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19 Music, Gender and Religion in Botswana

Culture Spears Traditional Group

Kenosi Molato & Musa Dube

Abstract

Music has a way of navigating through the complexities of life and brings healing to the realm that words cannot express. In African societies, there is a song for different occasions and events in life. There is a song for those who mourn for the lost ones. As such, music is perceived as a religion that encompasses African lives. Undergirding these songs is an image of African societies and their worldview. For it is through the music that one can glimpse the behaviour and norms of the society. This chapter therefore seeks to interrogate the traditional music of Botswana examining the concept of gender in the songs. The paper focuses specifically on the traditional group Culture Spears and examines its popular songs. The aim of the paper is to unravel some of the gender issues and concepts in these songs.

Introduction

Music in African society is perceived as a form of religion because it permeates everything that Africans do (Mbaegbu 2015:177). As such, there is always a sound of music at funerals, music made through singing and clapping of hands could be heard from afar when the women are working in the fields, there is always a song to accompany men when dig the graves of their beloved ones and music aids in the religious spaces whereby the ancestors are called upon to intervene in the affairs of the community (Mbaegbu 2015:177). At the heart of African culture, music functions as a resource that motivates Africans to face their maladies and to push through the storms (Oikelome 2019:185). Some of the popular songs are liberation songs that are common in African culture and demonstrate an outburst of liberation (Chitando 2007:334-347). Oikelome (2019:185) argues that music in African societies is a synthesis of different fabrics that constitute how music is composed. The manifestation of the music is not

only relegated to the lyrics of the song but more so in relation to the way the people dance. A person who is new to the African societies will always be staggered and surprised by the music which is always followed by dances in African festivals. Oikelome (2019:185) writes, “Dance is a type of art that generally involves movement of the body, often rhythmic and to music. It is performed in many cultures as a form of emotional expression, social interaction, or exercise, in a spiritual or performance setting, and is sometimes used to express ideas or tell a story.” The African traditional music is not only centered on dance but it is also didactic in that it is a medium by which the traditions of the culture are transferred from one generation to another (Nzewi 1999:35). It is in this sense that music is the window to the cultural norms of the society. Thus, it reveals significant concepts such as gender and patriarchy.

It is in this space that this chapter seeks to interrogate the relation between religion, gender, and music in African societies, especially in relation to Setswana traditional music. The chapter will primarily focus on Culture Spears, a Setswana traditional group interrogating the concepts of gender and music. The chapter starts by setting forth the history and the background of Setswana traditional music noting its popularity and the decline of this genre in the country. Secondly, the chapter will set the background of Culture Spears. The chapter will then interrogate three Cultures Spears's songs, examining the concept of gender. In the final section, the chapter will provide a concluding analysis.

History and Background of Traditional Music in Botswana

Elizabeth Wood's work on the history of Setswana music gives some insight into the Setswana culture and tradition. She notes that there is music for every occasion among the Batswana (Wood 1985). There's music for funerals and music when the men are plowing the fields. There are songs, which are dedicated to the inauguration of a chief, and a song for the young men when they go to the initiation schools. Setswana culture just like other African cultures has music as both a sense of entertainment and also as a source of connecting with the Ancestors. The songs are performed at different events or festivals such as *mantsho a ngwana* (when a baby's mother comes out of confinement), *Bogwera and Bojale* (initiation schools), during Christmas and New Year festivals, and political rallies (Nhlekisana 2007:35).

The diversity of Botswana communities entails that there are varieties of genres representing every ethnic group. This constitutes different genres that are windows to setswana music and reveals cultural issues that are taking place in every ethnic group in Botswana. However, due to Botswana gaining independence in 1966, some of the genres and traditional instruments were lost (Kekaletswe 2018). This is because the country became more urbanized in the sense that when people gravitated towards the cities, some of the traditional concepts and music were put aside for those that were popular at the time. Moreover, in terms of musical instruments, urbanization led to the fact that the skills of playing some local musical instruments were also lost as well (Kekaletswe 2018). The mining industry in South Africa also contributed to the declining and disappearance of the traditional music in Botswana in the sense that most of the Batswana men traveled to South Africa for work. And in those environments, they learned and acquired new music skills from other African countries and abandoned their traditional and local playing skills.

Thus, modernization and globalization played some roles in the decline of traditional music in Botswana from the perspective that this genre took a back seat on music' in the global stage. This came also with the disappearance of some of the traditional institutions which promoted this genre as they also began to decline in the country at large (Johnson 1973: 889). As the country began to be urbanised the community setting which demanded this kind of music began to be eroded as individualism began to take the central stage in setswana societies. The community style of singing was one of the crucial elements in Setswana traditional music. Kekaletswe (2018) writes, "Community singing is a core musical tradition in Botswana. Sometimes performed in age groups or along gender lines, community singing is either predominantly acapella or performed with minimal instrumental accompaniment. Drums and wind instruments such as whistles and *lepatata* (made from kudu horn) are occasionally used to add to the performance, particularly in the case of male groups." The central point of this music is what is called a "call" and "response". The call and response are made up of the leader of the song and the responders of the song (Kekaletswe 2018). In this way, the leader known as *Motlabeletsi* starts and leads the song. In the process, the responders will respond to his leading by picking up the lines that respond to the song, which the leader had begun begun. This style of call and response is more common in the rural traditional choir performance. This genre is encapsulated within a narrative style of singing. In this narrative style singers

imitate different kinds of activities such as hunting, wedding, the inauguration of the king, failed marriages, etc. (Kekaletswe 2018). The male aspect of the community style of singing is known as *dikoma*. This style of singing originates from the initiation school whereby men are taught how to hunt and fight their enemies. This style of singing therefore brings to the public what men are taught in the initiation schools. Women, on the other hand, sing *bojale* songs that also relate to their training in the initiation schools as well. Women's songs, as compared to men's songs, are feminine in the sense that theirs encapsulate some of the things that women encounter such as working in the fields during the harvest seasons and taking care of their families. Some of their songs also reveal some of the struggles that women face in society.

Besides the community style of singing, Setswana traditional music also has a soloist style of singing (Kekaletswe 2018). This soloist style of presentation is mostly performed at different events in the country such as at the kgotla gatherings, weddings and inauguration of the chiefs. Some of the popular soloists in the country are Stika Sola, Boruru Oageng, Lonaka Matlapeng, and Solly Sebotso. Most of these soloists use a guitar as their main instruments while others use a horn while others such as Ratsie Setlhako used a harp. In relation to the popular usage of a guitar among the soloists, Kekaletswe argues that a guitar is the cheapest instrument as compared to other instruments. Thus, most people are able to afford it. These performers were often the sought-after singers in the country based on the fact that their songs were mostly Setswana songs. Their songs captured and revealed some of the issues facing the majority of the population. As such, the masses would rally around these singers because their songs resonated with them... though setswana traditional music was popular in certain events in the country, however, it declined as the country developed. This is because the Western style of music became more popular in the country and people began to favour Western music. It was around 2006-2010 that Setswana traditional music began to be popular again (Mutsumi 2016). The Botswana Gazette reporter Lesego Mutsumi notes that the year 2006-2010 could be termed as Botswana traditional dance "golden years" in the sense that it was a time when the Botswana major traditional groups gained international recognition (Motsumi 2016). This genre was no longer under the shadow of Western music for it attracted the attention of international stages. It is the time in which groups like Culture Spears, Matsieng, machesa, and individual artists such as Shumba Ratshega came onto the scene and became popular

in Botswana and Southern Africa at large. Lesego Mutsumi argues that this was because this traditional music began to be commercialized at the time (2016). The commercialization of this music meant that the traditional music was no longer on the periphery but rather it came on the scene to compete both in the national and international stages. Writing about the sudden rise of this period, Lesego Mutsumi (2016) writes, “The sudden rise of the genre was a point in Botswana’s music history where almost everyone seemed to be in the mood for something genuinely local, and it was thought that this period would herald a new dawn for local music, especially traditional; that would continue to hold its own against music from anywhere in the world.” Mutsumi (2016) argues that it was the yearning for something local that contributed towards the rise of this genre that put this music both at the national and international levels. This entails that Setswana music was able to be represented and had a voice on the international stage. Thus, the music was able to contribute towards the international market with a genre that captures the worldview of Botswana at large. Consequently, music is the window of the culture; the international stage was now able to see the tradition of Botswana displayed through music.

However, this golden age of Setswana traditional music was short-lived in the sense that after 2010 there was a decline of Setswana traditional music in the country (Mutsumi 2016). There are many hypotheses stated as the cause of the decline of the genre of music after 2010. In an interview that was held by Sky News asking questions concerning the decline of the Setswana traditional genre, one of the participants Shumba Ratshega blamed the Botswana media for the decline and the lack of support (Mutsumi 2016). He notes, “Right now we don’t even have one program that focuses on traditional music. Our music is not played on radio stations and television; they give priority to other genres...they say they can’t play our music because it is vulgar and controversial! Songs can be censored and *pina ya setswana ga ena bosekelo*.” He notes that the media favours foreign music over Setswana traditional music. Ratshega argues that the media refuses to play their music because it is controversial and vulgar in the way in which it depicts things. As has already been stated, music is a window to the culture and society. Thus, the Setswana traditional music reveals the concepts of Botswana such as the hierarchical setting and gender insensitivity, which is common among Botswana communities. It is in the setting of the hierarchical structure that women are relegated to the bottom of the ladder while men are placed at the pinnacle

of the structure and everything revolves around them. Consequently, the current citizens of the country are enlightened to the ideas of gender thus when traditional music is played the people are now aware of the prevalence of this issue as such, they conclude that the setswana music has vulgar language is why some of the songs are prohibited from being played on the local radios. This therefore contributed to the decline and the downfall of Setswana traditional music.

Culture Spears cultural, traditional group

This Setswana traditional music group was founded in Botswana and its focus in its inception was Setswana traditional dance. Instead of a soloist style of singing, Culture Spears adopted the community style of singing with the emphasis of narrative presentation. Culture Spears songs always tell and narrate a story which is rooted in the setswana cultural concepts and values. Each song has a song leader and it is backed by other group members who respond to the leading of a song leader. The core leading figures of this group in its inception were Kabelo and Magedeline Lesolebe-Mogwe (Charma gal).¹ The rhythm was set on the tune of Sesarwa traditional style and the dance resembled the Sesarwa dance as well.² Culture spears songs were well known in Southern African, which could be heard across Southern African countries even in Central African countries as well. As compared to another Setswana traditional dance group such as the “*ditholwana*”, Culture spear chose to incorporate modern instruments in its tunes. It became the well-known group in southern Africa when through their most popular song title *khulenyana*. It is through the music that the Setswana traditional music took a centre stage in the 21st century. In the sense that the music was not only played by beating traditional drums and clamping of hands but the music was given the modern-day instrumentality that were set on the rhythm of Setswana traditions. This shift made the culture spears to receive international recognition by becoming one of the first Setswana traditional groups to receive an award in South Africa.

¹ Botswana’s Culture Spears break up? | A re di fefere le Tilo ngwana Rashaka (wordpress.com).

² This style is commonly known as a representative of Setswana traditional music.

Culture spears balances between the Setswana traditional and the Setswana lyrics, which open a window to Setswana cultural norms. The dance therefore reflected the interpretation of the rhythms of the song. Setswana traditional dance as expressed by the culture spears captured some of the thoughts, emotions and more so captured and reflected some of the narrative such as hunting. It is in some of the song such as *Khulenyane* that the dance expressed some of the actions of the song sets it in motion. It is in this area that culture spears became one of the leader groups in representing Setswana traditions and music. This genre therefore came from the periphery into the center stage of world music.

The leaders of the group were at the time Kabelo Mogwe and Magedeline Lesolebe-Mogwe (Chama gal) later on married. Some argue that it is the marriage of these leaders that led to the fall of the group in the sense that they later on divorced which led to friction and division within the group.³ Later on, Chama gal started her own band forsaking both the marriage and Culture spears. Even after the split of the group, it continued to produce some hit songs but it will never be compared with its initial stage whereby it dominated local music and even the international music.

In the next sections, this chapter will interrogate three of culture spears such as: 1) Khudu, 2) Tshedi Rine e kae, and finally 3) Mmapula. The chapter seeks to interrogate gender concepts, which motivate these songs.

Khudu by Culture Spears

This song is set to the tune of Setswana tune and Setswana traditional music with a rhythm derived from the Setswana cultural genre. Thus, it calls for Setswana traditional dance style as an interpretation through dancing style. In this way, the lyrics of the song are more hidden by the rhythm and the dancing style. Hence most of the Setswana song's lyrics are hidden by the Setswana idiom expression the listener might be moved by the tune of the song then miss the lyrics of the song and completely miss the message of the song. Consequently, those who argue that African music is not lyrically centered only examine the dancing in this style therefore are oblivious to the sophistication of the idiomatic expressions in Setswana genres.

³ Botswana's Culture Spears break up? | A re di fefere le Tilo ngwana Rashaka (wordpress.com).

The background of this song Khudu is a love story in an African Setswana traditional village. In the song, a young man is in love with a girl for he has fallen head over hills with her and he cannot help himself. However, the young do not have the guards to approach her, and more so he does not have the sophistication skill and language that will wear a girl to him. Thus, he relies on his trustworthy friend to assist him in his endeavor to win the girl's heart. The name of his friend is called *khudu* translated as a tortoise. The name tortoise depicts some form of slowness. One wonders whether the name *khudu* reflects the character of the young man who is in love with the girl or his friend. But based on the judgment of the character of the young man and *Khudu* in the song, the name reflects the character of a young who is in love but afraid of the lady rather than his friend *Khudu*.

The song brings an image and characters of Setswana folk myth in the way in which it is composed and written. In the Setswana folktales, the wisest animal is the rabbit thus if the writer of the song wanted to depict the sophistication of *Khudu's* friend he was supposed to have named him Mmutla meaning the rabbit rather than tortoise. This entails that *Khudu's* friend was so fearful of women that he had to send one of a slowest people to approach a girl on his behalf. Thus, he was a laughing stock to his peers even to his friend *Khudu* because he was not seen as a man enough for manhood in this sense is defined by the ability to approach women and to propose love to them. This depicts the gender insensitivity that comes from culture whereby women are seen as animals that can be pursued for fun and a man is defined by the ability to pursue them (women). Young boys are raised with this concept of pursuing and hunting them women for fun.

Khudu in the narration of the song acts as a sycophant. A sycophant is a person who takes advantage of another. Sycophant most of the time acts like he does not possess the ability to cause harm but will always catch the victim unaware of the danger that he brings. While *Khudu* plays as a sycophant in the content of the song, this might suggest that the young man who is in love overlooked *khudu* as the character of the tortoise suggests. The song implies in the beginning that *Khudu* was a trustworthy young man and loyal to his friend. Thus, the friendship between the young man and *Khudu* established some elements of loyalty and trustworthiness between the two of them. This is common in Setswana tradition, especially between the herd boys. There might be only two of them at the cattle post taking care of their parent's domestic animals. Their friendship has been

established that there was no one else to turn to. Thus, they were blood brothers who desired nothing else but good to one another. This implied that they were able to confidently share their secrets with one another and now the young man had the confidence of sharing with *Khudu* about the love he had for *Rebabedi*.

The young man who is in love or secretly loves *Rebabedi* sends his friend *Khudu* to the lady to speak on his behalf. However, instead of proposing and speaking for his friend to the lady (*Rebabedi*) in flowering terms, *Khudu* ends up pulling the character of his friend into the mud; Speaking ill about his friend to the girl. *Khudu* informed the lady that the man who sent him to propose to her on his behalf urinated in the blanket. This is the worst derogatory accusation in Setswana tradition. This entails that *Khudu's* friend has a strong sense of smell of urine and therefore he is unworthy to be in a relationship. Undergirding this derogatory is the idea that the lady might rather consider *khudu* himself rather than his friend (young man). *khudu* as a sycophant takes an advantage of his friend weakness of inability to speak for himself to a lady and at the end of the day *khudu* ends up winning the heart of the lady. Amid the drama of the song is the literary device that conveys the deception of the trusted friend. Though some might perceive this as the moral of the story the concept goes deeper than just betrayals in the sense that gender becomes the main issue in the song.

In the song, the young man requested feedback from *Khudu* because he had sent him to propose to the lady (*Rebabedi*) on his behalf. However, the young man realizes that his best friend *khudu* is avoiding him and keeping a distance between them. He realizes that *Khudu* has lied about him to the lady instead of speaking kindly on his behalf to her. As such, the young man now begins to notice that *khudu* is a deceiver. In the song, the young man starts to name *khudu*, “*noga e tlhogo pedi*” translated as *Chilorhinophis carpenteri*. This snake in Setswana tradition depicts the highest form of deception and trickery. The lyrics of the song repeat the line, “*wena Khudu ga ke go tshepe*” demonstrating that the young man no longer trust *Khudu* because of what *Khudu* has done is both to lie behind his back and dragging his name on the mud, especially to the woman whom he so dearly loves. At the core of this line is a fight over a lady. In some instances, these are some of the things that lead to gender-based violence and passion killing in the sense that the men might kill one another and also kill the lady because of a failed romance.

The song at its core is gender insensitive in that it is centered on a girl named, “*ReBabedi*” who is depicted as a person who could satisfy sexual pleasure. In this way, the patriarchal setting of Setswana tradition influences the song Khudu as it is charged by the masculinity that is depicted by dominating women for sexual pleasure. The line, “*Re babedi tisa kwano*”, explicitly unravels the sexual appetite. In this line, the singer literally requests for sexual encounter with the lady *Rebabedi*. This sexual line is hidden behind the literary masterpiece of Setswana idioms. The name *Re babedi* means, “We are only two now give me sex”. Hence the song is set on the dancing tune the listener might miss the underlying play of words and therefore concentrate on the rhythm. Underneath, the singer is calling forth the lady so that they might indulge in sexual activities. Allan Merriam argues that Music is crucial in the sense that it documents the norms of the culture. It is in this that when this song is interrogated it opens a window to Setswana culture concerning the role of women. Though there is an African renaissance in African societies that is trying to revitalize the African norms of life, this renaissance also brings along with the aspect of the marginalization of women in the 21st century.

Tshedi Ring e kae? Culture Spears

This song has a background of Setswana's traditional wedding and marriage. As the title of the song suggests, it is the “ring” that entails that the song's main point is about African marriage. The underlying factor is that this song shows the importance of marriage in the Setswana community especially to the parents who hand over their daughter to be married. It is therefore a desire of most parents in Setswana communities to hand over their daughter in marriage; for marriage gives them prestige in the community. The families that had daughters that were not married are often scorned in the community. Thus, the unmarried are called, “Mahetlwa” literally meaning those that have been passed by. As such, to avoid such scorn the family will try as much as possible to see that their daughters are married. It is commonly known in African culture that when the two couples get married it is not only the couples who are united by marriage but the families from those couples are introduced as family members as well (Resane, 2023). In the marriage ceremonies the two families are introduced to each other and the phrase, “We are now a family” is repeated. As long as the couple remains together the ties between the two families

become stronger and divorce wreck these families apart. Therefore, it is compulsory for the bride (Makoti) to endure all the hardships that she will face in her family no matter the circumstances. This is because the honor of her family is encapsulated in her not leaving her marriage no matter what might happen. She is compelled even to die no matter the abuse because of her family's honor.

In this song, Tshedi who is a character of a Bride is asked about the ring. She is being literally asked about her marriage by her parents. Writing to married women in southern Africa Mohatle notes, "The daughter-in-law is expected to wake up very early in the morning to do chores that will be acceptable in that family; otherwise, she will be subjected to different forms of abuse by the women living in the house and the neighbors where she is married." Moreover, the daughter-in-law is supposed to prove that she is truly a daughter-in-law by waking up in the morning to do some chores in the house (Resane 2023:4). This entails that a daughter-in-law does not only suffer abuse from her husband but more so also from the entire family in which she is supposed to prove herself as a real *Makoti*.

The song suggests that Tshedi has walked away from her marriage leaving her husband and the kids. Traditionally for the woman to leave her kids behind entails that she suffered from abuse in her marriage. However, instead of counseling her or talking to her to find out what has transpired in her marriage, the parents remind Tshedi that they took her to the in-laws and that *Lobola* was paid in full amount. Thus Resane (2023:2) writes, "When *bogadi* transaction is completed, the *makoti's* family gains a son while *mogwe's* family gains a daughter. *Makoti* becomes part of her husband's family, and this joining is carried out socio-religiously for the dead and the living to acknowledge, accept, and bless her." Thus, the parents are not concerned with the welfare of their daughter, but with their prestige and honour in the society. This shows that their daughter is perceived as a property that is used as a transaction for honour in the community rather than a human being who needs to be taken care of and who has human rights that need to be defended. The main question that is at the center of the song is where is your ring? This question is repeated as a chorus in the song to authenticate the brutality of working away from marriage. The brutality is that other family will scorn and laugh at them because their daughter has walked away from marriage. The question where is your ring? This becomes the primary question that Tshedi's parents are taunting her with. The implication is, "You don't have a home here anymore go back to your marriage".

At the beginning and the middle of the song the phrase, “*Ga dilwa di gatla marole*” which is literally interpreted as when the bulls fight in the kraal, they step on the calf is repeated again and again. The idiom in first glance sounds like it is out of place for the question is who is it referring to and who is suffering because of the fights? The implication is that the couples are referred to as the fighting bulls and that it is their families that are suffering from these fights. This entails that the family members were benefiting from this marriage. Consequently, when the marriage ceases to function the family members are also affected as well. This demonstrates that marriage is the pinnacle of the Setswana society. Resane (2023:2) argues that marriage is held in high esteem based on the fact that it contributes to the economy of the community. Resane (2021:33-42) again argues, “It is in many occasions, women who under strenuous circumstances, till the land, plant the crops, care for them until their full maturation ready for consumption.” It is in this light that the singers in this song state that they are now ashamed of the society and more so ashamed of their daughter who failed to endure the hardships of marriage. This means that according to them, she is not a woman enough for womanhood is defined by being able to stand against the abuses and hardships of marriage.

The song then turns towards the bridegroom informing him of his deeds of walking away from marriage. The song does not reveal the reason why he walked away from his marriage for in most cases it is only women who walk away from marriage because of abuses from their in-laws and their husbands. The bridegroom is asked where are your children? The children here refer to both his wife and kids. The line, “people will scorn and laugh at us” is repeated. This shows that marriage revolves around not on the couples but on the community especially around the in-laws because they benefit from these marriages. No wonder that even when the abuses are taking place, the victim is compelled to remain and endure the abuse for the sake of the community and their families. Rather than taking a gendered man-gendered (centred?) approach, which is popular in Setswana tradition the song then shifts towards the husband or the bridegroom. In most cases a woman is mostly blamed for the breaking of a marriage however this song recognizes something that is not popular in the community. For men are perceived as people who could do no wrong as compared to women and women are always blamed for the breaking of families. Steve Biko captures this concept in African society by stating “One of the most fundamental aspects of our culture is the importance

we attach to man. Ours has always been a man-centered society” (2000:26-30). Thus, the husband in the song is compelled to go back and resolve his family issues because his family and the community look at him with scorn as a man who has failed to take care of his family. It is the scorn and the shame of the society that makes the husband make a moral change and turn to his family to make things work. Underneath his behavior of causing havoc in his family, especially to his wife is the issue of infidelity and boyhood. Boyhood in the sense that he wanted to play out with other boys forfeiting his responsibility as a father in his house. Due to the scorning of the parents and the society as a man who failed to perform his duty, the man finally realizes and recognizes his mistake therefore he decides to go back to his wife. The underlying argument here is that the husband does not go back home because of his family but he goes back to take care of his family because the community was scorning him. Though the song presents an uncommon approach with regards to the issue of gender in the sense that the man is also held accountable for the breaking of marriage it still opens a window to the issues of what marriage is in Setswana communities.

Mmapula

The song *Mmapula* is named after a woman who is experiencing bad luck but more so that she is on the run, running away from abuses and the problems that she had encountered in her family. In the song, Mmapula is carrying along her daughter on her back running away from abuse. At its core, the song resembles a woman who is suffering and who is trying to run away from her troubles and misfortunes. As such, the song's main chorus is, “Mmapula is a woman who encounters some misfortunes”. Her misfortunes are the fact that she is divorced and she is running away from her troubles. In Setswana tradition, a woman is mostly blamed for the failure of marriage therefore in the song, it seems as if the Mmapula is encountering the same fate with no one coming to her rescue. Wherever Mmapula goes, people reject her and people are not willing to give her the assistance and help she needs. Women are always known as standing for the rights of other women however this is not so concerning Mmapula. This is because a woman who is divorced is seen as a shame as a result no one is willing to associate with her lest her misfortune contaminates them. So, they try as much as possible to stay away from her. In the

process, her misfortune reaches its peak whereby she is chased by men to rape her and her daughter. The scene therefore depicts one of the saddest things that women face in Botswana which is gender-based violence. At worst, the song unravels the sad state that most women encounter in Botswana. Hence, songs are the windows to a culture and a society this song depicts what a divorced woman faces in the country. In 2014, the rape rate in Botswana was 91.6 cases per 100,000 populations. In 2020 the Botswana Police recorded close to 2,7899 rape charges between January and November (Kuhlmann 2023). Writing concerning rape issues the University of Botswana social worker is noted saying, “GBV is spread through social and political conditions that undermine the ability of women and girls to escape from abuse. Culturally, when women report experiences of sexual harassment, the first questions are: Where was she? At what time? What was she wearing? Was she alone? All of this puts a responsibility on the individual woman for her safety, when really, these are broader social issues that need to change.” The underlying issue is that women are blamed for GBV in the sense that they are seen as the one who causes gender-based violence and the main culprits which are men are left out of the equation.

The song Mmapula encapsulates the above-mentioned brutality in that no one is willing to stand for Mmapula she listens to her story. She is blamed for her misfortune as the main and sole contributor to what has happened to her. The underlying assumption from a cultural perspective is that she has contributed to her misfortune therefore she needs to suffer for her actions. Consequently, Mmapula is unaccepted even by her own family because they assume that she carries bad luck with her wherever she goes.

Concluding Analysis

Music captures the memory and the traditions of the people. It is therefore a window to the cultural values of the society. This entails that the study of the lyrics of music is important in interrogating concepts such as gender. It is through the music of the culture that the ideology which shapes the culture is laid bare and used as a form of entertainment and also as a way of preserving those memories and ideas. In relation to the concept of gender, the interrogation of Setswana's traditional song unravels some of the oppression that women face in Setswana societies. To achieve the chapter's main goal which is to unravel the issues of gender in Setswana

traditional music, especially Culture spears cultural group music, this chapter therefore began by examining the history and the background of Setswana traditional music. Music in Setswana society permeates every aspect of the society. There is a song for everything, a song for weddings, a song for those who are mourning for their loved ones. What this chapter unravels in this section are the components that form Setswana traditional music such as soloists' style of singing and the community method of singing. Furthermore, though Setswana traditional music was at its peak from 2006 to 2010 this genre since then has declined. There are many hypotheses that have been used as the cause of this decline such as modernization and media. In the second section, the chapter presented the formation, history, and the decline of culture spear cultural groups. The chapter then analyzed three culture spears songs, which are khudu, Tshedi Ring e kae, and Mmapula. In the song Khudu, young men conflict a young lady whom they want to sleep with. The phrase "*Re babedi tisa kwano*" reveals the masculine society, which takes pride in abusing young girls through sex. These young men desire to consume girls these young girls with their sexual appetites. The song reveals the gender insensitivity that is common in Setswana communities whereby, women are reduced to sexual objects. The second song depicts the place of marriage in Setswana traditions. Tshedi has walked away from her marriage and instead of being counseled and advised wisely the family informed her that she brought shame into their family hence the family honour is tied into her staying in marriage even if she is abused. This song therefore reveals the abusive nature of which Batswana women suffer in traditional marriages. The chapter finishes with the song Mmapula. Mmapula also has encountered the same fate that Tshedi faced which is abuse in her marriage. To make matters worse, Mmapula is rejected by people even by women like her simply because she has been kicked out of her family, especially by her husband.

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