

Theme and character:
A point of reference in Serudu's
Naga ga di etelane

by

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Declaration

I declare that this mini-dissertation is my own original work. Where secondary material is used, this has been carefully acknowledged and referenced in accordance with university requirements.

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SIGNATURE

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DATE

Dedication

I dedicate this mini-thesis to the angels of my family:

Kagiso, who has a sense of responsibility;

Tebogo, my mirror and inspiration;

Kutollo, a generous soul who is an embodiment of harmony;

Lerato, a visionary who speaks what is in the heart like a poet;

Last but not least, my wife, **Themba**,

For ever complaining about all I do,

That alone has encouraged me to be strong.

Special thanks

Very special thanks to my sister, **Paulina**;

For support and caring over the years.

To my late parents, **Paul** and **Sarah**;

For their unwavering faith – *shalom!*

To my maternal grandparents, **Phetola** and **Mapula**,

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To my paternal grandparents,
Who I never saw with my naked eye,
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Chapter 1

Introduction and background

1.1 Aim of study

The study seeks to evaluate *Naga ga di etelane* and examine the author's craftsmanship in integrating **theme** and **character**. A closer analysis of the play indicates that the theme is encapsulated in three facets:

- Exile
- Wandering and
- Rootlessness

However, the real challenge is to put the aesthetic meaning of the play into perspective in terms of content and style. The author's use of language should be judged in relation to the other literary elements, which help the storyline to move forward. Here, the researcher cannot avoid the imprint of history and culture. This thought-provoking theme brings conflict into the life of the main character, Mphaka, as his family are suffering and his workplace has become 'hellfire' and his life a misery.

1.2 Significance of the study

This study is an appraisal, a reminder of the past and present political life in most, if not all African countries, lest we forget. The reality is that a number of books in literature written in Sesotho sa Leboa are a protest against the marginalisation of some groups and their voices against others.

Serudu has attempted to write about cultural conflicts and xenophobic tendencies in this play, which is different from the common trend. It should

be noted that *Naga ga di etelane* is an example of the use of culture by people today as a weapon to win their battles. In hindsight, this research communicates the fact that future researchers could start exploring cultural and xenophobic themes for the past and present moments in history.

1.3 Problem statement

Prior to 1994, the evident gap in Sesotho sa Leboa literature has been the publishing of politically-inclined literature. The apartheid regime regarded these types of materials as unacceptable to the public. Under these circumstances, some writers found other ways of informing readers about the injustices of separate development. One such writer is Serudu. Although other writers have explored **theme**, **character** and **expression**, the idea of exile and wandering has been less examined. It is in the interest of this study to examine the putative representation of homelessness, exile and wandering in *Naga ga di etelane*.

Valerie Lundberg (2008:19) asserts that in every generation there seems to be a natural drive to demonstrate dissatisfaction amid restrictive laws. This is basically what this study seeks to do, to unveil the protest disguised in fictional form. This should be understood within the context when the book was published, for in that era any overt protest would lead to a ban or censorship of such a work of art.

1.4 Status of research done

It is regrettable that very little has been written about Serudu besides being a prominent playwright in Sesotho sa Leboa. Pulane Mokgwakgwa (2000) in her Masters of Arts (MA) mini-dissertation looks at the portrayal of female characters in Serudu's three plays, namely, *A mo swina ngwanana' thakana*, *Kelelagobedi* and *Šaka la pelo*. Her focus is on female oppression by males.

However, this research does not make a comprehensive effort to confront sexism in all its forms and manifestations. Consequently, the assumptions in the foreground do not necessarily reflect the theme, but rather illuminate a certain time line in the history of literature.

In an MA dissertation, Maila (1997) analysed *A mo swina ngwanana' thakana*. In this critical analysis he devoted attention to content and the makeup of narratological levels, while emphasis is placed on the concept 'topic'. This account of the theme is briefly discussed, as it is not the researcher's focal point.

More recently, Maila and Mojalefa (1998:45–49) described the concepts, development and literary techniques used by the author in *A mo swina ngwanana' thakana*. This is not an in-depth analysis of the play but could be used for reference by future researchers.

Letsoalo (2009) in his honours degree article only discusses the plight of xenophobia as experienced by characters in *Naga ga di etelane*. This sensitive issue is not fully explored, as the researcher fails to show how the playwright has tried to bridge the gap between different cultures. Makgopa (2010) in the ALASA article develops Letsoalo's view and continues by applying some theories of xenophobia using a deconstruction approach. Nevertheless, the article only provides a theoretical framework and excludes concerns from the African diaspora.

Apart from these attempts, there are also notes but these do not provide an in-depth study of the author's work. However, these are merely examination tips and orientation notes prepared for Grade 12 learners. For example, Mokwebu (*s.a.*), Phatudi and Phasha (2008) address learning outcome number two, i.e. reading and viewing as stated in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and assessment standards based on some aspects of drama. Nevertheless, in both guides the prescribed dramatic elements

specified in the National Curriculum Statement (Home Language) are rather cursorily treated and remain trapped in ambiguity.

In general, these researchers fail to examine the social and historical conditions that have set the stage for the playwright. Further, they fall short of providing a convincing account for the circumstances that led to the playwright's choice of **themes** and **characters**. In discussing the international criteria in literature, which are components of content, the following is proposed:

The links between people can be of many kinds: employer-employee shared religious affiliation, friendship, and so on. Usually content refers to these and other normative contexts in which two people interact. When a relationship is restricted to or dominated by a single normative context of a kind that rigidly defines roles (for example, a patron-client relationship), the relationship is called single-stranded or uniplex. A relationship, which involves a greater number of role-relations, is termed multi-stranded or multiplex. A further distinction can be made between ascribed relationships and relationships which a person builds through his own actions and choices (N.W. Visser, quoted in Randolph D. Pope 1980:271).

Modern debates and theories in literature argue that the message of a text lies in its interpretation, which is not divorced from the lifeworld of a reader. The links that Pope refers to in an essay entitled *The Criticism of Criticism* are age-old breaches between writers and their critics. Thus, these are connected directly with culture and cannot be treated as exterior sources outside the landscape of the text. Through the humble attempts of the mentioned researchers, it can simply be deduced that the thread of links, which is conspicuous in the text(s) of Serudu, falls into abeyance.

It should be acknowledged that Serudu, who is an academic of note and a literary critic, has his literary output held in very high esteem by language experts, educators and scholars. The development of Sesotho sa Leboa literature will be hindered if this masterpiece (*Naga ga di etelane*) is not researched and left to posterity. Future generations of researchers are likely to examine it out of context.

1.5 The author and his works

Serudu belongs to the canon of authors in Sesotho sa Leboa, who started writing at their prime age. Without any fear of contradiction the author himself produced classics in his tenure, i.e. the 70s–90s. Two of his outstanding plays, namely, *Naga ga di etelane* (1977) and *Kelelagobedi* (1983) echo some strong political undertones. Clearly, if one considers the period in which they were written, indeed, the author has succeeded depicting the hardship and bitterness caused by the sting of the apartheid regime.

On a lighter note, the author wrote *Šaka la pelo ga le tlale* (1989) and *A mo swina ngwanana' thakana* (1991). Both plays are based on the wonderful intricacies of love and romance. Another play to complete the cycle is *Jo! Ke morwaka!* (1993), which tackles matters of freedom and democracy. Closely analysed, the plays of Serudu, advocate for social transformation in communities, which were oppressed during the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Apart from his craft as a creative writer and highly remarkable critic, Serudu translated a number of children's books from English and Afrikaans into Sesotho sa Leboa. An enormous leap in his translation work occurred when he translated Chinua Achebe's well-known novel *Things Fall Apart* and *Long Walk to Freedom*, a biography by Nelson Mandela. Later on followed *The Prophet* by Khalil Gibran, as well as *The Constitution of South Africa*.

Amongst others, he has edited the following books:

- *Matšwela* (1983), an anthology of poetry,
- *Sešegotheto* (1989), an anthology of poetry,
- *Koketšatsebo* (1989), a handbook of Sesotho sa Leboa,
- *Thagaletswalo* (1989) a series of anthologies of poetry,
- *Ditšwamaphotomoyeng* (1993), radio plays broadcast by Radio Lebowa,
- *Direto le Meretelo ya Baswana* (1994), a series of anthologies of poetry,
- *Mphufutšo wa bomakgona* (1997), an anthology of one-act plays,
- *Dikgodišakgopolo* (1997), an anthology of short stories.

Serudu's literary prowess has developed through his ceaseless exploration as a reviewer. It has also developed through his having been a staunch member of the then Northern Sotho Language Board. In one of my interviews with him, SA Makopo (See annexure A), his colleague at the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and a homeboy, says this about Serudu:

Out of the many playwrights who hold a special place in the history of Sesotho sa Leboa literature, Serudu, certainly is the most established. Today, his literary work has taken a firm stand in the wealth of our corpus, and his books are often prescribed at schools and tertiary institutions. Indeed, the man worked and studied hard throughout his lifetime, putting his heart and soul into the books he wrote. It is for this reason that he is still respected in the history of our language.

SNC Mokgoatsana shared the same sentiment when he described Serudu as a literary connoisseur (See annexure B), when he asserted that:

I had the opportunity to read his historical contributions on Writing in African languages. I found him very illuminating in the construction of a history that was never recognised to exist, painting a picture that future scholars would use to rediscover the early beginnings of an African literature. For me, his work represents the first historiographical work of good standing. As a critic, I also found him objective and courteous in the assessment of articles for publications in journals.

TJ Segooa (See Annexure C), a former student of the University of South Africa, says the following about Serudu:

I got to know Prof Serudu in my second year of Northern Sotho towards the study of B.A. degree where I met a humble and non-terrorist lecturer. He could teach an underprivileged group of part-time students of the University of South Africa in such a way that academic intimidations and impossibilities became surmountable.

In short, Serudu has contributed immensely towards the development of Sesotho sa Leboa literature. He is an academic, a literary critic, translator, language consultant and an extraordinary author who is widely recommended.

1.6 Biographical information

Majelele Mogwasha Stephen Serudu was born in Magatle Village, which is in the vicinity of Moletlane (Zebediela) on the 30 July 1935. He is the last-born son of four children (three sons and a daughter) to Letsholo Jacob and Raisibe Sophie Serudu.

He attended Magatle Primary School until 1953, where he passed Standard 6 with distinction and completed his Junior Certificate in 1955, also with distinction. He completed his Senior Certificate in 1957 at Lady Selborne, Pretoria. From 1959–1960, he was enrolled as a student teacher at the Pretoria Bantu Normal College. The college was closed down before he could complete his studies and he went on to the University College of North, now called University of Limpopo, where he obtained his teaching diploma.

From 1961-1965 he taught at Walmansdal near Pretoria. In 1966 he was employed by the SABC for Tirelo ya Sesotho sa Leboa as an announcer, translator and producer. In 1973, he was given a bursary and left South Africa to study at Bristol in the UK. This study programme focused specifically on radio, television and film script production. After completing his diploma in 1974, he was afforded the opportunity of visiting major radio and television stations in the United States of America. He returned home in 1974, equipped with valuable skills in those three fields.

He returned home with a wealth of experience, but to quote his own words:

Madimabe ke gore ge ke fihla gae ga se ke ka fiwa sebaka sa go yo šomiša tsebo ya ka thelebišeneng ya SABC ye e bego e šetše e le gona ka Afrika-Borwa.

(Serudu 2011:10)

(Unfortunately on my return home I was not given the opportunity to use my knowledge on the SABC television, which was already in existence in South Africa.)

In short, he returned to a world where well-qualified people were employed against the post, virtue had no reward and achievements were not recognised. Worse still, where the colour bar was still used as a benchmark.

All his degrees were completed through private study with the University of South Africa (UNISA). In 1975 the UNISA offered him fulltime employment in the Department of African Languages and he focussed on developing and promoting Sesotho sa Leboa in both language and literature. In 1991 he was promoted to professor and in this position he provided guidance to many Masters and Doctoral students who now occupy positions of authority in many educational institutions. He retired in September 1999.

Serudu married Mamakhudu Eunice Mojapelo (deceased) and the family was blessed with two sons (deceased) and two daughters.

His love for language developed at a very early age and continued to blossom with the passage of time. He had been writing throughout his life, and reviewing books for different publishing houses. However, it was not until 1977 when he was 42 years old that his first play, *Naga ga di etelane*, was published.

1.7 Definition of core terms

1.7.1 Theme

It is important to differentiate between the theme of a literary work and the subject of a literary work. The subject can be defined as the topic chosen by an author for his writing. The theme makes some statement about or expresses some opinion on that topic. For example, the subject of the story might be xenophobia while the theme might be the idea that there is no better place than home. This is revealed in *Naga ga di etelane*.

According to Guerin (1992:14), a theme is:

... a complex aspect of literature, one that requires very intentional thinking to discern, it is not likely to elicit the precritical response that the more palpable features do. This is not to say that it will not be felt.

The poignancy of the aforesaid could be clearly summarised as follows:

- When talking about theme reference is made to the underlying meaning of the story, a universal truth, a significant statement the story is making about society, human nature, or the human condition,
- The theme of a piece of fiction is its view about life and how people interact,
- A theme is a simile used to relate to idioms and or literary work a message or lesson conveyed by a written text.

1.7.2 Character

Round or three-dimensional characters usually have good and bad qualities. In different situations their goals, ambitions and values will change. A round character changes as a result of what happens to him/her. A character that changes from within as a result of what happens to him/her is referred to in literature as a **dynamic** character. Thus, a dynamic character grows or progresses to a higher level of understanding in the course of the story. Such a character in this study is Mphaka.

Bennett and Royle (2004:60) state the following:

Characters are the life of literature: they are the objects of our curiosity and fascination, affection and dislike, admiration and condemnation. Indeed, so intense is our relationship with literary characters that they often cease to be simply 'objects'. Through the power of identification,

through sympathy and antipathy, they can become part of how we conceive ourselves, a part of who we are.

Lethbridge and Mildorf (*s.a.*:51) as suggested by Rimmon-Kenan (1983:42) explain the inner life of character thus:

Depending on what sort of information is given about a character, readers will feel to a larger or smaller degree acquainted with a character. To a larger extent this depends on the **penetration of inner life**. The more one knows about a character's thoughts and emotional responses, the more complex the character will appear and the more ready the reader is to empathise with the character.

In the light of the above extracts, we can use and describe fully-fledged characters in a literary work, display their turgid inner life, simply because their integrity has become an open question in the environment that they inhabit.

For the purpose of this study, definitions of character may be summed up as follows:

- The aggregate of features and traits that form the individual nature of some person(s),
- An account of the qualities or peculiarities of a person,
- The combination of qualities or features that distinguish one person, group, or thing from another.

In the process, the researcher will uncover by means of dialogue and soliloquy how the writer reveals the personality of characters. The following will be taken into consideration:

- What does the character say,
- The character's feelings and thoughts,
- The character's impact on other characters.

In *Naga ga di etelane*, Serudu creates a larger-than-life character in Mphaka whose determination, resilience and selflessness illustrate the ability of the human soul's desire to achieve and reach greater heights in academic spheres. Nevertheless, this indomitable human spirit is sometimes faced with insurmountable challenges.

1.7.3 Characterisation

Abrams (1981:20) describes character and **characterisation** as person(s) presented in a dramatic or narrative work. These are interpreted by the reader and moreover, endowed with moral and dispositional qualities and these qualities are embedded in what they say or do (actions).

Characterisation encapsulates creation of images of imaginary persons in literary works. Further, it generates plot and reveals attitudes of these imaginary persons through their interactions, which enable the reader to analyse their actions, as well as their reactions to one another. Reactions may include, amongst others, verbal responses and physical or emotional treatment.

1.8 Key words/connotations

Status and cultural identity, xenophobia, theme, character, authorial intentionality, group identities, self-evident, undermining democracy, equality, liberty, human rights, tolerance, storyline, recognition of diversity, battle of ideas, aspirations and social justice.

1.9 Delimitation of chapters

Chapter 1 – Introduction and background

The chapter points direction of the study in terms of the following:

- Aim,
- Significance of the study,
- Problem statement,
- Research done on Serudu,
- Biographical information,
- Approaches to be engaged, and
- Explanation of some key terms.

The aim of the study provides a direction for the work whereas the significance of the study, based on the research, reinforces the need for an investigation. The statement of the problem establishes the gaps in relation to what other researchers have already undertaken. The biographical information gives a glimpse into the life and times of the playwright, which influence his philosophy of writing and is supported by the different literary approaches.

Chapter 2 – Literary approaches

In discussing the tenor of discourse in the play, the following approaches will be used as a vehicle to reach our objectives:

- Marxist Approach
- Sociological Approach
- Reader-response Approach
- New Historicism Approach

In this study, the abovementioned approaches are meant to develop other elements of literary criticism and not to coerce **theme** and **character** in isolation.

Chapter 3 – Theme and character analysis

The chapter re-examines the theme and character perspective throughout the play. It draws on ideas of human nature and social cohesion, touching on the relationships between characters' intentions and their desired goals. The following will be taken into consideration:

- Bias and prejudice
- Xenophobia
- Social and professional circumstances

From this, it can be deduced that it is a serious mistake to assume that literature is created out of a vacuum. Instead, literature is created in a living space, which incorporates conflicting views between different classes in society.

Chapter 4 – Beliefs and practices

The chapter takes into account how characters subscribe to their beliefs in their daily life. It goes on to point out key features in customs and tradition and how Christianity influences the family of the main character. The problem of ideological transformation as cited by Terry Eagleton (1977:38) will also be put into perspective. Serudu employs a set of gestures conveyed by characters in their social relations. The researcher will discuss how the text of the play is closely linked to the historical conditions as suggested by the title. Not every work of art gives us the 'real' feel of the world (milieu) we inhabit. However, the playwright here has tried hard not to be a utopian idealist.

Chapter 5 – Language and register

The chapter deals with method or style and literary techniques used as vehicle by the playwright to deliver the theme and message. Amongst others, the following will be dealt with:

- Convention and techniques
- Background and setting
- Style
- Mood and tone
- Foreshadowing

Serudu uses these literary techniques to build characters that move the storyline along to its conclusion.

Chapter 6 – Summary

The chapter will present a summary of findings, highlight key features of the study and make recommendations. In the final analysis, the objective is to see the play as a whole and to evaluate how the theme integrates with character until falling action.

Chapter 2

Literary Approaches

2.1 Introduction

The analysis of a text is governed by certain principles and rules amid the plethora of theories. Most 20th century literary theories have been developed in the mode of Western aesthetics. To cite a few examples, Deconstruction, Linguistic approach, Russian Formalism, Semiotics, Structuralism, New Criticism and a host of other theories emanate from Post-Structuralism rationales that works of art can and should be judged independently from the author who is the creator of the literary text and the society which has provided him or her with its voice. Yet it is remarkable that all of these approaches share a common notion that a text as a work of art is there to be interpreted from different perspectives.

According to Fokkema and Elrud Kunne-Ibsch (1979:xi-1) developments in the study of literature are assumptions that underpin knowledge. This knowledge implies value judgements shaped by certain theories, which are compatible with the scientific studies in the field in order to make it exact. To incorporate such a diverse body of theorists into a single study of research requires deep reflection and careful planning. Unlike betting on horses or playing probability games, selecting a research model is undoubtedly the most painstaking exercise. It can be categorically stated that concepts, models and theories of literature are all different. However, it is important to note that these tools must be seen to be of service to literary critics in the same way that theorems, number systems and equations inform mathematicians.

The main essence of a theory of literary criticism according to Creswell (2003:8) is to provide a solid foundation for the research work, as it is based on a set of causal relationships between constructs and variables. Furthermore, it enables the researcher to assess literary texts better and understand why literature can leave such an indelible mark in the hearts and minds of readers. Webster and Watson (2002) claim that a careful examination of previous literature is a crucial exercise for any academic research. For this reason over the years, literary critics have argued about the best methods and theories for the interpretation of works of literature.

The researcher subscribes to the idea that the ideological concerns of particular epochs cannot escape the hand of the artist. Mokgoatšana (1996: 17) admits that there are countless theories that apply to literary criticism; nevertheless, these theories cannot all be discussed in a single work. A few selected and carefully employed perspectives can contribute towards better understanding of a literary text.

2.2 Marxist Approach

This literary criticism is the name assigned to the body of knowledge popularised by Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895). Marxist critics interpret literature according to:

- Historical experience of the working class,
- Socialist transformation of society,
- Economic struggle between the haves and the have-nots,
- Focus is on content and theme rather than form.

Marxist or materialist criticism developed from the views of Karl Marx, who believed that the economic structure of society served as the foundation of its social, political and cultural structures. As cultural phenomenon (Swanepoel, 1990:52), literature in this sense expresses economic relations.

In addition, the Marxist criticism provides a comprehensive outlook on society and life as a whole. It makes available a complete theoretical foundation based on the economic infrastructure and the political and ideological superstructure (Mokgoatšana, 1996:22). Furthermore, focus is also on the interrelationship between the socio-economic base and the institutions. The latter, in literary spheres, includes the role that the author plays in advancing the cause and effect of time and space in history.

The Marxist tradition undertakes to examine literature in terms of the economic, class, and ideological determinants as written by an author. The emphasis is on the idea that social life is biased and fraught with conflicts of interest. The noticeable 'class struggle' of these conflicts as stated by Earl Babbie (1991:57) is between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. The paradigm describes social life as being a competition among individuals and groups, or rather 'competition for status'.

Eagleton (1976:551) points out that in essence, a literary work is the direct product of its socio-economic base. From this analysis, it can further be stressed that there is a clear interrelationship between the socio-economic base and the institutions and values that can be said to make up the superstructure. Subsequently, literature is viewed as a branch of human activity since it develops out of the life of a society.

In short, the social and political circumstances of Bonwatau, prompted Mphaka to leave his place of birth to go and seek employment elsewhere. That is the test of moral strength and discipline in a character, a make or break situation.

Taking into consideration that the setting of *Naga ga di etelane* is not based on one location, the Marxist approach seems to be the best option for this study. The storyline originates in Bonwatau, a typical South African rural

setting, and continues to develop in foreign countries such as Takone and Letsha la Mogadisho, where Mphaka is searching for greener pastures.

There is nothing more painful than having your pride and humanity wounded and nullified. It is even worse than an incurable disease for a man and his family to be cursed and relegated to second-class citizens in the land of their birth. But, to be cursed in a foreign country because of who you are and where you come from is a harsh experience. To be marginalised by colleagues and superiors – that alone tears one's soul and personality apart. Such is the reality of the life of Mphaka, the protagonist in Serudu's *Naga ga di etelane*. A man with great ambitions, a nation builder who has the capacity and propensity to make a difference; his conscience is pricked to render him susceptible. This is expressed in a soliloquy in which Mphaka ventilates his discomfort thus:

Ke tšhaba go šilaganywa le go foufatšwa kgopolo ke
itebeletše
Ke boifa go hupetšwa sehutamoya sa moya wa ka;
Go hlalana le dikgopolo tša ka tše nanana,
Tšeo go thwego ke meetlwa go ba bangwe.
(Serudu, 2011:13)

(English translation)

I fear that my mind would be crushed and be blinded whilst
I am watching
I am afraid that I would be made to suffocate,
To divorce my treasured ideas,
That some fellow countrymen regard as thorny.

From this extract, the writer provides the reader with an opportunity to understand the thinking of a frustrated citizen of Bonwatau. The quote is self-

explanatory because of the exceptionally poignant choice of words. The character in question is haunted by a fear that has dogged him since his early childhood. It is a fear of oppression and suppression – a fear of draconian laws, which are directed to the ‘not so white’ population. Not only that, but, the laws which are above all, horrendous and dehumanising.

The history of Bonwatau as depicted in *Naga ga di etelane* is reminiscent of that advocated by Marxists. In 1910, the South African Act of 1909 established the Union of South Africa and this Act was passed in the British parliament. In explaining this state of affairs, the historian, Brink (2013:148) remarks:

Despite protest from black leaders, political separation between black and white people was built into the act. The act excluded all black and coloured people (with a few exceptions) and all white women from voting. The Natives Land Act of 1913 forced black people off their land by creating special areas for them called reserves. The Land Act also banned ‘white’ territory from being sold to black people, and ‘black’ territory from being sold to white people. Many people were unhappy with this situation ...

It is gratifying to note that not only does Serudu borrow from the wealth of South African history, but also from people all over the world who have fiercely rejected racism and the erosion of civil liberties. After the National Party (NP) won the 1948 elections, the class struggle continued in South Africa because the new government adopted a policy of apartheid (separate development). The aim according to Grobler (1996:21) was to eventually achieve complete division of the population into separate racial groupings. Indeed, the white minority dominated the black majority socially, politically and economically.

During this period of apartheid the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) gained support and became stronger. Both parties mobilised the masses and formed alliances inside and outside the borders of South Africa. In this study, it is interesting to note how the playwright is seen to vacillate between two centres of power, namely, home and exile. These further highlight the permutation of theme and character in *Naga ga di etelane*. Serudu uses the main character, Mphaka, an intellectual and academic of note to illuminate the need to fight for his soul and that of his family. This is a thematic analysis in which the researcher examines the role of characters, explains to the readers a part of the story and the underlying message.

It is worth pointing out that throughout the play, a hint of a materialist conception of history is evident. Characters are engaged in the social production of their life and in their engagement they constitute the economic structure of society (Eagleton, 1976:554). It becomes clear that the historical background of Bonwatau assists the reader in understanding the action in the play, and more importantly, the theme and main characters. In contrast, it is disheartening for the reader to note that life in exile is not always rosy.

2.3 Sociological approach

According to Kenneth Burke, quoted by Adams (1971:942), the social approach advocates that the interpretation of literature rests in its broader social context. To this effect, it codifies the literary strategies that are used to represent social actions through a sociological methodology. This social criticism is twofold, it analyses how the social element is employed in literature and how literature mirrors society.

Further, sociological critics treat a work of literature in relation how it represents that society. In this regard, literary strategies are employed in order to analyse social constructs through a social methodology. The criticism

considers art as a manifestation of society as it contains relevant references, which are directly or indirectly applicable to global communities. Here critics comment on the pressure of social norms on the individual in his or her environment. For these reasons, the following factors are taken into consideration:

- Authorial intentionality,
- Cultural ideologies,
- Readers' construction of meaning of the text, and
- Forces of its age.

The primary study of literature, according to the sociologists, incorporates extrinsic and social factors, which surround the writer. Just as important, it has to be stated that the sociological interpretation of literature is closely connected to Marxist doctrine. Arguably, the two approaches use class ideologies, and class conflict as a vehicle for discourse. However, in applying these approaches the problem is that if the response of a reader is misguided, the underlying meaning of the text will be lost due to misinterpretation.

It is also fascinating to learn from O'Brien (1969:56) who explains the role of sociology in literary criticism thus: '... to relate the experience of the writer's imaginary characters and situations to the historical climate from which they derive'.

He goes on to specify the treatment of themes that permeate through characters and situations. In this manner, he says, these new themes form part of the artist's desire to recreate and explore the nameless anxieties and hopes in a particular period in history.

A question may be asked: what does the above assumption mean? Simply, it is a personal take on the old scale of literature and a move into a new key of expression by both the sociologist and the reader. For this reason, the scope

of criticism is not limited and, moreover, the reader is provided with ammunition for critical inquiry.

In addition, Griswold (1993:455) argues that:

... sociology of literature research during the past few years has concentrated on readers' construction of meaning and on networks within literary systems. New directions include studying the relationship between literature and group identities; connecting institutional and reader-response analyses; reintroducing the role of authorial intentionality; and developing a clearer understanding of how literature is and is not like other media.

In contrast, Boshego (2007:2) regards literature as essentially sociological since it is a human exercise born out of the life experiences of a single individual, the writer.

According to Dominik (2012:52), most of the African plays include cultural, social, political and ritualistic situations. Moreover, these plays have a direct connection to modern African society. The dramatic situations that are portrayed have a wider relevance to the human condition.

In this study, the socio-cultural elements of the theme to be investigated include amongst others, prejudice, bias, stereotyping and bigotry. Language and register is decisively and tactically used as the theme develops. Hidden and overt beliefs that emerge to enhance the development of the theme are also discussed. Values and needs of characters as catalysts of the development of the theme of *Naga ga di etelane* receive attention. Henceforth, the socio-cultural as well as the political views that manifest the background of *Naga ga di etelane* will be put into perspective.

2.4 Reader response approach

The criticism is an offshoot of New Criticism or formalist approach popularised by theorists such as IR Richards, TS Elliot, William Empson, John Crowe Ransom and others. According to Guerin (1992:331-332), these critics were not in agreement on formalism. However, reader response critics argue that a text does not exist if it is not read and interpreted by a reader. On the contrary, formalists hold that literature as a work of art exists on its own.

Although literary critics agree that different readers interpret same texts differently, Nolte (2012:1) poses the following questions:

- Do texts *have or possess* meaning?
- How do readers *produce or create* meaning when they read texts?
- Is a text a stable or unstable entity?
- Who is the reader?
- Do readers read texts as individuals or as part of larger communities of interpretation?
- Who are the readers in reader-response criticism?
- Is a reader more important than a text, or vice versa?

To illustrate this further, Carlisle (1999:12–19) adds that reader-response theory encourages readers to interact with the text to understand meaning. From this assumption, the researcher acknowledges that the interpretation of readers, rather than the author's aim or the text's structure, provide reasons for the significance and aesthetic value of a text. Biographical accounts of the writer are also taken into consideration in this kind of criticism.

From the viewpoint of reader-response theory, the researcher points out the evil disposition and behaviour of characters as described in the following dialogue:

NTLHORE: O bona re ka thoma ka efe taba?
LETSOTA: Nna ke be ke bona nke taba ya bafaladi ke yona ya mathomo e tlogago e tlabatlabiša dibete. Bana ba rena o ka re e tla ba bakgopedi nageng ya gabobona.
(Serudu, 2011:91)

(English translation)

NTLHORE: What issue seems most important?
LETSOTA: I regard the issue of immigrants as the most insolent. Our own children become beggars in their country of birth.

From this dialogue, Ntlhore seems possibly to be asking a question and he stimulates the reader to ponder what is to follow. The reader is therefore able to focus on what would befall Mphaka with the development of the theme.

OTŠE: Wa tla wa tšwa ka taba. O ka re o bone dikgopolo tša ka.
NTLHORE: Ke šetše ke akantše seo re ka se dirago tabeng yeo. Ke šetše ke lekile go tshwa la ka ka palamenteng ya go feta fela ka ge rabadia e be e le yo mongwe, ka gafelwa ka thoko, gwa thwe moeng ke hlare se bogale.
(Serudu, 2011:91)

(English translation)

OTŠE: You said a mouthful as if you could read my mind.

NTLHORE: I have got something in mind, I suggested something to parliament, but just because someone was leading, immigrants are regarded as useful people.

The most compelling evidence is derived from the provocative statements uttered by Letsota who reveals in a pompous manner that he is a member of parliament and has influence, but he was disappointed by a senior member of parliament who could not understand his intentions of demoting Mphaka.

NTLHORE: Ke thaba go kwa gore le wena o šetše o kile wa e fa mafahla a gago.

LETSOTA: Ke la ka leo. A re se hlwe re dikadika. Selepe se reme, mellwane e segwe. Mofaladi a tle a tsebe gore ke yena mokgopedi. A se lebale gore ge a filwe maengwana a ka godingwana, e tla ba a sammaruri.

(Serudu, 2011:91)

(English translation)

NTLHORE: I am happy that you thought of it.

LETSOTA: I agree. We need not to waste time because we have to take action forthwith. Immigrants need to know that beggars are not choosers. They

should be alerted that higher positions afforded to them are not permanent.

Ntlhore is pleased by the agreement of demoting Mphaka in such a way that he states it as something once thought of by Letsota. Ntlhore expresses it as he says: 'I am happy that you thought of it'. The agreement reached here develops the theme further as two characters that portray the two crooks that are completely committed to xenophobic tendencies.

NTLHORE: Lebakeng la go feta ge yola Mphaka a hlatlošetšwa maamong a rabadia, ke lekile go thibela taba yeo ka ge ke tseba gore re na le masogana ao a sa tšogo phetha dithuto tša go lekana le tša gagwe. Fela le gona ke ile ka botšwa ge ke na le poelomorago.

LETSOTA: Ge e le yoo yena ebile o a ipona. Le mo lese nna ke tla mmintšha ka koto le tee.
(Serudu, 2011:91)

(English translation)

NTLHORE: I tried to oppose the promotion of Mphaka because I knew we have young people who have just qualified and can take his position but I was regarded as a person who lacks foresight.

LETSOTA: Mphaka is very proud. I'll deal with him accordingly.

Here Ntlhore states that not all citizens of Takone support the demotion of foreigners who have expertise, as advocated by the revolutionary sect. Letsota, who is unaware that he reveals his low esteem, regards Mphaka as a person who has self-esteem.

The excerpts above project the unconscious defences and fantasies expressed by characters that are 'sons of the soil', waging war against a character that is an immigrant. As a consequence, these 'sons of the soil' feel that the promotion of Mphaka prevents their self-determination or their self-improvement as a society. By his presence and status he is seen as a threat and a *persona non grata*.

In summary, according to Reader response theorists, just as the reader is able to interpret a given text in ways that reveal his or her identity, so the critic has the propensity to interpret the reader's interpretation in a way that would benefit his or her standpoint. Supporting this assertion, Probst (1994:38) says:

If literature is to matter, however, if it is to become significant in the reader's life, then those personal connections become hard to deny. Meaning lies in that shared ground where the reader and text meet – it isn't resident within the text, to be extracted like a nut from its shell. Rather, readers create the meaning as they bring the text to bear upon their own experience, and their own histories to bear upon a text.

As a consequence, this does not imply that texts mean anything we want them to purport. Texts could possibly be misread, misunderstood; and moreover, a reader could be biased.

2.5 New Historicism

This approach aims at understanding the work of art through its historical and cultural context. H. Aram Veenser (1989) noted the following key points about the New Historicism discourse:

- Every human action is actually the effect of a network of material practices,
- Literary and non-literary texts are equally valuable,
- All texts came to be read as documents of historical discourse.

Some New Historicists, such as Habib, (2008:760–771); Barry, (1995:172–190), endorse the notion that the best framework for explaining the meaning of literature is to put it in its historical context:

- Contemporaneous issues
- State power
- Cultural-historical problems
- Anxieties and
- Struggles

In the light of the abovementioned assumptions, a noteworthy argument is created. Surely, the exclusion of social and political circumstances from the interpretation of a text is really similar to an attempt to read an encyclopaedia in total darkness. A literary work is less the product of its creator's thinking than the social circumstances of its timeline. Nevertheless, some critics such as Popper, (1993); Houlgate, (2005), maintain that New Criticism has turned literary criticism into an agenda of pushing political scores. Both arguments cannot be brushed aside, since they form an integral part of this study.

Naga ga di etelane was first published in 1977, immediately after the 1976 Soweto uprisings. The National Party (NP), which took over the reins of government of the Union of South Africa in May 1948, was in favour of transforming the country. Unfortunately, colonialism had laid the foundation for racial segregation, later on popularised as apartheid, which meant white supremacy. Grobler (1996:21) says:

A whole series of bills to regulate separation between the races were tabled and passed by parliament in a rather haphazard order. The most important so-called apartheid Act thus came into being over the course of three decades, from 1948 to about 1978.

Reading from the extract above, there is no objection to the fact that *Naga ga di etelane* is another product of history. Serudu uses Mphaka to express disillusionment of the period in point. This can be inferred from the following extract:

MPHAKA: Ke kitelwe dijo ganong,
Ke re ke betola ba re o a nyankga
O itshema mothwana moisa te!
(Serudu, 2011:13)

(English translation)

MPHAKA: Imposing ideas on me,
When I reject them I am considered a
recalcitrant person
You think you are better, you lout!

According to New Historicism, Howard (1986:13–14) argues that social institutions shape the identity of an individual. No doubt, Mphaka's political

stance is seen as influenced by the circumstances in Bonwatau. Throughout the book, his expression of personal identity is cast and evolves over the course of his life. He wants to prove his worth as an academic of note. As a result he holds fast, all together, to his capability, at all costs.

Taking into account Mphaka's decision to go into exile, we get an inkling of what it feels like to be a black South African during the apartheid era as Lewis Nkosi writes:

The total effect of the apartheid laws in South Africa is to make it almost illegal to live. Before you are through reading about what the black is not allowed to do, you begin to wonder if there is anything he is permitted to do.

(1995:35)

Every time a policeman encounters a black man in the street he assumes a crime has been committed.

(1995:40)

South Africans are, as a nation, a speechless people whose fear of the spoken and the written word has created a horrible fatuity in their lives, both private and public.

(1995:119)

The preceding quotes are without doubt testimony of the political climate that was the norm in South Africa prior the democratic elections of 1994. The laws, which were so oppressive, prompted lovers of freedom to flee the country. The woeful lack of opportunities affected most of the so-called non-whites who were compelled to live under stressful conditions and in adverse

poverty. The human landscape of South Africa has been punctuated by these very crippling and dehumanizing apartheid acts.

In contrast, as the plot thickens, Serudu draws the reader to voices that have been silent in the text. These voices are now afforded the opportunity to speak aloud. Several conflicts arise, which do not involve Mphaka and his wife. For instance, Sebola, Mphaka's son, clashes with a teacher at school about his status as an exile. In a similar manner, another teacher at a different school tries to find out the truth about the flight of Mphaka's family from Bonwatau. The family's domestic worker, Akitse, complains about the disrespect displayed by Sebola towards him. All attempts to reconcile Akitse and Sebola are ignored as Akitse introduces matters relating to labour unions. The theme of the text develops further as the conflicts add to the frustrations experienced by Mphaka in exile.

In considering the theme of the play, a question may be posed here: 'Is the grass always greener on the other side of the fence?' Reading through *Naga ga di etelane*, the answer is 'no'. Mphaka emigrated from Bonwatau to Takone and from Takone to Letsha la Mogadisho only to find no comfort there. His emigration was based on a perceived moral obligation – to live in a free country where his contributions would be acknowledged, where his children would receive better education and be respected as human beings. Unfortunately, he made the decision without considering sufficient alternatives.

2.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the researcher hopes that the dichotomy that cuts across the four approaches would make this study a source of knowledge to old and new critics, scholars and researchers alike. It is acknowledged here that this is a bold approach and has been chosen for the purpose of this study.

Chapter 3

Theme and character analysis

3.1 Introduction

According to Shipley (1970:41) the dramatic method gives the character a sense of self-activity and draws the reader into the flow of a text. Moreover, this allows the reader to formulate his/her opinion about characters and better understand their behavior and attitudes.

Serudu engages the dramatic method to build up the theme of *Naga ga di etelane*. For this reason, characters are presented in action in order to express their views. The following monologue by Mphaka reveals it all:

Ke kgethile go tšwa ka difate – mohlomongwe go tšwela
ruri,
Go ya mo ke tlo fiwago tlotlo,
Ka phela, ka phediša le ba ka ... (*Go kokota motho lebating
Mphaka o tsoša hlogo.*)
(Serudu, 2011:14)

(English translation)

I have decided to leave my country – perhaps forever,
To go to a place where I'll be accorded respect,
And live, and support my family ... (*A knock at the door
Mphaka raises his head.*)

Mphaka is deeply concerned about separate development in Bonwatau. He has a strong feeling that the system of education in Bonwatau is biased. Above all, education is used by the regime of the day as a bureaucratic

machine to perpetuate exploitation of the blacks. This is supported by Pam Christie (1992:17), who says:

If we look at the unequal education system in South Africa, we can see that it is part of the unequal social system. Besides unequal education there are many other inequalities. For example, job opportunities are not equal; salaries are not equal; housing provision is not equal; social services like health and welfare are not equal; so when we look at education, we should remember that schools are only one part of the whole social system.

From this statement, it can be inferred that Mphaka would not allow his children to be taught under an undesirable system of education and had to go into exile in pursuit of quality education for his children. In this way, Mphaka is portrayed as a loving, caring and responsible father who is aware of his political rights. Mphaka expresses the lack of the basic rights of life in Bonwatau as the reason for choice of exile in the following soliloquy:

MPHAKA: Matlakane a ntswetše! Ka bontšhwa lehu ka
mahlo
Ke sa bolaya motho!
(Serudu, 2011:13)

(English translation)

MPHAKA: Gosh! Faced death
Though I did not commit murder!

A shade of positive bias emerges in the form of the patriotism that Mphaka juxtaposes with life in exile. All in all, he had to violate this because he had a choice as expressed in the following excerpt:

MPHAKA: Go iphetoša moneneri, mosepedi majaditala
Go ena le gore ke binele sefogojane sa
komašele. (*O ribega hlogo tafoleng.*)
Go bohloko bjang go kgaolelwa lešika la
meloko!
Go ahlogana le dithakangwaga tša gago ke
polao
Go hwela ditšhabeng ke bogoboga;
Eupša ke be ke lebanwe ke kgetho ...
(Serudu, 2011:13)

(English translation)

MPHAKA: To turn myself into a vagrant, an undignified
persona
I cannot dance to a song of my oppressors.
(*He turns down his face on the table.*)
It's so painful to be detached from your
relatives!
To be separated from your peers is
tantamount to death.
To die in exile is humiliating
But I had a choice to make ...

Reading the above extract, it is clear that the weight of negative bias surpassed that of positive bias to the extent that the development of theme is enhanced. Mphaka is portrayed as an anxious character, looking forward to greener pastures in exile; this sentiment is expressed by the following sentences:

Go tšwa ka difate tša borare,
Go yo tsoma mafulo a matala dileteng di šele.
(Serudu, 2011:13)

(English translation)

To leave the land of my forefathers,
To seek for greener pastures in foreign countries.

Mphaka reflects painfully that he has been labelled a second-class citizen in his country of birth because of his pigmentation. He feels that he has been denied the choice of how he is presented to the global community. He has created his own identity as an intellectual and feels he cannot be constrained forever in a space that limits or suffocates his potential. Given the historical background of Bonwatau, it is quite evident that Mphaka is not suffering from paranoia and hatred of white people, but he is against the discriminatory government.

3.2 Bias and prejudice

Hornby (2007:106) explains bias as an inclination or prejudice for or against one thing or person and goes further to define prejudice (2007:921) as a preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience.

From the foregoing definitions, bias is viewed as a broader concept than prejudice and the two will not be used interchangeably in this study.

3.2.1 Bias

Through the use of soliloquy, several examples of bias are expressed by Mphaka, an expatriate living in Takone, as being the reasons that caused him to choose to live in exile rather than in his country of birth (Bonwatau). In this manner the audience develops sympathy towards and better appreciation of Mphaka's drastic decision to flee into exile:

MPHAKA: (*O bolela a nnoši.*) Ke be ke lebanwe ke
kgetho.
Tsela di be di le phakgapedi!
Na ke be ke swanetše go hwa ke sa phela?
Ke bitlelwe ke ipona?
Aowa! (*O šišinya hlogo.*) Le nna ke be ke
nyaka
Go swana le mantho a mangwe.
(Serudu, 2011:13)

(English translation)

MPHAKA: (*Monologue.*) I had to make a choice.
There we two options!
Should I allow my freedom of expression to
be violated?
Should I allow myself to be rendered a
person non grata?
No! (*Shaking his head.*) I wanted to be like
other people.

The following expressions point to the suppression of freedom of choice and freedom of speech: 'Ke be ke lebanwe ke kgetho' meaning 'I had to make a choice'; 'Tsela di be di le phakgapedi' meaning 'There were two options'; and 'Le nna ke be ke nyaka go swana le mantho a mangwe' meaning 'I wanted to be like others'. Mphaka feels he is being castigated and ostracised in his country of birth. He feels strongly that apartheid is an evil load that he can no longer carry throughout his life.

Another shade of bias concerns the system of education in Bonwatau, which is not holistic, is expressed by Mphaka as he says:

MPHAKA: Bana ba ka bona ke be ke tla ba lesa
bjang
Ba enwa meetse a tsebo sedibeng se
se fatilwego ke bangwe?
(Serudu, 2011:13)

(English translation)

MPHAKA: How could I leave my children
To be taught under a system of
education designed by others?

Using the phrase 'by others', Mphaka refers to the policy of separate development instituted by the apartheid regime. He clearly understands that there are forces preventing him and his family from achieving the life he desires. For this reason, he is determined not to ignore his subconscious mind, possibly by forever going into exile.

3.2.2 Prejudice

Clearly, a robust touch of prejudice against foreigners appears to Mphaka during a sojourn at a bar lounge in Takone. Rola, a citizen of Takone, enquires whether Mphaka acquired his academic credentials from Western countries because he assumes that Bonwatau does not have institutions of higher learning like Western countries:

ROLA: Dithuto le di phethile Bodikela na?

MPHAKA: (*O senya sefahlego.*) Ao, na Bodikela ke gona fela moo motho a ka rutwago dithuto tše kgolo gona?
(Serudu, 2011:26)

(English translation)

ROLA: Did you acquire your academic qualifications in the Western countries?

MPHAKA: (*Looking at him with a scowl.*) Funny, is it only in Western countries that one can accomplish better qualifications?

As if that is not enough, Kala also expresses prejudice towards Bonwatau with regard to the availability of universities in that country:

KALA: Le na le yunibesithi Bonwatau moo o tšwago?

MPHAKA: (*O thomile go tšea mahlo a tšhipa.*) Ke tloga ke le moditi wa gona. Ga ke sa le sealogane. Ke batametše go ba rabadia.
(Serudu, 2011:26)

(English translation)

KALA: Is there a university in Bonwatau?

MPHAKA: (*A bit tipsy.*) I am a senior lecturer. No longer a novice. Just about to be conferred professorship.

Although Mphaka is disturbed by this inappropriate behaviour, he stands his ground by telling the truth from his heart. Under the circumstances, he feels the heat of being in a new place with a new tag as a foreigner. In this moment, he does not only think about his new name, but also rejects it and at the same time he wants to move swiftly forward in the new world where he has chosen to live. The first move is to forsake his old life and work harder to impress his employers. In order to do this, he must distinguish himself as much as possible from the person he was directed to be in Bonwatau and adapt to the conditions of Takone. Consciously, he begins to learn how dangerous it is to be in a foreign country where one has to re-create and learn a new way of living. Now, the question is to which virtue will he dedicate the rest of his life?

Another example of prejudice comes about a teacher at school towards Sebola, Mphaka's son. This teacher reminds Sebola that he is a stubborn foreigner and this labelling digs a hole in the young man's conscience. After deep reflection, Sebola reports the matter to his parents thus:

SEBOLA: O re ke motšwabotšo le gona ke hlogothata.

MPHAKA: Wena o mo fetotše ka go reng?

SEBOLA: (*O a homola.*)

HUNADI: O sefowa na?

SEBOLA: Aowa mma.

HUNADI: O rileng ge o mo fetola?
SEBOLA: Ke rile le yena ke motšwabotšo.
(Serudu, 2011:42)

(English translation)

SEBOLA: He says I am a stubborn
foreigner.
MPHAKA: How did you respond?
SEBOLA: *(Silent.)*
HUNADI: Are you hard of hearing?
SEBOLA: Mom, no.
HUNADI: What was your response?
SEBOLA: I said he is also a foreigner.

It is becoming very clear that the situation in Takone is unbearable for Mphaka's family. To protect his status, Sebola responded by arguing fiercely with the educator. He acknowledges the fact that he is a foreigner but he feels it is uncalled for to be reminded of it time and time again. Subconsciously, he feels he is being undermined. This is the only reason that prompts him to be fearless and to stand his ground while saying to the educator that he too is also a foreigner.

The closing example of prejudice goes further and deeper as a teaching post senior to the one held by Mphaka in Letsha la Mogadisho is created. Irrespective of the fact that he has the relevant qualifications and is eligible for the appointment, the intention is to frustrate him (Mphaka) just because he is a foreigner. Serudu paints the picture as follows:

- OTŠE:** Go bonolo. Re tla hlola poso e mpsha ka godimo ga ya gagwe.
- NTLHORE:** Ga ke go kwešiše monna. Bjale ya gagwe poso e bolawe?
- OTŠE:** Yona ga e bolawe, e tla fela e le gona eupša boikarabelo ka moka bjo a bego a bo swere bo tla šikarwa ke ngwana wa rena.
- LETSOTA:** Aowa, bjale gona le nna ke a go kwešiša. Yeo ke noto ya moreo. O tla ngala ka go bona bjale a fokoleditšwe taolo le boikarabelo. O tla lemoga gore ga a nyakwe. O tla holega moko ge a bona serathane se mo hlabiša tsetsetse.
(Serudu, 2011:92)

(English translation)

- OTŠE:** Simple. We shall create a new post above the one he is an incumbent.
- NTLHORE:** I don't understand you man. Must his post be frozen?
- OTŠE:** Not exactly, it will be retained but all the accountability under him will be deferred to our compatriot.
- LETSOTA:** Now I can follow what you say. That is a well-calculated move. He will definitely go away when

he realizes that his administrative and accountability responsibilities are reduced. He will become aware that he is a *persona non grata*. He will be discouraged when a novice vilifies him.

The speakers display the extent and severity pertaining to the mistreatment and discrimination against migrants. This unfortunate exercise is tantamount to abuse and exploitation. What is more disturbing is the fact that the movement of Mphaka from Bonwatau to Takone, and from Takone to Letsha la Mogadisho is legal and authorised. Nevertheless, the man and his family face high levels of discrimination in democratic countries. This scourge of intolerance against migrants (Van Dijk, 1996) makes it difficult for them to work in safety and dignity, and enjoy access to decent work and living conditions.

3.2.3 Xenophobia

According to Culbertson (2009:8) xenophobia is regarded as an intense or irrational dislike of people from the outside, or other countries. He goes on to explain that the term describes fear or dislike of non-nationals or people different from one's self. Hornby (1994:1483) defines xenophobia as an intense dislike or fear of foreigners or strangers. From the two definitions the researcher derives an agreement with regard to the description. The following extracts are an illustration of xenophobic tendencies:

KALA: Kgane o a lwa na monna? Mošayagabo tena!
(Serudu, 2011:27)

(English translation)

KALA: Are you trying to fight me? You immigrant!

Mphaka is reminded of his foreigner status in an insolent way (... Mošayagabotena!). This theme is developed through the hostility between Mphaka and Kala. Rola, another citizen of Takone, adds to Mphaka's ordeal:

ROLA: (*O a emelela a katakata ka samorago.*)
Kganthe o phaga bjale monna!
(Serudu, 2011:27)

(English translation)

ROLA: (*Stands up and retreats.*) Are you this uncouth?

Serudu develops the theme of work by adding Rola and his derogative approach thus creating the concerted action of Kala and Rola against Mphaka. An insolent expression (... phaga ...) meaning a wildcat causes frustration in Mphaka as he experiences dehumanisation in exile.

ROLA: Ntlogele lekgoba towe. Etse ga gabolena le ja batho.
(Serudu, 2011:27)

(English translation)

ROLA Leave me alone you damn slave. By the way you are cannibals.

Serudu employs Rola who expresses himself in distasteful language ('lekgoba') meaning 'a slave' and ('le ja batho') meaning 'you are cannibals'; this creates an unhappy atmosphere that adds to the development of the theme by continually reminding Mphaka of his exile status. Rola is depicted as a person with xenophobic tendencies and a coward who hopes for the physical support of both Kala and Mbari in the case of a fight because they are his fellow citizens of Takone. Rola depicts Mphaka as a helpless person and a cannibal and Kala intervenes as if for a good cause but continues to hurt Mphaka's feelings and make him conscious of his incessant discomfort:

KALA: (*O swara Rola ka letsogo.*) A re tloge monna phiri ye e tla re gagola. Phiri ge e bone nama ga e swarege.
(Serudu, 2011:28)

(English translation)

KALA: (*With Rola in hand.*) Let's go man, this wolf will soon tear us apart. When a wolf sees meat it is uncontrollable.

Serudu uses Kala to reveal love and sympathy by action (*With Rola in hand*) as he insults Mphaka ('phiri') meaning 'wolf' and ('re gagola') meaning 'tear us'; furthermore, Kala arrogantly warns Rola of Mphaka's potential danger in order to further create an unsafe atmosphere in the text. In this way, Mphaka is portrayed as an undesirable addition in Takone, while in reality Mphaka has academic significance in their country. The purpose of the interaction is to make life difficult for Mphaka.

As the plot evolves, voices that have been silent in the text now speak aloud to the reader. Several conflicts that do not involve Mphaka and his wife now surface. For instance, Sebola, Mphaka's son, clashes with a teacher at school

about his exile status. In a similar manner, another teacher at a different school tries to find out the truth about the flight of Mphaka's family from Bonwatau. Akitse considers Sebola as a disrespectful person and reports the matter to Hunadi (Sebola's mother). This implies xenophobia because all attempts to appease the two characters become null and void. As Akitse threatens to resort to labour unions to resolve the dispute, Mphaka's homelessness, exile status and questioning are accentuated.

3.3 Social circumstances

A variety of social circumstances are described in regard to the lives of people in exile. Here, Serudu brings the subject of intolerance into focus and the images are very vibrant. In one occasion, Mphaka visits a bar lounge for an alcoholic beverage and a squabble ensues to add to his woes in a foreign country. The author chooses words (in bold text) that befit people communicating in drunken stupor:

KALA: Go bouta gona le a bouta **Bonwatau moo ga gago?**

MPHAKA: (*O fela pelo; o ba tsena ganong.*) Se **nkahlameleng**. Ga le kgone go bolela **ditlatla tenang?**

ROLA: O re re eng?

TOKARI: Tlogelang go hlaba lešata **baisa te!**

KALA: **Moisa** yo o a re roga. Ga o mo kwe wena gore o reng?

MPHAKA: Ke re **ditlatla**. A o kile wa bona banna ba bolela ka nako e tee bjalo ka basadi? Ke **disoso** dilo tše.

(Serudu, 2011:27)

(English translation)

KALA: Do you qualify to vote at **your so-called Bonwatau?**

MPHAKA: (*He becomes impatient; he now interjects.*) Don't **chatter** at me. Are you not able to be sensible of your utterances **you fools?**

ROLA: What does he say about us?

TOKARI: Don't make noise **fellows!**

KALA: **This fellow** is insulting us. Do you hear what he says?

MPHAKA: I say, you **fools**. Have you ever heard men talking in the same time like women? These **things** are **imbeciles**.

All forms of expressions like the words in bold are suitably to those used by characters in drunken stupor where derogatory and dehumanising words and accusations become the norm at a drinking place. Mphaka's woes in a foreign country develop further under these social circumstances as the arrogant characters portray reality. Sons of the soil make a mockery and poke fun at Mphaka who in turn shakes with anger.

3.4 Professional circumstances

The slippery nature of the definition of professional circumstances is acknowledged by Spillane (2006:94). He explains that professionalism and leadership are both 'a set of diagnostic and design tools' that can be used as a measurement to gauge the strength of a character in a work place or particular organisation. In dealing with issues, this professional character has to be governed by policies. As such, persons holding leadership positions become monitors of distributed leadership (Harris, 2008) and should work

towards a shared goal. This type of approach minimises the possibility of careless mistakes made by individuals acting alone in positions of influence.

In contrast, a meeting in an office takes place within a dignified discussion between Mphaka and Tokari at the college. Tokari makes Mphaka aware of the status accorded to expatriates in Takone and this further thwarts any hope of comfort for the foreigner. Tokari is portrayed as a confidante and trustworthy colleague of Mphaka:

TOKARI: Molato?

MPHAKA: Nka tseba na, ke fo kwa ba re ba swanetše go yo reka se le sela ka bjako.

TOKARI: Ao ke maano a go rata go ipha sebaka se sebotse sa go ya madileng. A ke re ka Mekibelo ga ba na le sekolo ba ka fo ya go phetha mešongwana yeo ya bona.

MPHAKA: Kgopolong ya ka ke bona molato e le gore ga se ba tsebišwa bohlokwa bja thuto. Maitapišo a a ka go bona ke lefeela, ke go itloša bodutu.

TOKARI: Wa tla wa bolela taba thaka, yona kgodu ya lerotse.

MPHAKA: Motho ge a ikgafetše go hwetša thuto, ga go seo se ka mo thibelago go e hwetša. O tla beakanya mabaka a gagwe ka tshwanelo gore a se tle a thulana le dithuto tša gagwe.

TOKARI: Ke moya wo re swanetšego go o gaša nageng ka moka woo. O tloga o sa hlokagala.

(Serudu, 2011:32-33)

(English translation)

TOKARI: Why?

MPHAKA: How would I know, I only hear them saying they are going to buy this and that immediately.

TOKARI: This is a good opportunity for them to go on a drinking spree. Isn't it they do not attend lessons on Saturdays and may attend to such errands?

MPHAKA: In my opinion, they have not been made aware of the importance of education. My efforts are fruitless.

TOKARI: You have said a mouthful friend.

MPHAKA: If someone is determined to get education then there is nothing that can stop him.

TOKARI: That's the spirit that we need to spread throughout the country.

The playwright uses the sincerity in Tokari's life with Mphaka to let Mphaka know the truth about the ill-treatment of foreigners. The reader of the text can sympathise with Mphaka, as the citizens of Takone do not take education seriously. Mphaka's woes are heightened in this fashion and he becomes nostalgic. The author succeeds to develop the theme of work by using professional register in the interaction of the two colleagues.

3.5 Conclusion

In summary, Serudu uses the social orientation of characters in *Naga ga di etelane* to paint a picture of bias and prejudice so that the reader has a good understanding of the characters involved. Likewise, the very same social orientation of characters serves to develop the theme of the text.

Chapter 4

Beliefs and practices

4.1 Introduction

For the great majority of traditional cultures, God and the gods or ancestors are active forces in daily life. People in different countries retain beliefs and rituals deeply rooted in their customs and traditions and Africans are no exception. In overall, religious beliefs and practices differ among various demographic segments. Moreover, it has to be noted that beliefs and practices are religion-bound. Elucidating the peculiarities of African beliefs and practices, Awolalu (1976:2) says the following:

This is a religion that is based mainly on oral transmission. It is not written on paper but in peoples' hearts, minds, oral history, rituals, shrines and religious functions.

It has no founders or reformers like Gautama the Buddha, Asoka, Christ, or Muhammad. It is not the religion of one hero.

It has no missionaries, or even the desire to propagate the religion, or to proselytise.

However, the adherents are loyal worshippers and, probably because of this, Africans who have their roots in the indigenous religion, find it difficult to sever connection with it.

From the above quote, the researcher can deduce that beliefs and practices in African tradition are not written, but handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. It is fundamental to note that these practices are a heritage resulting from a sustained faith held by the forefathers of African culture and tradition and are embedded in their customs. As the building blocks of theme and character these customs are traceable in *Naga ga di etelane*.

4.2 Covert and overt beliefs

A variety of beliefs are expressed to promote the development of the theme and characters in the play. Covert and overt beliefs in the Eastern and Western sections of the region appearing as different religious affiliations cause conflict among citizens of Takone. As a result, the Senior Manager of Education in the district cannot convene a meeting of both sections to discuss suggestions of improving the state of education as suggested by Mphaka. This further delay caused by these disagreements frustrates Mphaka.

A table below illustrates the covert and overt dimensions:

Reasons	Politics	Inspirations	Emotions	Mind-sets	Psychodynamics
Rational and analytic logics	Individual and group interests	Values-based and visionary aspirations	Affective and reactive feelings	Guiding beliefs and assumptions	Anxiety-based and unconscious defences

(Marshak, 2006:5)

In considering the table above, it can be deduced that beliefs shape how people think and react to different situations, and how these can improve or worsen a situation. This analogy illustrates the power of covert and overt

beliefs, which may act against reason if not carefully considered. Characters in literature are no exception as is evident in the *personae* of *Naga ga di etelane*.

4.2.1 Overt beliefs

Overt beliefs promote the theme of *Naga ga di etelane* by blocking deliberations on Mphaka's contributions to the improvement of the education system in Takone. His long wait for feedback unsettles him and adds to his discomfort in a foreign country. However, the steadfast attendance of church by Mphaka and his family serves to secure their spiritual stability.

Overt beliefs appear in the form of Christianity that is suggested by a mention of **Holy Communion, confirmation lessons** and **pastor/ reverend**. On the other hand, hidden beliefs are communicated to the reader by Mphaka's **dream** of his mother instructing him to bring the children to Bonwatau before she dies and Hunadi's mention of **ancestors** taking exception. Mokgoatšana (1996:xiv) aptly asserts that the contradictions between African religion and Christianity help us comprehend the frustrations of secular and religious lives. From this analysis, it can be deduced that both overt and covert beliefs form part of every moment of individuals' lives.

4.2.1.1 Religious affiliations

Mphaka recognises the frustration of his good intentions and loses further hope of attaining his aspirations in exile as overt beliefs serve as an avoidable barrier:

TOKARI: Karolo ya ka Bohlabela le ya ka
Bodikela ya selete se **ga di nwešane**
meetse.

MPHAKA: E ka ba **lebaka** e le eng?

TOKARI: Phapano e hlolwa ke ditumelo tša go fapana.

MPHAKA: Ke sona seo se mo šitišago go mphetola?

TOKARI: O tla kgona bjang go lebana le bona?
(Serudu, 2011:33)

(English translation)

TOKARI: The Eastern and Western sections of this region are hostile towards each other.

MPHAKA: For what good reason?

TOKARI: Conflict is caused by their different religious affiliations.

MPHAKA: Is that the reason why he is unable to respond to my submissions?

TOKARI: How will he be able to face them?

In this chapter, the dialogue reaffirms the hostility between the Eastern and Western regions of Takone that is precipitated by different religious affiliations. This state of affairs puts Mphaka in a dilemma because he is a foreigner who can easily be caught up in the conflict. Tokari reveals the hostility to Mphaka because he is Mphaka's sincere friend and Serudu portrays him as a firm and trustworthy friend who does not take sides despite the warring religious factions.

In the light of the above information, Mphaka is made further aware that foreigners in Takone serve as a buffer between the North and South regions of Takone. Tokari can safely and honestly make Mphaka aware of his vulnerability in exile.

4.2.1.2 Religious rites

Mphaka goes back home after some leisure at Mbari's bar lounge to find Raisibe and Hunadi have returned from church. The author depicts Mphaka's family as a religious one that honours church meetings as can be deduced from the following dialogue:

MPHAKA: (*O fihlile ka gae.*) Raisibe, le **boile** ka pele?

RAISIBE: Ee, Tate. Mme o ile a re a ka se kgone go ya **selalelong**.

MPHAKA: O kae bjale?

RAISIBE: O ka phapošing ya gagwe o robetše.
(Serudu, 2011:29)

(English translation)

MPHAKA: (*Back home.*) Raisibe, did you **return** early?

RAISIBE: Yes, Dad. Mummy said she would not be able to partake in the **Holy Communion**.

MPHAKA: Where is she now?

RAISIBE: She is in her bedroom and asleep.

Mphaka, a man who did not attend church to the distress of his wife, arrives home not aware that his wife has sacrificed taking Holy Communion because of her frustration and anger. This illustrates the very effective manner in which Serudu develops the theme of this text related to the frustration experienced by a family in exile because the reader realises that Hunadi is

religiously and emotionally hurt. The fact that Hunadi is asleep does not necessarily make Mphaka feel comfortable because Hunadi is not expected to sleep at that time. At the same time, Hunadi is portrayed as a wife who expresses her anger by sleeping, rather than frantic expression of emotions that can be witnessed by all.

4.2.1.3 Mention of God

At Letsha la Mogadisho, after a government take-over, Mphaka and Hunadi are worried by the continual disruption of the education of their children as a result of their vagrant life in exile. To complicate matters further, their son, Sebola has opted to join the war of liberation in *Zambia*; this is suggested by *Mušiwathunya/the Victoria Falls* because Zambia housed the South African, Zimbabwean, Namibian and Mozambican freedom fighters during the years of oppression in Bonwatau. Mphaka, a strong believer in God, has this to say as the play reaches its climax:

HUNADI: Ke boledišwa ke tlalelo, Tholo. Bana ba re tšamago re ba kgaosetša dithuto e tla ba ya ba batho?

MPHAKA: E tla ba batho kae Sebola e le yo a itahletše Mušiwathunya? Mafelelong re tla šala re ponoka; re pola diatla. Gwa swana le ge **A** se be **A** re abela dihlogo tša kgobe.

(Serudu, 2011:95)

(English translation)

HUNADI: I'm talking out of frustration, Tholo. Will the children whose schooling we

continually disrupt ever be self-supporting.

MPHAKA: How will they ever be self-supporting because Sebola has already joined the freedom fighters in the Victoria Falls (Zambia)? It will look like He never blessed us with lovely children.

The highest point of Mphaka's frustrations emerge when a teaching post senior to his position is created for the employment of a citizen of Letsha la Mogadisho who was once his student. Hunadi suggests that they return to Bonwatau because a neighbour who visits them, Lebisi, has told them about positive changes back in Bonwatau. However, Mphaka remains apprehensive about these alleged changes:

MPHAKA: Mosadi! O reng wa bolela ka mollo? Bonwatau? O ra gore diphetogo tšeo di ka re dumelela go boela gae?

HUNADI: Ke reng, Papa? Namile re tlo hwela mo nageng?

MPHAKA: Ke kabelo yeo **A** re filego yona. Ge re beetšwe gore re tla kotoga re le tseleng, thato a go phethege yeo ya **Gagwe**.
(Serudu, 2011:29)

(English translation)

MPHAKA: Lady! Why do you talk of hell? Bonwatau? Do you think that the changes may cause them to give us amnesty?

HUNADI: What should I say, Dear? Are we going to die in exile?

MPHAKA: It's the destiny **He** bestowed on us. If we are destined to die in exile then let **His** will be done.

4.2.1.4 Confirmation class

Mphaka and Hunadi are religious parents who conform to the conventions and prescriptions of their religious affiliation. Their religion serves to strengthen them against the upheavals in their life in exile within the setting of escalating problems. The pastor in their church advises that Raisibe attend confirmation lessons but her parents consider her still too young to qualify for attendance thereof:

HUNADI: Ga go seo a se boletšeng. O fo re ke go botše o tle o mmone mabapi le Raisibe.

MPHAKA: Raisibe o dirileng?

HUNADI: O re o swanetše gore a tsene **klase ya khonformasi** o godile.

MPHAKA: O reng a re gaba? Raisibe o sa gola. O tla išwa išago.

(Serudu, 2011:31)

(English translation)

HUNADI: He just said that he needed to talk to you about Raisibe.

MPHAKA: What wrong has Raisibe done?

HUNADI: He says she is due to attend **confirmation lessons**.

MPHAKA: Why is he so impatient? Raisibe is still young. She will attend next year.

Mphaka and Hunadi experience some discomfort when a religious pastor advises them to register Raesibe for a religious confirmation class. Both Hunadi and Mphaka agree that their daughter is still too young to register. Their reaction disagrees with the pastor's suggestion and, thereby, develops the theme of *Naga ga di etelane* further as both characters try to decide on the future of their daughter in Takone.

4.2.2 Covert beliefs

Covert beliefs emerge as characters speak and act as in real life. Mphaka dreams of his mother in Bonwatau demanding that her grandchildren be brought to Bonwatau to visit her before she dies. She states that if she dies before they visit her then Mphaka and his family will find no peace of mind as they move from one country to another.

4.2.2.1 Dreams as a means of spiritual communication

The strict character in Mphaka's dream is called Lentšu (Voice) who complicates his life in exile. Mphaka believes that a dead person becomes a god who can cast a spell on insubordinate living relatives:

LENTŠU: Mphaka! Mphaka! Se ithobatše; hlwaya tsebe!

MPHAKA: (*O a lora, o a bilokana; o a goragora mola Hunadi a ile ka boroko.*) Hmmm!

LENTŠU: Ke a go botša ge o ka se tliše bana bao gae ka ba bona pele **ke ikela go bomakgolokhukhu** o ka se lokelwe ke selo!

MPHAKA: (*O a goelela.*) Ijoo! Hunadi! (*O a robala.*)

LENTŠU: O tla yebela le lefase ka moka ba go tlaiša.
O se lebale mantšu ao a ka.
(Serudu, 2011:19)

(English translation)

LENTŠU: Mphaka! Mphaka! Don't pretend to be asleep; listen.

MPHAKA: (*He is dreaming, tossing and turning in bed while Hunadi is fast asleep.*) Hmmm!

LENTŠU: Lo, if you don't bring those children home so that I can see them **before I die** then you'll have a myriad of misfortunes!

MPHAKA: (*Aloud.*) Ooh! Hunadi! (*He falls asleep.*)

LENTŠU: You'll migrate from one country to another under abusive conditions of life. Mark my words.

Serudu introduces this horrible nightmare to disturb Mphaka's deep and restful sleep. This serves to further develop the theme of the literary work. The tossing and turning point to restlessness during sleep characterises Mphaka as a person who is easily manipulated by the voice that represents his aged mother in far away Bonwatau. By extension, the voice casts bad spells on Mphaka if he fails to return to Bonwatau during the aged mother's lifetime. The reader of *Naga ga di etelane* is able to foreshadow Mphaka's migrant life in exile as the voice mentions continuous migration and undesirable conditions of life in the close of the precept above.

4.2.2.2 Bad spells

After the horrific nightmare, Mphaka had to explain to his wife why he could not attend the church service on that day because Hunadi suspected his being addicted to intoxicating beverages as the main cause, and was perturbed and frustrated. Mphaka relates the horrific dream and Hunadi sympathises with him because she believes that his mother's bad spell in the dream will exacerbate their frustrations in exile:

HUNADI: (*O a tširoga.*) O tloga a boletše bjalo,
Tholo?

MPHAKA: Ke ona mantšu a gagwe ao. Gape o re
ditšhaba di tla keta ka rena diketo ge
re ka se phethe taelo ya gagwe.

HUNADI: (*O itshwara lehlaa.*) Tšo! O ra rena!
Mokgekolo o reng a re emela ka maoto
ka mokgwa wo mola a tseba re tlogile
re sa hloma dithaka?
(Serudu, 2011:30)

(English translation)

HUNADI: (*Terrified.*) Did she say that, Tholo?

MPHAKA: Those were her words. She even says
foreign nations will torment us if we
don't heed her instruction.

HUNADI: (*With hand on her cheek.*) Oh! It's
unfortunate! Why does the old lady
take exception with us knowing well
that we fled into exile?

Serudu portrays Hunadi as a round (dynamic) character who is terrified when circumstances in her life are unfavourable. Her fears lead to discomfort that allows the theme to develop without interruption. Worse still, Mphaka explains all this with a hand on his cheek. In this way, he shows a deep worry and concern that tells the reader of his restlessness in exile that is acting as a force to propel him back to Bonwatau. There is a strong belief in African tradition that if someone has put a hand on his/her cheek, he or she is in deep thought and intervention is required. The researcher, as a consequence, observes and recognises Serudu's exceptional use of the concept of bad spells and stage directions to uncover the theme of *Na ga di etelane*.

4.3 Cultural ideologies

Hornby (1994:291) defines culture as 'a state of intellectual development', whereas ideology (1994:616) is explained as the ideas that form the basis of an economic or political theory, or those which are held by a particular group or person.

Serudu employs several forms of cultural ideologies in the text. In this study, the following examples are chosen because of the economics of time and other resources.

4.3.1 Respect for one's parents

A letter from his mother in Bonwatau triggers the first example that points to Mphaka's unqualified respect for his mother. In the letter, Mphaka's mother expresses a longing for her grandchildren. This is the first factor that unsettles Mphaka in exile although in a mild way:

Hle, Tholo nke o re romele seswantšho sa gago le bana;
re tle re kgone go fela re le gopola ka sona ...
(Serudu, 2011:15)

(English translation)

Please, Tholo may you send us a photo of your family so that it remains a memoir to us.

As if this was not sufficient, Mphaka develops a nightmare that tortures him further, but also reflects his high regard and respect for his aged mother in Bonwatau. Serudu harnesses a nightmare that adds to the content of the abovementioned letter and makes life in exile even more uncomfortable for Mphaka.

After the letter from Bonwatau Mphaka experiences the same nightmare twice. Initially, a voice, commands Mphaka to heed its demands and Mphaka becomes terrified, frustrated and confused in exile as Serudu develops the theme. Secondly so, the nightmare reappears artfully to the reader as if the mission of the first nightmare is not accomplished:

LENTŠU: Ke a go botša ge o ka se tliše bana
bao gae ka ba bona pele ke ikela go
bomakgolokhukhu o ka se lokelwe ke
selo.
(Serudu, 2011:19)

(English translation)

VOICE: Verily, if you do not bring those
children home so that I see them
before I die your future is doomed.

Mphaka cannot take his children back to Bonwatau easily because he fled the country and experiences a dilemma as his aged mother commands him to

bring the children back to Bonwatau, this time in the form of a nightmare. Mphaka is a person who holds his mother in high esteem against his choice of life in exile. The theme of work develops as Mphaka, a person determined to satisfy his aged mother's request, seeks the resolution of his nightmare. In turn, the voice is depicted as uncompromising.

4.3.2 Love outside marriage

On several occasions, either Mphaka or Hunadi makes mention of love outside marriage during their interactions. At times it is done as a joke, ridicule or sarcasm to create a particular mood of the text depending on the context of their interaction. In all cases, the character of the persons involved in the interaction differ:

MPHAKA: (*O kgathotše mahlong.*) Na o bolela le nna bjang nke o ntirile motlabo wa gago?

HUNADI: (*O sega lesego la kgegeo.*) Uwe! Ge o le mo o tseba ge ke na le motlabo? Wa tla wa iphora ka lefeela ruri.
(Serudu, 2011:16)

(English translation)

MPHAKA: (*Looking very angry.*) How dare you speak to me like you speak to your lecher?

HUNADI: (*Laughing sarcastically.*) Oh! In this way you know me to be having a concubine? That cannot be true.

In the dialogue, Mphaka is angry and mentions some suspicion of love outside marriage as he describes the disrespect displayed by his wife towards him. On the contrary, Hunadi denies the issue of love outside marriage sarcastically. In this fashion, Serudu depicts a married couple in a natural conflict that is given with human existence. The anger and sarcasm in the dialogue is meant to make the characters aware of the discomfort caused by a nightmare and exaggerated by life in exile.

4.3.3 Preferred place of burial

Mphaka prefers to be buried in Bonwatau rather than anywhere else. The reader meets this issue several times in the text that becomes nostalgic in tone. This becomes evident in the following conversation:

HUNADI: Etse ruri, Mphaka, o sa hutša gore gae gona re tla hlwa re boetše? Ra bona lehu ka mahlo? Ra itahlela leganong la tau ya mariri?

MPHAKA: Na go ka swana le go hwela nageng? Hleng ge re hwetše ga gaborena ba tla kgona go re hloboga; ba khutšiša marapo a rena mobung woo o re godišitšego. Le mabitla a rena ba tla fela ba a hlagolela; rena re le dithokgola tša ditlogolwana tša rena!
(Serudu, 2011:91)

(English translation)

HUNADI: By the way, Mphaka, do you still hope for our return to Bonwatau? Should we

face death? To throw ourselves into a gaping mouth of a ferocious lion?

MPHAKA: Is it the same as burial in a foreign country? If we die in Bonwatau, tribute will be paid to us and we will be buried in the soil that nurtured our lives. Our graves will be maintained, as we remain ancestors to the future generations.

Mphaka is portrayed as a character that will prefer without hesitation, to be buried in his country of birth irrespective of the consequences. In this way, the reader can foreshadow Mphaka's return to Bonwatau. He wishes to be accorded last tributes and a decent burial in the soil that nurtured him. Dreams and superstitions have come to haunt him. At this point, he acknowledges the importance of home ground after a long torturous stay in exile. In this way, Serudu keeps on reminding the reader of the theme of *Naga ga di etelane* that there is no better place than home.

4.3.4 Love potion

Some African men believe that their wives apply love potions to food in order to cement their marriage. In some instances, love potions are meant to make food rations extraordinarily tasty to husbands. This, in turn, will blindfold husbands, so that they do not value concubines more than their spouses:

HUNADI: O sa le boeletša? Ke gore ka mehla ke go leša dipotsa?

MPHAKA: Aowa, Mogatšaka, ga ke realo. Ke fo re tše tšona di tloga di tsefa e le ruri. O di feafeetše.

(Serudu, 2011:18)

(English translation)

HUNADI: Are you saying it once more? Does it mean I normally serve you distasteful dishes?

MPHAKA: No, Dear, I do not mean that. I am just saying that this dish is very delicious. You have administered some love potion to it.

The mood of conversation between Hunadi and Mphaka seems unhappy as Hunadi serves Mphaka a sumptuous repast and receives remarks that cause her to feel uncomfortable. However, when Mphaka praises her for cooking competence for the second time, Hunadi believes he is being sarcastic, although Mphaka suspects the administration of a love potion to make him love Hunadi more than before. The researcher subscribes to the idea of the love potion (... O di feafeetše), whereas other readers of the text may freely interpret it to mean the extra effort made in the preparation of the delicious meal at the table.

4.3.5 Love out of wedlock

Husbands and wives sometimes suspect their spouses of infidelity. Each party stereotypes another as the subject of love out of wedlock. The suspicion is based on jealousy instead of concrete evidence. In some families, the stereotyping may cause serious family squabbles whereas others make regular jokes:

MPHAKA: Aowa, Mogatšaka, ga ke realo. Ke fo re tše tšona di tloga di tsefa e le ruri. **O di feafeetše.**

HUNADI: Gona lehono ga wa feta ga mogaditšong wa ka.

MPHAKA: (*O a sega ebile o nyaka go balelwa ke dijo.*) Kgane bona ba apea tše bose ka mehla?

HUNADI: Ba ka iphoronyaka. Gape ba rata gore lenao **le se ome** ka ga bona. (Serudu, 2011:18)

(English translation)

MPHAKA: No, Dear, I do not mean that. I`m just saying that this dish is very delicious. You have administered some **love potion** to it.

HUNADI: So today you did not go via your mistress.

MPHAKA: (*He laughs and was nearly choked by food.*) Do they always serve delicious food there?

HUNADI: They may not be unscrupulous. They aim to **attract men**.

From the dialogue, it can be inferred that the African man is free to have concubines. That is why Hunadi is indirectly admitting jokingly that she knows that Mphaka sometimes enjoys meals at his mistress' house. The words in bold are meant to emphasise the point. In African tradition, the womenfolk have not been granted freedom of association like their male counterparts. It was only in 2009, that the African Women's Development and Communications Network (FEMNET) embarked on the promotion of women's rights.

In recent times, women's rights have been nationally and internationally promulgated as laws and human rights instruments (Kagoiya, 2009). Nevertheless, Hunadi accepts African tradition without question. She believes in the higher hierarchical position of African men as is embedded in their culture and customs.

4.3.6 Irregular church attendance by men

In religious circles, men are viewed as not attending church regularly whereas women are portrayed as regular churchgoers. Men accept this type of stereotyping readily as evidenced by the following conversation:

TOKARI: Ke gore nna le wena **re ilana le kereke?** (*Ba a sega.*)

MPHAKA: Monna ge a ile kerekeng **gatee ka kgwedi** go lekane. Ga o bone dikereke di fo tlala basadi fela.
(Serudu, 2011:24)

(English translation)

TOKARI: Does it mean **we are not ardent churchgoers?** (*Both laugh.*)

MPHAKA: It's enough for a man to go to church **once a month**. That is why church buildings are always full of women only.

Both Mphaka and Tokari laugh together as a sign of agreement when Tokari indicates that men do not attend church regularly. In addition, Mphaka explains that men need to attend church once a month as a rule and states that this is the reason that there are always more women than men in

churches. By way of agreement, both men laugh once. The episode depicts a happy mood in the text that may mislead a novice reader in terms of the intended theme. For example, Serudu portrays Tokari and Mphaka as faithful and sincere colleagues although Mphaka is a foreigner in Takone.

4.4 Conclusion

Traditional African and Western religion blends well with the theme of *Naga ga di etelane* as is evident in the actions of characters in aspects of daily life. To honour his ancestors, Mphaka, believes that his bones must be laid to rest in his place of birth and not in exile. On the other hand, Mphaka's family exhibits relatively high levels of Christianity. His daughter, Mošopšadi, has to undergo confirmation class in order to become a full church member and his wife supports this. The researcher concludes that people in different set-ups, retain their beliefs and practices deeply rooted in their customs and traditions.

Chapter 5

Language and register

5.1 Introduction

Hornby (1994:700) explains language as the words used in a particular country or by a particular group of people and goes further to define register (1994:1059) as a form of language or vocabulary used by speakers in particular social encounters or in a professional context.

Language and register cannot, therefore, be divorced from each other. Alongside the two, features of style such as that defined by Lukas (1974:16) in Serudu (1993:118) are used as the technique or way of harnessing language in a literary work to create effective and intelligible communication with the reader.

Flexner and Hauk (1993:1081) define language as follows:

A body of words and the systems for their use common to a people who are of the same community or nation, the same geographical area, or the same cultural tradition.

Confirming the aforesaid statement, and more poignantly, Wyld (1961:654) says this about language:

A particular, characteristic form, or mode of speech current among a specific large group of human beings.

On the other hand, sociolinguists such as Wardhaugh (1986:52), Halliday and Hasan (1976:22) define register as language that is used intentionally and for a particular purpose or in a particular social setting. Consequently, speakers

and writers could use numerous registers at different times and in specific conditions. In the view of Halliday and Hasan (1976:23), a text is an integral part of discourse and therefore consistent in register.

For purposes of this research, register and style in *Naga ga di etelane* are discussed separately as they promote the development of theme and character.

McGann cited by Dogan (2005:1) maintains that literature cannot be carried on (created), understood (studied), or appreciated (experienced) outside of its definitive human context. The human context entails, among others, the literary background and setting and to a greater extent, mood and tone.

5.2 Background and setting

The setting of a narrative or dramatic work is as defined by Abrams (1988:172), the general locale, historical time and social circumstances where the action occurs. He goes on to explain the setting of an episode or a scene within a literary work as being the particular physical location in which it takes place. As an illustration, Serudu aptly poses the historical time and social circumstances in Bonwatau as follows:

MPHAKA: (*O šišinya hlogo.*) Le nna ke be ke
nyaka
Go swana le mantho a mangwe.
(Serudu, 2011:13)

(English translation)

MPHAKA: (*Shaking his head.*) I wanted equality
of treatment, like many others

Mphaka is portrayed as protesting against the lack of equal treatment of citizens of Bonwatau. To him the statutory enforcement of apartheid policies is not only aimed at regulating separation between the races, but also to enslave the majority of the blacks. In this way, the theme of the play develops as the reason for emigration becomes apparent.

By the same token, the historical time is presented by the play in the following extract:

MPHAKA: Go tšwa ka difate tša borare,
Go yo tsoma mafulo a matala dileteng
tše dingwe.
(Serudu, 2011:13)

(English translation)

MPHAKA: To go into exile,
In search of greener pastures in other
countries.

This historical time in Bonwatau forced some citizens to flee into exile because political circumstances of the period did not afford them dignified citizenship in their country of birth. The theme develops as Mphaka and his family move to Takone in the hope of finding greener pastures.

The setting changes as Mphaka and his family settle in Takone. Mphaka becomes a settled character as his academic qualifications make him acceptable to their educational needs because he is a well-educated person. It is important to realise that the letter from his mother back in Bonwatau challenges Mphaka and further unsettles him in what he had expected to be relatively greener pastures:

HUNADI: Le reng nke le tshwenyegile, Tholo?

MPHAKA: (*O šišinya hlogo.*) O a tseba, Mogatšaka, ge ke gopola ka ga lešika lešo, nakong ye nngwe ke ikhwetša ke tlaletšwe ke sa tsebe pele le morago.
(Serudu, 2011:16-17)

(English translation)

HUNADI: Why do you look worried, Tholo?

MPHAKA: (*Shaking his head.*) Darling, when I think of my relatives, I find myself frustrated, not knowing whether to go forward or backward.

The general locale is Takone, a country far away from Bonwatau. Mphaka experiences exaggerated conditions of discomfort in exile, which seem more obvious than the oppression he could not tolerate in Bonwatau. This discomfort is compounded by the letter he receives from his mother telling him of the need to return to Bonwatau. In this way, the letter contributes towards the development of the theme as Mphaka thinks about the relatives he has left behind in his country of birth.

Hunadi is portrayed as a wife who observes the discomfort of her husband easily and uses honorific language in her attempts to give him moral support. In response to that, Mphaka also employs honorific language to remind his wife of his lasting love for her. The reader realises how the pair attempts to make life in Takone bearable to it by adding respect and unfailing love to the social circumstances of the time.

It is interesting to note that both Hunadi and Mphaka are portrayed as patriots of Bonwatau. In this way, the theme of the work becomes clear to the reader. The following interaction tells it all:

HUNADI: O tlalelwa ka tshwanelo moo gona, Tholo. Mogologolo wa bogologolo o be a di bone ge a re: 'Legae la bomotho ga le na le bosehlananya'.

MPHAKA: Gae ke gae. Le ge motho a ka garama le dilete, a lokologa moyeng, a fiwa mahumo le maemo dileteng di šele, moya wa gagwe o tla fela o mmotša gore mo ga se ga geno.
(Serudu, 2011:17)

(English translation)

HUNADI: There is good cause for your frustration, Tholo. An old saying asserts that there is no better place than home.

MPHAKA: East, west, home is best. A person may traverse the world, acquire emotional freedom, amass riches and be held in high esteem in foreign countries but his/her inner person will always remind him/her of the country of his/her birth.

The social circumstances surrounding Mphaka and Hunadi in *Takone* force both of them to express and accentuate the theme of *Naga ga di etelane*. In their dialogue, they agree that east, west, home is best, although this is

voiced in different ways. This serves to foreshadow the pending return to Bonwatau about which they have a common concern.

In contrast, Mphaka indulges in a monologue that reveals to the reader the other social circumstances that comfort him and his family in exile. Mphaka and his family seem comfortable in Takone apart from the unhappy tidings received from his aged mother in Bonwatau. The monologue reveals Mphaka's thoughts, intentions and feelings towards the general locale:

MPHAKA: (*O a balabala.*) Ke gona ge motho a phela ka yona tsela ye. Go tlaišega moyeng ka yona tsela ye? Ruri, go gola ke go bona digolo. Fela batho ba mo bona ba tloga ba bonala e le batho ba kgobe sa boloko. Ga ba hlale mofalatšana wa batho. Ge nna le ba lapa re sa robala bja mohlapula ga ke bone lebaka la go boela gae le go yo itahlela ka ganong la tau.
(Serudu, 2011:18)

(English translation)

MPHAKA: (*Grumbling.*) Is this the way a person has to live? To be spiritually tortured in this way? Indeed, aging is to experience hardships. As for the people of this area, they seem to be extremely humane. They do not discriminate against a humble refugee. While my family and I are still welcome, I do not see the reason of

returning home, and to go and expose myself into the gaping mouth of a ferocious lion.

According to the monologue, Mphaka agrees that he is leading a stressful life in Takone but is reassured by the lack of xenophobic tendencies. He decides to remain in Takone on condition that nothing unsettles his family, instead of returning to Bonwatau that will cause his life to become highly vulnerable. The theme develops when life in exile seems to be settled and safe.

Mphaka's frustration reaches a high point when the education authorities in Takone request recommendations for the improvement of their education system and he responds to them. However, Mphaka does not receive any reaction or feedback from the education authorities although he submitted same (recommendations) several months ago. Tokari, a citizen of Takone, explains to him the probable cause for this unprofessional conduct:

TOKARI: (*O maketše.*) Ke be ke tla makala ge a ka go fetola.

MPHAKA: Molato ke eng?

TOKARI: Kgane wena mola wa fihlago mo seleteng se o ile wa kwa ba re o etetše karolo ya ka Bodikela ya naga ye?

MPHAKA: Le gatee.

TOKARI: A ka se ke.

(Serudu, 2011:33)

(English translation)

TOKARI: (*Surprised.*) I know that you will not receive feedback.

MPHAKA: What is the reason?

TOKARI: Have you ever heard of his visit to the Western region of the country since you came here?

MPHAKA: Never.

TOKARI: He will not.

Consequently, Mphaka feels uncomfortable in Takone because he now understands the animosity between the citizens of the Western and Eastern regions of the country. In addition, he becomes uneasier when realising that foreigners serve as a buffer between the two hostile regions of Takone. Readers of the text can expect Mphaka to immigrate from Takone to another country.

The research does not purport to be capable of exhausting the background and setting of *Naga ga di etelane*. Extensive research still has to be done on the subtopic alone.

5.3 Mood and tone

Lutrin and Pincus (2007:96) explain mood as the pervading feelings that the **reader** experiences. It is interesting to note that these can be used interchangeably within the atmosphere of a literary text. However, Quinn (2004:209) argues this by explaining tone as the author's attitude to the subject whereas mood refers to the reader's experience. The researcher subscribes to the differences as evinced by Quinn. For purposes of this study, mood and tone are treated under one subheading. An author may, thus, employ tone and other literary devices to create the mood of a text. Such devices include tone, honorific language, exclamation words, word choice, imagery and some figures of speech.

5.3.1 Tone

Lutrin and Pincus (2007:99) define tone in a literary text as a device that reveals the **author's** subjective views and attitudes. On the other hand, Hornby (1994:1350) explains tone as a manner of expression in speaking, which may point to anger, impatience, command, regret, insult, or unhappiness.

After the two incidents of a horrible nightmare in one night, the worried and frustrated Mphaka wakes up and walk quietly into the garden instead of preparing to go to church. Hunadi who woke up before him searches for him in their bedroom, but does not find him. Raesibe continues the search by looking for him in the study room without success and Hunadi intensifies the search and finds Mphaka seated on a boulder with his head between his knees. Mphaka's posture reveals an unpleasant mood because happy people do not indulge in such postures:

MPHAKA: Sepelang le ntlogele ke le bjalo.

HUNADI: (*O tlabegile ebile o befetšwe.*) O re sepelang? Na wena ga o sa ya kerekeng?

MPHAKA: Se mphate diganong. Ke re sepelang le ye kerekeng yeo ya lena.

HUNADI: Sešane sa basadi! Mphaka, ge o be o re ke šidulle diaparo tša gago mantšibua o be o era ge o tlo ntira sona se?

MPHAKA: Na ga o nkwe gore ke reng?
(Serudu, 2011:21)

(English translation)

MPHAKA: You go and leave me in peace.

Hunadi: (*Surprised and angry.*) You order us to go away? Are you no longer going to church?

MPHAKA: Don't vex me, please. Go to your damn church.

HUNADI: Gosh! Mphaka, when you said I should iron your clothes last night, were you aiming at treating me like this?

MPHAKA: Can't you understand what I'm saying?

Serudu's diction in the interaction between Mphaka and Hunadi is intended to create a sombre mood in the text. Mphaka commands Hunadi and Raesibe by saying 'Sepelang...' meaning they should leave him alone and go to church. Hunadi is surprised and angry at the same time. Serudu uses the following stage directions to depict the mood:

English	Sesotho sa Leboa
Surprised and angry.	O tlabegile ebile o befetšwe.

This then points to Mphaka's insolent reaction:

English	Sesotho sa Leboa
Your damn church	Kerekeng yeo ya lena

To a great extent, the above response is that least expected of him and Hunadi tries to continue persuading Mphaka to attend church thus:

English	Sesotho sa Leboa
Are you no longer going to church?	Na wena ga o sa ya kerekeng?
Don't vex me, please.	Se mphate diganong.

In a more severe and unkind manner than before, Mphaka requests that Hunadi not vex him and reiterates the command he made earlier. Serudu aptly uses a commanding tone to create an unhappy mood in the text. The reader cannot help, but sympathise with Mphaka and his wife as this contributes to Mphaka's unhappiness in exile.

On the other hand, Serudu creates a good example of a happy mood in the literary text to cause the reader to develop experiences of Mphaka's happiness as if that would make life in exile enjoyable for him although that was not to be. Mphaka has just had altercations with Mbari and Kala at a local pub but is comforted as follows:

- HUNADI:** Tsena. (*Raisibe o a tsena.*) Ao! Ke wena, Mošopšadi?
- RAISIBE:** Ke nna, Mma. Dijo di lokile.
- HUNADI:** Re tla fihla, tšhong le eja.
- RAISIBE:** Ke kwele, Mma. (*O a tšwa.*)
- MPHAKA:** (*O a myamya.*) O godišitše, Ngwanana tena!
- HUNADI:** Eya kua! O reng o sa re re godišitše? Na ke wa ka ke nnoši?
(Serudu, 2011:31)

(English translation)

- HUNADI:** Come in. (*Raisibe comes in.*) Gosh! Is that you, Mošopšadi?
- RAISIBE:** It's me, Mom. Food is ready.
- HUNADI:** We are coming, start eating in the mean time.

RAISIBE: Okay, Mom. (*Exit.*)

MPHAKA: (*Smiling.*) You have nurtured her, cute girl!

HUNADI: Ooh! Why don't you say we have nurtured her? Is she not our daughter?

The mood changes from a sombre one to a pleasant one. Raisibe has prepared food for them and her parents are proud of her. Mphaka commends Hunadi for her ability to raise a young girl and Hunadi makes Mphaka aware that the young girl was nurtured by both of them.

Serudu employs honorific language in a form of praise name by calling his daughter 'Mošopšadi' in order to create a happier mood in the text. As if this is not enough, Mphaka, addresses his wife as a cute girl by calling her 'Ngwanana tena'. These are expressions of tenderness and wonder. Hunadi happily reminds Mphaka, that both parents have nurtured Raisibe. Serudu portrays Mphaka and his wife as people who prefer respect and true love against the trauma of life in exile.

5.3.2 Use of exclamation

According to Lutrin and Pincus (2007:11) exclamations use words that accentuate and strengthen the tone of a statement. The tone is then used to develop the mood of the text as the theme unfolds.

Mphaka does not attend church but chooses to have some intoxicating beverage at Mbari's bar lounge. On his return home, he finds Hunadi lying in bed because she is angry that Mphaka appeared to be drunk. Mphaka's attempt to explain his absence from church lands on deaf ears as Hunadi is fuming with rage. Serudu develops dynamic characters in this fashion as the reader realises that Hunadi also can become angry at times and Mphaka explains his action apologetically:

HUNADI: E le gore se segolo se o nyakago go mpotša ke eng?

MPHAKA: Aowi! O reng wa mphelela pelo na, Mogatšaka?

(Serudu, 2011:29)

(English translation)

HUNADI: Actually what is the main issue you want to tell me?

MPHAKA: Gosh! Why are you impatient with me, darling?

In this conversation, Hunadi makes her husband aware that she is greatly disgusted in her reaction to his request for a chat by way of a question that reduces Mphaka's request to a triviality. The mood of the text turns into that of disrespect and Mphaka is sorrowfully surprised by saying 'Aowi!' to learn of it. The author of the literary text employs the exclamation to express Mphaka's unhappiness and surprise as he seldom makes his wife angry. Mphaka and Hunadi are depicted as normal people with emotions of anger and disappointment caused by a conflicting interaction.

The theme develops the discomfort between Mphaka and Hunadi and Raesibe queries this with deep concern. Raesibe learnt that her family fled Bonwatau to settle in Takone according to a teacher at school:

HUNADI: Morutiši yo wa bona yena o be a nyaka go kwa eng go ngwana yo?

MPHAKA: (*O homola sebakanyana.*) Ke kgolwa gore go na le seo ba se bolelago ka rena.

HUNADI: O ra gore o hlohlomiša ditaba?

MPHAKA: Gabotsebotse! Ge a nyaka go tseba seo se re tlošitšego Bonwatau, o reng a sa lebantšhe rena; a šiteletša ngwana?

HUNADI: Tšho! Ge re be re thabile bjalo; re re mo gona re tla robala boroko, tša napa tša re tlapela ka tsela ye? (Serudu, 2011:74)

(English translation)

HUNADI: What did the teacher try to find out from the little girl?

MPHAKA: (*Short silence.*) I believe there is something they are discussing about us.

HUNADI: Do you mean he wanted to establish some facts?

MPHAKA: Indeed! If he wants to establish what caused us to leave Bonwatau, why can't he face us instead of embarrassing the little girl?

HUNADI: Damnit! Now that we thought we would find some peace of mind in this place, have matters turned in this way?

Serudu uses a teacher, a minor character, to make life challenging for Mphaka and his family in exile by trying to find out through Raesibe whether the family fled Bonwatau for Takone. The teacher's action terrifies Mphaka and his wife and creates a mood of insecurity and unhappiness in the family. When Hunadi tries to figure out whether the teacher was trying to establish some

facts, Mphaka responds by exclaiming with disgust saying 'Gabotsebotse!' meaning 'Indeed' because the teacher sounds insensitive with regard to Raisibe's age. In addition, Hunadi realises with disappointment that their hope of peace of mind in exile is shattered. In this way, Serudu develops the theme to a climax in a way that engages the reader's sympathy because of the tone, which is indicated by exclamations and the accompanying gloomy mood.

Exclamations are carefully used to enhance the mood of the text. Hunadi uses attractive and expressive language in her exclamation to portray a character well versed in her vernacular:

HUNADI: Mmaantswetše! Nko re sešane sa basadi!
(Serudu, 2011:36)

(English translation)

HUNADI: Wow! I can't believe it!

To express affection, Hunadi requests her husband to attend to the garden in order to strengthen their love upon which Mphaka responds:

MPHAKA: Matlakane a maso! Hunadi, ke gore
ge o nkgopela go ya go nwešetša
matšoba o be o rata go bona ge ke go
rata?
(Serudu, 2011:39)

(English translation)

MPHAKA: Oh! Hunadi, when you request me to
tend to the flowers you wanted to
prove whether I love you?

Hunadi is portrayed as a loving and caring mother and Mphaka appears to be a kind and affectionate husband against the background of unfavourable conditions of life in exile. This serves to present the theme as temporarily untrue although the daily circumstances point to the gist of the theme.

5.3.3 Honorific

Hornby (1994:598) defines honorific expressions as words indicating respect for the person being addressed. The author sometimes harnesses honorific expression for the persuasive effect of what a character says. According to Rahayu (2014:140-146) honorific is expressed through utterances, which may be done by either selecting honorific vocabularies or changing word form in terms of morphology.

Mphaka and Hunadi sit in a relaxed manner when Hunadi was serving tea to her husband in their lounge. She invites Mphaka to tea in a charming tone that creates a happy mood to replace the frustrations of their life in exile:

HUNADI: (*O tšhelela Mphaka foofoo.*) Meetsana ke ao, Tholo.

HUNADI: Hunadi wa Moreku! Mosadi o realo. (*Mahlo a gagwe a tantšwe ke lengwalo le Hunadi a le phathakgilego.*) Lengwalo leo o le phathakgilego lona le fihla neng?

HUNADI: Ke gona ke sa tšwago go le ntšha ka lepokisaneng la poso.

MPHAKA: A o le bule ra kwa tša lona gomme?

HUNADI: (*O itšhelela teye.*) Le a mpoifiša. A le bulwe ke wena.

MPHAKA: Se ntlabele lefeela, Mogatšaka. O ka boifišwa ke pampišana ya bošilo bjalo? (Serudu, 2011:37-38)

(English translation)

HUNADI: (*Pours tea for Mphaka.*) Have some drink, Tholo.

MPHAKA: That's lovely, Darling. So does a lovely woman. (*His eyes are attracted to a letter under Hunadi's arm.*) At what time did you receive the letter under your arm?

HUNADI: I've just taken it out of the post box recently.

MPHAKA: May you open it so that we may learn of its content.

HUNADI: (*She pours tea for herself.*) It unsettles me. Please, open it.

MPHAKA: Don't frustrate me unnecessarily, Darling. Does an ordinary paper easily unsettle you?

Serudu uses Mphaka's wife's praise name throughout *Naga ga di etelane* in such a way that Mphaka never addresses her in first name terms. That in itself affords Hunadi respect throughout the text. Hunadi addresses Mphaka by his clan praise name 'Tholo' and thereby affords her husband respect. The tone of respect thus created by these endearments persuades Mphaka to settle for tea.

In the same fashion, Mphaka returns Hunadi's evident respect and love by addressing her as his 'darling' ('Mogatšaka') and a thankful expression

(‘Mosadi o realo’). In addition further respect and love are illustrated when Mphaka addresses Hunadi by her personal and clan praise names (‘Hunadi wa Moreku’). Many a reader is compelled to develop a measure of envy as the two characters interact in a mood reflecting love and respect.

The theme of *Naga ga di etelane* develops further into an undesirable social situation after Mphaka has visited Sebola’s school on the invitation of the headmaster. During their meeting, the headmaster hinted to him that Sebola had an altercation with a teacher to an extent of telling the teacher that he is also an exile:

HUNADI: Tholo.

MPHAKA: Hunadi `a Moreku!

HUNADI: Hlwang ge, Papa.

MPHAKA: Re ipshinne ka lona le ge tša morwago
di sa mpipetše.

(Serudu, 2011:40)

(English translation)

HUNADI: Tholo. (Greeting Mphaka by his clan
praise name)

MPHAKA: Hunadi `a Moreku! (Greeting his wife by
both personal and clan praise names.)

HUNADI: How did you fare, Daddy.

MPHAKA: I fared well although your son’s
unbecoming behaviour at school is
frustrating me.

On Mphaka’s return from a meeting with the headmaster, Hunadi, unaware of Mphaka’s sorrow, greets him with glorious respect by his clan praise name ‘Tholo’ as usual. Mphaka returns Hunadi’s warm greetings by addressing her

by her personal and clan praise names 'Hunadi 'a Moreku'. The theme develops further as Hunadi enquires with love and respect (Daddy) about the meeting between her husband and the headmaster but changes when Hunadi learns that Sebola has had an altercation with a teacher at school. The characters appreciate their culture and tradition of displaying respect and love by the use of honorific expressions during verbal interactions.

5.3.4 Register

Register is defined as a range of vocabulary, grammar; etc used by speakers in particular social circumstances or professional contexts according to Hornby (1994:1059). Register is viewed for purposes of this work as an element of language in any literary work. Examples of social circumstances and professional circumstances are cited as they contribute to the development of the theme and character in *Naga ga di etelane*.

Appropriate register is employed during the conversation between Mphaka and Hunadi (a married couple) who are seated comfortably in the lounge of their home while drinking tea. They both agree that Mphaka has to visit the office of the headmaster of a school after receiving a letter of complaint from the school, which their troublesome son, Sebola, attends:

MPHAKA: Aowa, **Mogatšaka**, o tloga o tseba gabotse gore pele motho a ka bonana le hlogo ya sekolo o swanetše **go beelana mabaka** le yona. Ga ke rate go sepelela lefeela.
(Serudu, 2011:11)

(English translation)

MPHAKA: No, **Darling**, you know very well that I need **to make an appointment** with the headmaster before visiting his office. I don't want to visit the school without securing an appointment.

The situation in the text determines the author's register. For a novice reader, life in exile seems enjoyable for Mphaka's family, although this is against the theme of *Naga ga di etelane*. The register employed in the situation concerns the address of a husband to his wife and the formality of making an appointment before visiting a headmaster.

5.4 Convention and techniques

5.4.1 Style

Ullman (1964:101–102), quoted by Serudu (1993:118), asserts that style entails expressiveness and choice, the right word in the right place. Tsiu (1992:1) says:

The word 'style' is derived from the Latin '*stylus*', the name of a pointed steel instrument employed by the Romans in writing on their waxen tablets. Applied to literary works, the concept 'style' has been defined in various ways by different authors.

Furthermore, Quackenbos, as quoted by Kleiser (1911:27) in defining style, goes on to say:

... the peculiar manner in which a writer expresses his thoughts by means of words.

In *Naga ga di etelane*, Serudu aptly expresses Mphaka's frustrations by an effective choice of words for stage directions.

5.4.2 Stage directions

As Gray and Schalkwyk (1994:9) noted, stage directions are elements of drama. These elements are not intended to be spoken, but are solely for the reader or those involved in a production. Simply, stage directions are indications of who should speak the line and how it should be interpreted or executed. In the words of researchers, Gray and Schalkwyk (1994:9), stage directions are meant to:

... create the context in which the speech acquires its meaning, and, however blunt and bald these directions might appear (since they are written in conventional shorthand for the people involved in drama), they serve to remind us readers that all scripts are blueprints for a full, living performance.

As a result of the expressions written in bold below, the reader will understand Mphaka as a frustrated character through the physical demonstration of cupping his head in his hands with his elbows planted on the table. Although Mphaka and his family have fled into exile, they can see no peace of mind in their future. An astute reader of the work will remember the conditions that forced Mphaka into exile with sympathy and foreshadow a measure of culture shock that results in discomfort, which may ultimately result in a return to Bonwatau. For the sake of clarity, the following stage directions in tabular form bear reference to this:

Sesotho sa Leboa	English
(a) a ageleditše hlogo ka diatla	head cupped in hands
(b) tsemilwego godimo ga tafola	of which the elbows are planted in anchorage on the table
(c) boka ditshegana	like stone supports for a clay pot

(Serudu, 2011:13)

Serudu includes stage directions to create a mood for the text and thereby, in turn, creates the context for what is said by a character. From the outset of the play the stage directions depict Mphaka in a comical way that makes the reader expect nothing but to experience the frustration of the protagonist in exile. The stage directions reveal Serudu's choice of a brief and pithy diction that is a suitable for the theme. In this way, the reader of *Naga ga di etelane* is not surprised to be welcomed by a monologue following the stage directions above.

5.4.3 Foreshadowing

Sebranek, Patrick, et al (2001:12) define foreshadowing as a technique of giving hints of what is to come later in a story. From this definition, it can be deduced that foreshadowing means suggesting beforehand, what is going to happen in a literary work. By and large, the playwright engages this technique for four reasons:

- To drop hints,
- To build suspense,
- To prepare the readers for what will take place (either good or bad) and,
- To make a story more credible.

Serudu, in addition, has aptly designed foreshadowing in the form of a pyramid in *Naga ga di etelane* because it appears at four points of the plot, namely, at exposition, during the rising action, the zenith of the conflict and the resolution thereof.

5.4.4 Mphaka's flight from Bonwatau

The text depicts Mphaka as a man who yearned for basic democratic rights in Bonwatau, but could not enjoy these in his country. The effects of dehumanization prompt the character to express his anger. From this statement, it becomes clear that his human nature is violated. Bastian and Haslam (2011:296) explain human nature as an attribute that is seen as shared and fundamental features of humanity, such as emotionality, warmth and cognitive flexibility. His human uniqueness attributes are pushed aside by legislative procedures of Bonwatau. He is regarded as an unequal, disrespected and a socially invaluable person. Mphaka, aptly spells it out as he says:

Gore botho bja ka bo se tle bja thakgolwa ...
(Serudu, 2011:14)

(English translation)

That my human nature should not be degraded ...

From the excerpt, it is very clear that Mphaka feels he is treated as an object or as a means to an end. To him this is pure exploitation of man by man. It is against this background that the main character is portrayed as a target of dehumanization and the theme of the play gathers momentum. The fact that Mphaka feels socially ostracised makes him become mentally strong and not allow himself to be treated in ways that lower his status.

After Mphaka's deep reflection, the novel method of solving the problems of dehumanization resulted in him leaving the borders of Bonwatau. Against all odds, Mphaka is depicted as a fearless soul who epitomises the feeling of the defenceless majority of fellow countrymen.

In the opening soliloquy of the play, Mphaka, mentions, amongst others, the lack of the following: freedom of conscience 'moya wa ka', freedom of thought 'dikgopolo tša ka', freedom of education for his children 'meetse a tsebo', freedom of association 'Ke re ke betola ba re o a nyankga' and the right to life, 'Ka bontšhwa lehu ka mahlo' (Serudu, 2011:13).

Mphaka's resolute character helps him to make the uncomfortable decision to flee into unknown exile that looks promising for him and his nuclear family. The reader of *Naga ga di etelane* can understand the accompanying predicament in which Mphaka finds himself. Serudu succeeds in painting a gloomy picture of Bonwatau at the beginning and creates a hateful mood in the literary text. In this fashion, the theme of work develops its foundation in an intriguing way.

5.4.5 A letter from Mphaka's aged mother

Mphaka succeeds in escaping the certainty of death in Bonwatau. He keeps on hoping for the best in exile, except for the letter from his aged mother that unsettles him. On receipt of the letter, Mphaka realises that someone has tampered with it and has a good cause to suspect the activities of the

Bonwatau police intelligence. As if this was not sufficient, the letter triggers nostalgia and sympathy in him:

Seo se re tlaišago ke go le hloela fela ...

(Serudu, 2011:15)

(English translation)

We are desperately longing for you ...

In like manner, the letter goes on to raise high hopes in Mphaka for the predicted arrival of a democratic dispensation in Bonwatau:

Bokamoso bo šišitše; o ka re bo tla re hlabišetša leo re
tlogo le orela ...

(Serudu, 2011:15)

(English translation)

There is promise of a bright future for us here ...

The letter goes on to say:

Batlogolo bona ba tla gata tala e bola...

(Serudu, 2011:15)

(English translation)

Our future generations will enjoy the fruit of democracy...

The discussion that follows from the message of the letter prophetically foreshadows their return to Bonwatau in the future. An avid reader of the text

will realise the possibility of their return to Bonwatau vividly as Mphaka and his wife support each other on the matter:

MPHAKA: (*O mo lebelela ka mahlong.*) Se iše pelo mafiša, Mogatšaka. Le rena letšatši le tla re hlabela; badimo ba re hlahla ra boela gae, ra ba batho.

HUNADI: Etse ruri, Mphaka o sa hutša gore gae gona re tla hlwa re boetše? Ra bona lehu ka mahlo? Ra itahlela leganong la tshehla ya mariri?

MPHAKA: Na go ka swana le go hwela nageng? Hleng ge re hwetše gagaborena ba tla kgona go re hloboga; ba khutšiša marapo a rena mobung woo o re godišitšego. Le mabitla a rena ba tla fela ba a hlagolela; rena re le dithokgola tša ditlogolwana tša rena.
(Serudu, 2011:17)

(English translation)

MPHAKA: (*He looks him in the face.*) Don't worry, Darling. We will also get an opportunity to be guided by our gods as we return home and regain dignity.

HUNADI: By the way, Mphaka do you still hope for our return home? Shall we risk death? Are we going to render ourselves highly vulnerable?

MPHAKA: Is it not better than dying in exile? Is it not it that if we return home, our

people will pay their last respect and bury our corpses in the soil that nurtured us. Our graves will be taken care of, as we will be gods of our future generations!

In reference to the dialogue, Serudu depicts Mphaka as a religious man who strongly believes in the effective leadership and efficient guidance of his gods who will unfailingly lead them back home. On the other hand, Hunadi is depicted as a cautious wife and mother who questions the safety and security of such a return to Bonwatau. Mphaka responds to Hunadi's concerns by indicating that facing the associated risks of their return home as being comparatively better than dying in exile because of the dignity that shall be accorded to them. The reader foresees a return of the family to Bonwatau against all odds. The researcher regards the dialogue as a foreshadowing of their determined return to Bonwatau.

5.4.6 A horrible nightmare

Serudu creates a setting where Mphaka's tossing and turning disturbs a night of peaceful sleep as he experiences a terrible nightmare. The theme develops to a significant proportion as a voice, representing Mphaka's aged mother, harasses him. The voice unequivocally commands him to return to Bonwatau or face incessant ill treatment and humiliation in exile. In contrast, Hunadi is fast asleep as if all is well for everybody in bed:

LENTŠU: Mphaka! Mphaka! Se ithobatše; hlwaya tsebe!

MPHAKA: (*O a lora. O a bilokana. O a goragora mola Hunadi yena a ile ka boroko.*)
Hmmm!

LENTŠU: Ke a go botša ge o ka se tliše bana bao gae ka ba bona pele ke ikela go bomakgolokhukhu o ka se lokelwe ke selo.

MPHAKA: (*O a goelela.*) Ijoo! Hunadi! (*O a robala.*)

LENTŠU: O tla ebela le lefase ka moka ba go tlaiša. O se lebale mantšu ao a ka. (Serudu, 2011:19)

(English translation)

LENTŠU: Mphaka! Mphaka! Do not fake a sleep; listen!

MPHAKA: (*He dreams, tosses and turns. He is restless whereas Hunadi is fast asleep.*) Hmmm!

LENTŠU: Surely, if you do not return home so that I can see your children before I die you'll suffer throughout life.

MPHAKA: (*Calling out.*) Hey! Hunadi! (*He sleeps.*)

LENTŠU: You'll be ill treated throughout your life as you traverse the world. Mark my words.

Serudu causes the nightmare to emerge once more in order to emphasise the vision of their return to Bonwatau. Mphaka wakes Hunadi up but pretends not to remember the gist of the nightmare. He becomes so frustrated that he decides not to attend church that day and in this social setting this causes conflict between Mphaka and his wife allowing the theme to develop unhindered because he lied to his wife.

5.4.7 Mphaka's ordeal in Letsha la Mogadisho

Mphaka emigrated to Takone with the hope of finding some peace of mind in Letsha la Mogadisho. Lebitsi, a university student, overheard a conversation of some students who expressed disappointment at the appointment of Mphaka as Head of Department at the university. In this way, the ordeal that Mphaka will experience in Letsha la Mogadisho is foreshadowed in so much that the reader is not surprised as it comes to pass:

MPHAKA: Bea pelo, Mma; o kwe seo Lebitsi a re tlelago naso. Tšwela pele, Warra.

LEBITSI: Ba lla ka go re maemo a ba go filego ona a be a swanetše go tšewa ke motho wa naga ye; e sego mofaladi.

HUNADI: Lebitsi, o ba kwele gabotse?

LEBITSI: Ga ke re ba re. Ke kwele ka tša ka tše pedi. Ba re ba tla leka ka moo ba kgonago go huetša baithuti le batswadi ba bangwe ka moya wo.
(Serudu, 2011:88)

(English translation)

MPHAKA: Be cool, dear, and receive the news that Lebitsi has come to deliver. Tell us, Brother.

LEBITSI: They complain of your appointment to a senior post because they wish it should have been given to a citizen of their country but not a foreigner.

HUNADI: Lebitsi, did he say that?

LEBITSI: I heard them saying that they'll try their best to influence other students and parents to support the idea.

At this point, the theme develops a sorrowful mood for Mphaka and his wife, after Lebitsi has hinted at Mphaka's possible demotion at the university. A change of government (state power) occurs and radicals seize power after general elections. As anticipated by Mphaka, a senior position of employment is created for one of his former students and all foreigners without residential permits have to leave the country. The aim is to frustrate Mphaka by removing all his responsibilities and accountability at work, and thus force him to leave the country. A letter of dismissal from the university crowns it all. Serudu creates undesirable and unbearable social circumstances for Mphaka to accept in relation to the theme of *Naga ga di etelane*:

MPHAKA: (*Ka kantorong Yunibesithing.*) ...
Bokaone ke gomele Bonwatau. Šefa ke
tla be ka fetša lefase ka moka.
(Serudu, 2011:99)

(English translation)

MPHAKA: (*In his office at the University.*) It is
better for me to return to Bonwatau.
See now! I'll traverse the whole world.

In a soliloquy, Mphaka decides to return to Bonwatau. On reaching home, he shows the letter to Hunadi and after a lengthy discussion she is convinced to return to Bonwatau. In this way, Serudu closes the theme of *Naga ga di etelane* as the brave partners venture back to Bonwatau. The researcher recognises Serudu's prophecy of what would happen in South Africa as the new political dispensation dawns.

5.5 Conclusion

Serudu's characterisation and development of the theme of the play are taken to the highest level by several factors that elucidate the text to the reader. The researcher identifies the factors as background and setting, mood and tone, and convention and techniques. These elements are specific language techniques, which writers use to create and produce texts that are clear, interesting, and memorable. There are necessary and sufficient causes to this end as Babbie (1991:73) states:

.... To review, most social researchers consider two variables to be causally related – that is, one causes the other – if (1) the cause precedes the effect in time, (2) there is an empirical correlation between them, and (3) the relationship is not found to be the result of the effects of some third variable on each of the two initially observed.

At the outset of *Naga ga di etelane*, Mphaka engages in a soliloquy that relays the background at setting in Bonwatau to the reader of the text. Bonwatau is portrayed as a background and setting that lacks basic human rights and freedoms. Mphaka is depicted as a resolute character that cannot tolerate living in a country such as Bonwatau under political oppression and domination. The tone of the soliloquy is sad and creates a mood that causes the reader to sympathise with Mphaka.

Mphaka flees Bonwatau for Takone with the hope of finding peace of mind in a foreign country. In contrast, Takone and Letsha la Mogadisho become environments that further unsettle him and through his experience, the reader is able to forecast Mphaka's return to Bonwatau. For purposes of creating dynamic social circumstances for Mphaka and Hunadi, Serudu comes

up with their home in exile as a warm place at most times while horrific experiences pervade their lives.

Chapter 6

Summary

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight, reflect and review the content of the study by asserting the distinctiveness of Serudu as a playwright in Sesotho sa Leboa. Unlike his predecessors and contemporaries, who were afraid of censorship, he uses theme and characters to project unfiltered messages. For example, throughout the play, Mphaka's character is memorable because the reader can empathise with both his external and internal conflicts. As has been noted, the theme is timeless and cannot be eroded by the winds of history and politics.

6.2 Breaking the ground

The researcher introduced the study by explaining its aim and significance. In addition, the statement of the problem is identified and this is followed with a description of the status of research undertaken on Serudu's works. Another key point is the fascinating insights into the life of the playwright, which are captured in the biographical information. In addition, a better understanding of the topic is facilitated by an explication of core terms, including theme and characterisation.

Amid the plethora of theories that form part of analysis in literature, only four are adopted in this study. They include Marxism that views life as a general struggle for power in various ways between different social classes. The sociological approach, notably, regards literary work as a kind of creation that cannot ignore sociological aspects of human existence while the reader-

response theory advises students of any literary work to view the reader as an active factor in the study of literature. For this reason, new historicism tackles contemporaneous issues and cultural-historical problems, which may include state power, human struggles and the associated struggles of a certain period.

The researcher analyses the theme and character of *Naga ga di etelane* by investigating the emergence of bias and prejudice and the resultant xenophobia. Other social circumstances that reveal the personality of characters in the text and promote the development of the theme are considered and include the professional circumstances that frustrate the characters to make the theme of work complete.

The researcher exposes the various beliefs displayed by the characters in the manner that they drive the development of the theme of the work of art under review. Correspondingly, the characters in the work are depicted as dynamic adding to the normality of their lives in the text. The dynamic nature of characters allows the author to create social conditions that facilitates the smooth development of the theme of *Naga ga di etelane*.

By way of diction, Serudu is able to create a tone that creates a suitable background and setting for *Naga ga di etelane*. The reader can understand this easily. Serudu chooses words in such a way that the reader is able to differentiate between a happy and unhappy mood in accordance with the need for an appropriate tone that matches the mood of the text.

The reader enjoys the flow of the text as Serudu employs both foreshadowing and flashbacks to validate the intended message and theme. The characters in the text express themselves through a register that affords the reader to predict or remember what has occurred in regard to the development of the theme. According to the researcher, the conventions and techniques involved facilitate maximum understanding of the text in totality.

6.3 The story-line

In *Naga ga di etelane* Serudu leads the reader gently into his story. The reader identifies closely with the character(s) and becomes fully involved with the events. The situation becomes very real and painful as the writer paints it with vivid mental pictures. The encounters of Mphaka at Takone and Letsha la Mogadisho are without doubt or contradiction, solid points of reference.

Mphaka is depicted as a character that is passionate and eloquent, an academic of action. He is portrayed as a loving and caring family man, who is also proud and confident in his abilities and experience. Though persistent in his approach, he interacts carefully with those around him. At the end of the play, Mphaka's physical, intellectual and emotional transformations chronicled through the complexities of his experiences in exile are put to rest when he returns to his home soil.

With regard to language and character, in Act 1, Scene 3, Mphaka, Rola and Kala are engaged in a debate. Foul language is constantly used, which is derogatory and defamatory. Though this is a shebeen set-up, patrons make noise and later on a scuffle ensues. The reason is not far-fetched: often bulls fight for territorial supremacy. Mphaka is criticised because of his sound academic background, which he obtained in Bonwatau. This did not go down well with Rola and Kala who had undermined the system of education of Bonwatau including Mphaka's qualifications and track record. In their view he remains a foreigner.

It is interesting to note that the title of the play is an ironic reference to Bonwatau where citizens do not freely or readily accept foreigners. A closer scrutiny of the play shows that Serudu tells a true story as it was at the end of the 1950s when most intellectuals decided to live in exile. Notably, one of them is the late E'skia Mphahlele. Reading from the latter's autobiography, *Down Second Avenue*, his life as a private individual and as a public figure is

revealed. His sojourn in foreign countries was indeed not a happy one, especially in West and East Africa. Nkosi (1981:92) says:

Mphahlele was an energetic worker. He organised and took part in many conferences on African culture and literature. At this time he also became engaged in many wearying disputations with the leading figures in the Negritude Movement of Léopold Senghor and Alioune Diop were and still are its chief exponents. A particularly bitter exchange took place at Dakar between Mphahlele and W. Jeanpierre, a black American, during the proceedings on 'African Literature and the University Curriculum'.

While Mphaka lives in Takone and Letsha la Mogadisho, events that take place are directly or indirectly recreated from the experiences of Mphahlele. Hence, the coined saying: 'once an exile, always one'. From the other side of the scale, Serudu used some twists and turns to suit his purpose.

6.4 Theme and characterisation

Brooks and Warren (1959:71) regard characters not only as important carriers of theme, but as the basis and starting point of a literary work.

What is more interesting is that Serudu's characters are men and women of blood and flesh; they are lifelike and have verisimilitude. The reader sees that these characters exhibit changes in terms of attitude, purpose and behaviour, as the story progresses. In this way, the reader of *Naga ga di etelane* cannot escape the effect of the socio-political situation experienced by Mphaka and his family.

From the opening scene of the play until falling action, it is indicative that the tension builds and as such accelerates action. Being a foreigner, Mphaka's peace of mind is disturbed but he cannot afford to compromise his integrity. Throughout the play, he is depicted as a dynamic character; he undergoes significant internal and external changes over the course of the story. These changes include amongst others, his understanding of different situations, untrustworthy associates, mindsets, values, friends and foes alike.

6.5 Closing remarks

The researcher does not claim to have exhausted Serudu's thematic dictum and characterisation in *Naga ga di etelane*. There are still many ways in which character delineation studies can show how characterisation significantly contributes towards thematic development. For example, future research can still focus on the following:

- Abuse of power and authority,
- Pretentious and hypocritical characters,
- Cultural exclusion,
- Myopic vision,
- Suppression of desires and aspirations,
- Tradition and modernity.

Without doubt, as an author Serudu has contributed immensely to the development of Sesotho sa Leboa literature by particularly improving the standard of dramaturgy. This playwright excels not only in *Naga ga di etelane*, but all his plays reveal, through their characters and themes, a wealth of ideas and complex human nature in its varied forms – a fertile soil for future research.

Annexure A

Annexure A

TO: PULENG NKOMO

Prof. MS SERUDU AS MEMBER OF THE NORTHERN SOTHO LANGUAGE BOARD AND REVIEWER OF BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS.

1. The Northern Sotho / Sepedi Language Board, as it was officially constituted and known, played an important role in the development of the language in the mid-70's, 80's and early 90's. Sessions of the Board were held twice a year, around March-April and then around September.
2. Sessions were held in Seshego, near Polokwane, and later at the offices of the then Lebowa Government at Lebowakgomo, south of Polokwane.
3. Members who constituted the Board were academics from various universities such as the University of Potchefstroom for Christian Higher Education, the University of the North (now Limpopo) the Rand Afrikaans University (now University of Johannesburg) the University of Pretoria, and the University of South Africa. There were also representatives of the then Department of Education and Training, the South African Bible Society, Colleges of Education, the Inspectorate and the Lebowa Government.
4. Among others, one of the main functions of the Board was to analyse manuscripts and existing published works with the aim of prescriptions for schools and colleges. Genres such as drama, the novel, the short story, poetry, the essay etc. were thoroughly scrutinised.
5. Selected members of the Board were assigned the task of studying various works and submitting written reports on them. Every genre had its panel of experts to attend to.
6. Professor Serudu proved to be one of the most reliable, regular and objective reviewers of manuscripts and works that were already published. Many books that have today seen the light of day went through him when they were still in manuscript form. In this way he has made a valuable contribution to the development of the Northern Sotho language in general, and its literature in particular. He himself has written a number of works in various genres, thereby enriching the corpus of Northern Sotho/ Sepedi literature.

SA Makopo. 25.08.2010

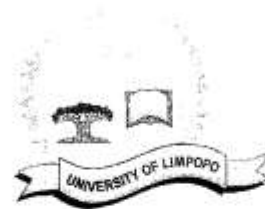


Annexure B

Annexure B

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Faculty of Humanities



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07 July 2011

Dear Mr PS Nkomo

I have received your request to give my opinion on the scholarly assessment, Prof Serudu. Surely, Prof Serudu has built landmarks in the development of Sepedi language in particular. He was not a linguist though, but should receive accolades befitting in the development of language in general given the time and context that relates to him.

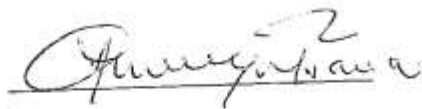
I acknowledge that assessing him as a critic and scholar is a very difficult task in the time that he worked. What complicates this is that he wrote when there was very little academic writing going on, such that he was limited by context not to reveal his scholarly acumen. The best way to examine him is to read his reviews which he surely wrote for the erstwhile language board; journals of academic bodies as well as publishing companies. The next option is to scrutinize his assessment reports for MA and PhD students from other universities which asked him to serve as an external examiner.

My comments, should be understood, are based on a limited readings. I had the opportunity to read his historical contributions on Writing in African languages. I found him very illuminating in the construction of a history that was never recognized to exist, painting a picture that future scholars would use to rediscover the early beginnings of an

African literature. For me, his work represents the first historiographical work of good standing. As a critic, I also found him objective and courteous in the assessment of articles for publication in journals.

In general, it should be understood that he had limited scope to critique as compared to the modern academic whose world is wide, with so much to read, review and critique. The earliest academics were used as all-rounders such that it would be unfair to judge them with modern standards in mind. His contributions in the development of the language are critical to me; as he mentored many Masters and PhD's which are now expected to increase the harvest. The modern academic has a plate full of texts to critique, and comment on, earlier academics did not have this luxury. His role as I explained was much of a developmental one; to increase capacity in the language, to grow reading materials, and develop standards so that future academics will have sufficient ground to work from.

General, I have great respect for his writings, his command of the language, and the manner in which he articulates ideas, express his thoughts on any subject he is expected to address.



Sekgothe Mokgoatšana



Annexure C

P.O. Box 11
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09.11.2014

Mokwena

Our previous regular and incessant discussion of academic giants relating to the N. Sotho literature refers here.

I got to know Prof M.S. Serudu in my second year of Northern Sotho towards the study of a B.A. degree where I met a humble and non-terrorist lecturer. He could teach an underprivileged group of part-time students of the Univ. of South Africa in such a way that academic intimidations and impossibilities became surmountable.

I developed a deep and undying love of Northern Sotho literature so much that I became one of the best teachers of the Northern Sotho language in the Mankweng Circuit. The Department of Education archives are attesting to what I assert with regard to Matric final examinations of 1978-1980. This was made possible by his support as my N. Sotho literature lecturer even after passing the third level of Northern Sotho under him.

Matters came to a head once when *Naga ga di etelane*, one of his literary works, was prescribed for Matric learners in 1978. Teaching some literary work written by him according to how he taught me Northern Sotho literature was a pleasurable experience.

Yours sincerely



T.J. Segooa

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