narrator takes a fairly long passage in the narrative and the chorus comes in occasionally with the three-word statement 'pula, pula, *Jehova*' (line 8) in only three-note phrase.



The instruction (law) song below simply states that if members of the community want rain, they should abide with the instructions (laws) of God. One of the instructions is that they should assemble every Wednesday for a joint prayer. By so doing they shall be remembering their Creator (God).

### 3.3.9.2 Text and translation

#### **INSTRUCTION SONG: *BANA BA MODIMO, THAETSANG MELAO YA MODIMO KA BADIMO***

<b>Northern Sotho (Pedi)</b>	<b>English</b>
1. Bana ba Modimo, thaetsang melao ya Modimo ka badimo.	1. Children of God, please listen to the laws of God through our ancestors.
2. Modimo ga a lahle ngwana wa gagwe.	2. God never abandons His child.
3. Modimo ga a sitwe ke selo.	3. Nothing is impossible for God.
4. Feela seo Modimo a se nyakago ke go tlogela mekgwa ye methata ya go hloka leago.	4. All what God expects of you is to abandon all your mischiefs, which will not help you in any way.
5. Ge le bona pula e sa ne e le bjalo e tshaba meferefere yeo e lego gareng ga lena.	5. The reason why we are without rain is because of violence prevailing amongst you.
6. Modimo wa lena o re pula ke ye ntsi fela ge le ka se rapele tse ke dinyane.	6. God says rain is in abundance, but if you are not prepared to pray to Him, the suffering you are experiencing is still at the initial stage.
7. Bana beso ka lerato la Modimo, le tsebeng gabotse gore Modimo ke lerato le mang le mang wa lena a swanetsego go le hloma pelong.	7. My dear brothers and sisters in the love of God, be informed that God is love. Everyone of you should have a room for Him in your hearts.
8. A re opeleng sefela seo se rego: "Pula Pula Jehova?"	8. Shall we sing the hymn: Rain, rain Jehovah?"
9. Ke re Modimo a le feng pula tsa medupi.	9. May God give you long lasting rain.
10. Bjalo ka ge Modimo a phala baloi, ke a holofela gore o re kwele.	10. As God is superior to the witches, I hope He has heard our prayer.
11. Ke a holofela gore o mongwe le o	11. I also hope that each and everyone of you has understood the message I put across.

mongwe wa lena o ithwaletse ka leumo.

12. Morena Modimo a re ke le botseng go re ge le tsoma pula, Laboraro le lengwe le le lengwe, setshaba se kgobokane go bea thapelo, ka yona e be go mo gopola.

13. Khutso ga e be le lena.

14. Go ya ka magoro ga se go tswana.

12. The Lord God Almighty has instructed me to inform you that if you want rain, as the community, you should have a communal prayer every Wednesday, in so doing you shall remember Him.

13. Peace be with you.

14. You can now disperse.

The narrative is narrated by a man called Tema (diviner) who lives at *Ga-Seopela* village in the *Sekhukhune* area-Limpopo Province (Nkadimeng 1993:118). Refer from track 10, Audio CD.

### 3.3.9.3 Language (structural elements and characteristics)

So-called *Pedi* law songs are instructional. They are characterized by instruction and warning. Song, text, speech and oral poetry are characteristics that are often used in these songs. Song in its simplest definition is packaged information in various sound forms that involve a combination of sounds in melody, often with words that centrally dominate the communication function. Poetry is an organized form of communication whereby words are skillfully knitted together in manners where only few words cleverly express a body of ideas. Speech is normally an organized use of words to communicate feelings to an audience. Words (without musical sounds) are composed as a text in prose or poetry form to inform an audience with a body of information. A text refers to the words that in a song communicate: thoughts, expressions and experiences.

In *Pedi* law or instruction songs the performers often open a performance with an introductory speech or narrative. The information

in this narrative is usually not sung but spoken. It informs the audience about the background of the song, which is to be performed and prepares them towards an experience. This is evident in '*Bana ba Modimo, thaetsang melao ya Modimo ka badimo*'. In Nigeria *Igoru* law songs are employed by the singers to warn and counsel their audiences against some wanton attitude and practices that could result in painful experiences. Some of the warnings and counsel are directed to individuals, communities and the entire *Okpe* nation (Idamoyibo 2005:157).

#### 3.3.9.4 Content and context

*Bana ba Modimo, thaetsang melao ya Modimo ka badimo* (Children of God, please listen to the laws (instructions) of God through the ancestors) is designated a so-called law song in the *Pedi* tradition. It is sung by a man called *Tema*, a diviner. *Tema* lives in the *Sekhukhune* area, at *Ga-Seopela* village (Nkadimeng 1993:118). After God has communicated with him in 1984 through his ancestors, *Tema* deemed it necessary to consult with chief *Seopela*, to request him to assemble *Seopela* community. The arrangements for the meeting through the initiatives of chief *Seopela* was successful. Not only the *Seopela* community attended the meeting, but also adjacent communities such as *Maila, Maloma, Kotsiri and Maphopha*.

The law song '*Bana ba Modimo thaetsang melao ya Modimo ka badimo*' can be divided as follows. It begins with a) an introductory narrative for instruction and warning (lines 1-3); b) an instruction and warning from God (lines 4-6); c) statement and admonition (line 7); d) request and climax of the narrative (lines 8-9); e) proverbial

expressions assuring the audience of God's omnipotence and sovereignty (lines 10-11); f) instruction from God (line 12); g) benediction (line 13); and h) concluding proverbial expression for best wishes (line 14).

The expression '*Bana ba Modimo, thaetsang melao ya Modimo ka badimo*' (Children of God, please listen to the laws of God through our ancestors') describes a complex situation. The verse suggests that there is great trouble awaiting the community. This does not however mean any danger, but implies that the problem on ground that demands resolution is not an easy one to cope with.

The expression '*Modimo ga a lahle ngwana wa gagwe*' (God never abandons His child') in line 2 is proverbial. It means that those who have not gone out of the ways of God, can be certain of his (God's) support. Therefore the community requires the backing of God for survival.

The poet's tone (line 3) in the above song suggests safety and security. The tone and diction in '*Modimo ga a sitwe ke selo*' ('nothing is impossible for God'). suggest the meaning of what the poet intends to communicate.

In lines 4-6 the poet deliberately organizes words, syllables and lines in patterns that will generate similarity in sounds; create audible sensitivity and stimulate curiosity and emotionality. The poet recycles the theme in order to fix the principal ideas firmly into the minds of the audience. No word is wasted in this poetry; they are all aimed at communicating specific messages, directly to the audience.

In line 7 of the above excerpt (*Bana beso ka lerato la Modimo, le tsebeng gabotse gore Modimo ke lerato le mang le mang wa lena a swanetsego go le hlome pelong*) the poet creates alliteration<sup>57</sup> by repeated use of the consonants "l", "M", and "m" within the same line. While the first "l" begins with the key-word of the verse; the second begins with the name of the subject. The correspondence of consonant sound between the name and the key-word creates an emotional mood that stimulates sympathy.

In line 8 '*a re opeleng sefela seo se rego: "Pula Pula Jehova'* the poet builds the narrative and its climax gradually by requesting the audience to sing to God while they are pleading for rain. In line 9 the poet repeats an idea that seems very significant within the previous line '*pula tsa medupi'* ('long lasting rain'). In rare cases the poet uses the first person pronoun 'Ke' ('I'), to refer to himself, both as narrator and the poet. In *Pedi* Psalm-like songs this very often occurs when the poet wants to convey certain messages, particularly when he is much involved in the context. In this song, the poet uses 'I' to refer to himself directly, being involved in the very context of the poetry theme.

The *Pedi* culture is rich in the use of proverbs both in speech and in song. Gadsby et al (2001:1136) states that a proverb is "a short well-known statement that contains advice about life generally". The *Pedi* believe that an eloquent orator and musician is known and honoured for his use of proverbs, because in proverbs various issues are raised and a multitude of counsel is given in brevity. The poet presents

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<sup>57</sup> Alliteration is the use of two or more words in close succession, in order to repeat the sound of a particular consonant letter within a line of a poetic verse, while assonance is the use of same or corresponding vowel sound closely within a line.

proverbs (lines 10-11) that God is superior to the witches and '*o ithwaletse ka leumo*': '...has understood the message I put across'. The first proverb refers to the God's omnipotence and sovereignty and the second proverb in this context implies that the poet has some hope that the audience understood the message put across. The central message of the two proverbs is that, as God is great, the poet hopes that God has enabled members of the community to understand the message the diviner has put across.

During periods of drought songs are used as a medium of prayer to 'heal the land'. Songs enhance the activities of rainmaking rituals (Levine 2005:149). In line 12 the narrator instructs the people to carry out the instructions (laws) as instructed by God through the ancestors to convey the instruction to the people. The expression '*ge le tsoma pula*' ('if you want rain') conveys meaning beyond consultation in this context. It implies invocation of the powers of God to come into action, for the survival of the community. The poet in fact presents a reported dialogue that ensued between him and God through the ancestors.

In line 13, the poet imports the pastoral language 'peace be with you' to illustrate his point. This is a benediction on the community. The last metaphor '*Go ya ka magoro ga se go tswana*' (line 14) means that, to disperse does not necessarily mean that people are no longer friends or relatives. It might imply that the audience may disperse to their respective homes.

In sum, for the *Pedi*, the ancestral spirits make use of the living people to convey certain messages and deeds to the community. Traditional

healers and/or diviners serve for example as mediators between the ancestors and the Pedi people (Levine 2005:147).

#### 3.3.9.5 Function

The primary function of the song is *to command* members of the community to follow the laws of God. The purpose of the command is in two-fold, namely: 1) *to instruct* the people to carry out the instructions (laws) as instructed by God through the ancestors; 2) *to admonish* the people to comply or oblige for survival or improvement of their lifestyles. The song serves as a teaching song in which God gives the instructions to people as a guide for life. It prompts a prayer expressing man's continuous need of God's care. The song breathes a spirit of devotion and celebrates the closest of relationships between the diviner (a "mouthpiece") and God as creator of heavens and earth. This song reveals the dimensions of truth and reality in the existence of the people, for it is given by God, the giver of life.

Furthermore, the significance of this song is *to revive life* in the *Pedi* tribe. It is the fundamental force, restoring to full vigor and vitality the flagging spirit of mankind. The laws (instructions) as reflected in this song reflect God's own permanence. It then gives hope to the *Pedi* people that their lives will not be cut short.

### **3.3.10 Feast (festival) Songs (*Ngwana malome nnyale and Hela mmatswale tlogela dipotwana*)**

#### 3.3.10.1 Form

Festival Songs in the *Pedi* culture are meant for entertainment on occasions such as *lobola* (bride-price) and *monyanya* (wedding)

ceremonies. Drumming, hand clapping, singing and dancing accompany Festival Songs. In cases where there are no drums, two other instruments are acceptable even though the effect is not the same. *Dithlwathlwadi* (leg rattles) and *seferenyane* (referees whistle) are also used as rhythmic accompaniments. The dancer, who is the lead singer for that particular song blows the whistle.

In *Pedi* Festival Songs the words take precedence over the tune. A good lead singer is the one who does not have to repeat words he/she has already sung. Instead, he/she goes on improvising new words, which closely fits the pattern of the singing and also makes musical sense. Because of this practice, the melodic line does not receive the attention it deserves, and very often the same type of short phrases are repeated time after time, without the melody developing any further.

Form critically the song *hela mmatswale, tlogela dipotwana* ('Hi! mother-in-law, please abandon the cooking pots') is a wedding song. *Pedi* people sing the song to welcome a daughter in law (bride) at her place of marriage (*bogadi*). *Pedi lobola* songs are originally a simple improvised dialogue, sung during a furtive meeting between a groom and a bride or during a *lobola* ceremony. Those who recite, sing, move or play instruments at a performance vary in numbers according to the size of the community and the importance of the event. Music and words differ considerably from traditional African music (Mbiti 1971:119)<sup>58</sup>.

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<sup>58</sup> Mbiti's (1971:119) observation is with reference to the area of musical notes, pitch, rhythm and intonation of words, and lack that vital spirit of spontaneous expression of emotions, which is common in African societies. As non-professionals, the performers come from all walks of the community and sometimes from adjacent communities. Some of them participate regularly in a local group; others join only



The song *hela mmatswale, tlogela dipotwana* (Hi! mother-in-law, please abandon the cooking pots') depicts some *Pedi* traditional chores the bride is expected to perform at her place of marriage. Such activities include sweeping with a bunch of grass, which is a typical traditional *Pedi* broom. A bride in the *Pedi* traditional culture is expected to sweep the whole yard every morning before people wake up. She is also expected to make fire and warm up water for the whole family to bath. So these are some of the activities demonstrated in the song *hela mmatswale, tlogela dipotwana*.

### 3.3.10.2 Language (structural elements and characteristics)

The rhythm in this song, which is first sung by the leader and then repeated afterwards by the others, is given extra accent by the percussion instruments. All parts of the body take part in the dance. Only the feet and chest perform precise and rhythmical movements. Sometimes this song is causing people (especially immediate family) to melt and to weep with emotion, as they visualize estrangement with either the bride or groom. The performance of *lobola* and wedding songs in the *Pedi* society emphasize successively improvised poetry, choral song, dance and drumming. In its descriptions we find the remains of the oldest forms of African religions and philosophical wisdoms (Mbiti 1969:67).

The major musical characteristic of the song *ngwana malome nnyale* is call-and-response. *Hela mmatswale, tlogela dipotwana* is a wedding song in which singers are pleading with the mother-in-law to welcome the daughter-in-law (bride) in her new location, that is, the groom's

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occasionally. Regardless of their expertise and accomplishments the performers are not professionals, but participants in a community event.

place (*bogadi*). While singing the song, the singers are in a cheerful mood. The performance of this song is in four part harmonic setting (i.e soprano, alto, tenor and baritone). The expressive intent of this song is established through a combination of syncopated patterns, stepwise melodic patterns and the textual message.

The song is accompanied by a dance in which dancers assume a bent contour. The body and knees bend at an angle to the earth at varying degrees. The low posture and crooked knees integrate the singing and the dancing. Dance variations include the open palms and dancing on knees. The distinguishing elements of *hela mmatswale*, *tlogela dipotwana* include an uplifted stance, the extension of the winged skirt, and partner dancing. In solo dances, the dancer faces the three drummers, and the eyes of the center drummer focus on dancer's feet. The dancer's foot movements dictate the lead drummer's improvisation mode, for he converts the movement of the dancer's steps into audible rhythmic patterns.

Hand clapping and percussion instruments normally accompany *Pedi lobola* songs, such as *Ngwana malome nnyale*. In the dance men and women partners hold each other by the little finger or by the hand. They may even place their hand on the shoulder of their male or female partner. Dance is a poetic and evocative body language that encodes emotive, gender, age, occupational, status and other decodable texts (Nzewi 2003:30).

### 3.3.10.3 Content and context

#### 3.3.10.3.1 Introduction

There are various kinds of feasts in the *Pedi* culture. Marriage celebration (*lenyalo*) is one of them. Marriage (*lenyalo*) comprises of two phases, namely *lobola* (bride-price) and wedding (*monyanya*) ceremonies. The *lobola* ceremony is a pre-marital ceremony. This ceremony is comprised of the submission of cattle, goats as well as money to the bride's family. The transfer of the animals gives the husband control over the reproductive powers of his wife and his unmarried daughters (Kuckertz 1990:163). But this is a family matter. Among the *Pedi*, progeny is 'owned' primarily by the *bogadi* (bride wealth) delivered by the family. The biological father can be substituted (Van Wyk 1973:414). At this time the immediate families of both bride and groom come together to discuss the *lobola*.

*Lobola* is the price for the bride paid by the groom to the bride's parents. The *Pedi* people are not selling their daughters. *Lobola* is not a business. It rather symbolizes a token of appreciation by the groom's family to the bride's family for bearing and rearing the child who is now their son's wife and who will take care of their son, bear them grandchildren and thus preserve their family name. The *lobola*<sup>59</sup> payment seals the marital negotiation (Matlala 2000:310) and demonstrates to a woman that she is valued. *Lobola* makes her feel

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<sup>59</sup> The word *lobola* is derived from the Zulu word *ilobolo*, which means to give precious presents (Voster & De Beer 1988:182). In South Africa various indigenous groups make use of this concept, for example *ikhazi* (Xhosa), *lobolo* (South Ndebele), *thakha* (Venda), *lovolo* (Tsonga), *bogadi*, *bohali*, *magadi* (North Sotho, South Sotho and Tswana).

wanted, cherished and welcomed in her new family. A responsible husband-to-be will take care of his future wife (Khumalo 1995:85).

The emphasis on *lobola* by the groom leads to an improved understanding of the marriage contract. In Africa, the payment of the bride-wealth remains a necessary, ritualistic, token payment to guarantee the stability of the marriage (Bascom 1970:191). At the same time it binds the new husband to his obligations.

Stayt (1968:144) adds further insight to the understanding of *lobola*<sup>60</sup>. A great deal of bargaining generally takes place between the contracting parties. Sometimes a man will give his daughter to a friend with the promise that *lobola* will be paid at a future date. Marriages take place with the payment of cattle or sometimes without it, but it depends on the wishes of the parents of the girl. Generally marriages take place with the payment of cattle (Duncan 1960:25).

Among the *Pedi* marriage has the wider aspect of an alliance between groups of kin. Marriage is a matter of interest not only to the parents of both parties, but also to a wider circle of relatives, particularly the members of the lineage of each (Mair 1964:4). Marriages are usually arranged, not by the young couple themselves, but by their parents and other close relatives (Schapera and Van der Merwe 1950:162). Marriage can be treated as a transaction between two parties (Fortes 1972:3). Getting married in African context has now become a burden to the majority of young people. It has become an expensive exercise

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<sup>60</sup> Sometimes a man betroths a child, or even an unborn baby, to a man from whom he has borrowed cattle (Stayt 1968:144). Stayt points out that in cases where the whole *lobola* has not been handed over, a check on the numbers received is kept by both parties.

because of the high amount to be paid in the form of bride price (Mashau 2005:59).

### 3.3.10.3.2 Text and translation

#### **LOBOLA SONG: NGWANA MALOME NNYALE**

<b>Northern Sotho (Pedi)</b>	<b>English</b>
1. Ngwana malome nnyale,	1. My uncle's child marry me,
2. Ngwana malome ntsee,	2. Cousin, marry me,
3. Ngwana malome motswala,	3. My uncle's child, cousin,
4. kgomo di boele sakeng.	4. So that the cattle should go back to the same kraal.
5. O di bone di goroga, (2x)	5. See them arriving, (2x)
6. Di tswa ko Mmakadikwe,	6. Arriving from Mmakadikwe village,
7. Kgomo di boele sakeng.	7. Cattle go back to the same kraal.

The song was recorded by the author at a *lobola* ceremony held at *Ga-Phaahla Mmakadikwe* village, *Nebo* area-Limpopo Province in March 2005 (Refer to track 11, Audio CD).

*Ngwana malome nnyale* (My uncle's child, please marry me) is a *lobola* song. The song is divided into three main sections, namely: plea for a hearing (lines 1-3); b) motivation (line 4); and c) vision (lines 5-7). The song begins with a plea for a hearing and action (lines 1-3). There is humble request begging the uncle's child to marry the singer. The motivation by the singer is clear "so that the cattle should go back to the same kraal" (line 4). The singer is convinced that the uncle's child will marry her (line 4). She visualizes the cattle arriving from the uncle's home to her home (line 5). The name of the village where the cattle are coming from is mentioned, "*arriving from Mmakadikwe village*" (line 6). Lines 4 and 7 ("*cattle should go back to the same kraal*") form the heart of the song. As a whole, *ngwana malome nnyale* is characterized by earnest appeal and hope. The song repeats the purpose of intermarriage (lines 4 and 7).

*Ngwana malome nnyale* ("Please marry me, my uncle's child") is sung at a *lobola* ceremony. The request refers to the custom of *lobola* or the preference for bride-wealth, which is part of the African culture and does not refer only to the transfer of cattle (or money). The song begs a cousin to marry the niece. It is one of the favourite songs for the elderly people in every family (parents and grandparents) of the *Pedi* tribe, because a large percentage of elderly people prefer and recommend intermarriage. Intermarriage implies marriage within the same clan. The *lobola* ceremony is joyous occasion and the mood of the occasion resembles that by the choices of songs that are sung and the accompaniments of ululations.

### 3.3.10.3.3 Text and translation

#### **WEDDING SONG: HELA MMATSWALE, TLOGELA DIPOTWANA**

Northern Sotho (Pedi)	English
1. Hela! Mmatswale,	1. Hi! Mother in law,
2. Mmatswale, tlogela dipotwana.	2. Mother in law, please abandon the cooking pots.
3. Hela! mong wa tsona,	3. Hi! The pots owner,
4. mong wa tsona ke yo, o fihlile.	4. Here is the pots' owner, she has arrived.
5. Hela! Mosuthelele,	5. Hi! Open the way for her to enter,
6. mosuthelele, mosuthelele, mosuthelele.	6. Open the way for her to enter, open the way for her to enter, open the way for her to enter.
7. Hela! Mosuthelele,	7. Hi! Open the way for her to enter,
8. mosuthelele, ke yo o fihlile.	8. Hi! Open the way for to enter, here she is, she has arrived.

The song was recorded by the author at a wedding ceremony held at Ga-Phaahla village, Nebo area-Limpopo Province in June 2005 (Refer to track 12, Audio CD).

The structure of the song may be set forth as follows: a) plea (line 1-2); b) announcement of the bride to the mother-in-law (lines 3-4); c) request (lines 5-8).

The singers further request the bride's mother-in-law to abandon the cooking pots and all cooking utensils she was using because the reliever (bride) has arrived, and shall make use of the pots to cook the food on her behalf for her and other family members (line 2). In the *Pedi* tradition, assigning some duties to the bride by the mother-in-law is a great respect for the bride as well as a warm welcome for her in the groom's family (*bogadi*).

Assigning some duties to the bride might sound to be a punishment to the bride but it is not. The bride is in fact proud and happy about all the duties she is executing at the new location, for example, cooking food for the family, cleaning, etc. She feels recognized, respected and helpful to the family, especially to the mother-in-law. The large percentage of the brides (*dingwetsi*) in the *Pedi* tribe look after their parents-in-law very well, as a reward for having brought up their husbands for the brides'. An announcement of the arrival of the bride in the groom's home (*bogadi*) is made by the singers to alert the mother-in-law of the bride's arrival (line 3-4).

The song as a whole is closely integrated by the repetition of key terms. Lines 5-8 use the verb *mosuthelele* (open the way for her to enter). There is an emphasis on the verb *mosuthelele*. Several other words are used twice, for example, *fihlile* (arrived), *mong wa tsona* (owner of the pots) and *mmatswale* (mother-in-law). Taking all these key terms into consideration, the precise occasion on which this song would have been used remains certain. They portray the context of a wedding. The word *mosuthelele* (open the way for her to enter) in lines 5-8 is addressed specifically to the mother-in-law. This is a humble request for her to respond promptly. The concluding line

"*Please open the way, she has arrived*" brings together the various dimensions of the song's theme, namely: humility, politeness, friendliness, praise, thanksgiving, joy and hospitality.

#### 3.3.10.4 Function

The name and sound of *hela mmatswale tlogela dipotwana* become synonymous with the meaning and observance of the occasion, namely a wedding. The meaning of the song/dance and its movements clearly relates to its purpose. One purpose of the song includes *entertainment*, which broadly implicates forms of socialization and companionship. Dance has long been used by Africans as a medium to express the issues of life, be they social, religious, occupational, stages of life (death, birth, marriage and initiation), moral values, ideologies, war, etc (Bakare and Mans 2003:217).

Traditional *lobola* songs have certain specific functions in the *Pedi* society. They are mostly associated with *companionship and intermarriage*. The primary function of the song, *Ngwana malome nnyale* (Please marry me, my uncle's child) is to *promote intermarriage* in the *Pedi* tribe. A secondary function is for *entertainment or enjoyment* by the singers (whoever attend the *lobola* ceremony and is participating in the dancing and singing). Dance in Africa has several human or social purposes, but takes on a myriad of forms depending on purpose, context, history and contact with others (Bakare and Mans 2003:217)<sup>61</sup>. In addition, music making in Africa

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<sup>61</sup> Bakare and Mans (2003:217) further mentions that dance provides an important social framework through which people interrelate. The performance of social dances may facilitate communication and create social cohesion while revealing much of the structure of a society, the relationships between age, class, lineage and gender structures.



has several dimensions (Addo, Miya and Potgieter 2003:237). They claim that music is social, philosophical and artistic.

*Ngwana malome nnyale* (Please marry me, my uncle's child) is sung during *lobola* ceremonies not only for the bride and groom, but also to *advise whoever is intending to marry, to think of intermarriage*. This *promotes the survival and future of the Pedi tribe's marriages*. The song *establishes mutual relationship* among the *Pedi* people as well as *cementing friendship*. In addition to the above-named functions, the song plays a prominent role in *relieving stress*. The song is enjoyed by both the attendees and the participants of the *lobola* ceremonies in the *Pedi* tribe. The central significance of the song *ngwana malome nnyale* (Please marry me, my uncle's child) is that *lobola* should be kept within the same clan.

The song alerts *the bride's mother-in-law of the arrival of the bride in her new family (bogadi)*. *Hela mmatswale, tlogela dipotwana* (Hi, mother in law, please abandon the cooking pots) *makes the bride feel wanted, cherished and welcomed in her new family*. Music is a vehicle for the expression of ideas. Africans are fully aware of its function. Music is not an optional decoration to life, but has a social function (Uzoigwe and Tracey 2003:76).

Both song texts reflect personal and social experiences of the *Pedi* tribe. Both are sung to *set the mood* for the action of the occasion or simply to *express emotions*. *It compels inter-communal participation and obligations* at the *lobola* and wedding ceremonies that enact family and social relationships.

## **3.4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

### **3.4.1 Introduction**

It is with joy and excitement that I undertook to translate *Pedi* psalm-like songs, bringing them to the English-speaking world. I have highly benefited from the privilege of repeated contact with *Contradosa* members (*Pedi* traditional healers) and other members of different *Pedi* traditional dance groups. Our many hours of dialogue over the translation, musical analysis and religious assessment were invaluable. In this chapter, the following categories of *Pedi* psalm-like songs are documented, translated from Northern Sotho (*Pedi*) into English and analysed: songs of praise, thanksgiving songs, lament songs, royal songs, liberation songs, wisdom songs, penitential songs, prayers of trust, imprecatory songs, law songs and feasts.

### **3.4.2 Function**

*Pedi* Psalm-like Songs are multi-functional. They are the very fibre of traditional life. The songs are essential part of religious ceremonies and are associated with the events of the life cycle: birth, marriage and death as well as with initiation for which special songs are learned. Initiates (both girls and boys) receive instructions by employing these songs. The language and expression in the initiation songs are so complex and sophisticated. It is difficult for anyone who never attended the initiation school to understand the meaning, interpretation and message of the song.

Only those who attended the initiation school could easily communicate by singing the initiation songs. They are also used to spur on workers and here the rhythms of the work are cleverly exploited: pounding grain, digging ditches and rock drilling in the gold mines are all accompanied by singing. Beside the communal role, *Pedi* songs (instrumental or singing) are also practiced by the individual simply to enjoy for his or her own pleasure. In all its varied forms, *Pedi* songs still play a vital part in rural traditional life. They reflect the values of the tribe within which they exist (i.e. *Pedi*). Specific songs for *malopo* rituals are amazingly good, as they are therapeutic. After singing these songs, patients/dancers say they feel young in the body and mind. Some say they have been rejuvenated. Something must have happened to their *psyche* or *soma*. Ancestors are remembered, honoured, respected and venerated by singing *malopo* songs.

The *Pedi* cultural heritage is preserved because of *Pedi*-psalm like songs. The *Pedi* tribe is successful in sustaining and retaining a high standard of living in terms of respect, hierarchy and cohesion because of these songs. As such enmity, greediness and theft are gradually phased out. Any kind of misbehaviour by any member of the *Pedi* tribe is addressed by singing these songs. Irony songs are more appropriate for such misbehaviour. Songs are beneficial to the *Pedi* people by building their moral. Some songs remind the *Pedi* tribe about age differences. Other bring joy, while others could bring sadness and comfort. The songs are also important in comforting the bereaved families. By singing these songs the *Pedi* people are able to share ideas, express their appreciation as well as their grievances or dissatisfaction. Kaemmer (1993:156) supports the above findings by stating that music often results in communication even when people

are not aware it is taking place. He further mentions that sometimes communicating through music is a way of publicly disseminating information. I agree with Kaemmer (1993:156) because through enhancing communication, music is often a way of building and maintaining group identity. The identity of a group includes both the indication of boundaries separating one group from others and the strengthening of solidarity within a particular group.

The songs also establish mutual relationship among the *Pedi* people as well as cementing friendship. They play a prominent role in relieving stress. For example, post-traumatic stress disorder and childhood depression. Wedding and *lobola* ceremonies are enjoyed by those who attend them by singing these songs.

These songs do not only seek to identify the people's culture, they further uphold and check the socio-moral values that identify the society and the people. The themes centre on issues of socio-cultural practices and events that manifest around them.

### **3.4.3 Structure of Songs**

This structure refers to the way the songs are put together. The poetic or musical structure of many *Pedi* songs is *cyclical*. This means that cycles of four, eight or more beats are repeated again and again. Signals are used to stop, start and change the songs. Accompaniment patterns provide layers under the improvisatory solo lines. The bass patterns are central to defining the piece of music being played while accompaniment patterns can be the same for several different rhythms. Solo lines take their material from all other parts of the

ensemble helping to weave an exciting, polyrhythmic structure. Breaks are points of unison playing typical of choreographed performances.

#### **3.4.4 Religious experience**

Songs give expression and contribute to religious experience within this specific cultural group, the *Pedi* tribe in particular. It shows that religiosity in various cultures can be supported by similar genres and structures like psalms of Old Testament. Such similar psalm like texts fulfil similar functions to support culture, social life and religion.