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Shona Traditional Poetry
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Shona poetry, in its nascent written form, received a welcome new expression in 1969 in the shape of an anthology entitled Mabvumira Entembo (The Harmony of Poetry). Before its appearance, there had existed only two very slight collections, Madetembedzo Akarc Namatsva (Poems Old and New) and Mutinhimira Wedetembo (The Rhythm of Poetry). These little books contained some examples of traditional oral poetry in written form but the bulk of their contents was original in the sense that it had been composed in the medium of writing, a medium relatively new and strange to an institution which is very ancient in its oral form.

When it first appeared, in the work of Chivaura and Mutswairo, written poetry in Shona was a new departure showing no continuity with the oral tradition. But gradually more and more account has been taken of the forms and devices of spoken art so that, in the work of Hamutyiini and Kumbira in the latest anthology, it is clear that the earlier oral poetic tradition is finding a new and developed literate expression. This very interesting development, which is a part of the brief history of written poetry in Shona, is something that calls for critical appreciation. But before this can be attempted, and it should be as part of a general assessment of written Shona poetry since its inception, it is necessary to say something about the nature of traditional Shona poetry. Informed criticism and appreciation of the work of modern poets, particularly when they continue the past, is only possible in the light of an understanding of the oral, pre-literate tradition out of which it has grown. This article attempts to describe that part of traditional poetry which was recited rather than sung; and the treatment of sung poetry and the relation of written poetry to traditional verbal art will be dealt with in a further article.

Social Role

The study of traditional poetry in Shona is part of the wider subject of Shona verbal art in all its varieties which include all the registers of speech and song, as related to their appropriate social context. Against this background, the poetry, both spoken and sung, stands out and is recognisable in virtue of its formal characteristics which it will be the business of this article to attempt to define. But it is helpful to state that the poetic styles and registers are part of a larger variety of verbal styles of speech since they formed part of the common repertoire of ordinary people and were in daily, functional use. The recitation of oral poetry was widely diffused in Shona society. There were certain social occasions which demanded and encouraged it and certain social relationships which received appropriate expression by means of it. These situations and relationships were those of the ordinary clansman and clanswoman and hence were part of their social rôle, to be learned as
this was learned. Poetry and its recitation were not limited to exclusively literary occasions or to a relatively restricted social group. In keeping with the relative lack of specialisation in Shona society, ordinary men and women had to be their own poets if they were to be fully members of their society and cooperate adequately in the social occasions which demanded poetic expression rather than some other register. There will be much to say later concerning other characteristics of this poetry and the extent to which it was traditional and original. The point to emphasise here is that poetry formed a normal ingredient in certain common social situations and relationships. This fact will be found to have influenced the poetry in its poetic qualities of imagery and form, and criticism, by which is meant informed and appreciative understanding of this poetry, should never lose sight of the social occasions in which and for which it was recited.

**Classification**

There is no single parameter which will yield an adequate typology of Shona traditional poetry. In fact there are several involved and the application of any one of them results in overlapping and anomalous results. We may categorise poetry according to its delivery into sung, intoned and spoken varieties; but this will yield a division which is irrelevant from the aspect of structural form, imagery, language or social context. In any case the study of Shona traditional poetry has barely commenced and at this stage only a tentative typology can be offered. In compiling and distinguishing the following types, the following considerations have been kept in mind: mode of delivery, imagery, form and structure of the typical single utterance or line, existence of larger structural units such as verses, poetic devices common to Shona poetry in general or specific to particular genres, and social context. Each genre is given a Shona term to bring this typology into agreement, as much as possible, with that of the Shona themselves. Before the various types can be listed, exemplified and described, however, the nature of Shona poetic devices must be clarified.

**Poetic Devices**

Since Shona poetry is part of Shona verbal art in general it will be found to be limited by the resources of Shona phonology and morphology. It is also limited by the further constraints of the poetic tradition which Shona poets have elaborated. Gleason's definition of poetic form is a useful one to recall at this point: 'Poetic form is any conventional patterning superimposed on the normal phonologic structure required by the language ... Only after a text has qualified as a sample of some specific language can the question be raised as to whether it is poetry or not, for a poem is always a text which uses the resources of its language in a characteristic poetic way.' Shona poetry shares a common phonology and morphology with the other registers of Shona verbal art. It is distinguished from them by the further conventional patterning which is imposed on it. But these poetic devices must lie within the phonologic and morphologic resources of the language and not be foreign to them. This must be remembered in the attempts to develop Shona poetry. It cannot be expected to imitate foreign models which are constructed on completely different phonologic principles. Shona does not employ word stress as English does. Hence it cannot be expected to develop a prosody based on the principle of recurring patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables. Metrical rhythm as it occurs in English poetry can be expected to be foreign to it since it finds no place in the sound system of Shona. Similarly Shona does not employ the opposition between long and short vowels on which Latin metric patterns are based. The typical Shona syllable consists of a consonant and vowel (CV) or of a vowel (V) alone. With the exception of certain ideophones which end with syllabic nasal consonants, e.g. ha-m (barking of a baboon), ha-m (sounding of a gun), words in Shona never end in a consonant. Hence Shona could never develop a system of rhyming akin to the so-called "strong" rhymes of English poetry. Rhyming schemes, if any, would have to be weak; but, in fact, Shona traditional poetry has never used rhyme as a poetic device to achieve repetition.

The poetic devices of traditional Shona poetry are: linking, which may be initial, cross or final; parallelism; alliteration and assonance; and others such as antithesis and repetition of a refrain. These are the forms taken by the principle of repetition in Shona. Poetry consists essentially of imagery but, as Cope reminds us, its effectiveness is greatly increased by the judicious use of repetition. This contributes the aesthetic necessity of form which gives unity and satisfactory completeness to a poem and to its constituent parts. Imagery with repetition. Cope reminds us, combine to make poetry more evocative, more emotive and more memorable than other forms of speech and
issue in a greater richness and concentration of language. He also reminds us that mere repetition in itself is monotonous and so it appears in combination with variety and in various guises.

**Linking**

Linking is a pervasive feature which is found as a poetic device in all types of Shona poetry, spoken as well as sung, of children as well as of adults. When applied to single lines or utterances, it consists in the repetition of an identical item in two or more successive cases. There are three kinds of linking, initial, cross or final, depending on the relative positions of the two repeated items. We have initial linking when the repeated items occur at the beginning of the successive lines:

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 \\
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6
\end{array}
\]

We have cross linking when the repeated items occur, one at the end and another at the beginning of the successive lines:

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 \\
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6
\end{array}
\]

We have final linking when the repeated items occur at the end of the successive lines:

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 \\
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6
\end{array}
\]

The lines which are linked combine automatically to form a larger structure, normally a couplet, but sometimes a triplet.

The principle of linking is also applied to larger entities than lines or utterances. Thus a series of lines may be initially linked to another following series by both series beginning with the same item. Similarly a series of lines may be medially or finally linked to another following series by the medial or final repetition of an identical item, such as by a recurring refrain at the end of successive groups of lines. The recurrence of these linking elements or items serves to indicate the existence of the unities which are linked, whether these be lines which are linked into couplets or groups of lines into a sequence of verses.

The occurrence of lines and sequences of lines has been mentioned. The unit out of which Shona poetry appears to be built is the line. The line in oral poetry is recited within, and usually well within, the compass of a single breath. But as Schapera has pointed out, there appears to be an optimum length of line which is not due solely to the physical necessity of drawing breath, since the favoured number of words to a line is three or four. The position in Shona is similar to that in Tswana; and the line most commonly found consists of three or four words. Each word is marked by an accent of relative length and, it seems, slightly more prominent stress or breath force, on its penultimate syllable, the final word of each line receiving a more marked accent than those preceding. Thus the words and lines of Shona poetry are marked by penultimate accents. This may be one of its basic features: the recurrence, within very flexible limits, of a favoured pattern of three or four accents per line or phrase, the phrase itself being marked by a pause.

A good example of cross linking is found in Kumbirai's version of the children's jingle, *Mwedzi wagara*:

1. *Mwedzi wagara*

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
Gwe-e kwe-e, mwedzi wagara & Wagara kuna Dondore & Dondore ane mavara & Mavara anenge edzete. & Gurryana nhisi wachena & Wachena kuti ngwengwengwe \\
New moon where Mr. Fruit-toffee is & Fruit-toffee covered with stripes & Stripes like those of the bullfrog. & September today is bright & Bright with shining light \\
Fruit-toffee covered with stripes & Stripes like those of the bullfrog. & September today is bright & Bright with shining light & Shining the cold has fled \\
Strips like those of the bullfrog. & September today is bright & Bright with shining light & Shining the cold has fled & Fled out of fear of the summer. \\
September today is bright & Bright with shining light & Shining the cold has fled & Fled out of fear of the summer. & Summer that pleases the children \\
Bright with shining light & Shining the cold has fled & Fled out of fear of the summer. & Summer that pleases the children & The children and we are glad \\
Shining the cold has fled & Fled out of fear of the summer. & Summer that pleases the children & The children and we are glad & Glad that the winter is over \\
Fled out of fear of the summer. & Summer that pleases the children & The children and we are glad & Glad that the winter is over & Over and scorched marks are gone.
\end{array}
\]

In examples 1-4 the linking elements are printed in bold in the Shona versions and in italics in the English versions.
There exist many varieties of this jingle which the writer has adapted in order to convey some development of the thought and a recurrence of cross linking. This device effectively threads lines together into a unity of form though, as I have implied, the oral forms are not so developed either in thought or form as this example is. Lines 19 and 20 show that elements smaller than words can be used to link lines. In this instance it is the concordial affix of cl. 10 which is repeated. Similarly items longer than words, such as substantive phrases, may be repeated and thus link lines.

The following example, also an adaption by Kumbirai, combines cross linking with initial linking in the creation of three line stanzas. This is a very skilful example of the use of a traditional device as a structural principle. The poem is a piece of advice which might be given by an uncle to his sister's son or indeed by any elder to a junior. It savours of the traditional instruction given by elders at the dare (the village meeting place):

2. Chawanzwaw

Chawanzwa usaudze mukadzi
Mukadzi idare rinoti ngwengengwe
Chawanzwa achingida kwese

Chawanzwa usavanze murume
Murume idare risingamborira
Chawanzwa charamba kurira

Chawanzwa pfimbika mudundundu
Dundundu ijobozi usine kaburi
Chawanzwa pfisira mumwoyo

Chawanzwa usachipambidzire
Kupambidzireko kudira nundiru
Chawanzwa reva nepawanzwa

Chawanzwa ziva kuti wanza
Ndechenzeve, handi chokuona

Chawanzwa ziva kuti watonzwa

What you have heard

What you hear never tell a woman
A woman is sounding metal
What she hears ringing out everywhere.

What you hear never hide from a man
A man is metal that never rings
What he hears does not resound.

What you hear store away in your breast
The breast is closed, a store to mature
What you hear shut away in your heart.

What you hear do not add to
Adding means pouring in gall
What you hear say as you heard it.

What you hear remember you heard
Of the ears, not of the eyes
What you hear remember was only heard.

The linking is initial between the first and third lines of each stanza. It is in fact this linking which constitutes the stanzas. There is no linking between 11. 3-4, 6-7, 9-10. Each stanza is similarly linked initially into a series since the first element of each is the same.

At the same time there is cross linking between the first and second lines of each stanza save the last. Note that stanzas 1-4 are characterized by a similar pattern of linking, both initial and cross. The last stanza departs from the pattern in having cross linking between the first and third lines and in having final linking as well, a somewhat rare feature in the case of lines.

The poem also makes very effective use of parallelism in order to convey contrast. Parallelism is a device which will be discussed in the next section but which may be savoured in anticipation in this example. Stanzas 1 and 2 are almost wholly parallel in construction but sharply contrasting in content. Stanzas 3 and 4 show hardly any constructional parallelism but they also contrast. Thus, in keeping with the aphoristic and pro-
verbial style of traditional moral instruction which delights in pointed antithesis, this piece of advice is conveyed by way of two pairs of balancing yet contrasting images, the first pair that of the imprudent, talkative woman and the sage, circumspect man, the second that of the ripening store of fruit in the ground and the injection of bitter gall. In the fifth stanza, which stands apart as a conclusion from the preceding two pairs, there is the antithesis between hearing and only hearing, which is conveyed by repetition, and that between hearing and seeing of the second line. The whole poem is in fact a little gem of imagery and repetition of the forms of linking and parallelism.

The repetition of initial, and sometimes final, forms as a framework for successive verses is a feature of children's "item songs" or memory games. The games involve a song or a recitation in which items of a particular category appear successively within a constant framework. The song is sung by a soloist and a chorus. The soloist is a competitor taking his or her turn in the game in which the winner is the one who can list the greatest number of items of the sort considered relevant. The chorus is made up of the other children competing in the game, having had, or waiting to have, their turn and quick to notice if the competitor has defaulted in any way. It is usual for songs to accompany communal activities in Shona life. The activity which these 'item songs' accompany is a game:

3. N'dianiko? (Who is it?)

Chorus (repeated after each line)

Mushava anendarira, mushava
(A brown one with a bracelet, a brown one)

Solo

N'dianiko? (Who is it?)
N'dianiko?

Muchafa (Boy's names)
Tsikwa
Mhoniwa
Dzumbunu
Chinholi

N'dianiko? (Who is it?)

Sekai (Girl's names)
Taona
Zviripi
Maria
Dhokasi

N'dianiko? (Who is it?)
N'dianiko?

Tsunu (Names of various kinds of cattle: heifer, barren cow.
Mhange (Names of various kinds of foods: stiff porridge,
Mapfunde (Names of various kinds of bulrush millet, sorghum.
Mupunguza (Names of various kinds of rice, finger millet)
Zio

N'dianiko? (Who is it?)

N'dianiko?

Sadza (Names of various kinds of)
Mhunga (Names of various kinds of foods: stiff porridge,
Mapfunde (Names of various kinds of bulrush millet, sorghum.
Mupunguza (Names of various kinds of rice, finger millet)

N'dianiko? (Who is it?)

N'dianiko?

Derere (Names of various kinds of)
Chiongo (Names of various kinds of glutinous wild vegetables)
Hambakachere
Nyanwenda
Nyenje

N'dianiko? (Who is it?)
N'dianiko?

Pfura (Names of hills)
Harare
Tsikwa
Chishawasha
Hambudyu

Here the competition consists in listing items of all kinds of categories. In changing from one category to another the competitor-soloist should introduce the new class of items by singing N'dianiko? (Who is it?) a set number of times. Further, the number of items in each category should be kept constant. In the above example N'dianiko? is sung twice at the beginning of each new category and there are five items each sung by each competitor. The one who reaches the greatest number of categories wins.
4. *Poti, poti*

*Chorus* (repeated after each line)

**Solo**

First Boy:

*Poti, poti!*

*Ndinotsvaga wangu*

*Musikini wendireo*

*Anodzichenesa*

*Simuka, hende!*

Second Boy:

*Poti, poti!*

*Ndinotsvaga wangu*

*Mureri wemwana*

*Asinganuchemedze*

*Simuka, hende!*

Third Boy:

*Poti, poti!*

*Ndinotsvaga wangu*

*Mwikwi wesadza*

*Anovimvononga*

*Simuka, hende!*

Fourth Boy:

*Poti, poti!*

*Ndinotsvaga wangu*

*Mukuyi wezvivo*

*Anozvitsetsetsa*

*Simuka, hende!*

The setting for this song is a game played between boys on one side and girls on the other. Each boy in turn dances over to the girls singing his part of the song, accompanied by the chorus. While singing the last line he touches the girl of his choice and brings her back to his side. Each boy in turn must choose new lines for the variable part of his verse within the constant framework. If a girl remains unchosen or a boy remains over with no one to choose, she or he is mocked.

Item songs of this general type, of which there are many, were of great use in the education of children as memory training exercises and for teaching them the culturally recognised categories and typology. They also gave the children a grasp of different kinds of verse form.

Songs consisting of verses which consisted of a constant frame and partly of a varying element of a particular, relevant sort were also sung by adults, and minstrels' songs were frequently of this type. The following song about the baboon, sung in alternating and interlocking parts, is a good example:

```
Solo  Tehete   tehete  Nhai, Gudo he
Chorus  tehete  tehete
Solo  Zimuswe  chivi?  Nhai, Gudo he
Chorus  tehete  tehete
Solo  Hayaya  Ini zvenyu
Chorus  tehete  tehete
```

*Tehete*

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Solo  Tehete  tehete  Tell me, baboon
Chorus  tehete  tehete
Solo  What is the big tail?  Tell me, baboon
Chorus  tehete  tehete
Solo  Hayaya  You people
Chorus  tehete  tehete
```

*In 5 it is the variable parts of the verse, not the linking elements, which are printed in bold in Shona and in italics in English.*
The song makes fun at the expense of the baboon but was also a satire on employment in the towns.

Parallelism

Enough has been said about the form of repetition called linking as applied to two kinds of unit, lines and stanzas, and the way in which it is used to signal the presence of these units and create poetic structures. We must now turn to the second pervasive poetic device, namely parallelism. Parallelism obtains between two units when there is similarity of grammatical construction. Cope defines parallelism as “repeated statements of identical construction with different words expressing the same idea” and he exemplifies it by verses from the poetry of the Bible. A somewhat wider definition is more useful in describing the Shona material for two reasons. Firstly, parallelism in grammatical structure admits of a great number of degrees ranging from complete identity at one end to something very partial at the other. Just as linking can involve the repetition of phrases, words, stems or affixes so parallelism can involve the repetition of larger or smaller grammatical patterns. Secondly similarity of construction between two units may exist not only to reinforce a common idea in different words but to develop an antithesis or contrast.

The following lines taken from a love poem or set of courting praises show close parallelism:

6. Mune meso anenge etsinza, anoendaenda.  
Mune meno anenge mukaka, akachena semwedzi wechirimo.  
Mune mhuno yakari twi, kunge mutswi weduri.
(You have eyes like the oribi's, bright with life.
You have teeth like milk, white as a winter moon.
You have a nose that is straight, like the stamper in a mortar.)

Each line consists of a verb phrase inflected in the same way by the second person plural subject prefix. Each verb phrase contains the same radical /-naj/ (be with) and similar object complements made up of similar substantive phrases. In these substantive phrases we have a noun, one of the features of the beloved, which is qualified by relative inflected verb phrases. Three of these relatives convey a simile for they include the verb radical /-nge/ (be like, seem). Structurally and in content these three lines are closely parallel though not identical.

Another example is given by the ending of a traditional love poem:

7. Amai vangu vanakura-narwo, mukonde wangu yuyu,
Chiityal ndikudetembei, iye muri munyasi.
Dai zvainzi munopindurwa kuva tsine remvura,
Tsimero ndairisosa nemubaya-nmhondoro.
Dai maiva nwiwa, ndaikudyai nemhodzi dzose.
Uye dai pasina chakauya ichi, ndingadai ndakusitirai.
(My mother versed in the ways of love, close as a bead girdle to me,
Come and let me praise you, as you sit beside me.
Could you be turned into a spring of water.
I would seal that spring with a branch of thorny mimosa.
If you were a melon, I would eat you, seeds and all.
And if these new ways had not come, I would have carried you off already.)

The last four lines consist of three hypothetical conditional sentences of the same general structure each expressing the desire of the suitor to make his beloved his own.

There are many cases where an idea is repeated without any similarity of structure between the two phrases. Here for example are two pairs of lines, each of which is describing, metaphorically, a stingy woman:

8. VaChipa imbwa rejena,
Remupunga rinopa imbwa gwembe;
Vakaitzani nezvipungu
Zvisadonhodzi mumhenga pasi.
(She who gives dogs only maize porridge.
That made from rice would give them mange:
Neighbour to the bateleur eagles
Who never drop a feather to the ground.)

With regard to parallelism in structure serving to underline antithesis it is certainly true that examples are not numerous in poetry. Parallelism in poetry mainly expresses analogies. But in proverbs it is often used to express paradox or contrast and examples can be found in didactic poetry as for example in the first poem quoted in this article.

9. Mukadzi idare rinoti ngwengwengwe,
Murume idare risingamborira.
(A woman is sounding metal,
A man is metal that never rings.)

10. Munhu akurumana anodya chebanga misi yose,
Aii munhu akaipa anotodya chedemo.
(A just man eats what he can cut with a knife everyday (viz. has special favours),
But an unjust man eats only what is cut by an axe (viz., can expect only the common lot).)

Parallelism is a very common feature of proverbs as is its opposite, cross-parallelism. This is possible because proverbs normally have a balanced structure and fall naturally into two halves. e.g.

11. Kandiro enda, kandiro dzoka
(Little dish go, little dish come back;
viz. One good turn evokes another)

12. Chiri pamuchena chiri pamutenhure
(What is on a poor man is on a sloping place; viz. A poor man’s possessions are not durable)

13. Zvawakanzi dzikatc, wakanzi dziridze here!
(When you were told to carry them, were you told to play them [mbira (the hand-piano)]? viz. A lessee is not an owner)

14. Aive madziva ave mazambuko. Aive mazambuko ave madziva
(What were pools have become fords.
What were fords have become pools; viz. Times change)

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Parallelism involves similarity of structure. In proverbs it is often very close, the structures in each part being as similar to each other as it is possible to be. Thus in example 11 we have the structure of imperative clause in both parts. In example 12 we have a clause consisting of subject and predicate. What creates the parallelism is that both subject and predicate are inflected forms of verb phrases having in common the same verb radical /-ri/ and similar complements *pamuchena, pamitenhure*, both adverbial locative complements of cl. 16. The subject is a relative inflection and the predicate a principal inflection.

The fact that these two inflections differ only tonally is made great use of to create proverbs with relative subject and principal predicate parallelism:

15. *Wakweva sanzu wakweva namashizha aro* (He who pulls a branch after him pulls its leaves as well; viz. If you inherit a wife, you inherit her children as well)

16. *Chafamba chasvava* (The thing which travelled wilted)

In examples 14, 15 and 16 this is the basis of the parallelism. In example 13 the inflection of the first part is participial, that of the second principal. The parallelism is equally there. The common structures being repeated so that what is not common, the contrasting forms, can convey their maximum effect:

11. *-end- (go)* : *-dzok- (come back)*
12. *-muchena (poor man)* : *-mutenhure (slope)*
13. *-pakat- (carry)* : *-ridz- (play)*
14. *madziva (pools)* : *mazambuko (fords)*
15. *sanzu (branch)* : *mashizha aro (its leaves)*
16. *-amb- (travel)* : *-svav- (wilt)*

Parallelism is also created by the collocation of substantives or substantive phrases in clauses. Just as a clause can consist of a substantival or relative inflected verb phrase as subject and a principal inflected verb phrase as predicate so also it can consist of a substantive phrase as subject and a predicative or copulative inflected substantive phrase as predicate:

17. *Mhavha imhata* (A thief is someone you catch in the act; viz. Suspicions are not enough)

*Mhavha* (a thief) and *mhata* (someone who is caught) are both nominals of cl. 9.

In many instances the subject is an infinitive phrase and the predicate a copulative inflected infinitive phrase:

18. *Kurema chivi hukana chiyuha* (To hate the bad is to see the good)
19. *Mbudzi kudya mumenje kufane nyina* (For a goat to eat the *mumenje* bush is to resemble its mother; viz. Like father, like son)

In many cases of parallelism the likeness is rather distant:

20. *Mwana washe miranda kumwe* (The son of a chief is a servant elsewhere)

Here the parallelism is between a substantive phrase of cl. 1 consisting of a noun and possessive and another substantive phrase consisting of a noun of cl. 1 and a locative.

21. *Musoni wepwere nديye asinayo* (The expert with children is he who has none)

Here the first member of the parallel relationship is a substantive phrase of cl. 1 consisting of a noun and possessive, a noun of cl. 9 (*pwere*) being the possessive stem. The second member is a substantive phrase of cl. 1 but consisting of the pronouns which refer to these nouns, /-ye/ (he) and /-yo/ (it), in a sequence of headword and relative *asinayo* (he who does not have it).

These examples and analyses are given in order to make the point that the creators and users of these literary forms, both poems and proverbs which are poems in miniature, have an awareness and appreciation of relationships of structure of a very abstract kind. Secondly similarity of structure is a variable. It is greater or less depending on how many structural elements are held in common. The correspondence of structures even though of the most abstract and general kind is enough to create frames in which contrasts may be appreciated.

In cross parallelism the correspondence and the similar frames are reversed. Similar forms and structures are not in corresponding positions in each half of the proverb but in transposed positions. And their relationship is like that which obtains between objects and their mirror image:

22. *Chakanganwa idemo, Chigutsa hachikanganwe* (What has forgotten is the axe. The stump does not forget; viz. One who injures another may forget but the injured party will not)
   (Roasting requires the mother’s action. That of the child puts out the fire)

   (A year never comes where another has come; viz. No year is exactly alike another)

25. *Makunguwo zvaakatya, akafa mangani?* (When the crows took flight, those who died were how many? viz. Those who run away live to fight another day)

In all these examples the variable correspondence must be looked for crosswise. The contrast is perhaps sharpened by the contrasting words, axe and stump in example 22, mother and child in example 23, being held in tight juxtaposition.

Parallelism corresponds to initial linking while cross-parallelism corresponds to cross linking.

**Alliteration and assonance**

Alliteration and assonance are a final feature which is used as a poetic device to give unity of form to lines and stanzas. The distinction which Cope has made between natural and contrived alliteration in Zulu obtains also of course in Shona as it rests on a similar structural linguistic feature, namely grammatical agreement. The nouns of Shona are divided on the basis of their prefixes into a number of classes. For example the nouns *chinhu* (thing) and *chigutsa* (stump) both belong to the same class as they have the prefix *ichi-* in common. The nouns *murume* (man) and *mukadzi* (woman) both belong to the same class because they share the same prefix *jnui-*. Now grammatical agreement between headwords and qualifiers in substantive phrases and between subjects and predicates in clauses is brought out by the repetition of the class prefix in varying forms:

**chigutsa hachikangemwi**
   (the stump, it does not forget)

**chigutsa chldiki**
   (a little stump)

Since the class prefixes which are repeated in qualifiers and predicates to express agreement commonly consist of both consonants and vowels, their repetition is accompanied by alliteration and assonance. The proverbs quoted above provide a number of examples. Alliteration and assonance based on repetition of the class affixes is natural and inherent in the grammatical structure of Shona. Since class affixes are usually in prefixal position it means that natural alliteration and assonance is common. Contrived alliteration and assonance is not common but does exist:

   (One who brings up orphans)

27. *Mukadzi asina mhindu kana mhakanyiko; VaChirewa-tenda;*  
   *(A woman not unpredictable nor railing; Biddable;)*

   *Mudzimu usina shura kana shungu; Panzuro ndipo peshisi.*
   *(A spirit without brooding or anger; What she was yesterday she is today)*

L1.1 and 3 of 27 are parallel even in their pattern of alliteration. The alliteration of 1.4 is inherent.

**Typology**

The oral and sung poetry of Shona is tentatively divided into the following types:

1. Praise poetry addressed to people in virtue of their clan affiliation (*Nhetembo*).
2. Praise poetry addressed to people in virtue of their social role and personal qualities (*Made-tembedzo*).
3. Didactic poetry recited in order to implant and transmit traditional sentiments and values (*Nhango dzepadare*).
4. Critical poetry aimed at expressing or rectifying social ills and personal grievances (*Nheketserwa*).
5. Poetry recited at wakes to console and hearten the bereaved (*Nhembo*).
6. Entertaining verse (*Ndiringo*).

The above types are mainly spoken or intoned, but sung varieties are found as well, such as minstrels’ songs and the critical songs sung during threshing. What follows are sung:

7. Songs sung to accompany communal activity such as work in the fields, dancing, storytelling. Of these children’s songs sung to accompany their games form a separate category.
8. War and funeral songs.
9. Songs sung to and by the spirit of a founding father.

This list will certainly not prove to be complete or satisfactory when more is known about Shona traditional poetry; but in the absence of anything more systematic it may serve for the purpose of this paper.

**Nhetembo**

The Shona are segmented into exogamous patrilineal clans, the members of which all claim descent from a common ancestor. They also own a totem in common and a number of praise names and praises. The clan praises enjoyed considerable
Nowadays they are difficult to collect in their entirety to such an extent has their use fallen into desuetude. They were used to thank a clansman for a service and the praises used were, first of all, praises of the clansman in terms of his totem with which he was identified, and of the clan’s particular virtues. Secondly they were thanks addressed to all his ancestors. These were addressed by name, in the case of famous men, or by the names of their burial places in the case of those forgotten. It was held that the whole clan should be thanked for service done by any single member since he would have been inspired to do it by his forefathers. Indeed the primary object of thanks is the clan.

In style the clan praises are apostrophic and consist largely of praise names addressed to the clan, the imagery of the totem being used. This is often striking and bold. In other lines the ancestors in their several burial places are addressed, these being the names of places where the clan once lived and left their dead. No one should be left out from thanks for who knows which ancestor was responsible for the kind thought? They are to be thought of as collectively responsible for any good deed done by a member of their clan.

In delivery the praises are recited in short lines with a special accent of final length and falling tone, high-falling if the final syllable is high-toned and low-falling if it is low. This cadence marks the end of each utterance, usually a complete praise, though a praise, if long, can be distributed over several lines. Praises are grouped into stanzas by introductory words of thanks like Maita (You have done a service), Zvaitwa (A service has been done) and Hekani (Thank you). Thus stanzas can be looked on as initially linked in this way. The intent of the nhetembo dzorudzi (clan praises, cp. tetembo: utter praises, greet ceremoniously, praise, thank in traditional wise) is to express the thanks, appreciation and indebtedness of the beneficiary. The stanzas are of varying length and there is the greatest freedom in the order in which they are recited. They are not cumulative or developed to reach a climax. They are essentially a string of praises, seemingly unconnected save in their subject matter, which cluster round the object of thanks which is the clan. The lack of development and the free order in which they may be recited accords well with the apostrophic style. The praises usually have a standardised beginning and end. The beginning consists of the totem and principal praise name of the clan and the conclusion commences with the phrase Aiwa, zvaitwa and concludes with a praise name.

The following is the version of the clan praises of the Hera people under Chief Nyashanu, quoted by Musiwa. Their totem is Shava (Eland) and their principal praise name Museyamwa (Support).

**The Clan Praises of the Hera**

Thank you, my support!
Thank you, Eland.
My dear tawny one.
Thank you, Mutekedza;
The honoured dead who lie in Buhera.
You have done a service, Those of the bracelet of white beads;
Bull Eland:
Going with power and graceful ease as the noise when your knees bend reveals;
Like a region full of wasps.
Thank you, Great beast;
Those of the tails that cover the body in their sweep;
When you cross a river, the water climbs the hills in its excitement;
Those who are hunted by the silent stalkers;
When they turn a ridge, hoeing, while...
The Hera clansmen are praised in imagery taken from the eland, the animal they revere, and for certain moral qualities they are deemed to possess such as patience and self control. Mention of ancestors and ancestral sites, as in 11. 4, 5, 8 and 21, is meagre in this version compared with others. There are usually also in such praises references such as those of 1.6 which cannot be fully understood.

Thanks to the Guardian Spirits
Gracious, Guardians of the bushveld and the wild country!
The children say, “We clap our hands, And thank the lords of the land and the bushes For the relish and fruit you have given us.”

The children say, “We thank you, our fathers, For what you have done, masters and lion spirits.”
You have opened a way to good fortune, masters of men.
You rule without favour or spite;
You exercise giving without partiality;
You call whoever comes to you, “Child!”
You have a renown which covers the world;
You will please take our thanks to those who are beyond you:
It is you who must acknowledge them in our stead who do not know where they are.
Indeed, a kindness has been done, masters of the land.
You have done kindly, lords.
This poem is remarkable both for the religious feeling and its matching form, far more organized than the loose sequence of apostrophic lines in 28. In 29 we have a formal opening, characteristic of ritual thanks, in the term Hezvoka and the praise name of cl. 2a which follows. There is parallelism and initial linking between 11. 2-4 and 5-6; initial linking and repetition of the same sentiment in 11. 7-10 and partial parallelism in 11. 12-13. 14-15 are a formal conclusion. This definite yet flexible form is a fit vehicle for the praises and thanks which are in perfect taste. In comparison 28 is marked only by its division into praise stanzas of variable length and initial linking by means of the reiterated cl. 2 affix /va/. Ll. 16-17 are interesting for a form of negative-affirmative cross-linking which results in a couplet with cumulative effect.

The imagery of this love poem is clearly different from those of the clan praises. Here the interest is in the personal attractions of the beloved and images are applied through metaphor and simile to describe them. All of these praises are recurrent and hence, no doubt, traditional but there is room for adaptation to the person praised and for new and original lines. Otherwise the devices used are similar to those used in the clan praises, parallelism in 11. 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 (1. 12 being parallel to part of 1. 11); the use of praise names which compress a great deal of imagery in nominal constructions of various classes and types (cf. 11. 2, 5, 7, 13; 1. 16 is one long praise name of cl. 2a). Initial linking and alliteration (cf. 11. 11-12, 13, 17 and 19).

30. Mhezi yomunwe wangu

Houno musikana wandinoda,
Tvarkadanga, muti uSHA bimba,
Mhuyaya asina nekanongo kose.
Mhezi yomunwe wangu,

Muswa-ndakaringa.
Ane meno onenge mamanda.
Nhongora-mutsipa yomusikana,
Ane mupiya unorare-nda pamzira.
Ane mhuno iheze muswi.
Ane meso anoendaenda.
Ane kufamba kunenge kukavira nyimo,
Kutizira kuchinge kudyara nzungu.

Vachirera-nhercra vangu vava:
Vakanditi, "Fonda arnal,
Ndigosara ndokurereni."

Vanzunqu-nhokotera, niateko ndiri
Ndatoti kutakura ndotodii?
Dai pasina varoyi,
Ndingadai ndakusitira.

Pimple on my finger

Here she is, the girl I love.
Straight as a tree without a knot as it stretches up to brush the sky.
My beautiful one without a single blemish.
Pimple on my finger.

Which I turn to all day long.
She has teeth as white as fat.

Girl of the long and graceful neck,
Which a louse may not traverse in one day.
She has a nose straight as a stamper.

Eyes that shine and glisten with life.
Hers is a gait like the planting of ground-peas.

And running like the planting of ground-nuts.

My dear guardian of orphans:
Who say to me, "Slay your mother.
And I will then look after you."
Kernel of the nut, the shells being 1.

What do I do to carry you away?
But for the witches,
I would have borne you off.
Nhango dzepadare

The genre of didactic poetry in which the traditional mores and knowledge of social institutions was passed down has been called here nhango dzepadare. As the title indicates, their appropriate context is the dare, the village meeting place, where the men gather and which is the focus of village life. In the nhango the proverbs are appropriately expounded and given a context of commentary. The following example is called Rugare harumbungirwe (Peace is not seized by force) and it develops in a manner reminiscent of the Book of Proverbs the paradoxes of humility and pride.

31. Rugare harumbungirwe

Ichokwadi kuti vakuru vanoti,
"Kugariro tange-hhomo, rugare rugotereva."
Munhu akangwara anofamba akozivereka panyika;
Noushu hwake hunozviraidiza hwoga pavanhu;
Navanhu vanomupa chiremero nokuti ha-
zzvikudze.
Asi mhengerera munha inofamba yakatakura
ungwaru mumaako.
Nokuti anoti baridzira ndiwo unhu.

Chimiro chomunhu akarwana ane rukudzo
Chinokosha kupinda ndarama zvakaperwa
runa.

Mbiri haikungirwe hata, aiwa!
Mbiri inowuya yoga.
Noushwaruwo kunzvivira navanwe, kwete
muridzi.
Usafambe wakashonga uzivi hwako
pavanhu.
Rega kutamba uchiparidzira ungwaru
nouchenjeri hwako.

Zvirerekwo, ugozviisa pasi pavakuru vako.
Zvikomberoro zvinowonzwira kune vaka-
shoroka
Kunyange zvzviro dzimwe nguva vakuru
yachiri,
"Chiri pamuchena, chiri pamutenhure."
Asi vendaChinyamapezi ndovaiwana shan-
gura dzvakudzidze.

Chikara harisi henzi, Chikara imhepo ino-
ziva kwaไหว?
Varanda vakururama vakazova machinda
ashe,
Vakazopedzisira wapiwa rimwe divi kuti
vatonge
Sechipo chounhu nedikita ravo.

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This piece is clearly proverbial in its inspiration, not only because it is a development of the proverb quoted in 1.2 but also because its language and tempo are philosophical and its imagery the somewhat abstract metaphors of the moralist. The proverb in 1.2 skilfully uses cross parallelism to convey its contrasts, beginning: sequel, trouble: plenty. The poem in its first two stanzas contrasts the eloquent power of humility with pride and the false pursuit of honour. Humility is shown to be the prelude to the true blessings that come from solid worth (stanza 3). Though one proverb might seem to argue against it, the whole of the folklore and many other telling proverbs show what the received teaching of the elders is (stanzas 4, 5). The language is sententious and epigrammatic. It does not, even in its didactic aim, descend to the use of simple language since it is held that the young are best taught by saws, adages and proverbs in all their compressed and undiluted power. Because enigmatic, they are also challenging and make the young think for themselves and gradually assimilate the wisdom of their elders. Proverbs are best elucidated by reference to other proverbs. The Shona find it distasteful and banal to translate the powerful metaphors and epigrams into plain speech. However, the poem provides a context of elevated commentary so that the meaning of the proverbs, themselves expressed in homely images, may be fully appreciated.

The element of external form does not appear until 11. 31-34 where there is parallelism observed in two pairs of lines. The ideas of 11. 31-32 and 33-34 are expressed first in affirmative and then in negative form.

Nhceketerwa
Nhceketerwa or critical and satirical poetry is to be found in a variety of contexts and forms, most of them highly institutionalized and in sung form. In them the singers air their grievances, complaints and frustrations, for the Shona very sensibly believe that if mental and emotional upsets do not come out into the open they will only cause personal and social harm. There are a number of correlative registers recognised as belonging to these institutions and which differ from each other along a scale of explicitness. At one end of this parameter are nhceketerwa which are veiled, cryptic and allusive and at the other are the grinding songs of young wives airing their complaints against their mothers-in-law, the hamhara or public complaint of a man who believes he is being bewitched and the songs sung at threshing time when all inhibitions on speech are lifted and what does not come out must have a special spirit to stop it.

The language of criticism and complaint is called madimikira. It is metaphorical and indirect. Different situations will call for different depths of metaphor and allusion and the Shona are very skilful at gauging the depth required so that the language used may be intelligible but avoid being actionable, hurtful or embarrassing by being too direct. Art is at the service of delicacy

So the elders have their proverbs which run.
"If you want food from a nursing mother, you must hold her baby for her."
"The way to the heart of an inherited wife is to think of her children more than of her."
"When the mother rewards, the quiet child gets the stirring stick to lick."
"When you beg, humble yourself; arrogance will belittle your need."
A chief cannot expect to be treated as a chief outside his country.
A good character is a legacy that dies with you.
An upright character cannot be passed on by will.
A just man is singled out for special treatment everyday.
But an evil man just gets the common lot.
An upright character is more precious than gold.
and produces pieces which are admirable for their imagery and the adjustment of their imagery to the situation in which they are spoken. It may be because of their aesthetic requirements in verbal art quite as much as for social and moral reasons that the Shona avoid plain speech in the language of social comment. These qualities fuse in the verbal art of the responsible person, as much at one end of the scale as that of the other. The interest in this type of poetry lies in the imagery which is never absent even in the mavingu, the

complaints which a wife may address to her husband.

The following example, entitled Madimikira, might be spoken by a village head at the dare in the evening. He is seizing the occasion to comment on a number of things for which he has been biding his time.

Mwoyo womukuru nditoorera (The heart of an elder is a fertile heap of compost.) It brings forth the fruits of reflection but with no very clear thread of meaning to link them together as far as the outsider is concerned.

32. Madimikira

Zuva igore.
Rinodoka rava namavi namavya.
Mhosva kaina mweni.
Upfumi kahutukenherwe,

5 Asi hunotoenda pane kumwe.
Cheinhanza ndechinhanza.
Chonudzimu ndechawadzirwa.
Rega dzive shiri.
Mazai haana muto.

Kugona nhavatava kuivevedzera.
Imbwa ivete
Harmutsirwe kudya. Inokuruma.
Kufa hwchanga.
Mazai anoparara.

10 Haabatirwe chake semuRozvi.
Kutceya riva mumutsva,
Usatye mhapa kusviba.
Makodzi akasimira mhapa,
Kupengera varume.

20 Dende dzvuku, mukari mumendye.
Gonzo mhini, gara mumhango.
Chonudzimu chikuwaniremo.
Vari kumunondo nvivo vavuya.
Vari kunusha zvigeje.

Kuva nezivo kuvu nesimba.
Imhashu yomurwere
Inogochwa yakabawa gumbo.
Kutchengeta imbwa yomufanibi
Kuda tenzi wayo.

Allusive Sayings

One day is like a year.
It sets with its fill of bad and good.
Where faults are concerned, no one can plead ignorance.
Wealth cannot be forced like cattle into their pen,
It only goes where there is some already.
Luck is luck and
A gift from your ancestors will be yours by name.
Let the birds hatch out.
Eggs make no broth.
To catch a rogue in the act you have to follow him.
A sleeping dog
Is not roused from its food lest it bite.
When a guinea fowl dies
Its eggs are scattered.
A man objects to have his property taken like the Rozvi.
When you set a trap in burnt grass,
You do not worry about soiling your rear-skin.
If insolent women have on their rear-skins.
They treat men with contempt.
A red gourd is bitter inside.
Tailless rat, stay in your hole.
If you want to enjoy a natural death.
Those who are in the forests are lucky.
For those at home nothing is free from trouble.
Knowledge is strength.
The locust of a poor man
Is roasted by the leg.
If you care for a traveller's dog,
You show love to its owner.
Zvaunu mutsvuku, chizocherwa.
Ruzivo rwendangariro
Kumachindarume nemachindakadzi,
Makara aakomana.
Anoera mvura nechigunwe anonyima.

Since you are ruddy and ripe, be ready to be plucked soon.
Wisdom and folly
Are like young men and women.
Wild beasts that avoid each other.
She who measures water with her thumb is stingy
And it is as with a goat belonging to a passing traveller.
Avoiding a fool of an old man
Means denying yourself instruction.
You revealed your true character, mother-in-law, by eating all the fish
And your son-in-law has thrown away the fish trap.
Let it be only once, a first-born calf.

The introduction (11. 1-2) warns that the old man has plenty to say and that he speaks to those who know, or should know, what is right (11.3).
L. 4-7 urge work, 11. 8-15 avoidance of intemperate action particularly if so advised by bad companions. Though fair on the outside, they infect one by their conversation. L. 21-5 advise against being provocative or taking offence too quickly; 11.26-9 state that everything is to be gained by tact and a soft answer. An overwhelming sense of one’s own importance will land one into trouble (11.30); wisdom and folly do not mix (11. 31-3).
Stinginess, (11. 34-5), arrogance in the young (11. 36-7) and another unattractive trait, such as meanness (11. 38-39), all adding up to lack of magnanimity, are condemned with the plea that this behaviour be not repeated.
Parallelism, with many different degrees of similarity, both within and between lines, is very evident (cf. 11. 1-2, 6-7, 10, 23-4, 25, 28-9. 36-7): L1. 4-5 show cross linking with negative-assertive contrast. The piece is uttered in phrases as set out. The proverbs in themselves have a variety of meanings and applications but their combination and particular sequence in any recital are deliberate and converge to convey a consistent meaning to those in the know. The language and constructions used are terse and severely economical, each morpheme used carrying its maximum reference particularly the person and class affixes (11. 6-7, 22, 23-4). This genre, and that of the nhango dzepadare, which expound and form the setting for the tsumo, the proverbs, are obviously influenced greatly by structures which the proverbs use and which second and serve the communication of their meaning with such deft felicity.

Nhembo dzorufu
Funerals are the occasions for recitals, or the expression of sentiments of varying length, which convey sympathy to the bereaved and are aimed at heartening them in their affliction. The context may be the dare where the men of the village and those who have come to mourn and console are gathered and the time either in the evening or morning before the burial or after it. Mourners do not come to share the funeral meal without expressing appropriate sentiments. The recital may pass from one man to another and as each one speaks others will chime in to show their agreement. This will explain the way in which these nhembo dzorufu have been set out as if recited by a leader and chorus, respectively A and B, though the part of leader passes from one to another.

33. Kuipa kusina magumo
A: Iwe mfu, zita rako rinotyisa.
B: A, kutyisara kutetete?
A: Hapana anoda ushamwari newe.
B: Umguite ushamwari neravambira?

Limitless evil
A: Death, your name is a fearful one.
B: And is the fright a small one?
A: No one wants friendship with you.
B: Would you be friends with a deadly snake?
A: You are not a good friend.
B: How could he be good friend?
A: You have tremendous sway over men.
B: A sway like what else?
A: Everyone dislikes you, shuns you.
B: And is that a slight shunning?
A: No one is too clever, too much of a hero for you.
B: A clever son of whom?
A: Your coming throws all into confusion.
B: Can the mouth utter such confusion?

A: You are not a good friend.
B: How could he be good friend?
A: You have tremendous sway over men.
B: A sway like what else?
A: Everyone dislikes you, shuns you.
B: And is that a slight shunning?
A: No one is too clever, too much of a hero for you.
B: A clever son of whom?
A: Your coming throws all into confusion.
B: Can the mouth utter such confusion?

A: Hauna munhu ari parufaro rwakadi!
B: Zvinoonekwa naani izvozvo?
A: Hauna tsitsi noruregerero kana wasvika.
B: Chinoregerera munhu ndicho chii?
A: Mwoyo wako hauna kana nekatsiisi zvako.

A: Hauna munhu ari parufaro rwakadi!
B: Zvinoonekwa naani izvozvo?
A: Hauna tsitsi noruregerero kana wasvika.
B: Chinoregerera munhu ndicho chii?
A: Mwoyo wako hauna kana nekatsiisi zvako.

A: No one is so happy as to be safe from you.
B: By whom would that be seen?
A: You have no pity or mercy in your approach.
B: What sort of thing is it that shows mercy?
A: Your heart has not a scrap of pity.
B: A scrap of pity from where?
A: Truly, Death you inspire fear.
B: So his is the final word, is it?
A: Your evil cannot be compared with anything else.
B: What can be compared to it?

A: Hauna munhu ari parufaro rwakadi!
B: Zvinoonekwa naani izvozvo?
A: Hauna tsitsi noruregerero kana wasvika.
B: Chinoregerera munhu ndicho chii?
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B: Chinoregerera munhu ndicho chii?
A: Mwoyo wako hauna kana nekatsiisi zvako.

These are but two stanzas arbitrarily chosen from a long series. The threnody is expressed in the form of a number of complaints addressed to death in the most direct manner and which express well the mortal predicament of man. There are no madimikira here. The responses are based on the principle of linking, usually a word in the second half of the line being chosen, and all interrogative. At times a different response is chosen, which does not involve repetition, as a variation. These nhembo dzeparufu and their responses would repay study as they express in a clear way the Shona philosophy of life and death.

Ndyaringo

The term ndyaringo is another large category of recitals. They are told mainly for entertainment and the examples which have been examined seem to deal with two sorts of material, social institutions and events or happenings which are notable or extraordinary in some way or other. They are notable for their vivid language, their extravagant humour and exaggerated descriptions in which ideophones play an important part. Ndyaringo are often fitted into the various culturally determined divisions of life and its activities. One may deal with marriage negotiations in their sequence, another with an adventure explicitly segmented and described according to the times of the day. Some ndyaringo are satirical and most, like folk tales, convey a moral, distilled from the recital, which may be expressed in a proverb at the end. Ndyaringo make use of the usual poetic devices being distinguished from the other genres by subject matter, language and style.

As an example here are a few lines from a description of a visit of a marriage intermediary to arrange the bride-wealth.
34. Kuchiri kuvuora here?

*•

Mune inwe nyikayo isingadlwedwe,
Nyiikayo ina vanhuva navatezvura vasingadlwedwe.
Mumwe mukinda ndokuti mwanusikana
vavo tsavara.
Hapo pakundotumira mari yerusambowere
zyino.

5 Sanatume akashana mari yaperevedza
zviveketero.
Musikana ndokubva angora pagumi rine
rere.
Vatezvura zvunyoro repondi piku, zatwira
muroomo.
Pondo piku, chigaro chavatezvura:
Pondo piku, swingura honwe.

10 Pondo shani uri, makanzina wani?
Vamutya pondo shana, mwanawaranwa.
Paimuni tuna wavatezvura pondo mbiri,
mwanawaranwa.

In ndyaringo a good deal of fun and entertainment is given both by the subject matter (description or social comment) and the racy style. This genre shares a common approach to events and institutions with the item songs of which examples were given earlier in this paper. Ndyaringo also exists in sung form as minstrels’ songs.

The other types of poetry which have been distinguished need not detain us here. They are remarkable chiefly for their developed verse form which involves the co-operation of a leader and an interweaving chorus which can take all sorts of shapes and forms. Save for the mhondoro songs, which may contain statements of varying length in the allusive styles, these songs are not notable for content. There are, of course, many occasions in which nheketerwa are sung. The threshing songs of the jakwara have been mentioned. Beer drinks are also the occasion for songs of reproach or complaint. The children’s verses which accompany memory games as well as others said or sung at other times have provided Kumbirai with a number of models which will be studied another time.

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1. Madetembedzo Akare Namatsva. Cape Town, Longmans, 1959; the traditional poems were collected by M. Shamuyarira, the modern poems written by W. B. Chivaura and S. Manyika. Matinhimira Wedetembo, ed. C. R. Musiwa, Salisbury, Longmans in association with the Rhodesia Literature Bureau, m.d.; the traditional praise poems were collected by the editor, the modern poems written by W. B. Chivaura, P. Christie, P. T. Kazembe, J. C. Kumbirai, G. D. Mandishona, M. Manyika and E. M. Muzeze. Mabvumira Enhetembo. Gwelo, Mambo Press in association with the Rhodesia Literature Bureau, 1969; this is a much more substantial work than its two forerunners. Edited by the Shona Section of the Literature Bureau, it contains work

2. The materials for this study are somewhat slender since it is only recently that the Shona have taken to giving poetry a written form:
(b) The writer has copies of unpublished verse by J. C. Kumbirai, E. Mudadzira Muzeze, S. M. Mutswairo and E. J. Zvobgo.
(d) The three anthologies already mentioned and other journals which have printed poems in Shona very occasionally, such as Mumo and NADA.

3. The past tense is used to describe the social role of Shona poetry because the description applies to an ever decreasing number of people. Social change, evident in urbanisation, education and religion, has divorced most people aged forty and under from their traditional literature in its fullness.

7. COPE, p. 38.
8. Ibid., p. 45.