

**THE TEACHING OF LUVENDA DRAMA
IN THE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
VENDA SCHOOLS IN THE
NORTHERN TRANSVAAL**

by

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DECLARATION

MATSHIKHIRI CHRISTOPHER NELUVHALANI, declare that the dissertation:

The Teaching of Luvenda Drama in the Senior Secondary School with special reference to Venda Schools in the Northern-Transvaal; is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted, have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that this dissertation has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university.

Signed:.....

M. Neluvhalani

Dated:.....

1992 November 25

DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate the study to my dear Mmeavhana (wife) Shonisani Patricia Neluvhalani (Nee Muthambi Mukwevho) without whose warm support and gentle encouragement when I was on the verge of giving up for sheer fatigue, this study could not have been completed.

TSHIKHODO TSHA VHAKWEVHO

*Vha a zwi funana,
Iwe nguluvhe khulu ya Luonde,
Nguluvhe ntswu pfemula ya Luonde,
Mu nwa maḁi Luvuvhu.*

*Nguluvhe khulu ine,
U ḁa mavhele vhusiku,
Ri sokou ita.
Ra ḁa masiari,
Vha nga itani?*

*Ahee Neluonde wee,
Mufamaḁi o tou fa maḁi,
Luvuvhu wo ḁala, a wela,
A tshi shavha mitsindo u byuma,
Vha Shehe vho ingamela.*

*Iwe nguluvhe ntswu Mukwevho wa Luonde
Mushavhisela Makwevho vha na maḁo.
Lumbelule ḁa makhotsimunene,
Nguluvhekhulu dzi Luonde,
Zwibwamuḁaḁa zwi Luvhola!
Mifhululu na mashuvho!*

FOREWORD

I wish to express my gratitude to my supervisors, Professor A. L Mawasha, Head of the Department of Language Methodology and a colleague under whom I served for a period of nine years and Professor N L Nkatini Assistant Registrar at Giyani Teaching Centre, of the University of the North, for their unceasing interest and constant motivation. Their invaluable guidance and encouragement are appreciated.

My sincere thanks to Mrs Eleanor Boshuisen who typed this dissertation so ably. To her I say:

AGILE FINGERS

*Do not miss the page,
When the telephone doth ring.
Keep 'em button rattling.*

*With each soft touch,
Like an opium wand,
You weave age-old ideas.*

*Watch 'em clear screen,
Watch 'em queer spellin'.
Readers have no mercy.*

*Your ever ready readiness,
To offer your expertise,
Will go to the annals of history!*

I wish to thank the Library staff of the University of the North for the assistance in procuring all the literature I needed for this study. Also the Research Committee of the University of the North for their financial assistance towards the cost of undertaking this study.

I also wish to put on record my sincerest gratitude towards the Venda Government through the Department of Education for having granted me permission to use its schools for research towards this dissertation. It is a truism that:

Muthu ndi muthu

nga vhanwe vhathu.

Tshitanda a tshi na ndevhe!

Muhulwane ndi muṭuku kha muhwe.

Muthu ha tambiwī ngae.

Ndi mapfura,

U a doliwa!

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SUMMARY

The major problem dealt with in this study is the lack of correct teaching methods of plays in black secondary schools, the tendency to use ill-qualified or despondent teachers to offer the mother tongue and the shortage of Luvenda literature on the teaching of drama and of literature in general.

The fact that the teaching of drama is examination oriented, the obvious unstageability of many prescribed plays and lack of know-how on the part of the teacher, explains the reason why there is a decline in learners' dramatic productions, because essentially plays written with the intention of providing material for the school syllabus do not communicate effectively when staged. (See item 2.9.18) (See pages 39 - 48 and 141 below).

This study attempts to make pedagogical-didactical proposals to try and address the current teaching problems encountered in the teaching of Luvenda plays.

It is hoped that the quality of teaching could be enhanced by suggesting strategies in the teaching of drama, in order to instill in both the learners and the teacher the driving will to dramatise and to afford the prospective playwrights with the tools of the trade and the desire to produce stageable plays, and so improve the quality of learning and revive the will to dramatise.

OPSOMMING

Die vernaamste probleem waarmee ons in hierdie studiestuk te make het, is die ontbreking van die korrekte onderwysmetodes van opvoerings in swart sekondêre skole; die neiging om gebruik te maak van laer gekwalifiseerde of ongemotiveerde onderwysers om die moedertaal te doseer asook die tekort aan Luvenda literatuur rakende die opleiding van drama en literatuur oor die algemeen.

Die feit dat die dosering van drama meestal eksamen georiënteerd is; die opmerklike onuitvoerbaarheid van baie voorgeskrewe dramas asook die tekort aan die nodige ondervinding aan die kant van die onderwysers, is hoofsaaklik die oorsaak vir dié afname van dramatiese opvoerings deur leerlinge, omdat die dramas wat geskryf word met die doel om material vir die leerplan te dien, kan nie goed vir opvoering wees nie (vergelyk met bladsy 39 - 48 en 141 hieronder).

Hierdie studiestuk beoog om pedagogies-didaktiese voorstelle te maak ten einde die huidige doseringsprobleme wat ondervind word in die onderwys van Luvenda opvoerings, te bekamp.

Die hoop word gekoester dat die standaard van onderwys hiermee verbeter kan word deur die voorstelling van strategië in die onderrig van drama ten einde in beide leerlinge en onderwysers, die dryfkrag te skep om te dramatiseer asook om die voornemende dramaturge te trotseer met die kundigheid en die begeerte om te dramatiseer aan te wakker.

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CHAPTER 1 : THE LULL IN THE TEACHING AND STAGING OF DRAMA

1.1 Introduction

Literature on the teaching of drama in African Languages in general and the teaching of Luvenda drama in particular, is sadly lacking. Clearly more research is needed before a firm explanation for this dearth can be offered.

In his paper, "Research Address No.1 South Africa : A Laboratory for Theatre Research", Hauptfleisch, Temple (1984:13) observed that the previous century saw a comparative lull in drama in certain parts of the world including South Africa which probably contributed to this dearth and he says:

... theatre (was) banned in many countries, also in ours during the previous century. Yet to some (theatre there was) a glamour to the

stage (and that, while we are lethargic here, elsewhere dramatists were observed as) entertainers ... and hailed as prophets.

This statement may be confirmed by what HARTNOLL, Phyllis (1987:51) says, namely that:

... theatre underwent a metamorphosis due to its widespread repercussions ... (because) in Paris the acting of religious plays was forbidden in 1548, in England the Reformation, combined with political expediency, brought them to an end by 1588 ... (and) in Spain, it was forbidden in 1765.

This lull probably also influenced general attitudes towards drama, especially stageable drama in schools, notably black schools. It is probably for this reason also that articles on drama, and the desire of staging it, received very scant attention even in popular educational journals such as EDUCAMUS.¹ (See also footnote 25 below).

¹ The researcher studied copies of EDUCAMUS from 1979 to 1990 and found only three (namely one March 1980, S. Sotho, May 1985 Zulu and July 1986 Tsonga) articles on the teaching of drama in African languages and none in Luvenda.

This neglect may well have created the impression in the minds of many teachers and learners alike, that drama is less important than other genres such as the novel, short story and poetry.²

It is the researcher's contention that not only the teaching of Luvenda drama should receive the attention it deserves from language methodologists and researchers in African languages, but also that stageability of such drama should be an integral part of the methodology of presenting it.

The researcher is aware of the dividends³ that staging a play has for the learners, the teacher and the community, hence the need for this type of study.

² Between 1960 and 1990 only 16 dramas were written in Luvenda as against 23 poetry anthologies 38 novels and short stories.

³ As a scholar the researcher was trained in stage drama in 1965 to 1966 at the then, Vendale Training Institute by Mrs M. Whitehead who was the English Teacher. Drama production was discontinued after she was transferred from the Institute to Ladysmith, Natal.

In 1968 Professor Louw Odendaal trained a group of students in the production of the Afrikaans drama, Nyoni at the University of the North, and the present researcher was one of them.

1.2

Problem Identification

Diligent search by the researcher has convinced him that the how in the teaching of Luvenda drama has never been the subject of extended and in-depth research. It is probably for this apparently simple reason, that no literature exists in this area except the work by the present researcher, called Madzhenele a Mañwalwa (Approach to Literature).⁴

The need for adequately trained and conscientious literature teachers, especially teachers of Luvenda drama and the need for suitable methodological supportive materials, activities in literary appreciation and newer and more effective teaching strategies in Luvenda, prompted this study.

The main problem addressed by this study could be summarised as follows:

How can the teaching of Luvenda drama in Senior Secondary Schools be improved by using practical pedagogical-didactical strategies that could improve the quality of teaching and activate the obvious potential in learners to act on the stage?

1.3

Aim of study

⁴ Submitted for publication by Via Afrika and could soon see the light. The work is a combination of research and teaching experience spanning seventeen years.

The aim of this study in broad overview is to record certain important current pedagogical-didactical problems prevailing in the teaching and learning of Luvenda drama which have resulted in *inter alia*, the apparent reluctance by most teachers (and learners too) to stage prescribed plays (let alone any additional plays) as part and parcel of teaching and learning strategies which could bring about innovation in the teaching of drama. In so doing, the researcher hopes not only to contribute towards the field of methodology in African languages in general, but also specifically towards the teaching of drama in Luvenda. Such specific studies do not seem to exist at the moment.

1.3.1 General aim

The general aim of this study is threefold:

- 1.3.1.1 to examine the structure of drama in order to establish a broad yet firm basis on which viable methods of teaching drama could be matrixed; (See item 2.5 below)
- 1.3.1.2 to describe briefly the different types of drama for the same reason as for 1.3.1.1 above; (See item 2.2 below)
- 1.3.1.3 to address the issue of appreciating Luvenda drama especially as regards the dichotomy between reading for study or examination purposes only and the need for stageability and moral value as the other side of the same coin. (See item 2.3 and 3.2.5 - 3.2.7 below)

1.3.2 Specific aim

On the basis of the hypothesis that the teaching of Luvenda drama in senior secondary schools leaves much to be desired, this study seeks to:

- 1.3.2.1 sample and assess attitudes towards Luvenda drama and the teaching thereof;
- 1.3.2.2 sample and assess the state of the art in teaching Luvenda drama;
- 1.3.2.3 suggest strategies aimed at stimulating interest in the teaching and staging of Luvenda drama at secondary school level in order to encourage the inborn gift and revive interest in dramatic play in the learners.

The present writer feels very strongly that not only methodological principles for the teaching of Luvenda drama should be clearly identified, articulated and documented but also the importance of stageability of such drama (See items 2.5 - 2.10 below).

Drama is doing, drama is acting, drama is the picture or portrayal of life and as Hauptfleisch, Temple (ibid; p.12-13) so aptly states:

Acting has been described as the second oldest profession in the world.

This alone suggests that man has always been an acting being, a being of action, created by action in action and in action by action. Drama saw its birth with Creation, when God so

dramatically created Adam and Eve and also in the incarnation when God became flesh. Burbridge, P.A.V.S. and Watts, Murray (1984:4) say the following about God's dramatic recreation:

God is the God of drama. Not only did the prophets, such as Ezekiel and Agabus, reinforce the thrust of their message in highly dramatic form; but nothing could be greater drama than the incarnation itself when God became flesh in Jesus Christ. Here is God's supreme communication of himself ...

Since creation therefore, the sun of drama never sets because man is by nature a dynamic acting being on the stage of life.

1.4 Research methodology

In order to gather adequate information for this study, the researcher used three research methods:

1.4.1 Literature study

Although literature relating to Luvenda drama *per se* is wanting, the researcher found the study of drama in general as documented in English and Afrikaans invaluable. The researcher also studied literature relating to drama in African languages in South Africa.

This extensive reading and study created a broad background against which comparisons could be made.

The researcher, himself a playwright in Luvenda and a language methodologist, has over the years noted with interest some kind of pattern within Luvenda drama writings, but has never before analysed these systematically for study purposes. Research into literature revealed that no effort has so far been made to research in the teaching of Luvenda drama.

1.4.2 Questionnaire

An extensive opinion and information questionnaire was drawn-up and personally administered to fifty teacher-respondents from urban, semi-urban and rural areas of Venda.

The sample was distributed as follows: two schools from an urban area, four from a semi-urban area and four from a typically rural area. The aim of the questionnaire was to:

- 1.4.2.1 determine the pedagogical-didactical background of the teachers offering Luvenda as a school subject;
- 1.4.2.2 sample (for later assessment) the general methodology preferred by most teachers teaching Luvenda drama as an example of literary genre;
- 1.4.2.3 create a broadly representative sample on which findings and recommendations can be made with maximum objectivity and reliability.

1.4.3 Oral elicitation of information

Research data was also collected orally from subject - teachers, learners, principals, playwrights, Language Board members and community elders. The purpose of this extra research instrument of collecting data was to supplement the questionnaires. Experience has shown that valuable research data can be gathered orally as an extension of the written questionnaire. This is even more important where the questionnaire is written in English and responses are made in English while the respondents are not the native speakers.

1.4.3.1 Luvenda Teachers

The purpose of obtaining more information from the subject-teachers was to complement the written questionnaire responses and to tap further information from them as a group.

1.4.3.2 Learners

An elicitation of research data was made from a sample of 300 learners that is, 30 learners of both sexes per school in the ten schools that were targeted for research. It was imperative to collect oral data from the learners in order to complete whatever areas the questionnaire might have missed.

1.4.3.3 School Principals

Ten school principals were interviewed in order to elicit oral data concerning their attitude towards drama as a teaching-learning aid and as a socialising tool in the conative, cognitive affective and physical development of the child as a member of the school community, whose potentials, capabilities and abilities should be unveiled in a normative fashion. This data was also important in sounding the principals' opinion about staging drama as part of the schools' educative effort.

1.4.3.4 Playwrights

Research data was also elicited from five playwright pioneers in order to record their abilities and reasons for writing drama as these would help to understand the quality of plays already in circulation because they appear to serve as models for play writing in Luvenḡa.

1.4.3.5 Language Board members

Research data was also elicited from members of the Language Board in order to find out what criteria are used in recommending a play for prescription. The importance of choosing and prescribing the right play or drama for the different standards of the secondary school is very important since wrong choices may lead either to poor or inaccurate understanding and appreciation of the drama by the learners or inability of both the teacher and the learner to stage such a play for even better understanding and appreciation or for edifying enjoyment or for sheer entertainment. (See item 3.2.9 and 5.2.5 below.)

1.4.3.6 Community elders

It was also found necessary by the researcher to elicit oral data from elderly members of the community because they are the custodians of the community's tradition. Ignoring them, could have meant missing the traditional dramatic link with the past.

Because the elders are responsible for the transmission of the wealth of traditional literature, hundred respondents with their ages averaging between 60-90 years, were interviewed from five rural areas.⁵

1.5 Definition of Concepts

Unless concepts are properly defined, they can conceal the meaning for which they are intended. Kneller, George (1971:2) avers that words are defined *in order to assess the different meanings they carry in different contexts.*

This is because, says Peters, R.S. (1966:3):

some words are usually very general terms which have developed a life of their own in a variety of contexts.

⁵ Oral elicitation of data is discussed in Chapter 3. Efforts were made to capture some of the responses on a cassette recorder from which an analysis was made.

This is the reason why it is deemed fitting to define some of the concepts used in the study in order to know in which context they are used.

1.5.1 Teaching

In this study teaching refers to the handling of a prescribed play by the teacher in a teaching-learning situation.

Teaching therefore is an educative act aimed at broadening the horizons of the learner by imparting normative knowledge which can effectively and efficiently be ploughed back into the community when the learner reaches adulthood. (See also Duminy, P.A. and Söhnge, W.F. 1980:3.) In other words teaching is a relationship packed intentional-situational-triangular activity consisting of the subject matter, the teacher and the learner benefiting therefrom. (See Neluvhalani, M.C., 1984:5 and figure 9 on page 122 below.)

1.5.2 Teachers-in-service

This concept refers to qualified members of the teaching fraternity employed by any recognised Department of Education.

1.5.3 Drama

Drama is acting out life which can be meaningfully and didactically interpreted by man.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica 15th ed s.v vol.5 (1985:988) drama is:

re-creating of a picture of life for others through impersonation.

Smith, B.H. (1978:24) supports the element of re-creation when he avers that the:

events performed on the stage are not happening but are being presented as happening.

This is the reason why Holden, Susan (1981:1) defines drama as a genre that:

is concerned with the world of let's pretend (because it connects the present with the past.)

Therefore we may understand that drama is action or the recreation of an act of doing or talking or both which when coupled with any relevant supportive stage decor does not only amuse and entertain but is also educative.

1.5.4 Learner

The concept learner, refers to a language learner who is expected to study, amongst other aspects of the language syllabus, drama in Luvenḡa as one of the literature requirements.

Learning here also include meaningful reading, acquisition of knowledge and consolidation of the learning material by staging a play as an end product for the purpose of edification,

self-enrichment and transfer of knowledge and the development of skills acquired in the learning situation.

1.5.5 Tshikona

The concept tshikona means, that which has been successfully accomplished (Ro tshi kona i.e. "we have ultimately succeeded in performing it"). It is a flute dance performed by males of about 10-50 or more years of age supported by drumbeating. The performance takes place during harvest, installation or burial of a chief or king and other important celebrations such as ancestral worship and memorable visits of one chief to another.

1.5.6 Malombo < (u lombā) means to ask for mercy from the Creator e.g.

Tsha u fela kule,

Midzimu i tshi lomba haya,

Vha-Matongoni vha do phasa.

:

Malombo is an organised dance performed by those possessed by ancestral spirits to ask for mercy from Thimuḁi/Nwali/Musikavhathu (God). It is believed that an appeal through the spirits of the dead (midzimu) will succeed because they are nearer to the living God than the people still alive.⁶

1.5.7 Domba < (u dombela) means to be seasoned or matured.

⁶ An explanation given by two elderly traditional malombo leaders on different occasions.

Domba is a traditional initiation dance which together with the educative lessons provided, prepares the youth for successful absorption into adulthood. It is the only unique traditional Tshivenḁa "University" second to none that dramatically prepares the youth for a role and place in life as a member of the community which will always aspire for self-determination.

1.5.8 Senior Secondary School

Behr, A.L. (1978:176) defines senior secondary school as the level which:

caters for Forms I to V, and in specific cases only for Forms III, IV and V.

Senior Secondary School is therefore the level of learning before tertiary education.

1.5.9 Language Board refers specifically to the Venda Language Board. Every written language, including African languages e.g. Northern Sotho, Tsonga, Xhosa, Zulu or Sotho, have their own language boards, whose brief is *inter alia*, to ensure the perpetuation and development of a specific language through the written word or literature.

1.5.10 Rurban refers to an urban area in the making, that is, an area whose modern development is between that of an urban area or rural area.

CHAPTER 2 : MODERN AND TRADITIONAL DRAMA AS THE BASIS OF MODERN LUVENDA DRAMA

2. Introduction

In the previous chapter, a concise explanation of the basic concepts was given. In this chapter, a global overview of drama, its roots in ancient Greece, will be highlighted before embarking upon the problem of teaching Luvenda drama and how this teaching problem can best be addressed.

Such an overview is necessary to achieve perspective and to provide the necessary background against which the study may be developed, understood and appreciated.

2.1 The Origin of Drama

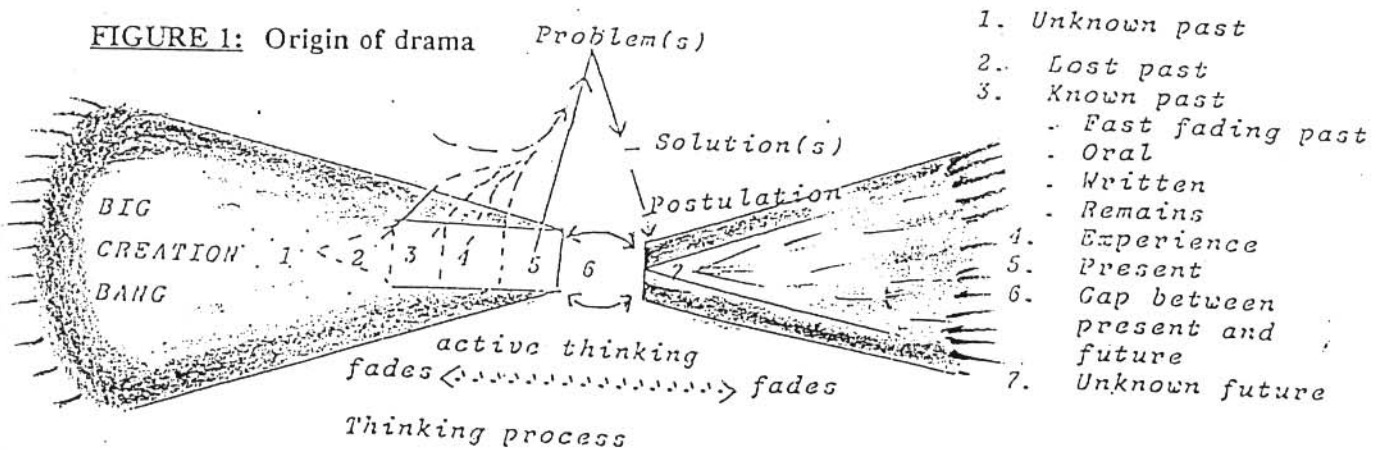
Everything in life has its origin. There are devious theories about the origin of the universe and coming closer, although also without definite answers, about the origin of the earth and of man.

The obvious question about the origin of anything including that of man himself is because by nature, man wants to know more about his past and future in order to understand his present life situation.

Man's existence therefore, is based on two diametrically irreconcilable poles which shuttles him backwards and forwards in order to ensure him of a secure present and future dimension.

Man's fear of the present and future is based on his failure to probe deeper into the past or future. His future prognosis is only based on how he can solve his present problems on the knowledge gained through experience and or literature.

Man's failure to understand himself fully is because of the gap that exists between the present and the future and as a result the future is a tentative, circumstantial, temporal answer to his problems. Schematically the perpetual search for man's origin and that of drama can be shown as follows:



Our present problem about the origin of drama will in this study be based on the information from literature and what is still characteristic to all men because as a temporal being man is a religious being whose civilization is based on his dramatic religiosity as reflected in literature.

Literature on the origin of drama abound in the world. The recorded history of drama shows that it all began with the Athenians during the fifth century before the birth of Christ. (See Boulton, M. (1960:194-196)). A Greek drama was witnessed from the amphitheatre and was performed by 1, 2 or 3 actors and a chorus which sang and danced in a central area containing an altar. (See Taplin, O. (1978:85-86); Roby, R. and Ulanov, B. (1962:685); Cronje, G., (1971:43); Leech, Clifford (1969:14) and Lucas F.L. (1954:7-8)).

Drama and ritual are almost indistinguishable as far as form goes because in both, the actor or celebrant engages in imitation by action and word, making use of appropriate costume, objects and settings. It is only in the intention and belief accorded to the initiator that they differ. The religious celebrant becomes one with his G(g)od.

Ritual and drama were originally the same; the difference occurs when the old faith is replaced by a new kind of belief and ritual passes into drama. The close association of drama with religion is evident world wide because drama developed from religion into art.

After the decline and eclipse of drama in the Dark Ages a new dramatic tradition came into being in Medieval Europe. This religiously grounded Christian drama stood its ground to supersede the pagan rituals and to dwarf their influence. (See item 2.4 below).

The example of Christian drama are the liturgical plays and miracle plays which were first performed within the church then in the neighbourhood, and later were taken over by the craft Guilds who performed them on elevated portable stages.

These plays drew their material from the Bible and told the story of the Creation, the Fall and Redemption of man. When interest in these plays grew amongst Christians and the pagan society, morality plays were also introduced to preach the Christian message by employing symbolism in order to bring the message home to the spectators.

The association of drama with religion is one of the reasons for the long series of prohibitions laid upon drama (as reflected according to Evans, B.I. (1984:15-16), in Deuteronomy 22:5 throughout the Christian world including South Africa as pointed out in 1.1 above. (See also item 2.4 below.) Political drama was short-lived because Puritanism was against such an endeavour to challenge the rulers of the time whom the church considered to be God-chosen. As a result, political dramatic performance came to an end.

The Restoration of drama was initiated by the pleasure of King James I who formed the company which became known as "the King's Men". Shakespeare was a member of this first national theatre company. (See Sisson, C.J. (1955:7) and Brown, J.R. (1971:23)).

Because of the high demand for entertainment by the public in the early nineteenth century, other minor theatres came into being but as they were prevented by law from presenting regular plays, they resorted to plays that were accompanied by music namely, melodrama. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, people petitioned for the right to establish theatres royal and this ultimately enabled the rulers like Charles II, to recognise the social value of drama by conferring knighthoods upon distinguished men of the theatre. Ever since, drama has been commercialised and nowadays, it is a lucrative industry manned by physically fit and highly qualified specialists in stage drama, radio and television. (See Lattimore, R. (1964:2); Else, Gerald F. (1980:5); Day, C. and Norman, J. (1983:36); Leech, Clifford (1969:14); Brown, J.R. (1971:22-26); Taplin, O. (1978:85-86); Tibble Anne, (1970:94); and Bradbrook, M.C. (1963:40-47).

The development of drama was an effort of many dedicated playwrights and its scope and character have been shaped by the economic forces of society while its organisation has reflected the stage of economic development of society throughout the world in the hands of shrewd and astute men and women of integrity.

It remains to be seen therefore, whether theatrical civilisation will ever be ended before it is ended because throughout the ages, dramatists are being born worldwide hence, while France

cannot be France without Molière and Racine, and Italy without Seneca, England on the other hand cannot be England, without Thomas Kyd, Christopher Marlowe, John Lily, Robert Green, George Peele, and William Shakespeare, who through their works determined the course of modern civilisation *inter alia* aesthetically, morally, socially, economically linguistically, juridically, psychically, historically and pistically.

Drama therefore is as old as man himself because essentially, drama originated with creation and from man's will to act out life because as a dynamic being, man, is an acting-talking being on the stage of life.

The word "drama", says ROBY, Robert C. and ULANOV, Barry (1962:p.xi):

... originated in the Greek verb dran: to do; to act; and to accomplish.

The vital characteristic of drama therefore is the element of acting and because life is based on action and every man acts, drama is therefore a given with every man. Based on what Roby, R. and Ulanov, B. (ibid, p.xi) say, it is clear that:

From its beginnings the drama of the Western World (or better still, the whole world) has had action as its element. Action is vital to drama in two ways: as its matter or content and as its manner or form of presentation.

In Voetlig 1 by Du Toit, P.J. and Hauptfleisch, Temple (1983:7), Hauptfleisch has this to say about drama, that:

(dit) gaan oor dit wat tussen mense plaasvind, die interaksie tussen mense-of dit nou ernstig, snaaks, angswekkend of vol deernis is.

Free translation: *it deals with that which takes place amongst people, the interaction amongst people - whether serious, funny, frightening or sorrowful.*

For Cronje, G. (1971:43) drama is: *the thing done.*

By this, he means that by his very nature, man tends to do things for himself, for those around him and with those around him. Man therefore is not an island because he is always interacting with other people.

Encyclopedia Britannica (Vol 5., 1981:981) points out that drama: *is found in almost every society primitive and civilised, and has served a wide variety of functions in the community.*

This idea is supported by Lloyd, C.P. (1982: Introduction) who states that:

The theatre and the drama developed from simple games played by simple communities. Together, people played out their fantasies, their daily needs,

their joys, their wonderment, at the ways of nature and the gods, and all the many things that concerned them as a group. Before the hunt they would perform a dance and play stories, telling of their success.

Before a battle they would act and sing a victory. During drought they would act their misery and chant a prayer for rain. After a victory they would celebrate by dancing, acting and singing the praises of the heroes, or give thanks to the gods for smiling on them.

It is very interesting to note that the very earliest forms of drama are still alive in Africa today in the performance of the praise singers and in such things as war dances, mime dances, snake dances (domba dance) and other similar forms of performance by the Black peoples of Africa. (See items 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 below.)

Ritual, marriage service, funeral service, a graduation ceremony and many others, still include an element of drama in them. (See Boulton, Marjorie (1987: 195)).

In support of this view Malan, R. (1973:6) also avers that:

From the primitive, through the historical ages of man, and from the infant, through the chronological ages of man, drama is basic (as) the thing done, the doing of life, the celebration of man ...

Primitive man celebrates life, he celebrates the cycle of birth, death, renewal, the death of winter and the birth of spring, the sowing and growing of the crops and the fulfilment of the harvest, through drama. (See also item 2.4.1 below.)

So the hunt is always preceded by a dramatic enactment of it, a sort of dress-rehearsal for it. The anger of his gods is faced by some kind of ritualistic act of propitiation. What the primitive man is, in fact, doing is playing.

Day, C. and Norman, J. (1983:46) are also of the same opinion when they say:

Like all games, drama has its roots deep in the earliest manifestations of our civilisation.

This exposition can further be supported by what Mary Kelly in her article, "Drama" in Barnett, U. (1983:227-228) claims that:

The kraals can provide the white man with a living textbook on the origins of drama ... (See also Guma, S.M. 1983:115).

What Barnett claims, confirms the fact that the life of the traditional black man abounds with traces of the origin of drama like ritual and traditional dances which have been carried down from generation to generation orally and by action. This oral literature could be deployed as a means of entertainment because literature, as Brett, R.L. (1969:3) tells us:

has a twofold role of pleasing and instructing ... the instruction and the pleasing are two aspects of a single whole, the work of art pleases by instructing and instructs by pleasing (and of course this includes drama).

As a genre which is concerned with the world of let's pretend (Holden, Susan 1981:1) by presenting dramatic events on the stage as happening (Smith, B.H. 1978:24); Gassner, J. (1966:132), drama is just a lively image of human nature (Daiches, David 1982:74) that could be compared to a slice of life which is artistically put on the boards (Brentley, Eric 1960:1) to show people in conflict Schoeman, J.A. *et al*, (1983:8); Schoonees, W.F. en Van Bruggen, H.A. (1937:261) by reconstruction, recreation and reproduction of the great experience of a people (Barnett, *U loc cit*; p.228) through imitation of an action (Day, C and Norman, J. 1983:36; Else, G.F. 1980:5) in order to serve man as a lifebelt to rescue him from an ocean of meaninglessness (Day, C. and Norman, J. 1983:37) because he does not want to die. Man wants to be entertained, to entertain himself in the act of entertainment and

to learn from entertainment and thereby justify his existence as meaningful to himself and to other people.

This is a universal fact which is apparent among all human beings, primitive or modern, because acting is a given to all men by God and an easy way of acquiring knowledge which is transferable and is important in shaping man to become what he ought to be.

Drama is a true portrayal of man's being on earth and concerns his wants, fears and security or insecurity about his existence and his future through action in order to derive a didactical lesson from it and to give meaning to life.

As a universal phenomenon drama originated with Creation and not with the Greeks.

The Greeks only succeeded in arresting it in a written form, in structuring it, designing terms and staging it according to rules in order to provide entertainment and in so doing paved way for modern perfection, as is the case with stage - and media drama of the western world.

In the western world stage drama has a two-way communication of sharing between the providers of the play and the playgoers because the playwright designs his play in such a way that the audience or his readership feels to be living in the actor's time, by effectively employing verisimilitude and appropriate costume.

The media drama, however, presents something different from stage drama because the performers do not physically exist, since they are either imaginary (radio) or appear in the form of illusions on television or bioscope. (See item 2.2.6 below.)

Although media drama falls outside the brief of this study, the researcher wants to indicate that though the ideal perfection could be far from being attained in the development of stage and media drama, media drama emanates and is dependent on the primary elements of stage drama for its survival and in keeping the emotions of the audience in tune, and that for African drama to attain the same level of development and competence, playwrights should go back to the roots and address present and past events in a natural and realistic manner because as Bernett, U. (1983:228) avers:

*... western drama grew out of the same roots as traditional African drama:
the basic and emotional urge to men and women to re-enact sacred and other
stories illustrative or symbolic of their lives and the forces that rule them.*

2.2 Types of drama

The purpose of this brief classification is to describe the different types of drama in order ultimately to help place the different Luvenda dramas already in circulation, in a broader historical and universal perspective.

This is important since drama is not only part and parcel of man's history as already indicated in 2.1 above, but also as a universal human phenomenon.

Although the different types of drama have action as the core, they can be differentiated on the basis of thematic specialisation.

This classification is at times not easy because every drama portrays good and evil, happiness and sadness. The classification is mainly done for the purpose of study, and identification is based on the element most prevalent in each. Just as life is, drama is full of dynamism because it portrays the dynamic element of man, that is characterised by breath taking surprises.

The handling of this aspect, is essential because most Luvença plays already in circulation, are devoid of what we might call, " the dramatic punch," which is a source of attraction to the readership and playgoers. Most playwrights wrote their plays without the mastery of the tools of the trade and this explains why most plays are a failure and are unstageable as it will soon become apparent in subsequent chapters.

2.2.1 Tragedy

Tragedy is simply and precisely defined by Boulton, Marjorie (1987:146-147) as:

A play with a sorrowful ending, usually at least one death ... (See also Brown, Ivor 1984:30).

Encyclopedia Britannica (Vol.18 1981:580-581) shows tragedy as having emanated from a religious act that was associated with:

- ◆ *fertility feasts to commemorate the harvest and the vintage and the associated ideas of the death and renewal of life⁷*
- ◆ *the prize of a goat given to the best early Greek performers*
- ◆ *the sacrificial goat around which the dancers used to perform*
- ◆ *the tragic hero whose courage, tenacity, suffering and endurance was unparalleled to the end and was regarded as a source of knowledge.*

(See also Mamadi, S.A. in his article: "The writing of Drama" Association of Lebowa Authors, Newsletter No.6 1985:13-14)

⁷ The traditional Vhavenḁa still commemorate the seasons by performing different traditional Tshivenḁa dramas in the form of rituals: the sowing of maize seed over the grave to symbolise the hereafter and Domba and malombo dances.

While Aylen, Leo (1964:15) agrees that tragedy stemmed from Greek religion, he continues to say that it developed: *out of the need (of man) to come to terms with the fact of death, and the forces with which human life is surrounded.* (See also Cronje, G. 1971:169). This is true to every human being and can therefore not be restricted to the Greeks because death is universal and no man wants to be reduced to nothing.

2.2.2 Comedy

Comedy is a play that has a happy ending. Its function, says Boulton, Marjorie (*loc cit*; p.151): *... is to amuse. The amusement may range from a quiet smile to a guffaw.*

There are many forms of comedy, and all of them aim at making the audience or readers, laugh, because as Brentley, E (1966:3 and 18) so aptly puts it: *comedy with tears instead of laughter is comedy without a comedy.*

Bradbrook, M.C. (1963:38) states that comedy is: *a mirror of man's life wherein evil is not taught but discovered ... (because) serious things cannot be understood without laughable things.*

Its humour, whether wry or effervescent, which in turn evokes delight and joy, attracts; says Cronje, G. (*loc cit*; p 176):

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diegene wat in hoofsaak of slegs ter wille van vermaak na die skouburg gaan en diegene wat ook of veral die skouburg besoek om die dramaturg se lewensbenadering mee te belewe omrede die persoonlike verryking wat meebeleving aan die toeskouende gehoor te kan besorg.

Free translation: *those who mainly or partly for the sake of pleasure, go to the theatre and those who go to the theatre to observe the playwrights' point of approach to life in order to derive (the maximum) personal enrichment therefrom.*

Comedy deals with human life and human nature and therefore appeals to the feelings and emotions of both the readers and the audience who want to see how other people behave in situations they already know of, in order to gain moral lessons.

There are many types of comedies namely: farce, comedy of manners, sentimental comedy, comedy of character or humours and melodrama which because these types are still to be explored by the Vhavenda playwrights, will not be handled any further. It will take some time for the Vhavenda playwrights to produce this type of drama because it requires precision, in planning relevant jokes, skill and thorough know-how in the correct use of the tools of the trade.

2.2.3 Problem Play

According to Boulton, Marjorie (*loc cit*; p.150) a problem play: *deals with painful human dilemmas, asks a definite question and either supplies an answer or leaves it to us to find one.*

Examples in Luvenda are Namusi by Neluvhalani, M.C. and Hu do sala nnyi? by Makuya, T.N.

Problem plays induce people to ponder in depth about social and moral problems as is the case in Hamlet by William Shakespeare.

2.2.4 Closet play

A closet play is according to Boulton, Majorie (1987:26): *a play which is better read than acted.*

In Luvenda closet plays abound because almost 99% of the plays in circulation can hardly be staged with success because they were written for school use only as explained on p.32 below. The reason for this could also have been lack of exposure as actors on the part of playwrights themselves or lack of know-how. Examples of closet plays are, Muofhe, Vhamusanda Vho Dzegere, Vho lu Fukula, Zwo itwa, Ndi mitodzi muni, Lukuḍavhavha, Mposi and many others.

2.2.5 One act play

Pretorius, W.J. and Swart, J.H.A. (1983:26) define it as: *a drama which is comprised of only one act. There is no change of scenery, and hence no subdivision into scenes. It is extremely compact with regard to time, place and action.*

Hauptfleisch, T. *et al.* (1983:9) says: *nie 'n maklike kunsvorm nie en daar is min mense wat dit werklik goed kan gebruik.*

Free translation: *it is not an easy art and there are very few people who can use it.*

Luvenda, has one example, namely Edzani by Maumela, T.N. This play is a good example of a poor piece of work which a playwright can produce if she/he does not have the required skill for the unique art. Instead of producing a one-act play Maumela made a collection of (mini-) closet plays which also leaves much to be desired.

2.2.6 History Play

A history play emphasises the history of a nation and as a result it is a narrative in a dramatic form e.g. William Shakespeare's Richard II and Richard III. (See Daiches, David 1976:7 and Leech, C. 1963:8).

An example in Luvenda is Nemudzivhadi, M.H.'s Makhaulambilu a Julius Caesar, which is a translation of Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare. Other types of plays like radio drama

and television or media drama as cited in 2.1 above, will, for the purpose of this study, not be dealt with since they form a separate genre (See page 21 above).

2.3 Educational impact on the Vhavenda Playwrights

There are several possible reasons why the works of black playwrights represent very few drama types. The reasons are mainly historical rather than inability to write or unwillingness to do so, because in their daily life situations and interaction, all the sources for drama can easily be noticed because they are part and parcel of the human make-up. Man makes jokes, ridicules other people, suffers strain and experiences tragic things like death. Why then, could they not cover them in their written literature? A possible answer to this question is as follows:

Written literature in black languages appeared only after blacks were educated enough to read and write and had been encouraged to write in their own mother tongue by the Christian Missionaries, who proof-read what was thus produced. Some of these missionaries were members of the language committees and similar bodies.⁸

In this capacity, they might have preferred certain types of material for publication at the expense of others, leading to a preponderance of certain types of literature over others.

⁸ Primary Source: Z.Mutsila, E.Mulaudzi, T.N.Maumela and Prof M.E.R.Mathivha.

The shift of black schools from missionary to Central Government control under the then Department of Bantu Education in 1958 followed by decentralisation of educational control under national and independent black states, since the sixties resulted in the mushrooming of schools, pupil explosion and the resultant need of school books to satisfy the requirements of the syllabi. (See Eiselen Report in Rose, B. and Tunmer, R. (1975:244-280); Behr, A.L. and Macmillan, R.G. (1971:396-405) and Behr, A.L. (1978:165 and 183).

This change was brought to bear on the black authors who were, in the main teachers. These authors produced books including Luvenda books for school consumption.

The most unfortunate side of the story, however, is that the playwrights in the vernacular write mainly to highlight a cultural conflict between rural and urban life revealing weakness in the use of verisimilitude and stageability as noted by Pretorius, W.J. and Swart, J.H.A. (1983:24) when they say that:

many dramas in African languages cannot be staged as the action moves rapidly from one place to another.

and because of digression which Van der Poll, J.D.P. in his article, "Structural analysis of the Southern Sotho drama Senkatana" in ALASA edited by Groenewald, P.S. (1982:50), referring to Southern Sotho plays, speaks of:

it is difficult to discern what action is relevant to the plot.

Vho lu Fukula by Netshivhuyu, M.J. is a good example of rapid change of action and milieu. This weakness in drama may be ascribed to the fact that in Luvenda, in particular, the first play saw the light in the late fifties when Maumela, T.N. published Tshililo which he wrote using English plays as a model in order to satisfy the requirements of the syllabus of the then Department of Bantu Education.⁹

Pretorius, W.J. and Swart, J.H.A. (ibid; p.16) support this when they say: *the modern drama in African literature is based on the European drama.*

Generally, black literature has English and to a lesser extent, Afrikaans, literature as its backbone because blacks were influenced largely by English which as the medium of instruction in schools as Behr, A.L. (loc cit; 162) avers:

there was an overemphasis on the teaching of English and Arithmetic, while other subjects, including Afrikaans and the vernacular, were neglected.

In his unpublished M.Ed dissertation Mnisi, M.H. (1986:62-63) gives reasons why the teaching of vernacular is poor:

- * *Before 1910 vernacular neither played a role as a subject nor medium of instruction.*
- * *English, Afrikaans (and content subjects) counted for everything and vernacular counted for very little.*

⁹ Primary source, by T.N.Maumela on tape (novelist and playwright).

- * *Stemming from colonial rule, every effort was exerted to avoid reducing vernacular as a medium of instruction. (See also Mawasha, A.L. 1982:6-11 and Neluvhalani, M.C. 1984:66-68).*

The problem here lies in the lack of competence¹⁰ in playwrights themselves and not in the lack of source material in life or in the introduction of drama into schools. This state of affairs did more harm than good to future playwrights who wrote in their home language and who also produced unstageable plays by using an inappropriate model as an example.

Translation could have been a way out as a method of equipping prospective playwrights with the tools of the trade, as it was employed by certain West African French writers of the first generation who went through the William Ponty School. (See Schipper, Mineke 1982:52-53). In support to this view, Dhlomo, H.I.E. in his article "Drama and the African" in Barnett, Ursula A. (1983:228) says:

African drama, ... cannot be based purely on African roots: It must be grafted in Western drama. It must borrow from, be inspired by, shoot from European dramatic art forms, and be tainted by exotic influences. The African dramatist cannot delve into the past unless he has grasped the present. African art cannot grow and thrive by going back and digging up the bones of the past without dressing them with modern knowledge and craftsmanship.

¹⁰ Competence of the authors here refers to lack of exposure and training in the production of stage drama.

Venda and black South African universities have a dearth of dramatic societies and/or drama schools which would be in a position to correct the situation, because as Aylen, Leo (1964:34) says:

... if we wish to appreciate or understand them (plays) fully, we must perform them; there is no other way.

Instead impressive halls at these universities are not utilised for the staging of drama but for graduation ceremonies once a year. Yet says Swanepoel, C.F. (1986:3 and 9) in his paper, "The Present and Future of African drama", that:

The school, college and university are the right places where enterprising students and lecturers may start the resurrection of dramas. Not only may this be done through silent reading and individual or creative reading, but by oral reading using full casts, even in front of audiences.

In support of this very important statement about the need to stage plays, which most Vhavenda playwrights are not aware of, Taplin, O. (1978:1-2) writes as follows:

Great playwrights have been practical men of the theatre, never mere scriptwriters: Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Shakespeare, Molière Racine, Chekhov, Shaw, Brecht ...

They have supervised the rehearsal, directed the movement of their works, overseen their music, choreography and design and often have acted themselves.

They composed works to be performed before an audience. For them the play is realised, finds its finished state, in the theatre.

The text, which is inevitably all we have, is no more than a transcript, a scenario. The play's the thing. Shakespeare seems to have paid no attention to the publication of his plays; he put his energies into having them seen and heard and understood in the performance.

For one to be able to write good or successful drama, one needs to be trained, for according to European standards all playwrights were actors, instructors, stage managers and/or producers of profound experience.

In his article "French contributions to African Drama", Unionmwan Edebiri in Lindfors, Bernth (1975:42-43) says:

It needs to be stressed here again that, whatever its literary merits, a drama script is only the starting point of a play and does not actually become one until it is performed ... no author can seriously claim to be a dramatist if his text has not passed the crucial test of production ... because the playwrights'

reputation and consequently, his psychological and professional satisfaction depends largely on the success of his plays on the stage ...

The relevance of the above quotations can further be enhanced by what David, John E. (1962:ix) said about himself as a playwright with profound experience:

In that time I have acted in it (that is, Murder in the Cathedral), directed it, taught it in grammar school, university and adult classes, and gone on to similar, though not so extensive, exploration of other plays in the theatre and the study.

Work of this nature goes on yielding new insights year after year so that one is engaged in a continued exploration of it.

In short, the purpose and nature of drama has been explicated by Altenbernd, Lynn and Lewis, Leslie (1963:1) who have this to say:

Drama is a narrative art ... in which mankind has learned to present a story ... to give pleasure (and) to entertain ... to conserve legends, order its laws, explore its problems, demonstrate its codes, ridicule its weaknesses or extend its knowledge.

(It) is composed not for a reader, as fiction and poetry are, but for spectators. The playwright composes under a knowledge of the limitations and advantages of a specific kind of theatre. He then entrusts his play to a director and actors who produce the play before an audience ... (See asterisk under item 5.2.1 below).

In his article "Vutlangi/Ntlangu", appearing in *Educamus* (Vol.xxxii No.6 of 1986 p.12) Mawela, C.N. also confirms about the importance of stageability of drama in Xitsonga when he says:

*Tsalwa ra ntlangu ri kuma rihanyo exitejini.
Hi vona leswaku ntlangu i swiendlo ...
Kutani hi le xitejini laha hi nga kumaka
vumboni ... bya tsalwa ra ntlangu.*

Free translation: *Play finds its life on the stage.*

*Drama is action and as a result,
it is only on the stage that a proof of
the success of the play could be put to test.*

(See also footnote 25 below.)

See also Morris Fishman, (1965:12) who states that: ... *the (Greek) instructor ... rehearsed the actors in their movements, gesture and grouping.*

This exposition explains the reason why most plays written by black playwrights and Vhavenda in particular, cannot be staged with success because of lack of this type of exposure.

As a result, there are hardly any farces, melodramas, comedies and tragi-comedies. The available tragedies in Luvenda namely Mabalanganye by Mathivha, M.E.R., Mukosi wa Lufu by Milubi, N.A., Zwo Itwa by Mahamba, A.M., leave much to be desired, concerning the characteristics of a play necessary for its stageability and lack of the dramatic punch which should be a source of attraction to both the readership and playgoers.

Most plays in Luvenda, are fit for school use with an examination as the ultimate goal only.

Referring to Maumela's plays, in his article, "Venda literature" in Gerard, A.S. (1983:108), Muloiwa, T.M. says:

Unfortunately ... these plays are written to be read and not to be performed on the stage.

The reason for this as Muloiwa, T.M. puts it (ibid; p.106) is that:

Creative writing in Venda (Luvenda) was born out of a need for reading matter for pupils. The forerunners in this ... were teachers who were faced with this challenge.

In his paper "The present and future of African drama" delivered at the Ramaila, E.M. Prize-giving Ceremony held at Lebowa Showgrounds on 16 September 1986, Swanepoel, C.F. (1986:17) supports the above views by stating that:

the African playwright's knowledge of drama has been acquired largely indirectly, first through reading and ... listening to radio broadcasts.

He continues to say: *having had to resort to his imagination ... the performing aspect escaped his immediate notice and that his own efforts at scriptwriting basically would be for the purpose of reading ... the requirements of the school syllabuses ... (caused playwrights to defect the aim of writing a play by producing plays that failed to comply with accepted characteristics of the genre because of lack of guidance in a form of manuals). (See footnote 25 below.)*

Most Luvenda plays are therefore closet plays. (See the definition of a closet play in item 2.2.4 above). Fortunately this situation is changing with more and more promising and experienced playwrights with stage experience appearing as Mafela, M.J. claims in his article on Namusi (Today) by Neluvhalani, M.C. appearing in South African Journal of African Languages, Vol.5 (1985:55):

All the events in Namusi are stageable ... the general standard of the book is high when compared with the few drama books in Venda ... one expects more

contributions by the same author in play writing to enrich our Venda (Luvenda) language.

These are the fruits of training which the researcher went through as a student. In her article "Bantu Schools' Drama Festival", appearing in South African - The official bulletin of the African Teachers Association of South Africa, issue (No.1 November 1965), Patricia O'Dowd says:

Vendaland Institute's dramatisation from Pride and Prejudice won particular commendation for Christina Ramaite as Elizabeth and Christopher Neluvhalani as Darcy.

(See also The Star, November 3, 1965 and also in Muvenda - Dzhenala ya Birou ya Tshivenda, Vol.4 No.2, December 1974, p.12).¹¹

A contributing factor in Europe and America to their overwhelming success in literature and drama in particular, is that there is no censure and as a result, authors may write on almost any topic.

¹¹ The dramatised novel Elelwani by Maumela, staged by students from Tshivhase High School produced and directed by the present researcher was so good that the author even quoted it during the interview.

This is an avenue that needs to be opened up for the South Africans as well, to mock, criticise, appreciate, ridicule and amuse because sometimes if people see a play without laughter, they do not like it so much.

This is another reason why most Luvenda plays already in circulation, are hardly staged because many people would not find them enjoyable enough, for example:

It has been established in this study that learners and teachers prefer to dramatise novels rather than the prescribed plays. (See research results in Chapter 4 below.) Madima's A Si Ene, is high on the list with 60% followed by Maumela's, Elelwani with 40%.¹² Yet most, if not all plays now in circulation, are hardly ever staged because they are not always as interesting as they should be, nor were they written for the stage as plays should be.

However, neither author is a good playwright as their plays are not stageable and reveal the authors' lack of exposure to the stage. These authors equate dramatic dialogue with conversation and/or courtroom dialogue.

Unlike conversation or court room dialogue, dramatic dialogue is packed with action, meaning and form. It is character revealing because its development always has an element of conflict and intrigue. (See Brooks, C. and Heilman, R.B. (1984:3-12). Shroyer, F.B. and Gardemal, L.G. (1970:17) correctly declare that:

¹² See analysis of responses to questionnaires No.8 and 12 below.

It is principally through what is said by the characters that the playwright is able to propel the action of his play (because) the lines spoken in a play characterize the persons who speak them and the kind of language employed largely determines the general tone of a dramatic work. Thus, the language of a play is effective only when it contributes to the story continuity, when it is appropriate to the characters, and when it conveys the dramatic view of life ... that the dramatist wishes to reflect.

2.4 The Tshivenda traditional drama

The history of the Vhaventḁa, their culture, religion and tradition is sadly underplayed in books on History, Sociology, Ethnology and Anthropology.

The reasons for this may include the following:

- ◆ tucked away in the rainfall areas of the Zoutpansberg mountains since antiquity, they were the last group to be contacted as the natives of the area, by the whites from the South;
- ◆ they are even today believed to be one of the smallest nations in Southern Africa. This deduction is based on the fact that the Vhembe (Limpopo) river is observed as a boundary, yet according to the Vhaventḁa, the Vhembe is just one of the rivers of the Venvḁa of yore. There are many Vhaventḁa north of the river (which is used as

- a colonial boundary), with many Vhavenda chiefs up to Alilali (Harare) where Luvenda is one of the spoken languages and was taught in some Zimbabwean schools;
- ◆ as staunch believers in their religion and tradition, characterised by traditional schools¹³ which prepared the youth for successful acceptance into adulthood as conformists, the Vhavenda, with their strong ruling system of Nemashango (kings) Mahosi (chiefs) Magota (headmen), Nduna (Indunas) and Vhakoma (village headmen) took time to accept formal schooling or to be christianised until the fruits which such an education introduced by missionaries, could bring before they could make any decision.

The history of the Vhavenda therefore suffered greatly under the stroke of the pen of the early writers hence Hoernle, A.W. in his "Introduction" in Stayt, Hugh A. (1968:viii-ix) says that the customs and legends of the Vhavenda are:

- ◆ *linked more closely with the culture that has been revealed in connection with the ruins of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe ruins) than in any of the other Union tribes ... they alone of the Bantu peoples (blacks) weave a cloth from wild cotton and they alone (and those influenced by them) plant the elusion grain ... (Mufhoho).*

In his book Bantu Origins. The People and their Language, Bryant, A.T. (1965:140) mentioned something relevant to the above when he says:

¹³ These are initiation schools, such as musevhetho for young boys and girls, murundu/mula for boys, vhusa/vhukomba for adolescent girls, vhutuka for adolescent boys and domba for the youth of both sexes.

The origin of the Bantu, is still a problem to Ethnology even today.

The missionaries did not know that the Vhavenda had an understanding of the Divine God. Undoubtedly this misconception was based on the education they received when they entered the ministry to systematically erode traditional belief. Missionaries were taught to regard Africans as pagans. About this Schipper, Mineke (1982:52) says:

... the clergy opposed the African rituals and tried to have them abolished. This (attitude against African religion) had the effect that for some time Africans looked down upon their own culture and lost interest in it. (See item 2.2 above.)

This negative attitude could have further been exacerbated by the outcome of the decision taken at the congress of Berlin (1884-85) at which Congress according to Motshekga, Mathole (1989:32) says:

European powers entered into the Berlin Treaty which divided Africa among themselves, dispossessing African peoples of their land and right of self-determination.

The rationale behind this recognition of the legitimacy of annexations of African territories was that lands inhabited by the so-called backward, or non-

civilised, peoples were terra nullius (no-man's land) and that their people were not entitled to the right of self-determination.¹⁴

In support to this claim Kendall, F and Louw, Leon (1989:44) say:

The map of Africa as we know it today was largely drawn in Berlin in 1885 when the British, German, French, Italian, Belgian and Portuguese imperial powers met to decide on a final division of their spoils. The boundaries they drew bear no relation to the pre-colonial tribal territories. Hundreds of political entities were cobbled into 47 states - some dividing people of common culture and heritage, others bringing together in one country peoples with long-standing antagonisms.

Fortified by the Gospel according to Mark 16:15-16 which says:

... Go into the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved and whoever does not believe will be condemned,

the missionaries had no other option than to eradicate what their religion describe as paganism wherever it occurred. In the process, they created a state of religious dualism

¹⁴ See Mathole Motshekga "The African charter on Human and People's Rights - its importance to human rights thinking in South Africa" 1989 CODICILLVS volume xxx no.2, Faculty of Law University of South Africa, October 1989.

amongst the blacks and especially the Vhavenda who already had their own religion, unique culture and traditional dances like Tshikona and Domba.

2.4.1 The Domba School or Python Dance

On the areas like Tshakhuma (Goedverwacht farm), Maungani (Beuster) and Haluvhimbi (Georgenholtz), and adjacent areas where missionaries had absolute control, they vigorously discouraged all traditional schools, beliefs and dances as pagan practises, yet in the Domba dance, for example, morals, norms and traditional beliefs are symbolically and practically enacted to depict adult life.

The tragedy of life is displayed in the performance of the snake or python dance which is the highest traditional school that the youth had to go through before they were accepted as adults.

In the past the python dance was performed as a ritual dance for both sexes to teach the youth good morals but this practice has gradually diminished as the Vhavenḁa have become progressively modernised.

Today the dance itself is just part of the whole drama performance to entertain the audience. Lessons on how to lead a culturally and socially acceptable life, how to behave sexually, how to give birth, what to do after birth and a woman's relationship with her husband and how to space siblings using traditional birth control, are conducted separately but still as part of the Domba school.

The Domba dance itself is an enactment of the tragedy of life and death. The Vhavaṅḁ believe that life is continuous, that it has a beginning and an end and that it is in the ending of life, that new life sprouts up. (See item 2.4.4.3 below.)

The Domba school starts off with the kindling of fire (by using the primitive method), which indicates the beginning of new life for the youth.

Once the fire is kindled, it is kept burning, to indicate the continuity of life that has internal and external energy because the youth is full of ambition, is emotional, sensitive, gregarious, social and full of life and strength, which goes on and on, and that the presence of the youth, like warm fire is felt throughout the community. If it is handled well, fire is useful and so are the youth without whom the future of the community is doomed.

When the dance is performed, the dancers move together rhythmically with the throbbing drumbeat and heart-piercing songs while all dance in unison in an s-wave form like a python in motion; hence the name python dance.

The Domba dance as a dramatisation of the extension of the traditional school, climaxes the activity symbolically, on how the youth should behave as youths and as adults and how they should uphold the beliefs, tradition and culture of the nation in order to live as responsible, loving and caring parents who should also form part of the extended family, to respect, trust, honour, love and help those in need, to avoid public indecency, to be faithful and to lead an exemplary life as mature husband and wife(s) and thereby help to protect and promote the

interests and philosophy of life of the nation in an answerable manner because as Cronje, G. (1971:171) puts it in his book Die Drama as Speelstuk:

In authentic tragedy ... the tragic personage cannot evade responsibility.

Likewise the educators at the Domba school, are responsible for the dramatic oral transmission of morals to the youth.

The staging of the Domba school for the youth, is a responsibility which adults cannot avoid because it is through this type of dramatic education that the continuation of responsible adult life is assured, hence the school closes with a successful graduation ceremony in which no one fails because in life everybody has the right to live on the basis of his given ability or potential.

Symbolically the Domba dance indicates the:

- ◆ end of youth and the beginning of adulthood because soon after graduation the youths are allowed to marry;
- ◆ end of being dependent and the beginning of being independent;
- ◆ end of being irresponsible and the beginning of being responsible, original, sensible, self-disciplined, trustworthy, diligent, purposeful and respectful to religion and tradition;
- ◆ choice of no return - from youth, adulthood and subsequent death;

- ◆ rhythm of the universe as symbolic of the rhythm of life;
- ◆ need for survival by belonging and group identification; and
- ◆ beginning of freedom under control because although man is free he is required to observe laws and regulations set out by the community.

Holding each other from behind on both hands to form a winding human chain, one observes great human drama in music and action which can be equated to the words of Taplin, O. (1978:8) when he says:

Great drama makes universals concrete, and portrays the human condition through the voice and human body ...

We are all male and female, young and old, closely attached to some people and not to others; we all have hopes, fears, feel sorrow and joy - live with bread, feel want, taste grief, (and) need friends ...

All of which are universal characteristics of human beings because no matter how successful, human life ultimately comes to an end, hence Venter, I.S.J. (1979:96) says:

... everything changes and disintegrates continually in the course of time, science, arts and other things are born to disappear, kingdoms just like individuals, have their own life cycles, they grow, attain maturity and disappear.

The Domba dance like fire that burns itself out, in it and through it, the youth actively enact life dramatically in an open theatre, to symbolise the emergence and disappearance of generations in the perpetuation of human existence. The Domba dance is therefore an enactment of the drama of mankind. As an enactment of life, the domba dance, indirectly reveals to mankind that, through birth, man is dead-alive because whatever he does, leads him to death and so, perpetuate life and death in a virtuous circle into eternity.

2.4.2 Malombo/ngoma dza Vhadzimu (Ritual drama)

As a ritual dance, malombo is still performed whenever there is a problem beyond the people's control namely, drought, earthquake, plague, illness, a prayer before and after a war or when a medicine man is possessed by ancestral spirits.

At the possession stage, the women gather in a hut where they sit and sing songs accompanied by handrattles (tshele). As soon as the music has gained its required pitch, the drummer (matsige) controls the rhythm and speed.

When the malombo dancer dances, she/he impersonates the god(s) brandishing a spear and/or tsanga (battle axe). Anybody could for example dance malombo, but it is only members of the cult who are taken by spirits of their ancestors.

This view is supported by two studies made by Ralushai, N.¹⁵ and Blacking, J.¹⁶

¹⁵ See Ralushai, N. "Some Venda perceptions of Malombo Spirit possession cult. "The congress on the State of Mental Health in South Africa, Human Sciences Research Council, CSIR conference Centre (1986:4).

The dancers therefore do not enter into a trance because of the music of the drums and handrattles but because they are overpowered by the ancestor-spirits while in the process of dancing and enacting them.

Spiritual possession is not only amongst the Vhavenda; in New Guinea the hevehe ritual cycle of the Elema tribe engage themselves in a month-long dance of the masks. To this Bradby, David *et al*; (1983:117) quoting Williams, F.E. say:

... the person wearing the mask is considered to be moved to dance, not by his own will but by that of the Spirit.

The Vhavenda traditional drama therefore has been largely affected by the changes brought about by the process of acculturation.

2.4.3 Missionary Misconception about the Vhavenda Religion

The lack of any formalised religious institution, sacred writings or temples, caused missionaries to observe the Vhavenda religion as a futile exercise in which worthless things are idolised.

¹⁶ See Blacking, John "The context of Venda Possession Music : Reflecting on the effectiveness of Symbols." Yearbook for Traditional Music (1985:69).

The fact that the Vhavenḁa religion does not have written texts does not mean that it does not have a long history because man himself is a religious being, whose life is always religiously oriented. Possibly by the time the missionaries set foot in Venḁa, religion had already entered a state of degeneration from a former higher Vhavenḁa civilisation caused by some natural calamity e.g. volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, floods, war or plague.

In his article, "Religious life" appearing in the book The Independent Venḁa, (1979:34) Nemudzivhaḁi, H.M. has this to say:

... before the advent of Christianity, the Vhavenḁa believed in a supreme being, Khuzwane (Thimuḁi) who had created all things and can be compared to the Hebrew Jehovah.

Pestilences and natural disasters may destroy many people including the most influential religious leaders but not all the people. When such a disaster happens, it only succeeds in enhancing the spiritual power and ritual observance because such an exercise safeguards the basic needs of man like safety, bodily health and security of the family or clan, and improves the spirit of nationhood because the spiritual rite helps to weld the political system of a nation into one entity which is indivisible in the eyes of a foe no matter what their internal differences are.

2.4.3.1 The concept of G(g)od

The Vhavenḁa knew and understood about the existence of the Divine God long before the advent of Western Civilisation. It is unfortunate that in the Luvenda Bible a wrong term, **Mudzimu** instead of **Thimuḁi** for God is used.

The concept **Mudzimu** which the missionaries used for God, is confusing to the illiterate Muvenda because **Mudzimu**, whether used with a capital letter (M) or small letter (m) has a plural, **midzimu**, which means gods.

As soon as this concept **Mudzimu**, is used to an illiterate, it refers to ancestral worship or gods. Ancestors are incidentally observed as mediators between man and **Thimuḁi** or God/Jehova.

According to Schipper, Mineke (*loc cit*; p.17)

The ancestors are mediators between man and the gods. Ancestor worship is an important means of maintaining contact with the gods (in order to reach God).

Ancestor worship is according to the traditional illiterate Muvenda, an important means of effectively communicating with the gods (Midzimu) in order to reach (Thimuḁi) God. The concept Mudzimu may be used in various ways with different connotations:

* M(m)udzimu refers to a god or idol,

M(m) udzimu referring to the father of someone, for example:

Khotsi aṅu ndi mudzimu waṅu.

(Your father is your god, meaning your creator)

- * that there are as many gods as there are families.
- * that the word M(m)udzimu may be used when fooling a person.

This ambiguity misled the missionaries into believing that the Vhavenḁa do not know anything about the Creator or God.

In his article "The Context of Venḁa, Possession music: Reflections on the effectiveness of symbols," Yearbook for traditional Music, Blacking, John (op cit; p.70) says:

Since the Venḁa word mudzimu had been taken to refer to God, and members of the possession cult were manifesting mudzimu in their lives, the difference between what they were doing and what Christians were supposed to do was not clear.

This misunderstanding may have been caused by incorrect rapport or unwillingness by missionaries to accept that the Vhavenḁa could have been so advanced as to have developed the correct pistic or religious concept of God (Thimuḁi) or High God or Jehovah. In the outpouring of their minds, the traditional Vhavenḁa pray through their ancestors (also calling on them by their names) and then conclude their prayer by saying:

Na iwe Thimuḁi

(And you who is Unknown)

The unknown here, is the Creator or God and not M(m)udzimu/god. The Almighty therefore is always addressed in a singular form and unless this wedge of misunderstanding is corrected, the gap will increase because traditionally every Muvenda believes that in order to appeal to the living God or creator, one has to do so through objects of his own creation.

It is therefore not surprising to find the following items included when conducting ritual as an indication of the power behind the power of creation (See item 2.4.3.2 below):

- * a special plant planted around three smooth and naturally pointed dolerite stones collected from a perennial river bed to symbolise flora and larva and the trinity of God.
- * a he-goat or bull to symbolise fauna.
- * sacrificial beer made of *Eleusina caracana* (mpambo). See Van Warmelo, N.J. (1937:155 and 160).
- * spears and battle axes to symbolise a continuous connection with the past to respect the invention made by ancestors as a perpetuation of culture.
- * *Voandzeia subterranea* Thouars (phonḁa) found to be grown by the Vhavana only, when discovered by whites. See Van Warmelo, N.J. (ibid; 219).
- * Maize (Thonwane, Gororo, Tshikundaḁwedzhi or Tshitaḁvatsindi) and other cash crops like (mphwe, mafhuri na ḁduhu).

* Water for squirting about, when praying.

All these are used to symbolise the power that exist behind the power of creation. The Vhavenda believes that it is this power that sustains life and which no living man except the living God alone can create. Hence everything in his prayer is directed to God through his ancestors. This explains the reason why there is a misunderstanding between traditional believers (heathens) and christians.

This wedge between Christian and traditional belief amongst the Vhavenda would be best corrected by playwrights who could highlight the mistaken identity with a resounding comical effect and by effecting corrections in the Bible concerning the concept God, to win more converts.

2.4.3.2 Some reasons for reverting to traditional belief

Since missionaries misunderstood the Vhavenda religion or never bothered to make an in-depth study of it, except to apply preconceived ideas; they became blind to reality. In order to bring about change and innovation, an in-depth research is necessary. Religion has no compromises because it is a belief in the hereafter. This is the reason why it was difficult for some people to forsake their traditional belief for the Christian belief for they thought that to become a Christian means to forsake your own origin-based religion. It is not easy for one to throw away something one is strongly clinging onto without being convinced.

Missionaries substituted traditional belief with Christian belief and when their converts were baptised, they were convinced that they had accepted the new belief. Most of them may have been baptised because they admired the way of life without changing the man within, otherwise people would not be going back to traditional practices such as ritual murder, ancestral worship, joining sectarian churches and belief in witchcraft, after attaining Independence of Venda from South Africa on 13 September 1979 and after the missionary epoch.

What aggravated the situation during the missionary era is that no student could be admitted to school or a Teachers' course, without being baptised first and students could have acceded without being converted to Christianity for one reason or another.

What should be made clear, is that although the traditional Vhavenda believe in the hereafter, their belief cannot get them to God because man can only be saved through Jesus Christ who died on the cross, was buried, arose and went to Heaven to prepare for our hereafter which the dead are unable to do. (See the Gospel according to St. John 11:24-25, John 14:6, John 15:1-23, John 20:1-31, Acts 9:1-20, Romans 10:9-10, 1 Corinthians 1:18,23-25, 1 Corinthians 3:9-15, Ephesians 2:8-9 and 1 John 4:9-10).

This explanation could not appeal to the uneducated Vhavenda because it was approached from one angle and because of the use of a wrong concept namely, M(m)udzimu, which was not only ambiguous but was according to the illiterate Vhavenda applied with reference to the gods and not to God (Thimuḍi).

It was therefore difficult for them to understand how one could believe in Mudzimu/god of another foreign person, family or clan because one's own deceased parents or blood relations can mediate for one, as explicated above.

The understanding of the hereafter was therefore different from the Christian belief. The traditional Vhavenḁa believe that the departed live in a state of waiting and that wherever they are, they are nearer the Creator than the living and as a result they can be used as mediators based on their pious religious dedication when they were still alive.

It should be noted here however, that it is not every departed person who becomes a mediator (god). It is only those people who led an exemplary life who become a motivating force to the living to cling to their religious teachings. It is held that if a man has led an exemplary religious life which his family, for example joined, the family will not stop believing in his morally acceptable teachings because he has departed; instead, such teachings become a strong anchor to cling to, tenaciously. His last words before his death, will be held in esteem by all and may bind the family or warring clans together.

As a custom, at a traditional funeral, no speeches are made except praise poems to bid farewell to the deceased and to give him a "message" which he should take along to inform the departed ancestors.

His children are made to crawl under his coffin as a symbol that they have all noted with respect that he is no more and that his spirit should go to rest and to help them in times of need.

Even though the corpse is there they are aware that his spirit has already departed from him but will stay with them, until his body is laid to rest hence the adage:

A hu tshee na muthu

(There is no longer a person/personality).

At the grave yard, after the deceased is buried, they sow maize and pumpkin seeds over the grave and then pour water on because it is believed that:

- * in order to live again, like the seeds of his own staple food (maize) man must be buried and have water poured over him in order to germinate again in new life; (See John 12:24 and 1 Corinthians 15:35-36);
- * wherever there is water there should be life and the earth cannot be the only place where there is life, because God created things according to their kind;
- * the new life that the departed will enter into is the new world where Thimudī (God) is and where they expect to have the same type of life as the one that is led on earth as spiritual beings who will no longer taste death as is explicated by the following adage:

*Tsho bebwaho tsho fa uri tshi tshile*¹⁷

(What is born, is dead for it to live again).

After the funeral the bereaved shave their heads and show their respect by not working for up to a month if the deceased is a ruler. No food is offered on the day of the funeral.

Ancestral worship is therefore based on the belief in the hereafter as the ultimate goal.

It cannot be gainsaid that the traditional beliefs of the Vhavenḁa (and incidentally all the African people with different emphases) are a cause for concern propelled by the spirit of black consciousness. These beliefs are still practised at the tasting of the first fruit to thank the creator for looking, smiling down upon them by providing them with ample food because:

Tshi fha vhadzimu a tshi lali na ḁdala

(He who makes offerings to the gods will never starve).

The importance of the ancestors is that because they have survived death, and are alive in the spiritual world, they become guardians of the fertility and safety of those connected to them because according to Parrinder, E. Geoffrey (1962:58-59):

they are its (family) elders and will also seek rebirth into the same family. The family land is their property, and they must be consulted ...

¹⁷ Input made by the Tshakhuma traditionalists on several occasions.

This could be supported by the fact that some children are named after their grandparents and the belief that the names influence the character of a person, for example:

Thinandavha may lead a carefree type of life

Nndwakhulu may be a warmonger

Mukondeleli may exercise a lot of patience, while

Mulalo may be a peaceful person, etc.

As an ordinary name, a child may be given any good name or a potentially riotous name as long as it is not connected to any troublesome ancestor, for they are afraid that such a child will take after him/her.

This has relevance to the fear which Parrinder, (ibid; p.59) quoting Frazer, E. refers to when he says:

the general attitude (of the people towards their ancestors) is one of fear rather than affection.

The traditionalists are not afraid, they merely respect their ancestors just as much as some Zionists propagate the observance of ancestral worship.

At Shayandima location, a resident erected a rondavel of Ngoma dza Vhadzimu or Malombo (ancestral worship).

I have decided to stop praying to a foreign God. I was a Lutheran, but have since abandoned it because the churches are there to make money. Ancestral worship requires no money except offerings and blessings in return.

The number of livestock has been reduced to five cattle per family, cattle graze in overgrazed camps. This reduction was purposefully done so that the black man should be dependent on the white man for their livelihood and employment. We must worship until we get our land back, whites also worship their ancestors for they cling to pronouncements of the past, why shouldn't we?¹⁸

This report reflects a deep seated dissatisfaction which becomes a source of unity for a common struggle to have equal share in a meaningful way.

For anyone to make an objective deduction about the claims set out above, would require in-depth research based on actual involvement in ancestral worship.

This is a flexible subject which can result in a biased deduction as was the case with the deductions made by visitors to Coventry Cathedral who, according to Davidson, Basil (1969:28) claims that:

¹⁸ Shayandima Location is a suburb of Thohoyandou the capital of the Republic of Venda. The informer is Mr Radali, originally from Mukumbani. He is presently a business man in Johannesburg. (Because of influx control, for a black man to have two homes is not surprising.)

The English pay little or no heed to religion. They have splendid churches, but seldom worship in them.

They claim to have a notion of a High God, but you soon find out that this God is thought of as a man, a fact which no doubt says something about their intense individualism and aversion from community control. They will not, however, admit this.

Although Coventry Cathedral is decorated with the painting of an enormous male figure, the priests claim that this is really the picture of a god, a suprasensible being in some way an embodiment of ancestral wisdom. They deny that this is an image to be worshipped, although it is perfectly obvious that people do in fact kneel before this image and pray to it.

The same misinterpretation could emerge when a non-believer witnesses a prayer on television because such opening prayers usually have the voice of the preacher in the background while beautiful flowers, sea waves, a beautiful sunset or a landscape are screened as though the preacher is suggesting that those are the things which should be idolised, when in fact, he is trying to highlight the power behind the power of creation as the source of all creation, because man cannot recreate what God has already created except to make use of it, to observe and be aware of his omnipotence. (See item 2.4.3.1 above.)

When dealing with a traditionally based play, the teacher should be careful not to mislead the learners by lack of ample information and background knowledge because instead of correcting the misconception, he may end up having perpetuated and indirectly justified a wrong belief.

2.4.4 The myth of creation

The African belief about the universe is that it was created by some power, and that this power is God and as a result blacks observe the universe from a religious point of view. As the creator of the universe, God therefore exists outside and beyond it because one cannot create something while inhabiting it.

This does not mean that after creating something one cannot make use of it or cannot live in it. This possibility brings us to the widely held belief that God is everywhere, namely:

*Muali: found everywhere > Mwari/Mwali/Mwai > Nwali (Omnipotent) or
Thimudi (God) or Musiki (Creator), Musikavhathu (Creator of Man).*

As a timeless being, God who was, is and will always be, is everywhere including on Earth. God is therefore not limited by time, space or place. He is a trinity found in Heaven, on Earth and in the sea.

2.4.4.1 The myth of the creation of man

It is believed by the Vhavenda, that man was created by God from the mud of the deep river pools or lakes. (This in itself was a dramatic act.) The dramatic act of creation and death is aptly summed up in the word Lufu(no), where Lufu means death and Lufuno means love. This means that death (Lufu), is centred on the love (Lufuno) of the creator. Man was created by the love of God and in order to reunite with God he has to do so through death (Lufu). Lufuno is therefore the keeper of death and life because by making love (Lufuno) the chances of it resulting into death or life is equally strong. Man is therefore created to glorify his creator and in order to find meaning and the purpose of his creation, man appeals to God through the items of his creation as symbols of his continuous existence.

After creation, man was allowed to live on earth until his descendants inhabited and ruled the entire area. The Tshivenda myth states that the Vhavenda disseminated the country side from Matongoni (Zimbabwe ruins) which is regarded as the climax of the Vhavenda civilization of yore. The Dzata ruins and many other ruins and human footprints on the rocks around Venda e.g. Kwakwane, Mugwari, Mulenzhe, Vhufuli, Makahane Thulamana(ma) in the present Kruger National Park, where according to the legend, an aunt of the Makahane clan, left her footprints on a basalt rock in a position of worship. This legend supports the belief of an earlier occupation of the area by the Vhavenda at a time when volcanoes and earthquakes were still active.

The Vhavenda are a homogenous nation with the same tradition, language, religion, culture, kingship, and country namely VENDA which is formed from two stems -VE- of Vele (maize) and NDA- or Ndala (hunger) as can be explained by two analytical methods indicated below:

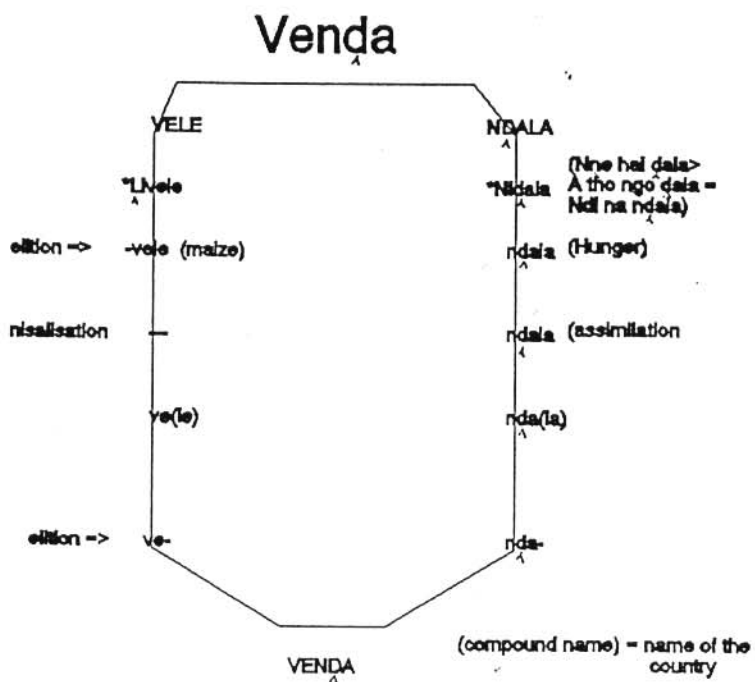
FIGURE 2: The concept Venda

Method 1

Prefix	Stem	Suffix	New word	Singular	Plural	Noun class
li-	-ve	-le	livele	VE le	mavhele	Li - ma- (5-6)
ni-	-da	-la	niḁala	NDA la	dziḁala	N- dzin- (9-10)

VENDA (Stem + Stem)

Method 2



By using a prefix the following names were formed:

- VENDA
- Muvenda citizen of Venda
- Vhavenda citizens of Venda
- Luvenda language
- Tshivenda tradition and culture
- Zwavenda treasures of the country

Briefly stated, Venda means a country of plenty or a country where one can appease one's hunger with maize, hence the adage:

Venda (vele) la Hanyatshikamuroho a li ladzi nwana na ndala.

*[Venda (vele > maize), a country where wild vegetables are plentiful,
does not make one to starve.]*

This claim is further supported by the availability of the four drought resistant traditional maize types namely; Gororo, Tshikundañwedzhi, Thoñwane and Tshitavhatsindi which were cultivated long before any contact with the whites, was made.

The name VENDA, therefore could have referred to the entire summer rainfall region where maize is grown even at the time when VHANGONA (name common to black South Africans), were the rulers.

Examples of some of the names which were historically and dramatically formed are:

- ◆ Thulamana(ma) < vha nthula mana(ma) (a phukha) nga maduvha othe.
- ◆ Hamutsha < Ha lwiwa mutsho wa vhuya wa tsha Tsworodi.
- ◆ Lwamondo < Ri lwa sa kholomo dza gondo musidzi tshi orowa.
- ◆ Magoro < Mu lima mavhele a gororo makhaha a tshi salela zwinoni.
- ◆ Tshikundamalema < He mmbi ya Malema ya kundwa hone.
- ◆ Khalavha < U hone, u livha (vhona) tshikhala.
- ◆ Mungona < Muthu wa shango la nama.
- ◆ Mundalamo < Ndaka ya muthu ndi kholomo.

The myth about the creation of man from mud in the pool, is often narrated to inquisitive children who would like to know where the new baby comes from. The answer that is often given is based on this myth that:

Mme anu vho mu gula tivhani (la Senzi)

(Your mother pulled it (the baby) from the pool of Senzi).

Vho mu hambela kha vhadzimu
(She asked for it from the gods).

Perhaps it is for this reason that pregnancy is kept a secret from the children by the traditional woman until the child is born.

2.4.4.2 Myth surrounding twins

The ability to bear children is considered as a blessing by the gods; hence after birth, a murula (feast where the in-laws bring beer and gifts as a sign of welcome to the newcomer), is held.

It is on this day that a child is given its name(s). The name that is supported by a valuable gift, becomes its first name. A high cultural premium is placed on fertility and preferential marriages between families are usually prearranged or approval is sought after first from the nuclear family.

If not approved, no matter how deep the love is, between the lovers, such a marriage will never take place. This type of strictness once forced two lovers to take their own lives by diving into the river pool now known as ZWAVHAVHILI (the twain-lover-pool) in honour of this heroic deed to protest against pre-arranged marriages.

The reason for this type of control, was to try and avoid:

- * notorious families, thieves, murderers or sorcerers;
- * hereditary mishaps like physical and mental handicap and blood related diseases;
- * a family that has a history of bearing twins or triplets or more children as this is often seen as an ill-omen, because a human being cannot be equated with an animal like a goat which usually bears more than one kid;

- * another belief is that in the past, women who bore twins were usually taken away from their rightful husbands by the ruler in order to bear him more children.
- * as a precautionary measure, in an unstable environment, one child was preferred to more of the same age by the same mother.

In order to avoid this, a woman who begets twins is ordered by the elders to pick out one of the babies the day they are born and kill it herself. The reason for this is that she will never tell the story herself or blame anybody else as she only has herself to blame.

This secret was maintained until it was broken by the birth of the first known twins in Venḁa who were saved because they were born at a mission clinic at Beuster mission station in 1915.

The problem of twins in Tshivenḁa culture is handled in a stage drama called Namusu. The problem of twins appears to be an African problem. Only twins and albinos that are born in hospital are saved but those that are born at home, are still killed in a gruesome manner.

2.4.4.3 The myth of death and eternal life

At the beginning, Thimuḁi/Khuzwane (God) sent a millepede to inform man that he would never die.

On the way to deliver the good message, the millepede came across the nice smelling mbula (grysappel fruits). Feeling very hungry, it took its time in eating the fruit.

Meanwhile the naturally very slow chameleon with its jerking movements and rotating eyes, moved on and on changing colours with every change of background and eventually overtook the millepede in the process, unaware. Then it came upon man and said:

Tsho bebwaho tsho fa.

(Because of birth, man shall die.)

When eventually the millepede arrived and said:

Muthu ha nga fi.

(Man shall not die.)

Man in return replied by saying:

Mulaedza uyu wo lenga, ro fa ri tshi kha di tshila.

(Your message is belated, we are dead even while we live.)

Then the millepede rolled moving its many feet in the air and then curled and folded itself. Soon afterwards a cloud and dense mist covered the area and a voice sounded saying:

Tsho bebwaho tsho fa uri tshi tshile.

(What is begot is dead to live again.)

Kha tshalo, zwala mbeu, u shele shothodzo uri sa yo, u tshile hafhu.

(On every grave sow seeds (maize seeds) sprinkle water so that like it (seed), you would live again.)

Thereafter, heavy rain fell. To date when traditional children see a millepede roll, they believe that rain will fall. Because of this mishap, whenever herdboys come across a chameleon, they will force its mouth open and fill it with snuff, soil or sand while it changes its colours in the process, to enact that it is the cause of death.

The belief about the hereafter by the blacks, is also made clear by Barnett, U (1983:231) when she says:

Age, by bringing us near our grave, brings us near our regeneration. Near death shines life. The crumbling dry bones of our autumn herald the spring of our new life. No, woman, I am no man - I am man in the making. My wrinkles show that life is softening this old human clay in order to remodel it into new forms. Man never dies although men do. (See item 2.4.3.2 above).

2.4.5 Witchcraft and Voodooism

A thorough research in this field could be a breakthrough in freeing people from the chains of fear, persecution, death, a claim about a cheap workforce of the living-dead, that is, zombies and indiscriminate gruesome killings and burning of the "culprits".

In his unpublished M.Ed dissertation, Maibelo, J.R. (1989:86) says about Witchcraft; that:

The practitioners of the craft are feared and held at arm's length as enemies of the society. They are rather wished dead than alive.

In Venda, in the month of January to March 1990 alone, no fewer than 50 people were burned to death in a gruesome manner. Many are in the custody of the police at Thohoyandou, while others have escaped and are at large leaving all their belongings behind, because they were accused of being practitioners of either witchcraft or voodooism or both.

In the wake of this dramatic mishap more than 500 families have been left homeless and unprotected because of the raging fear of the unknown, in which anybody could fall prey to circumstances.

The problem is that there are people who believe that witches exist and that there are people who practice voodooism. In order to prove them wrong, research could be the only solution.

Omoyanjowo, J. Akinyele (1971:15) says that:

... witches are generally regarded as being against society, mischievous and harmful to peaceful living and the progress of civilization.

This hopefully is the reason why society shows no mercy to them and also because: (they) choose progressive people as victims (ibid; p.21).

Worth mentioning also is that in Venda people accused of practising the craft are progressive farmers, business men and community elders. About this Omoyanjowo, A. (ibid; p.25-26) gives the following reasons why such people are labelled as sorcerers. They choose:

- * close relatives because rivalry and hatred always develop between associates;
- * mothers and in-laws because the two normally contest each other over supremacy and control; one over the husband and the other over her son;
- * co-wives because of jealousy;
- * old women (and men) because they look ugly and because of their age;
- * queer ugly people because they are associated with evil deeds;
- * women who are unable to bear children; and
- * somnolent people who are found still asleep in the courtyard of a friend or relative.

Coupled with the influence of the diviners who capitalise on deception, cheap psychology, and tricks, people are usually intimidated. After the mob has made up its mind to get rid of the menace, nothing stops it.

Unless the law intervenes timeously the "culprit(s)" are bound to die because neither the community nor the local chief will come to their rescue.

The accused usually find themselves in a predicament because whether they deny or admit the crime, the punishment remains the same ... death, hence the inexplicable fear which is not only based on practising the craft, but on whether one is accused or not.

Omoyanjowo, J.A. (ibid; p.18 and 39) gives reasons why the accused make confessions. According to him, they are:

- * procured by prophets who want to use them to boost their prestige by smelling out witches unaware of the fact that their action is helping to perpetuate the existence of witchcraft;
- * made under suspicious circumstances such as persuasions that one has committed the offence in dreams;
- * made inadvertently to avoid greater ordeals;
- * made as a result of rumours because once accused, no amount of denying would free the suspect;
- * made as a result of small discrepancies and lying which would be taken as obvious signs of guilt;
- * made on slight indications such as, turning the eyes to the ground, being the child of a witch, getting easily engaged and inability to shed tears. Signs like these, becomes the grounds for torture to make the accused confess;
- * made as a result of illness like high fever which makes one to feel delirious and unconscious; and
- * when one is suffering from mental disorder.

In a well-known newspaper, The Sowetan of Friday, March 20, 1992 p.12, Mathatha Tsedu and Don Seokane, reported on a testimony made by Mogano of Molepo who said he was taught to bewitch people by his mother before he became a christian and that he used to fly on a broom to Tanzania at night where they would hold meetings chaired by the president of the witches of the whole world.

He said that they would change their forms into anything, including ants and in this state, fly all the way to Tanzania in two minutes. He said he used to feed on human tissue which was as tasty as beef steak.

How true this story is, is none of our concern here because it cannot be scientifically validated. The fact of the matter is that there are people who believe in witchcraft and those that can be so influenced or instigated for whatever reason, to take the lives of innocent people who are blamed for practising witchcraft.

The influence of traditional beliefs in witchcraft, voodooism, the role played by witchdoctors and the conflict between these beliefs and Christianity is dealt with in Zwo Itwa by Mahamba, A.M.

The aspect of Makhuwani motif and traditional beliefs in witchcraft and the powers of miphwebwebwe (drugs) obtained from witchdoctors is handled in Muofhe by Ramaite, U.M. Tshililo by Maumela, T.N. Vho lu Fukula by Netshivhuyu, M.J. shows how lovers stake all their faith on witchdoctors in order to plot against other people.

In Ndi Mitodzi Muni, Milubi, N.A. addresses amongst others, several themes such as nepotism as practised by African rulers, corruption, extra-marital love, polygamy and university life.

Mabalanganye by Mathivha, M.E.R. shows the belief in witchcraft, witchdoctors and of ghosts in war. One can easily read from some of these plays the influence of Shakespeare's A midsummer Night's Dream and Julius Caesar.

The question of Ngoma dza vhadzimu or malombo in spiritual possession as a belief propagated by witchdoctors comes out very clearly in Vhuhosi a vhu Thetshelwi by Maumela, T.N.

Although the few dramas cited above, are closet plays, the information, influence and education they have for the learners cannot be underestimated.

Davis, Edward (1965:ix) shows how successfully Shakespeare succeeded in arresting the traditional impact of the legend of spirits in his play The Tempest through the mouthpiece of Prospero bidding farewell to the stage of all times when he says:

These our actors ... were all spirits and are melted into air, thin air:

and about death (ibid, p.ix) he says:

(Life is) like a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more.

Yet it is also equally true that life is observed (ibid; p.x) as a stage:

*All the world's a stage
And all the men and women merely players
They have their exits and their entrances
and one man, in his time, plays many parts ...*

This does not mean that when a playwright makes use of these observations like sorcery and spirits from the past he believes in them, but that he will be using them to serve as a didactic lesson, or source of experience for spiritual and moral enrichment and/or amusement.

African playwrights should make use of the treasure of the past in order to reveal the truth about traditional beliefs, by illuminating for example, how a nation can be caught up in a dilemma of voodooism, ritual murder, sorcery and other unfounded beliefs which threatens the lives of innocent people and retard progress.

2.5 The relevance of Pedagogical - Didactical Principles in the teaching of drama

For any meaningful successful teaching or learning to take place, it must be based on basic didactical principles which in turn determine the relevant methods to be used when planning a lesson based on the aim the teacher would like to achieve.

2.5.1 Traditional principles

The main aim of teaching, is to guide the learner from non-adulthood towards adulthood by introducing him to new learning material which will be useful to him in life as a member of the community to which he belongs or even to a wider community as well.

In order to achieve this goal, the teacher starts his lesson(s) from:

2.5.1.1 the known to the unknown

This means that the learner does not start school or a lesson without some basic knowledge. The teacher should make use of this knowledge in order to introduce him to the new learning material.

In teaching drama, for example, this cannot be difficult if the teacher taps from the child's basic knowledge to play because basically, the child acquires knowledge through playing or active participation in the learning activity. Malan, R. (1973:6) says that:

*the child, from infancy, learn -
is educated by and through play,(because drama like soccer or any other sport, is fun
game and life should be fun to all living because it is a God-given fun-gift.)*

In class the drama teacher, could start off by introducing the names of the actors in the play, how they are related to each other, where they stay and what happened in the story in a nutshell, in order to whet the interest of the learners through the fun-making learning technique.

The class could then be divided into groups with a leader in each group. Each group is given a name of the actor under which they will operate. This will be easy to them because every child not only has a name, she/he belongs to a specific family, place, street and does something in life as a living being. Such an aspect will therefore be within their scope of knowledge of operation in daily life, because as Steyn, P.J.N. Badenhorst, D.C. and Yule, R.M. (1984:14) observed: *it can be taken for granted that, at every stage of school life, the pupil knows something, however vague and ill-defined, about the subject matter to be presented, and that some or all of it may be common knowledge to most or even all the pupils.*

2.5.1.2 Simple to the complex

As part of their make-up, when children play, they utter words or sentences spontaneously and thus reveal their intelligence and how far they have mastered their mother tongue. The ability to speak well and intelligently, makes parents feel very proud about their child because it is a sign of intelligence that only needs to be unveiled through education.

The teacher should then introduce the learners to the play by allowing them to participate in reading aloud. The teacher should, where necessary interrupt because as Day, C. and Norman, J. (1983:40) observed, children: *accept interruptions, to settle differences along the way and to recognize that the pace of the game must accommodate the slowest player.*

While reading, the teacher will have to stop and explain some difficult words, phrases or idiomatic expressions or ask questions in context, in order to find out whether this links up with their previous knowledge on the subject or not, hence Steyn, P.J.N. et al (ibid; 1984:15)

say: *The more difficult part should be presented later when the simpler part has been grasped by the pupils.*

2.5.1.3 the concrete to the abstract

According to Steyn, P.J.N. et al (ibid; 1984:15) this principle is based on the fact that: *The child lives in a world which he knows, of which he has ... experience. This world is to him concrete, because he can identify everything in it.*

This principle has relevance to drama because naturally the child learns through play which can easily be transferable to the secondary school learner who cognitively, affectively, emotionally and socially is mature enough to understand the learning matter through abstract thinking. This level of operation can help the learner to spiritually visualise things and then enact them convincingly as if they are happening.

2.5.2 The principle of development.

The choice of the subject matter will differ according to the chronological age physical- and spiritual development of the child because as Steyn, P.J.N. et al (1984:26) purport, every child: *starts off being poor in experience but rich in potential. As the child grows up he develops gradually into an adult.* (See also Vrey, J.G. 1984:16.)

This in itself means that although drama may be taught to the primary and secondary or post school youth, it will be handled according to the different levels of difficulty based on the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual maturity of the learners.

2.5.3 The principle of totality

This principle refers to totality teaching because man, as a totality or whole, also observes the world as a totality. This implies that home- and school education should form a unity

because as Van Schalkwyk, O.J. (1978:38) quoting Sadler says: *the things outside the schools matter even more than the things inside the schools, and govern and interpret the things inside (because) the outside world is brought into the classroom.* (Engelbrecht, S.W.B. et al, 1938:40, see also Barnard, S.S. and Vos, S.J. 1980:4).

In a learning situation therefore, the teaching of a prescribed play should be such that it considers the child as a totality by developing his physical-chemical structure, Biotic structure, psychological structure and Act structure. (See Van Schalkwyk, O.J. op cit. 1978:130).

The principle of totality according to Engelbrecht, S.W.B. et al, (1983:39): *enables pupils (to) learn and memorise more easily if the work forms part of a larger unit.*

When studying a play for the examination purposes or for the stage, the learner will be able to understand, memorise and retain those parts of the play which are of a didactic value or are allocated to him as an actor, if the whole story addresses problems which are true to life.

2.5.4 Principle of environmental teaching

By introducing the social environment into the classroom or learning situation the child's disorganised knowledge and experience, is organised into a meaningful whole by using the environment as a point of departure and by adapting the subject matter to his environment (See Engelbrecht, S.W.B. et al, ibid; 1983:47). Before handling the play in detail, the teacher and the learners should, where possible, visit the place(s) where the play takes place, read about the milieu, visit the library, archives, play a video or film about the play or even bring in, items mentioned in the play, in class for use when staging it or to serve as models.

This method of teaching a play, enables the teacher to move from the known to the unknown, the particular to the general or the general to the particular and thus helps the learners to

understand the play as a whole and how its contents are interrelated and interwoven with life and how they affect them as individuals, as a group and as a community.

2.5.5 The principle of perception

Simply stated perception refers to awareness of one's surroundings through one's senses with a view to learning that leads to inner experience in which language and thought play a vital role (Steyn, P.J.N. et al, op cit; 1984:19) in enabling an individual to think in abstraction.

While teaching a play, the learners learn to define the meanings of words used in abstraction and thereby enrich their language proficiency and reasoning ability.

2.5.6 The principle of individualisation

Although every child is a possibility who should realise his potentialities in full, he should also be observed and accepted as an unrepeatable individual who is totally different from all other children because as Van Schalkwyk, O.J. (op cit: 1978:121) puts it:

... each individual born ... is genetically different from all other individuals living, previously living or yet to be born.

Since no two people are alike and the teacher is not only responsible for one individual learner but for the whole class, it means that a combination of both class teaching and individual teaching methods should be applied interchangeably and/or simultaneously.

In teaching a play, the teacher could attend to individual performance as well as to group or class achievement in mastering its contents in order to produce the best teaching, learning and stage performance results.

The teacher can attain this goal by providing enough possibilities for every child to participate in the class activities (See Steyn, P.J.N. et al, 1984:24).

2.5.7 The principle of differentiation

This principle emanates directly from the principle of individualisation because if no two individuals are the same, they are therefore different and because they are different, they should therefore be treated, understood and be taught in a different way in order to accommodate their individual differences in the most possible manner. This principle says Engelbrecht, S.W.B. et al, op cit. (1983:43):

takes the accent away from teaching directed at the average pupil and places emphasis on the individual pupil and his personal circumstances and potentialities.

In teaching a play individual abilities and interests can be successfully deployed and by so doing enrich the dramatic act.

2.5.8 The principle of (self) activity

This principle is based on the fact that every normal child is by nature always active and if correctly and methodically channelled, by the teacher, active participation creates in the child an atmosphere of enthusiasm which is an essential prerequisite for successful learning (See Steyn, P.J.N. et al, op cit; 1984:25).

The teacher should induce learners to be actively engaged in the learning act through tasks, role playing when reading a play in class or by providing answers or asking questions or by appearing on the stage as an actor displaying his unique unrepeatable abilities which serve

as part of the spicy, juicy, ingredient to the whole play and to life. This is the reason why Malan, Robin (1973:9), quoting Burton, E.J. says:

Surely this natural, powerful and fundamental impulse - the impulse to play - must be used in education as a means towards healthy and full maturity. Any attempt to educate without using a main dynamic of human cultural development seems rather foolish.

The learner should therefore improve his learning techniques of stagecraft through active involvement.

2.5.9 The principle of socialisation (class teaching)

This principle is based on the fact that since man is a social being who wants to socialise, it will also be beneficial to him if he is taught as a member of the group or class. The teaching activity essentially became class/group teaching as a method of directly and indirectly preparing him to fit in his community as a responsible co-operative person.

John Dewey in Archambault, R.D. (1974:xxvii) like Rousseau observed:

that the function of the school was not merely to provide a means for pupils to fit into society, but also a means for them to change it for the better.

Naturally, children are gregarious and therefore teaching them as a group should be as relevant as it is when teaching them a play. A class is usually composed of both sexes as it is in real life and in drama. Members of the class can therefore display their abilities as actors if their prescribed play is written for the stage or they may be denied such a privilege if it is a closet play.

2.5.10 The principle of motivation and interest

There are two types of motivation namely, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

- ◆ **Intrinsic motivation** is motivation which comes from within and it includes the inner striving of the learner to acquire knowledge. Intrinsic motivation dawns with insight.

Based on the knowledge they already know and the relevance of the play to life, the learners may be intrinsically motivated to stage their prescribed play and to memorise and internalise pithy idiomatic expressions used in the play. Some learners may even name themselves after the characters found in the book or even fight for the name of a particular outstanding character.

Once this happens, it becomes a lot easier for the teacher to organise the learners to stage a play successfully as a team.

The language of the learners does not only improve but they also learn how to quote from the book, how to think logically, to plan and to execute their plans successfully, to have insight and how to behave in a socially and normatively acceptable manner.

- ◆ **Extrinsic motivation** results from motivation that comes from outside the individual learner such as prizes, praises, reproof, environmental influences, marks, promotion certificates, scholarship, method of teaching or competition. (See Engelbrecht, S.W.B. et al: 1983:44).

These incentives can be of great assistance as a method of teaching drama. If both the intrinsic motivational forces are combined and supported by the contents of a thriller, there is no doubt that successful learning can always be attained to the benefit of all concerned that is, the learner, the teacher, the school and the community ... all of which are the basic elements of progress, development and stability.

2.5.11 The principle of mother-tongue teaching

One of the biggest achievement a child can attain in life, is to master his mother-tongue because it is through it that he can discover the world as the world discovers him as a vehicle for communication, and acquisition of knowledge (see Engelbrecht, S.W.B. et al: 1983:47).

By the time the child goes to school, he already has, depending on the environment in which he is, mastered at least one language. What remains for the teacher to do, is to develop it and to create a foundation and a way for him to learn as many languages as there are at his disposal.

Just as the acquisition of the mother-tongue is the basis for the learning of other languages, the teaching of a good play written in one's native language becomes a strong basis for understanding the plays written in other languages because the learner will be moving from the known to the unknown which is a fundamental principle in successful learning. The learner not only masters the language but he is involved in the practising of skills such as mime, voice production, speech techniques of expression and movement.

All these principles have direct relevance in the teaching of drama and although the various principles can be identified and differentiated, they are all inseparable, interrelated and intertwined together and the application of one of them overlaps with that of all other principles.

In teaching drama, all the pedagogical - didactical principles should have an interplay in the moulding of the learner in order to develop him as a complete being acceptable to his community as its useful member who can still be its ambassador to the outside world.

It could be of great importance if these principles could be deployed in the teaching of Luvenda drama in order to unveil the potentialities of the learners in full, to improve the standard of teaching, to motivate the learners to read and stage stageable plays, to be critical

mindful and to develop interest in drama to such an extent that learners could even produce their own sketches.

2.6 Drama in a learning situation

In order to awaken the interest of the learners in written plays the playwrights should address facets of life as envisaged by them objectively and by so doing educate both young and old to understand themselves better and so bring about innovation and realistic change which will be acceptable to all. The above exposition shows that the activities of man reveal his religious character and attitude towards nature, how he controls or is controlled by it and how he learns to adjust himself positively towards nature in order to ensure his continual existence and that of his progeny.

This attitude influences not only the child in a learning situation but the attitude of the teacher towards the child and the subject matter and the views of both about life and its meaning in general.

As a literary genre therefore, drama can only be meaningfully understood, appreciated and esteemed if it is handled in class and on the stage, because by so doing pupils will not only be able to evaluate their prescribed play objectively and to determine what type of play it is as elucidated above but will also be able to state whether such a play could be staged with success or not.

If the play is fit for the stage and the learners are privileged to dramatise it, they will be exposed to a maximum learning situation wherein they will, through proper teaching, develop their cognitive, affective, conative, moral, social and physical potential, to full capacity.

This type of learning not only absorbs the learner deeply but induces him to master the subject matter methodically through active involvement, experience, motivation and significance attribution which is the key to learning success. (See Vrey, J.D. 1984:28-44.)

For the learning act to succeed, the teacher should involve the learner by starting his lessons by moving from the known and then move systematically to the unknown as explained above.

The learner will always be keen to master the subject matter if the teacher cultivates *inter alia*, a relationship of mutual trust, mutual dependency, freedom with responsibility, understanding, openness, exploration by means of tasks, assignments and personal experience.

Although the teacher allows for freedom and openness to rule in the learning situation to enable the learners to be relaxed and natural, authority which hinges on self-discipline, determination, support and appreciation derived from individual and group work, should reign.

The acquired knowledge in the learning situation and on the stage will be so vast that they will not only do well in the examination but also in life because what a person learns by heart with understanding can be transferable and also improves one's life.

The subject matter of a play therefore, as Roby, R. and Ulanov, B. (1982:xi) correctly observed, is about an accomplishment of: *an action or happening in human life*.

This action is in fact the service of giving, by means of encoding and decoding information in a meaningful way in order to activate both physical and mental action not only of the actors, but that of the audience and readers as well through meditation and emotional outburst.

According to Malan, Robin (1973:6):

Drama-in-education is an experiencing activity ... in which all (he means all who are involved, i.e. learners, teachers and possibly the audience) participate; and all bring to the activity not acquired skills but what is basic and common to all human beings and they bring these to the activity in order to investigate with sincerity and absorption, some area of life or of themselves, so that it may in some way or another alter their being, may affect their awareness of themselves, of others, of the environment and the society in which they exist.

This means that drama can be successfully and effectively deployed in the learning situation as a learning method because it is not only basic but also common to Man.

The fact that an urge to play is basic to all men, means that the teacher has at his disposal an inborn potential in his learners (and in himself) to act in order to satisfy the will to participate as an element of the learning process.

In drama, as in life, action is initiated by a problem/stimulus. Depending on the intensity of the problem, action may be slow or fast but nonetheless, this action will pass through a number of phases or events. Each of these phases has an element of conflict which could be internal or external or both.

The point at which the conflict takes place is the climax or the highest point of an emotional experience in a play.

In order to be more practical, use will be made of a translated version of Julius Caesar by Shakespeare into Luvenda by N̄emudzivhaḁi, H.M. so as to cover the most important elements of drama and their functions in the play to enable both the teacher and the learner, to observe the prescribed play or any play they may be interested in reading in perspective in order to exercise literary appreciation objectively. This approach could help improve the quality of prospective playwrights to produce spell binding plays. An analysis of the existing Luvenda plays reveal that had they included most of the following elements by putting their works to test on the stage first in order to prune whatever is irrelevant before publication, good plays could have been produced.

These elements help in a detailed analysis of a play and could be applied when studying a Luvenda play in order to find out whether it is stageable or not.

Each time, an attempt will be made, to give examples of Luvenda plays which succeeded or fall short in satisfying any of the elements handled hereunder.

2.9 Elements of (Modern) Drama and their function in a play

2.9.1 Acts

The history of acts dates back to the year 1610, or even centuries earlier, when five - act division in a play became a generally established fact. (See Leech, Clifford 1963:29.)

According to Pretorius, W.J. and Swart, J.H.A. (1982:20) drama is subdivided into acts in order to indicate a movement from one place to another or a lapse of time and/or provision of ample time for the players to change costumes and stage decor.

Two playwrights, Ramaite, U.M. Muofhe and N̄etshilema, E.S. in Vhamusanda Vho-Dzegere, failed to use acts and scenes in their plays. (See figure 3 below.) A one-act play is however, not divided into scenes.

2.9.2 Scenes

Each act in a play is sub-divided into scenes, which may differ in length. A scene may be introduced by a narrator or may start as soon as the curtain rises.

According to Pretorius, W.J. and Swart, J.H.A. (ibid; p.20) pauses between scenes help to:

allow the audience a degree of relief from ... tension

and an anticipation of what has yet to follow and time to prepare for the next scene with or without background music and/or other sound(s).

A scene is as Van der Poll, J.D.P. defines it in an article "A structural analysis of the Southern Sotho drama Senkatana" in ALASA edited by Groenewald, P.S. (1982:50):

that portion of the total play in which the stage is occupied by an unchanging group of players.

These are the players who, by their acting skills reveal the intrigue and interwovenness of events in the play. The skill or intrigue and interwovenness of events leaves much to be desired in the Luvenda plays because they lack the necessary spell-binding dramatic punch or force. This explains why most Luvenda plays are only fit for reading and not for presentation because their worthiness on the stage was never tested before their publication - a method applied by all successful stage, radio and television playwrights who make sure that all scenes remain exciting and true to life. (See figure 3 below and item 2.3 above.)

2.9.3 Exposition

Here the dramatist informs his audience indirectly about the place, time and relationship that exists between the main characters and thus warns the audience of the ensuing conflict or action.

The exposition sets the play in motion and helps to whet the interest of both the readers and the audience. In most Luvenda plays like Tshililo, Mabalanganye, Muofhe, Vhamusanda, Vho-Dzegere, and Mposi to mention but a few, their exposition is often so unexciting that instead of forcing the reader to sit on the edge of his chair, it turns him off even before turning to the next page.

Exposition is what Van der Poll, J.D.P. (ibid; p.51) calls *the law of action* because it makes the reader inquisitive and ready to read on keeping him alert and interested. Makhaulambilu a Julius Caesar is a good example because the dialogue between Flavius and Marullus, as the play opens, create an atmosphere and feeling of suspense and anticipation of breath taking events. (See all figures below.)

2.9.4 Development

As soon as the exposition is completed, something happens which sets the action going in such a way that everything in the play remains connected with each other in an inseparable manner with problems multiplying and complications ever expanding as in Makhaulambilu (Julius Caesar) and Namusi.

2.9.5 Action

The display of action in drama, is interwoven and inseparable because what we see in the actual act, has a bearing on the internal action.

Internal action refers to the action of feelings taking place in the minds of the characters. This action often leads to an external or physical act(ion). Physical action is a clash which comes as a result of the torment until emotions forces the 'animal' in man to act.

2.9.6 Motorial moment

The motorial moment simply refers to an incident that is responsible for setting an action into motion. (See Pretorius, W.J. and Swart, J.H.A.; 1982:21.) This motion is present in all plays but its success depends on the skill of the playwright to keep the emotional atmosphere intact throughout the play until a surge of relief is introduced later in the play. Mark Antony's oration, is a good example of the relief that comes in after many breathtaking incidents from the beginning.

2.9.7 Complications

Once the motorial moment takes place, the action forges its way through a number of insurmountable problems until the climax is attained. The plot against Caesar by Casca, Cassius and Brutus, Calphurnia's dream, Calphurnia's convictions and Caesar's bravery says Alexander, Peter (1964:980) namely:

Cowards die many times before their death

The valiant never taste death but once ...

are good examples of complications that were characterised by human nature. In Luvenda plays, these problems tend to be more speculative than explicit as in Mposi, Zwo Itwa, Vho lu Fukula, Muofhe, Lukuḍavhavha and others. Unfortunately the problems they address, tend to be unrealistic to life.

2.9.8 Tension

In a good play, tension is reflected in the appearance and behaviour of the audience or playgoers. If the play is a thriller, the reader will remain nailed to his seat until he finishes reading it.

Tension reveals the eagerness to want to know what will happen next, as though it may not happen even though in fact it will happen because it is already arrested on paper. This skill can only be achieved if the play is put to the test on the stage first before it is published.

The ability to produce a good stage play lies in the training and know-how of the playwright to knit the events in his play to fruition as explicated in 2.3 above.

2.9.9 Climax and conflict

The climax and conflict happen simultaneously because they represent the highest point in the play which as Brooks, C. and Heilman, R.B. (1984:28) describe it, is the: *exploding point of conflict* without which there can be no fluid and potent action which is the throbbing heart of a pleasurable play.

2.9.10 The peripety or Peripeteia

This refers to an event after a conflict and climax have been reached. It is a turning point that comes in after a major event.

2.9.11 Denouement and the end

This is the anti-climax, devolvement or the unravelling phase in the play. It is an event that follows the peripety and continues up to the end of the play when a solution or suspense is reached.

For easy handling the elements of drama can be reflected by the following figures to show their position, using Julius Caesar as an example.

FIGURE 3 : THE STRUCTURE OF DRAMA

Example: Julius Caesar

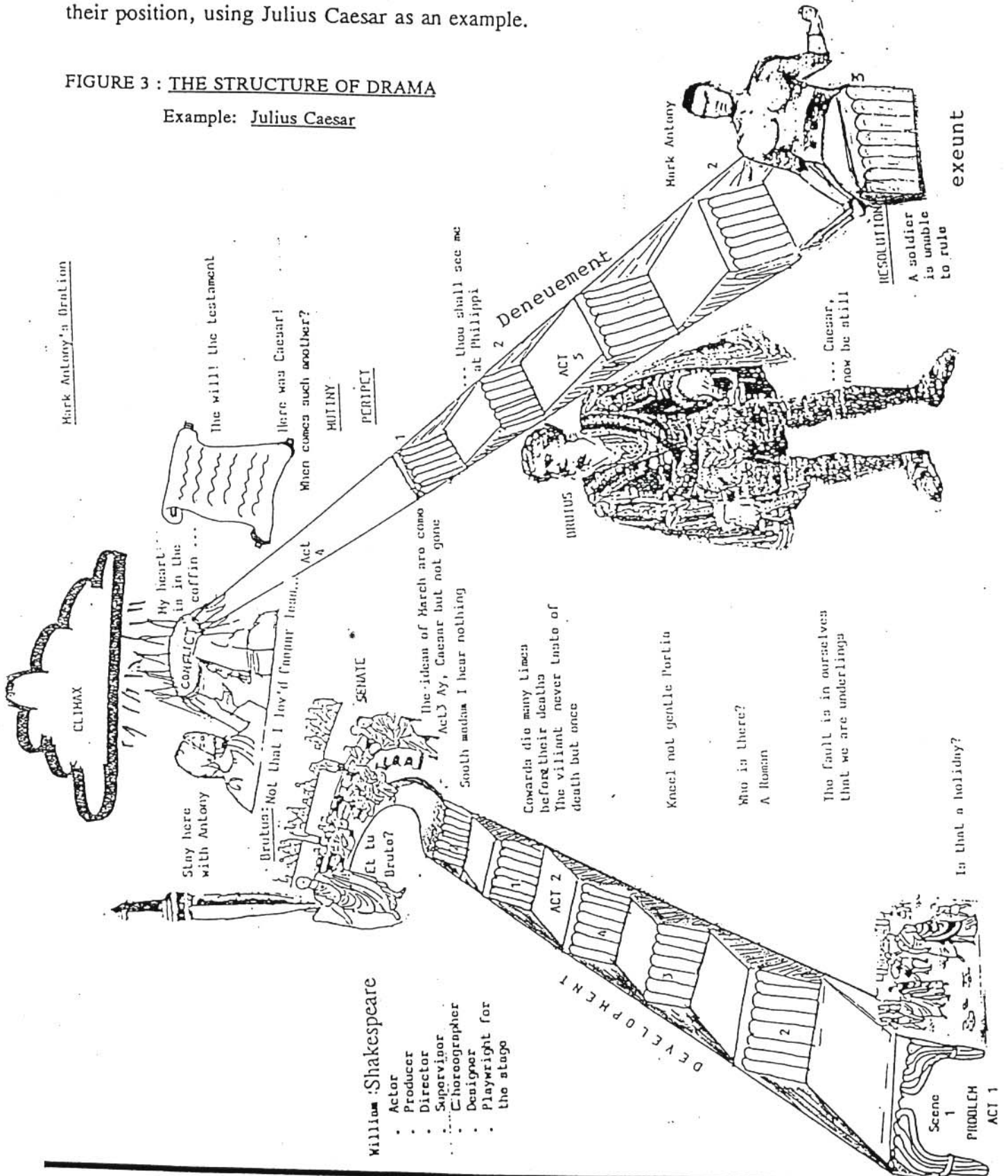


FIGURE 5 : DRAMATIC SHIFTS

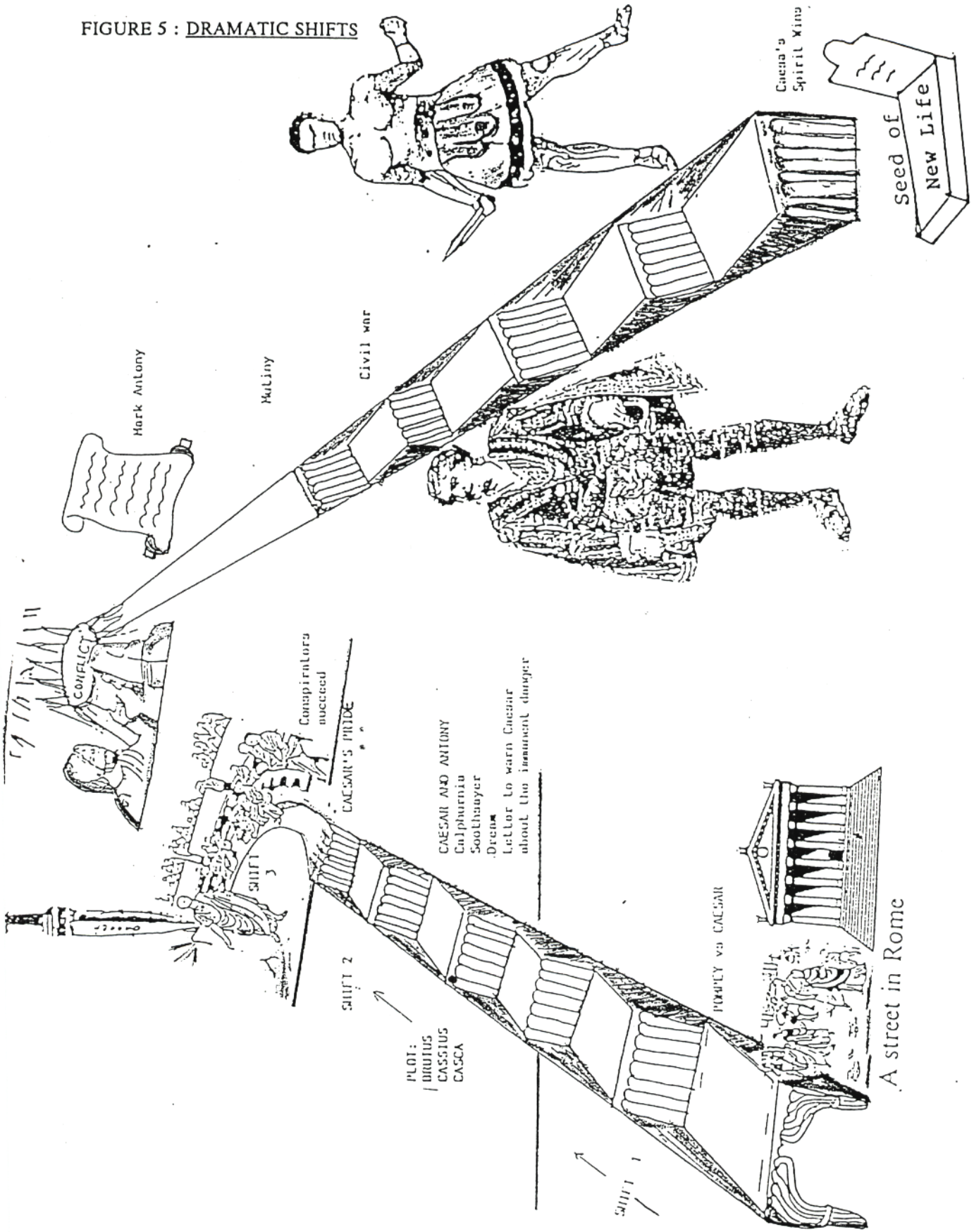
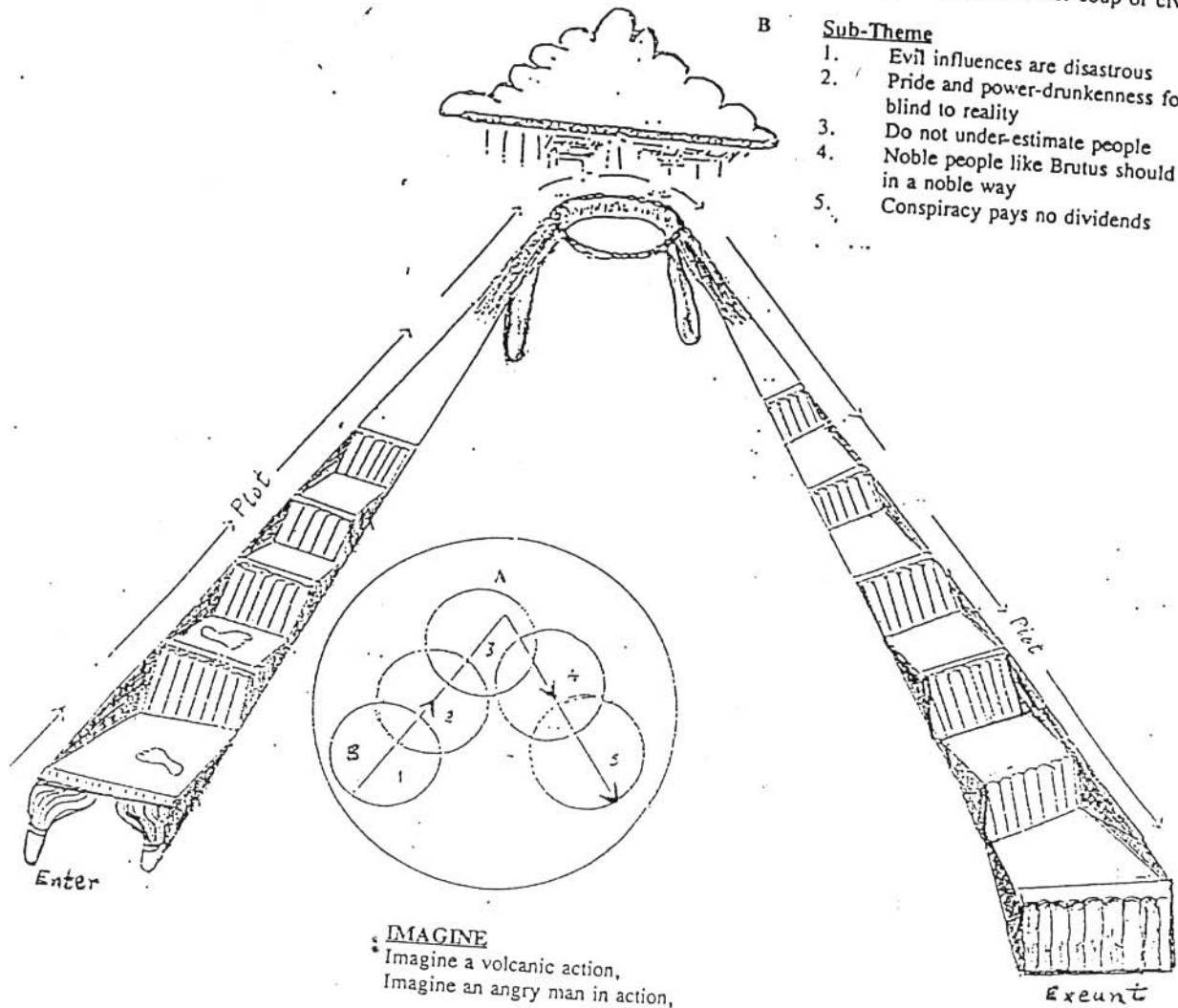


FIGURE 6 : THEMES



IMAGINE

Imagine a volcanic action,
Imagine an angry man in action,

Imagine the rumblings,
Imagine the mumblings,

Imagine the rocking and shaking,
Imagine the angry quivering,

Imagine the eruption,
Imagine the havoc,

Imagine the tranquil,
Imagine the Serenity,

That's the drama of nature,
Like that of man on the stage of life.

(By M.C. Neluvhalani Shiriyadenga)

2.9.12 Plot

A plot is the events in the story put together by the playwright and brought to a logical conclusion. Souvage, Jacques (1985:86) defines it as:

a narrative of events with emphasis falling on causality. The king died and the queen died in grief is a plot (because of the over shadowing cause of the queen's death).

Newhouse, N.H. (1966:59) sums up the definition of a plot by stating that: *plots should have beginnings, middles and ends* hence Thompson, A.R. (1946:129) gives the three essentials of a plot as: *the purpose that leads to the action, the conflict and the resolution* (All these are diagrammatically represented in Figure 3 and 4 above.)

2.9.13 Theme(s)

A play can have more than one theme as evidenced in Figure 6 above which depicts the themes found in Makhaulambilu, a translation of Julius Caesar by Nemudzivhadi, H.M.

Shroyer, F.B. and Gardemal, L.G. (1970:13) defines a theme (own paraphrasing) as an explicit or implicit statement which a work makes about its subjects; one or more themes often overlap.

Themes are therefore flexible depending on how one reads meaning into the play.

The most prevalent and preferred themes usually handled by African playwrights as Pretorius, W.J. and Swart, J.H.A. (1982:19) observed are:

related to the ... generation gap, the spiritual estrangement between parents and child in a changing world (and these include) the battle for the retention

of life values, the traditional concepts opposing modern concepts and social restructuring in modern society.

The theme of generation gap has been handled in many Luvenda plays such as Namusi, Muofhe, Hu do sala nnyi? and Zwo itwa.

2.9.14 Verisimilitude

A well rounded play must reflect an interrelationship of action, mileu and time because life is based on action which is time- and place-bound.

In Luvenda plays like Muofhe, Tshililo, Vhuhosi a vhu thetshelwi, Hu do sala nnyi?, Vho lu Fukula, Mposi, Vhamusanda Vho-Dzegere, Mabalanganye, Lukudavhavha and Zwo lungwa reflects how difficult it was for the playwrights to utilise the elements of time, action and place successfully, and unless the learners are made aware of the importance of these elements in any specific play by the teacher, the standard and quality of work in future will still lag behind.

2.9.15 Dialogue

Drama revolves around, and is anchored in dialogue. Many playwrights wrongly believe as Brooks, S C and Heilman, R B (1984:3) observed:

that a play consists of people talking to each other directly and that when this goes on long enough, we have a play.

Dialogue should not only be meticulously woven into the plot but should start the action and anticipate later events; it should be full of wisdom, intrigue and suspense; be pregnant with meaning and make a strong appeal to the emotions, and yet be brief and manageable.

Luvenda plays are characterised by long-winded dialogues, which reveal lack of planning or bearing the implications of the stage in mind.

2.9.16 Characterisation

The characters in a play must not only show relationships with each other but they should all have a role to perform and more importantly as Brooks, S.C. and Heilman, R.B. (ibid; p.28) remarked, playwrights should not lose: *sight of the main centre of action and thus get our attention focused on the wrong character* because this dismally discredits the otherwise good play.

An example which may be given in Luvenda is found in Hu do sala nnyi? (Who will be the heir?) where the problem of having an heir is focused on the main character's father, Mr Makhado, instead of Tshiwela whose wife bears only girls. Tshiwela, a teacher by profession and the only son to Mr Makhado, is married to Esitere (Esther) by Christian rites. Mr Makhado, a traditional man who still believes in traditional practices, is worried that in the event of his own and son's deaths, there will be nobody to inherit the family property because according to the Tshivenda tradition, it is only sons who become heirs.

Much against Tshiwela's wishes Mr Makhado marries him off to his cousin with the hope that she will bear him a son. Unfortunately Tshiwela is not interested. The author solves the problem of successor by allowing Ndileni (second wife) to be forced to leave and for Esitere to unconvincingly beget a baby in hospital leaving Tshiwela with the question as to what sex it is. Since the play took place within 22 days and it takes 9 months for a child to be born and in the absence of any reference to Esther's pregnancy since the play started, it is questionable how the child she begot could have been a baby boy.

Esther is known to bear girls only. This being the case does she have to bear a baby boy because there needs to be an heir?

If the problem had been focused on Tshiwela, the play would have been a thriller because its development, internal and external conflict, motorial moment, complication, tension and many other related elements, would have forced him (Tshiwela) to act and to quarrel with his wife until he was induced to look for a second wife. Then and only then would his parents come into the picture by supporting his move. This is where the playwright missed the point and this could be ascribed to the lack of exposure and know-how on stage drama on the part of the author himself; to such an extent that the problem and resolution are not convincingly addressed. (See also 3.2.6.4. below.)

The character and his actions should form an individual and distinct identity which reveals him to the audience without the playwright teaching them; hence Pretorius, W.J. and Swart, J.H.A. (op cit; p.23) says:

The dramatist cannot tell the audience how the character thinks or feels. The character only becomes known through what he/she says or through what other characters say about him/her.

Characters may conveniently be divided into:

◆ Protagonist

The character of a protagonist represents the positive or conservative element of life.

◆ Antagonist

An antagonist represents the negative, lawless element of life.

◆ Tritagonist

The tritagonist stands between the extremes. He is a go-between who usually complicates issues by exaggeration. He may also be a good negotiator who reconciles enemies or warring parties.

◆ **Rounded, flat or symbolic characters**

When a character is said to be flat it is not, as Souvage, Jacques (1965:83-84) has correctly observed: *to question its effectiveness as a character; (it is because) they are constructed around a single idea or quality.*

Abrahams, M.H. (1971:21) observes them as people who *can be described in a single phrase or sentence.*

They only help to harmonise themselves with their *fellow men ... so that the reader can identify himself with them because he appreciates their personality, attitude and, therefore, their relationships with one another, in other words the reader is able to sympathise with, or hate the character. (See Van der Poll, J.D.P. 1982:84).*

In Makhaulambilu a Julius Caesar they are many namely, the Soothsayer, Portia, Calphurnia, Artemidorus, Strato and others.

2.9.17 Style

The style in drama must be so good that it has such an effect on the readers and audience that it even influences their linguistic style and their way of thinking by enriching them in as far as their lifestyle goes as most of Shakespeare's works have done to modern man.

2.9.18 Stageability of drama

The purpose of writing drama is to provide actors or prospective actors with textual material for use when preparing the play for the stage in order to enact life in front of the audience and not as reading material for school use only. Reading a play should be followed by staging it in order to enjoy and appreciate it fully and so understand it better.

Drama therefore is intended to entertain both the players and the audience; and is being presented on the stage as its ultimate goal, hence Hauptfleisch, T (1983:1-3) says:

Die drama of toneel is seker een van die oudste vorme van vermaak wat die mens ken ... en dit is nie geskryf om ge lees te word nie, maar gesien en gehoor te word.

Free translation: (Drama or theatre is one of the oldest form of entertainment which man knows of and it is not written to be read but to be seen and to be heard).

Drama, therefore, say Day, C. and Norman, J. (1983:27) is a leisure pursuit which is *concerned with the transmission and exploitation of the best of the cultural heritage, which is expected to exert a powerfully civilizing influence (because) illegal behaviour in life can be avoided by the release of emotion through drama.*

It stands to reason therefore that if one wants to understand the process of theatrical experience one needs to go to a theatre because as Stayan, J.L. (1967:3) rightly observed:

words put on the stage assume a complexity of their own because they are the words written to be acted, seen and heard ... (he continues to say) the effect of the words in a play, and therefore of their value, is limited if they deny the resources of the stage or if they are not valid in terms of the theatre for which they are written.

Actually staging a play helps the reader, the audience and actor(s) to become initiated and interested in the characters of the play as if they were people of flesh and blood like those in real life.

It is therefore easy to see how drama encourages the development of an individual's personal resources of sensory, perception, intellect, concentration, memory, imagination, physical and verbal skills and emotional control, all of which are necessary for the full development of the whole human being. As a social activity, staging a play demands from its participants, group awareness or belonging and group sensitivity which leads to integration, recognition and acceptance by a wider society, because man is not created to fit into his community only, but to the wider community as a fully developed mature individual on whom other people can depend and rely upon.

The presentation of a play by learners helps them to get the feel of it and to make positive contributions to the social life of the school.

Drama therefore involves the whole person in the actual learning process because purposeful learning can only take place through total involvement, motivation, significance attribution, or giving meaning to the actual learning act, and self-realisation which in turn boosts the positive self-concept of the learner.

Drama can be used with success as a teaching aid and as a method of teaching to enable the learners to acquire more knowledge, to overcome stage fright, to gain confidence and to discover themselves and their abilities to the full. Aylen, Leo (1964:34) rightly observed that:

... if we wish to appreciate or understand them (plays) fully, we must perform them; there is no other way. (See pages 141 and 162 below.)

Through this exposition the Luvenda teacher will not only be provided with essential background information to enable him to handle any prescribed play effectively but it will also engender in him the interest and attitude required to view the teaching of drama seriously for the benefit of the learner.

2.10 Teaching Strategies

The teacher and the learners should always bear in mind that a good drama is written for the stage in order to entertain the audience and to be enjoyed by the actors and its producers by realising that they have not only succeeded in achieving the goal of entertainment but that they did so because of the precise mastery of their work.

In a learning situation the teacher should handle a prescribed play in such a way that the learners' interest is sharpened by giving a good reading model because reading aloud should in itself be a performance by giving it a dramatic effect.

The dramatic effect can be achieved if the teacher bears in mind that: *Shakespeare seems to have paid no attention to publication of his plays; he puts his energies into having them seen and heard and understood in the performance.* (Taplin, O. 1978:1).

In order to orient the learners to the fundamentals of drama the teacher should organise and prepare the learners to take part in the dramatic act by moving from the known to the unknown. (See item 2.5 above.) This he can achieve by using the following simple but effective strategies which will not only help to whet their appetite for drama but will serve to make them feel relaxed, motivated, challenged and ready to participate effectively:

2.10.1 Bringing the life situation into the learning situation

In the life situation, learners feel free when in the company of their peers. They mix easily, make jokes, engage themselves in reasoning, pose questions and provide answers, play tricks,

quarrel and are involved in mischief in order to experiment and to experience the effects thereof.

This is the type of experience which the teacher should make use of in the learning situation in order to capture their confidence and support, to derive meaning from the learning act and to influence the learners' positive self-concept.

a) Making jokes

Good teachers often make jokes in order to reinforce their lessons. Learners should be encouraged to make jokes. By so doing a collection of the best jokes for the day, week and month can be made and ultimately bound together yearly. As in life, a play without jokes, can be like a desert during a dry season. Indeed even tragic tension is often relieved with some humour provided by the clown or tester or fool.

b) Short narratives

Learners should be encouraged to tell short stories in a dramatic manner with a beginning, climax and ending. They should be pithy stories aimed at making people laugh or sympathise. A comic story is a recipe for a gay day and a memorable emotional lesson of all times.

c) Recapturing a quarrel

Learners should be encouraged to give an account of a quarrel they witnessed in a dialogue form and so enact what actually happened. Such an account will not only force them to select appropriate and thought provoking words (not profane language), but will cause those who listen to be emotionally involved and so afford them an experience of what it is like to be in such a conflict. These quarrels may be for example, between lovers, because of a mistaken identity, friends, a shopowner and

a customer, a worker and his boss or a teacher and a parent. Equipped with masks, make-ups and mimicry the germ for a farce, comedy and tragedy, to mention just a few, could germinate.

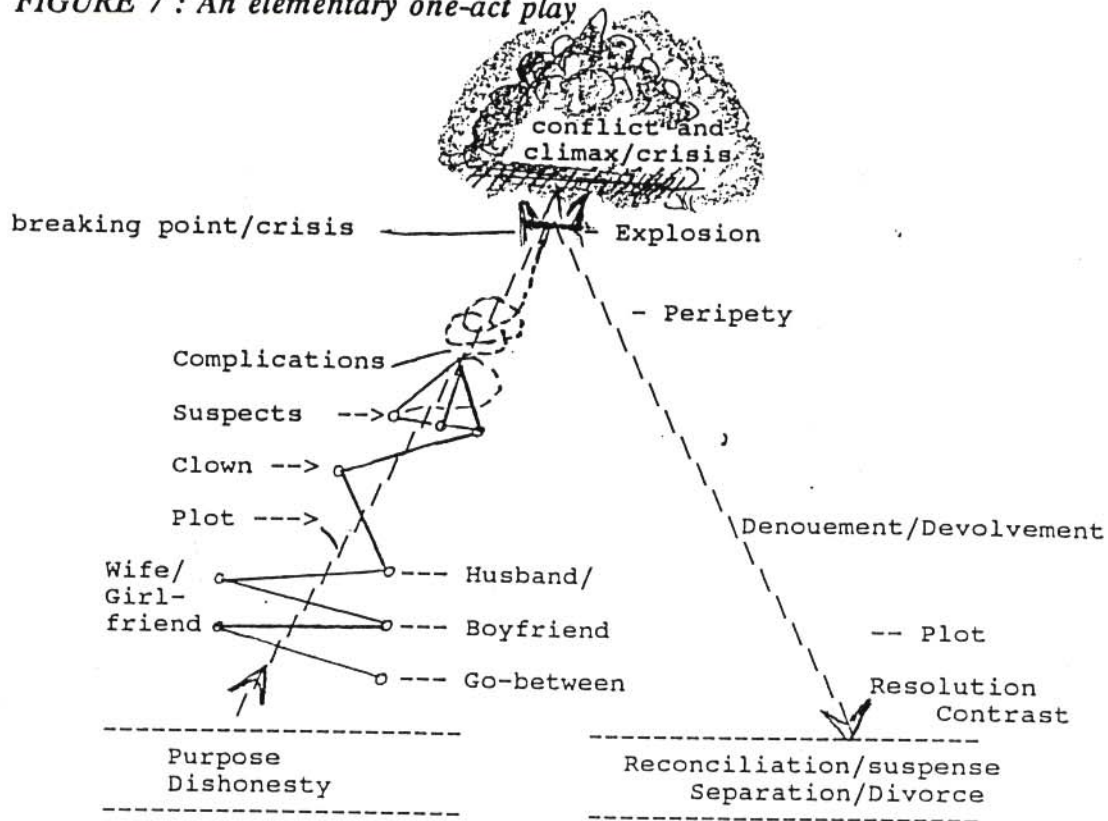
d) Elementary one-act play

Learners should be encouraged to dramatise incidents which took place over the weekend or the previous day for instance, misunderstanding between lovers. Without changing a scene induce one person to soliloquise or involve himself in mimesis.

A second person is introduced and the two are engaged in a meaningful and purposeful dialogue which develops and is complicated by internal and external conflict which is further exacerbated by involving a third person as a go-between (tritagonist). Characters appear on the stage alternately without themselves knowing about it. To the audience the scene remains the same with the actors coming and going and plotting against each other. Suspicion and prejudice can be created by implicating the first person (protagonist) with another person of the opposite sex in such a way that the partner (antagonist) feels jealous. Clown(s) should also be introduced to kindle the fire of jealousy, by ridicule.

This complication is built to a climax and physical or mental conflict, followed by denouement and resolution which could be separation, reconciliation or divorce in the case of a married couple. (See figure 7 below.)

FIGURE 7 : An elementary one-act play



All this could be done extempore with or without the teacher's guidance. As soon as this becomes manageable, the learners work in groups to reconstruct it and then stage it for the class. A collection of stageable sketches could be gradually compiled, typed and bound for future use as samples.

The learners are then introduced into handling their prescribed play using the various teaching and learning methods.

2.10.2 Reading a play in class

Handling a play in a learning situation, is done to address the life situation as it should be. The life situation therefore is a norm by which a play should be judged, and its stageability is based on the possibilities in the real life situation.

In order to enable the learners to discover the stageability of a play, the learners are made to act through reading aloud. This will train their eyes to see all the words and punctuations accurately so as to produce the correct dramatic significance. A depth of meaning is obtained by varying the tone of the voice to show happiness, anger and forgiveness and will change according to whether he is cautioning someone to be quiet, giving a sigh of relief or giving a command and whether he is addressing himself or other people.

Coupled with imagination, this type of reading helps the learner to create his own setting which for the sake of its meaningfulness should be true to life.

As O'Brien, Veronica (1982:2) observed, reading a play in a learning situation is necessary to help the learners:

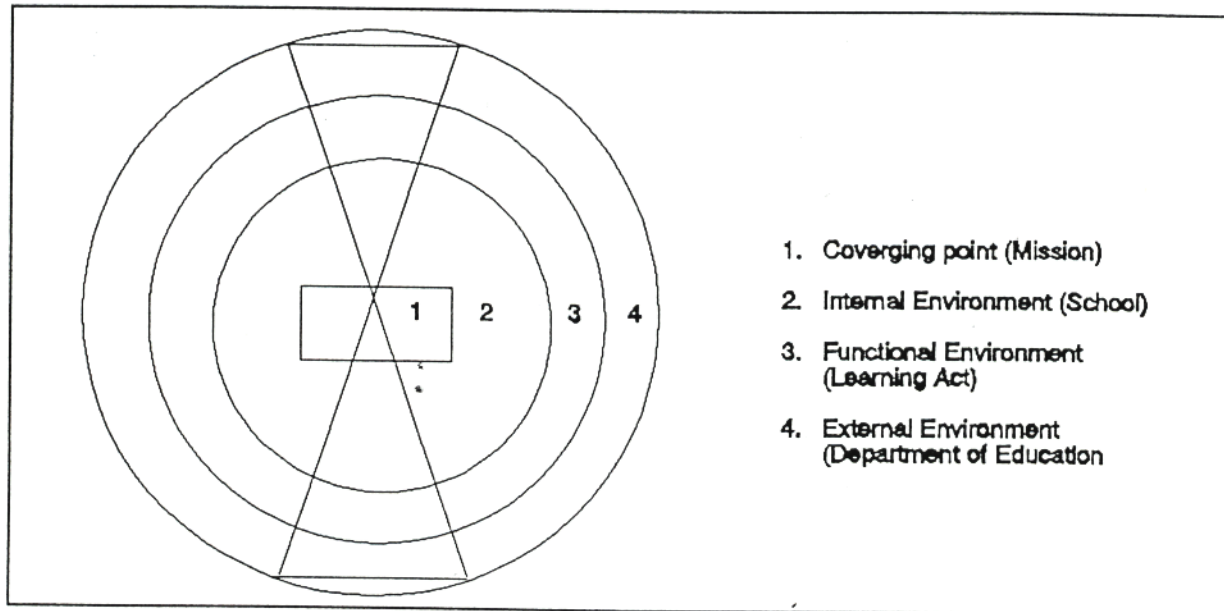
to watch a play they know with more attentiveness so that they see, hear and understand more. A television or videotape version should never precede an active classroom reading ... (because it) hinders rather than help efforts to develop the skill of inward seeing while the play is being read.

In order to stimulate and involve the learners in a successful learning act, the teacher should, according to Day, Christopher and Norman, John (1983:86) aim at (be):

- * *curriculum as a practice rather than curriculum as fact;*
- * *liberation rather than domestication;*
- * *interpretation rather than transmission;*
- * *open rather than closed;*
- * *integrative rather than dominative;*
- * *person-centred rather than production centred;*
- * *progressive rather than traditional; and*
- * *(stage oriented rather than examination oriented) in teaching drama.*

The drama teacher should be aware of the fact that the ultimate objective of any play should be the stage as an internal environment while other factors which operate beyond its control like writing a play for school consumption, form an external environment. Although the internal environment is unable to influence the external environment, it is interesting to note that the external environment determine the activities of the internal environment. An improvement can only be brought about by trying to reconcile the problems emanating from both environments.

FIGURE 8 : INFLUENTIAL AND FUNCTIONAL FORCES



The external environment dramatically influences the internal environment which hardly has any influence on it because it is entirely on the receiving end.

Change could be brought about if there is meaningful consultation and formal active mutual engagement between the interested elements namely:

- ~ External environment (Department of Education); and
- ~ Internal environment (Learning Situation or Schools i.e. Learners, teachers and subject matter). See Van Schalkwyk, O.J. (1982:80-113).

In order to derive the maximum educational benefit, the ideals of the school and the Department of Education may only be realised if both interested bodies are conscientiously geared toward the attainment of the humanly possible normative goal by making use of the strategic planning process which is an ongoing and integrated process in which the different steps are consequentially result or goal oriented namely:

- formulation of a mission - the purpose of writing such a play;
- formulation of the objective - the attainment of a moral lesson;
- analysis of the external environment - the impact such a play will have to the public;
- analysis of the institution's resources - satisfying the requirements of the syllabus and its general and specific objectives;
- the selection of the correct strategy - how drama should be written, produced and examined;
- implementation of the strategy - recommendation on how drama can be written, produced and examined in order to bring about innovation and change; and
- control of the devised strategy to determine its relevance in helping the learner to unfold his potential, to full capacity.

a) Formulating the mission

The Department of Education should formulate its mission on the teaching of drama as a genre in general, as a direction which may be changed to suite its needs and that of the communities it serves as circumstances dictate.

b) Formulating the objectives

The global mission or direction of the existence of drama (that is, staging and examination on a prescribed play) can now be converted into specific objectives which also becomes the point of departure for the strategic planning.

c) Analysis of the external environment

This is the third step in strategic planning process and it occurs simultaneously with the formulation of the mission and the objectives because the formulation of objectives (why drama should be taught in schools) can only be handled if the environment in which the department operates, is known and so be in a position to determine aspects of the department which offers opportunities (after or) threatens the achievement of the desired goal.

d) Analysis of resources

This fourth step is interrelated with step (b) and (c) above, and is used to determine the department's strong (manpower, special knowledge of abilities, skills and experience of teachers; learners and parents) and weak points such as financial resources to put up theatres or production of poor plays by playwrights.

e) Performance analysis

This fifth step determines whether the old strategy, namely, the way drama is presently presented to the learners, is still suitable for reaching the goal e.g. developing the performance skills of the learner through stage drama, or not.

At present drama has been included in the syllabus with a view to testing the learner's recall of events in the examination.

In a progressive situation, the strategy, to examine only, needs to change or reviewed in order to include performance as well because drama is essentially written for the stage.

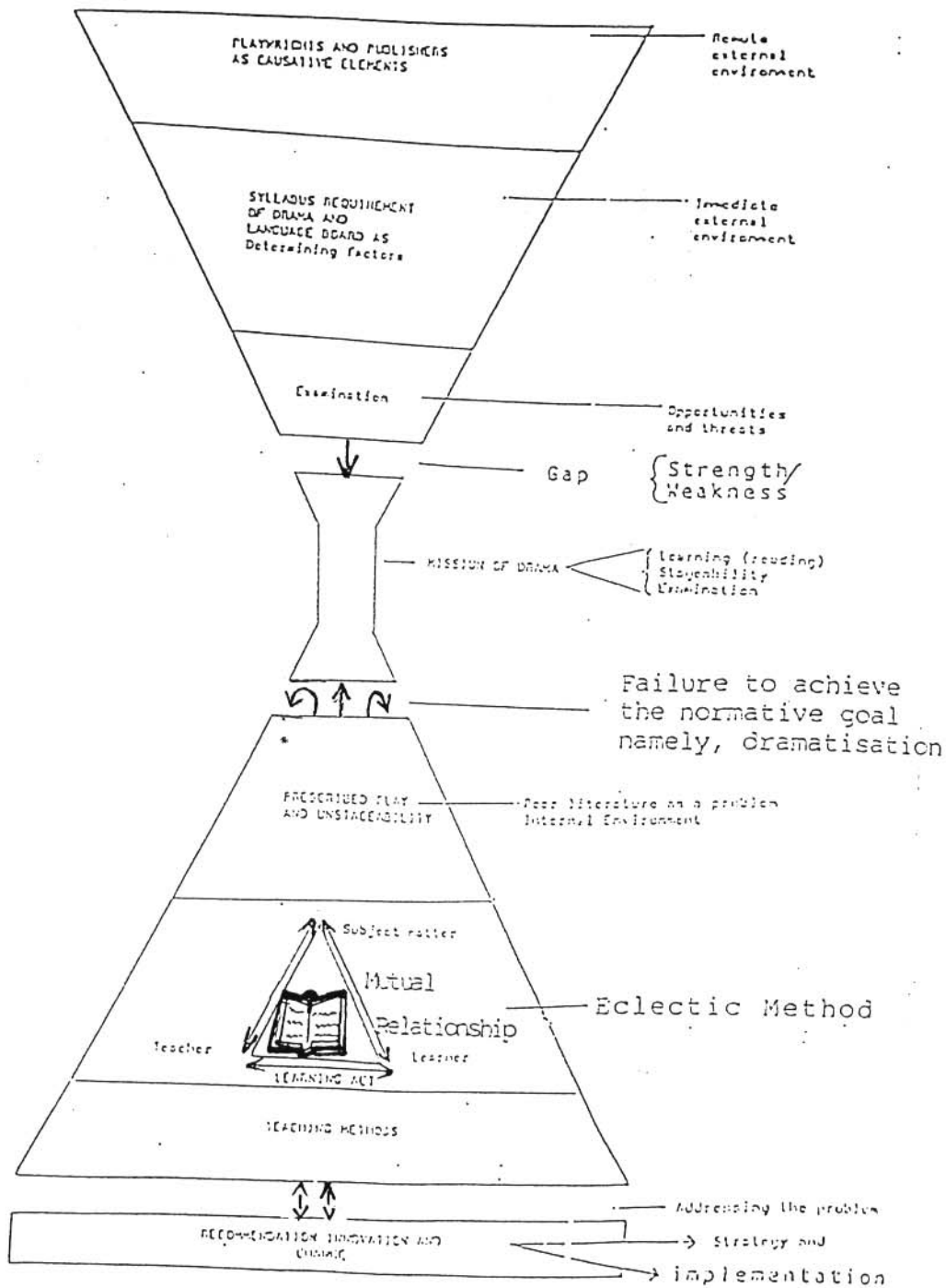
f) Selecting a strategy

In order to bridge the performance gap, new ideas should be worked into the whole system i.e. the syllabus, by making use of the recommendations made in order to achieve the goal for which it is written.

g) Implementing the strategy

If the Department decides to prescribe stageable plays, it should also encourage learners to stage such plays, through local and national competitions and through examinations and so develop the physical, linguistic, social, aesthetical, juridical, ethical, economical, psychical and pistical aspects of the learner. This could be the logical thing to do in order to develop the whole person and not just part of his being. (See figure 9 below.) ;

FIGURE 9 : EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL INFLUENCES IN THE LEARNING SITUATION



h) Controlling the strategy

The Department could exercise control by indicating in the syllabus that only stageable and not closet plays, should be prescribed. This could help to bring about innovation and change in the teaching of drama in black schools in a more pragmatic manner and by so doing pose a challenge to playwrights to produce stageable plays only ... all to the benefit of the learner.

In Luvenda the mission of drama is unattainable because the prescribed plays are largely unstageable. The ultimate goal or objective of drama is therefore interfered with by the exclusion of stageability as a criterion.

The ideal of writing an examination on a prescribed play has shifted the original aim of writing a play, that is primarily for the stage, to writing it basically for school consumption.

Prescribing a play for examination purposes only may be viewed as one of the reasons why Luvenda dramas are not fit for the stage. This requirement caused the early playwrights to continue their poor dramatic style and so lower the standard of play writing at the expense of the learners. This wrong approach succeeded only in denying the learners the opportunity to discover themselves and their abilities through actual performance. (See item 2.5 to 2.9 above.)

Although the publishers gain materially, they could still gain more if they could encourage authors to write for the stage. This positive approach could also increase the readership enormously and could also revive the fame that stage drama used to enjoy in the past and provide learners with good reading, staging and examination material.

This approach could be one way of trying to bridge the gap between the external (authors, publishing houses, the requirements of the syllabus) and the internal environments that is, the school or teachers, learners and the subject matter by working out an educational principle

that is aimed at developing the child in full and not just part of his being namely, the intellect.

It is not surprising therefore to hear Kaiser M Nyatsumba¹⁹ (1990:37), writing of the black American poet Langston Hughes, saying:

the best plays, novels and poems about blacks were still written by whites (in America ... The same can be said of South Africa, where the best known works - some of which have gone on to become classics ... (about blacks) ... and some of the plays shown on TV2/3 are written by whites.)

This understandably means that while whites have been taught how to write prose, blacks had to fend for themselves, hence the low standard of writing. This poor standard of writing, appears to have been adopted as a model since it is accepted by the manuscript readers who for various reasons, approve such manuscripts for publication. Because of the shortage of suitable literature in black schools, such manuscripts are prescribed by the Language Board to satisfy the requirement of the syllabus and ultimately lands in the learning situation, whereupon the learners and the teacher are faced with multifaceted problems of handling such a play(s).

These problems are normally circumvented by answering only one of them, namely the examination, while the stageability of such a play, remains untested and thus perpetuate the possibility of producing future poor playwrights.

It is for this reason that Banning, Yvonne in an article "Teaching Drama: A world of many wonders" appearing in UNISA English Studies edited by Kossick, S.G. Vol. xxviii, No.1, (1990:61) says:

¹⁹ Nyatsumba, K.M. Stepping into Future: Whither Black South African Literature? UNISA English Studies. Journal of the Department of English Vol. xxviii, No.1, April 1990.

Teaching drama both in and outside formal educational institutions is a notoriously under-theorised and peripheral activity ... Equally, objective testing of the degree to which learning has been successful leaves drama teachers and students alike with an uneasy sense that the results do not match the range and qualitative experience of the events in the drama class. Hence there is often a tendency for drama teachers to resort to defensive generalizing and mystifying as to what precisely it is that they do and what educational value may be ascribed to these activities (without ultimately realising the play on the stage).

Innovation and change could be brought about if the decision-makers could go back to the original requirement of drama. This could reduce the conflicting objectives between the internal and external environment and so reduce the destructive effect of the causative elements prevalent in the remote environment as indicated by figure 9 above.

The reduction of this cause could be made through mutual co-operation, consultation, communication and active engagement by all the interested bodies for the benefit of the learner who should be the future responsible and knowledgeable adult, as suggested in Chapter 5 of this study because education through active participation maketh a man hence the ancient proverb says:

I hear, I forget,
I see, I remember,
I do, I understand.

(By hearing and seeing,
remembering, is forestalled.
By action, retention is reinforced and
knowledge thus acquired.

Learning is doing.
Doing is learning
and so is drama.)

(See Burbridge, P.A.V.S. and Watts, M. 1984:1)

Here lies one of the differences between white and black education, because while white education is comprised of both theory and practice, black education does not always have this essential balance, mainly because historically the latter has always been under-resourced in terms of materials that promote practical work in teaching.

Limitations notwithstanding, to attain the ultimate goal in the teaching of drama, playwrights should endeavour to make use of the stage to mirror the activities of life through drama. As Schipper, Mineke (1982:1) puts it:

the world is a stage and the theatre the mirror of the world.

The activities of the world can be mirrored on the stage by the learners under the guidance of a good teacher by enacting the events of the play. This is why Boulton, Marjorie (1987:195) says:

Acting or play-reading increases their (learners) poise and self-confidence, it stimulate intelligence and aids the development of such social virtues as co-operation, helpfulness and responsibility; it improves the voice and therefore makes it easier for the student to be articulate and fluent in conversation

It will therefore be relevant to capture this inherent gift to man, by God to act out life in a learning situation, in order to ensure progress, stability and successful learning, to take place.

CHAPTER 3 : THE DESCRIPTION OF THE METHOD OF SAMPLING RESEARCH DATA ON THE TEACHING OF LUVENDA DRAMA TO SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 gives an overview of drama (including Luvenda drama) as a genre in literature especially in the context of the secondary school. Chapter 3 and 4 describe in some detail research data sampled empirically for this study. Chapter 3 describes findings obtained mainly from oral elicitation of data with some supportive comments. Chapter 4 analysis, interpretes and comments on questionnaire-based research data sampled from the target-group of teachers.

3.2 Research method for Sampling Data

In this study research data was sampled by means of a questionnaire to teachers and by oral elicitation of data from elders, members of the Language Board, playwrights, learners and principals.

Since the information collected, its analysis and interpretation concerns individuals and their schools, the researcher has decided to protect his research target groups from whatever consequences the finding of the study may have. Names have therefore been avoided and symbols have been used instead. The researcher is convinced that this approach will in no way affect the quality and authenticity of the study. Instead, it will heighten candid comment on research data.

Furthermore, the corpus data was collected personally. The researcher also collected valuable recorded data by oral elicitation from the target group conducting ancestral worship, and the Domba dance. The additional data was carefully noted and subsequently built into the study under relevant sections in Chapter 2 above.

3.2.1 The questionnaire

The questionnaire used consisted of fifteen items. The aim of the questionnaire was to obtain specific data on the teacher's qualifications, his point of view regarding drama, interest and learner interest in the following itemised form:

The teacher-respondent was required to indicate:

- * his academic qualifications;
- * his professional qualifications;
- * his home language;
- * when he started teaching;
- * whether his school had a school hall or not. If so he had to answer item 6 of the questionnaire;
- * for which purpose the school hall was utilised namely, morning devotion, debate, staging drama, eisteddfod or any other purpose which he had to specify;
- * whether the school had established a dramatic society or not;
- * whether the learners were naturally interested in drama or not;
- * whether he had received any substantial training in drama production at secondary, college or university;
- * at which level of learning he would prefer the teaching of drama to be introduced;
- * on the basis of the fundamental statement: "A play is written for the stage," whether there are any plays in Luvenḁa which satisfy this requirement;
- * whether he considered Luvenḁa plays suitable only for examination purposes or not;

- * which aspects of drama does he find easy or difficult to teach;²⁰
- * whether dramatised novels are preferred to Luvenda plays.
- * whether there are any novels which have been successfully dramatised.

3.2.2 How the questionnaire was administered

The questionnaire was administered personally, ie. the research data was collected personally. Fifty Luvenda subject-teachers of standards 6 - 10 were cross sectionally sampled from six out of the ten school circuits found in Venda. Four schools were situated in traditional areas (rural), four in the semi-urban (rurban area) while the last two schools were situated in the urban area.

The reasons for preferring the personal approach may be stated here as follows:

- 3.2.2.1 to ensure that all the questionnaires were completed and returned to the researcher at every sitting: to avoid them ending up in a waste-paper basket;
- 3.2.2.2 to clear up quickly, without influencing the teacher-respondents, any technical problem encountered concerning the filling-in of the questionnaire;
- 3.2.2.3 to reassure respondents about the confidentiality of their answers, which would be used for research purposes only. This helped to dispel the attitude of trying to please or help the researcher rather than to be objective and unbiased;

²⁰ This question helps to unveil the problems which the teacher-respondent had problems in, inducing him to teach only the story or leaving the learners to read on their own without any guidance except to use previous examination question papers as a means to an end.

3.2.2.4 to indicate to the respondents the importance of research of this kind in teaching Luvença drama in particular and education in general; and

3.2.2.5 by direct supervision the researcher ensured that teachers responded as individuals without receiving any assistance from their colleagues. This was made possible because the researcher was provided with either a class, the Domestic Science centre or the staff room for use during the exercise.

3.2.3 Possible Limitations

No research can be conducted without possible limitations no matter how ideal and favourable the conditions may be because there is always a human element. Possible limitations, besides those already highlighted in Chapter 1, are the following:

3.2.3.1 Some teacher-respondents could have filled in responses they believe would please the researcher. It is hoped that this tendency was lessened by item 3.2.2.3 above and because:

- ~ they were not expected to reflect their names anywhere on the questionnaire.
- ~ the researcher explicitly stated in the instructions that the responses should be unbiased in order to produce genuine results.

3.2.3.2 Depending on the capability of the individual, the time allocated for answering the questionnaire could have been too short or too long even though no complaint was made in this regard. It would, however, make no difference if too long a time was given.

3.2.3.3 No teacher would like to be underrated and as a result respondents could have avoided supplying 'no' or 'uncertain' as the answer, even if true or

could have even high-rated their abilities but this would have been counteracted by the specific and general objective the researcher hoped to achieve, namely to assist the teacher and enable the learner in a didactic situation and to enable the community to derive some benefit therefrom.

3.2.3.4 The researcher could have influenced the responses of the testees by possibly explicating what could have been viewed as obvious but this limitation is believed to have been taken care of by handling only those issues which required some clarification.

3.2.3.5 Another human element is that of failing to see the value of answering a questionnaire because its purpose seems unclear except as an interference in the teacher's daily activities. In such a case, answering it becomes only a formality instead of a necessity. It is believed that this possible limitation could have been controlled by the researcher's active engagement, and the teachers' eagerness to correct the status quo in the teaching of drama.

3.2.4 Oral Elicitation of Data

The researcher gained a lot of valuable information by engaging his research subjects in a general but purposeful discussion on traditional drama with the elders of the community, some of whom were members of the school committees and/or members of the tribal khoro (council) and by discussing traditional and modern drama with teachers, learners, principals, playwrights and members of the Language Board.

After administering the questionnaire the researcher then engaged the teachers in about 30 minutes of discussion on drama in general, how to present it and what should be done concerning staging it.

After this engagement the researcher together with the subject-teacher involved the standard 10 learners in a similar but less involved discussion on how they could best handle their prescribed play, namely MAKUYA, T.N. (1974) : Hu do sala nnyi? (Who will be the heir?).

Thereafter the researcher interviewed the Headmasters and recorded their responses using a cassette recorder.

Elders, playwrights, and members of the Language Board were interviewed on separate occasions with or without appointments on Sunday morning after a tribal council meeting or at their homes in the afternoon.

Similarities in some of the responses will be reflected for the purpose of endorsement and confirmation of their validity, and should not be regarded as redundant. Most of this information has been weaved into some parts in Chapter 2 dealing with traditional beliefs.

3.2.5 Oral information from the subject teachers

These were the teachers of Luvenda who were also responsible for the teaching of Luvenda drama. The onus of teaching and staging Luvenda plays in schools, in the final analysis, rested in the hands of these teachers.

3.2.5.1 100% of the respondents in rural, urban and semi-urban schools found the handling of modern Luvenda plays very difficult because many characters are involved, the stories lack the necessary dramatic punch and intrigue, they lack active physical conflict (except that between the youth and traditional culture as already indicated above) and are unstageable because of sudden changes in milieu and the handling of unstageable issues.

- 3.2.5.2 Most respondents found it difficult to classify Luvenda plays according to their types except that, as closet plays, they could only be utilised for class use. There are however a few tragedies and problem plays.
- 3.2.5.3 The respondents pointed out that they only handle Luvenda plays because they are prescribed for examination purposes and not because they like them. Luvenda plays only satisfy the language element and not the dramatic element. A good play needs to satisfy both elements.
- 3.2.5.4 The teacher-respondents were unhappy about the obvious lack of a Luvenda Handbook on Literature and the lack of articles on drama in popular journals like Educamus, Mvelaphanda and circulars of the Department of Education. (See Chapter 1, Item 1.1 above).
- 3.2.5.5 The teacher-respondents were not happy about the reports compiled by the examiners as they are too general and too skeletal to guide them adequately. Some claimed not to have seen or read any examination report. (See item 5.2.4 below).
- 3.2.5.6 All fifty respondents considered that the Language Board should include matric language teachers or Departmental-heads (that is, one of each of the 10 circuits as a representative of his own circuit language committee) so that they could be involved in the prescription of books and not to be represented by inspectors who never report to them. Teachers should be involved in one way or another on issues affecting them instead of having other people who are less connected with class work (e.g. ministers of religion), deciding on their behalf. Viewed in a wider context, this lack of direct representation of teachers on bodies concerned with matters educational, could be one of the reasons why school unrests seem impossible to control with pupils seemingly ready to sacrifice their future

by disrupting their education and this with the broad sympathy of many teachers.

3.2.5.7 All fifty respondents said that although the language used in the plays may be good, they are difficult to follow because the playwrights use fictitious names of people and places together with well-known names.

3.2.5.8 The teachers in rural areas claimed that they were teaching a subject they were not qualified for because well qualified teachers have since Independence (1979), either been absorbed by the Government or been promoted to head schools or as inspectors of schools. Some respondents from semi-urban areas were, however, improving their academic qualifications with the University of Venda as part-time students.

3.2.5.9 Some of the respondents claimed that their students stage their own dramatic sketches based on novels or of their own making to entertain their parents during the school-leaver's end-of-year party.

3.2.5.10 None of the schools represented in the research project have dramatic associations nor do they plan to have school museums. This has a deleterious effect from a language education point of view because it becomes a wedge between the past, present and the future.

3.2.5.11 All fifty teacher-respondents evaluated the progress of their learners by means of class work, written tasks and monthly and quarterly tests as part of literature basing their questions on previous external examination question papers.

3.2.5.12 Although most of the schools did not have halls, the use of an open-air theatre for staging drama as they do for soccer, boxing and dancing, was

seen as a possible solution to the problem, should a need arise to stage a play.

3.2.5.13 The respondents said that for a prospective author to have his manuscript approved for publication is very difficult because the readers appointed by the Publishing houses write very destructive reports to discourage them by disapproving their work for publication. The publishers often accept such reports without verification or giving the author an opportunity to defend himself.

3.2.6 Oral information from learners

After every interview with the teachers the researcher visited a standard 10 class in the company of the subject-teacher and/or departmental head or principal who introduced the researcher in order to create a conducive atmosphere for participation by the learners. From each school a sample of 30 learners were interviewed, making a total of 300.²¹

3.2.6.1 All the learner respondents emphatically confirmed that they enjoy drama to such an extent that they stage sketches portraying the life situation in their school during the end-of-year concert to amuse their parents and teachers.

3.2.6.2 A good number of learners living in rural and rural or semi-urban areas enjoy radio plays very much while the remaining group in urban areas are so fond of television drama screened on TV1 and CCV to such an extent

²¹ In many schools in Venda, although it could be claimed nowadays that the teacher-pupil ratio has improved, there are lately more learners in matric than in the past because of pupil explosion and the reduction of bottle-necks. There are no fewer than 3 to 4 or more matric classes per school nowadays, with each class having no fewer than 30 to 35 learners, hence there are many school leavers in the streets looking for work.

that it often becomes very difficult for them to find enough time to study regularly. Sometimes even parental intervention, especially in broken families, does not always help.

3.2.6.3 All the learner-respondents agreed that if they could be afforded an opportunity by their teachers to dramatise, they would not hesitate to take part because drama is a challenging art with many opportunities.

3.2.6.4 While all the learner-respondents agreed that their prescribed play namely, Hu do sala nnyi? portrays a conflict between modern and traditional life and belief, they differ in the analysis of the play in this fashion:

* Learners in rural and semi-urban areas had difficulties in understanding the play and its purpose because Luvenda literature is left to them to handle while the teachers utilise the two periods per week set aside for literature to handle language study in which they also have many problems.

* Some learners believed that the aim of reading literature and drama in particular was to remember the story in order to answer questions in the examination. They saw no reason for pursuing Luvenda after completing matric.

* Learners in the urban areas unveiled a very interesting analysis of the play. They pointed out that although the playwright identifies the theme, he fails to present it convincingly because he:

~ centres the problem of the lack of an heir who, according to the Tshivenda tradition should be a boy, in the main character's father Mr Makhado instead of Tshiwela. Esther, Tshiwela's

wife is blessed with four girls already. This problem worries Mr Makhado who because he is well-to-do, and has only one son, wants to see a grandson born in the family before he dies. This state of affairs does not bother his son Tshiwela, who, as a Christian and teacher, is satisfied with what God has blessed him with. Centring the problem in the wrong character reduces the would-be dynamic action which could have been unleashed by the main character, to zero action to the author's discredit. This explains the reason why Tshiwela is not interested in the second wife whom his father marries to him secretly so that she (Ndileni) could possibly bear him a baby boy who would be the heir.

~ he further fails to convince his readership by trying to induce them to accept that Esther's new baby could be a boy since there is no single incident in the play that the learner could use to support such a possibility because the play covers only 22 days whereas it takes 9 months before a child is born, because no mention is made in the play of Esther's pregnancy and because Esther has so far given birth to girls only, the question of a baby boy coming because there is a problem, is very unlikely and cannot be justified in terms of reference.

Even if all other facts about her pregnancy were given, the likelihood of a baby boy would also be difficult to justify unless it is made to try and prove Mr Makhado wrong and to justify a moral lesson that the good always overpowers the evil because the chances of any baby's being a particular sex are 50:50, irrespective of the sexes of older siblings, just as if, you repeatedly toss a coin, you may get a run of 5 or 6 heads

consecutively, but in the end the proportion of heads to tails will be 50:50.²² That a baby boy or girl is born, where there is one sex dominating, is besides the point, the problem lies with the author's plot. This is a problem play which does not take long to solve. The ideology of one man one wife (Christian ideology) is becoming a problem to many Africans who, nowadays, seem to resort to the African tradition and ideology of one man, many wives (polygamous ideology).

Despite its good theme, it can neither be staged nor adapted for the radio with success because of its rather long winded dialogues, poor verisimilitude and lack of dramatic impact (See asterisk under item 5.2.1 below).

3.2.6.5 The learner-respondents in rural schools took part in all the traditional activities (drama) like Domba dance, tshikona, matangwa, givha, visa (flute) music, initiation schools, ancestral worshipping, dancing and belief in medicine men, witchcraft and belief in the practice of voodooism and zombiism.

Their knowledge and belief in the traditional treasure should not be ignored or underplayed in the learning situation as it could help in shedding light on many unresolved mysteries. Answers to many unresolved issues could surface if the learners are made to participate actively in the learning act by collecting items relevant to their play for the school museum, by compiling reports, suggesting or providing clues to the problems and by giving prizes to the best students. Collected items could be used for stage

²² This type of literary appreciation could be attributed to the fact that well qualified teachers prefer to work in urban areas while the less qualified and problem teachers are relegated to rural areas.

decor, costuming, improvisations, as musical instruments and final casting or could serve as models on which new items could be designed and utilised. This type of involvement could help revive African drama.

3.2.7 Oral information from School Principals

3.2.7.1 All ten principals agreed that drama is a very effective teaching aid and teaching method (see item 2.5 above) because it helps the learners to master their school work as a group and as individuals. Between them, as a research target group, the principals feel that drama improves co-operation, communication skills, co-ordination, socialising, originality, creativity, planning, leadership, language skills, retentive mind, good performance, confidence, positive self-concept and transfer of knowledge. The correct use of drama not only improve self-discipline, but teaches the learner to be independent, to endure, to be determined, to be goal directed and to help in improving school results dramatically.

3.2.7.2 In some schools, principals indicated that their school halls are used for eisteddfod competitions, ceremonial occasions, as examination centres, morning devotions, debates and film shows.²³

A good number of principals said that because of the interest shown by the students in drama, they encouraged them to form drama societies. These societies, however, rarely go beyond the initial stages not because of lack of interest or enthusiasm, but because of lack of expertise: schools simply do not have teachers trained in drama and drama production, to cash-in on the learners' natural interest in drama.

²³ Magnificent halls or auditoria with all the facilities required for staging drama, but used for graduation ceremonies only are found in every university and college of education. It is here that not a single dramatic society or school of drama exists, hence the perpetual lack of dramatic societies at schools.

3.2.7.3

All principals agreed about the importance of drama in education and stated the following:

- * Learners who participate in drama tend to obtain higher marks in the examination probably because drama improves mental retention capabilities.
- * Such learners usually become powerful public speakers and debaters who have control over emotions and stage fright.
- * They are able to quote freely, effectively and relevantly.
- * There should be specialisation in drama just as much as there is specialisation in the teaching of music and physical education which, if combined with drama, could be a motivating force to keep the students busy, away from the streets and mischief after school hours.
- * Staging drama not only helps in socialising the learner and developing his personality, but in enhancing his interest in learning and good self-discipline.
- * Drama competitions should be graded to cover all the classes and grades from primary level in order to engender progress, foster the spirit of continuity and relate to their social life.
- * The fact that most Vhavenda playwrights do not (because of lack of training) write for the stage has so retarded progress and interest in drama that drama is now believed to be written for school consumption and examination only.

- * Due to the shortage of well qualified teachers because of the upward mobility in education shortly before and after independence (1979) unqualified teachers have had to be deployed in the teaching of Luvenda in junior and sometimes senior classes in the hope that learners will make the best of it.
- * After sitting an examination in Luvenda literature, candidates often leave their books behind, the reason given being that they no longer need them, but this is not the case with English or Afrikaans literature. This could be a sign of rejection and dissatisfaction by action of the quality of work produced by authors, because unless they are prescribed, the students do not purchase Luvenda literature in order to read or build up their own library collection as they do with second languages and other content subjects.
- * Once an author starts off poorly, chances for him to improve the quality of his work are very slim and the people to carry the burden are the teachers and the learners.
- * The tendency of authors to produce school readers only, neglecting the history of the Vhavenda and their tradition and the reluctance by publishing houses to publish such manuscripts on the basis of lack of market could only be solved by the use of the Government printers to instill pride in the minds of the youth about their tradition because a nation that does not write about its tradition and aspirations will perish, and as a result drama will fail to probe deep into the past.

3.2.8 Oral information from playwrights

Five prominent Vhavenda playwrights were interviewed and commented as follows:

- 3.2.8.1 The Luvenda language is still far from producing a play that can be staged with success. Teachers make use of dramatised novels like Elelwani and A SI ENE. These novels were successfully staged by students from various schools in Venda in the late seventies. Competitions were arranged by the now defunct Birou ya Tshivenda (The Tshivenda Tradition Bureau).²⁴
- 3.2.8.2 The early playwrights wrote plays in order to boost the standard of language and to fulfil the requirements of the syllabus (see Muloiwa, T.M. in Chapter 2) and not essentially for the stage because they did not have the necessary training. The anomaly could best be corrected by the introduction of drama schools at colleges and universities, so that the knowledge so gained could be ploughed back into the community by producing plays that are intended for the stage.
- 3.2.8.3 The difficulties encountered with the publishers with their unnecessary restrictions and delay in publishing manuscripts by up to five years or more, has induced one lecturer to make a breakthrough by publishing his own books. This is however not a method that could be deployed by everybody as it is expensive.
- 3.2.8.4 They feel the need of establishing an association of authors which could help to address problems facing them and to aim at producing literature of quality and not quantity, and so reach a wider community through translation.
- 3.2.9 Oral information from the Language Board

²⁴ The researcher then in the capacity of a teacher, produced and twice led a team of players to these competitions, before they were discontinued.

The Venda Language Board was formed in 1978, and one of its functions is to make recommendations of prescribed books in the (Venda) Luvenda language for all departmental examinations as well as for the Joint Matriculation Board to the Central Books Committee of the Department of Education and Training. (See constitution for the Language Board item 3.8 of 1978.)

There are very few authors serving as members of the Language Board, most of whom come from various institutions and by virtue of the positions they hold there, they proofread and approve or disapprove manuscripts for publication. The Language Boards have the power to prescribe literature for use in schools but the Venda Language Board only recommends. This restriction is unknown to other African languages like Northern Sotho. The Northern Sotho Language Board prescribes literature for use in schools and as a result, it exercises the full powers vested in it. The advantage in this is that once it prescribes literature no changes can be effected yet the possibility could exist in the case where recommendations are made.

3.2.9.1 The respondents reported that the Board has not as yet thought of working out a questionnaire to tap information from schools about the quality, standard and type of literature they recommend for use by the learners.

3.2.9.2 Since there are very few dramas in circulation, the Board screens a play and classifies it for use by a particular class on the basis of comprehension and then recommends it for use without considering its stageability or dramatic impact.

3.2.10 Oral information from the Community elders

It soon came to light during this research on traditional drama that there is still a lot of untapped and valuable information about the Vhavenḁa that needs to be recorded before the elders take it with them to their graves. (See also Chapter 2 above.)

While traditional drama, religion, music, the institution of initiation schools and traditional structures were discouraged by missionaries these practices flourished and continued unabated in rural tribal areas.

As one who grew up in a traditional society and went through the different initiation schools, and as a regular member of the tribal council, the researcher could openly enter into deliberations with members of the community. The researcher interviewed no fewer than 100 elders of both sexes from five different communities on different occasions and the following comments are relevant although most of the findings still require a lot of indepth research by researchers from other fields of study.

3.2.10.1 All the respondents said that what the Vhavenḁa believe in, is more profound than it appears to be at face value, because ancestral worship appears in various forms in various nations, in a direct or disguised form. They attain great importance to all the drama that goes with the various forms of ancestral worship and feel that this should be passed on to the younger generation as a legacy of the Vhavenḁa as a people.

3.2.10.2 The respondents said that initiation schools were the only educational structures used in the past (and in the present in rural areas) to prepare a youth to accept disciplined responsibilities when he reaches adulthood where conformity, patriotism and self-identification play a most important role. They see all the ceremonies that make up the initiation schools as an important component of the educative process that the youth must go through.

3.2.10.3 The respondents said that traditional music is as important as the throbbing heart of the nation. The action; the drama, are all part of this God-given activity to virgorously and dramatically act out life.

3.2.10.4 They enjoy and cherish traditional drama and music - the action; the doing: whether it be in a form of rituals accompanying ancestral worship, stages in the initiation schools, festivities or even youthful games such as ndode, tshimee, mutoga, mapfatshane, mufuvha, tshifasi (tshinzerere) or mavili, nzambo, tshigombela, malende, nanga, bune (tshiswathe), u zwima, u ra notshi, u bambela, mahundwane, u dia thulwi, u fhufha nzambo, u dia khororo (the Tshivenda traditional hockey) u vhiedza mbelesa, u imba zwidade, u ita ngano, thai, khube, u tamba dembentiti na u gidimisa tshikurukuru. The community elders observe drama and the life-style of the Vhavenda with one eye-sweep.

3.3 Conclusion

The objective of elicitation of data through questions and recordings was to assess the relevance and importance of drama at school and in life and what impact it could have if it is staged by the learners and observed by the community, whose life is ready to respond to it positively as an educative and entertaining force, through which tradition can be nurtured.

Only research data collected by means of the questionnaire will be analysed in detail in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4 : A DETAILED ANALYSIS , INTERPRETATION AND COMMENT ON RESEARCH DATA FROM TEACHER RESPONDENTS

4.1 Introduction

The specific objective of this chapter is to analyse in detail and to interpret and comment on the research data sampled on the teaching of Luvenda drama to senior secondary school learners in urban, semi-urban and rural areas of Venda.

The data was sampled from ten schools, four rural, four semi-urban and two urban areas. Fifty teacher respondents were covered, 48 males and 2 females, one of whom was in a semi-urban school, the other in an urban school.

The rural school was characterised by a majority of unqualified or ill-qualified and inexperienced teachers while better qualified and productive teachers were mostly found in semi-urban and urban areas.

4.2 Analysis and Interpretation of the Questionnaire

The analysis and interpretation of the questionnaire has, for easier access, been itemised, and could with advantage be compared with the sub-items of 3.2.1 above.

Since most of the facts are self-explanatory and self-evident, the researcher resolved to dwell more on the interpretation of data.

Item 1 : State your highest academic qualification.

TABLE 1 : INDICATION OF ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

	Respondents	Sex	Matric Std 10	Undergraduate B.A. I - II	B.A. III B.Paed	B.A.
URBAN	10	M	4	5		
		F			1	
SEMI- URBAN (RURBAN)	20	M	17	2		
		F				1
RURAL	20	M	20			
Total respondents per qualification			41	7	1	1
Total percentage per qualification			82	14	2	2

4.2.1 Analysis of Table 1

The totals of the first column on the vertical axis indicate that 82% of the fifty respondents have matric as their highest academic qualification. These are all males from all three areas.

The next column indicates that 14% respondents are studying as part-time university students and have passed courses at first and second year level. These are mainly in the urban area with a few from semi-urban area. There are none from rural areas.

The totals in the third and fourth columns indicate that 2% have passed third year B.Paed, while another 2% have a degree as the highest academic qualification.

Table 1 indicates that there are more male than female Luvença teachers in the secondary schools sampled; and that of these, the female teachers are better qualified than the males.

4.2.2 Interpretation of Table 1

According to this table males constitute 96% of the respondents while females constitute only 4%. Again, the male respondents are less well qualified than their female counterparts.

The reason for this state of affairs is that after the attainment of Independence in 1979, the newly-born state was faced with a shortage of manpower in the Government and other institutions and had to rely on teachers to fill senior posts.

This vertical mobility resulted in the creation of a vacuum in the teaching fraternity. Better qualified teachers, especially men, became principals of schools, while principals were elevated to become inspectors of schools, Directors and Heads of Department in the Government or lecturers at the newly established University of Venda and colleges of Education.

As a result matriculated primary teachers and unqualified people gained teaching posts at primary and secondary schools.

Item 2 : Indicate your professional qualification

TABLE 2 : INDICATION OF PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION

	Respondents	Sex	Unqualified	(H)PTC	JSTC	STD	UED	B.A. Paed	TOTAL
URBAN	10	M			5	4			9
		F						1	1
SEMI-URBAN	20	M			10	9			19
		F					1		1
RURAL	20	M	10	10					20
		F	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL			10	10	15	13	1	1	50
Total % per qualification			20	20	30	26	2	2	100

4.2.3 Analysis of Table 2

Table 2 indicates that 90% of the respondents in the urban area hold a Junior Secondary Teachers' Certificate (50%) or a Secondary Teachers' Diploma (40%) with some degree courses to their credit, while the sole female had a Bachelor of Arts in Pedagogy (B.A. Paed.).

In the semi-urban areas 95% of the respondents hold a Junior Secondary Teachers' Certificate (50%) or a Secondary Teachers' Diploma (45%) while the female respondent had a University Education Diploma.

The picture in the rural area is completely different because 50% of the respondents were unqualified while another 50% had either a Higher Primary Teachers' Certificate or a Primary Teachers' Certificate. There were no female teachers in this area offering Luvenḁa.

4.2.4 Interpretation of Table 2

The first vertical column indicates that 20% of all teachers sampled are unqualified. They are employed to teach because of the shortage of qualified teachers. Most of these unqualified teachers are young men who have been:

- * unable to secure a place at tertiary institution because of lack of money; or
- * unable to gain admittance anywhere because the total score of their symbols in matric is low and does not justify admission to college, university or any field of specialisation.

In order to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio, principals in rural areas employ them to fill the vacant post(s). Such ill-qualified teachers are made to teach the "easy subjects" like the Vernacular, Religious Education, Music and Physical Education, without taking into consideration that it is not pedagogically permissible for the teacher to teach learners at the

same standard as he has achieved himself. It is unfortunate that such a situation prevails in black schools and unless it is rectified by the inspectorate, as the learners suffer, the problem will be perpetuated with the resultant drawback to the community.

The second column indicates that 20% of the respondents had a Higher Primary Teachers' Certificate or Primary Teachers' Certificate, all of them are males in rural areas.

The reason for this could be that:

- * competition in more affluent areas like semi-urban and urban areas is stiff and only well qualified and progressive young men and women will prefer to stay there leaving the rural area to the steady traditionally inclined teachers who may have already established themselves; or
- * since the first Teachers' Training college offered a two-year course for teacher trainee after standard 8, it may be deduced that such teachers, most of whom had to pass the standard 10 examination through correspondence, were no longer keen to improve their academic qualifications.

This is an indication of the shortage of well-qualified teachers in rural areas and the subsequent multifaceted didactical problems the learners have to contend with in a learning situation. This means that such teachers are not exposed to the modern Teaching-learning techniques. In a situation like this, teaching and learning conditions deteriorate at the expense of the learner who didactically should not be denied the optimum conditions for successful learning.

The third column indicates that 30% of the respondents had Junior Secondary Teachers' Certificates, all of them males, are evenly distributed between urban and semi-urban schools i.e. half from each. The reason for this distribution is that better qualified teachers prefer

to teach at schools in areas with better learning facilities to improve themselves and for the benefit of the learner.

The fourth column indicates that 26% of the respondents had a Secondary Teachers' Diploma, all of them males and almost evenly distributed between urban and semi-urban schools. The reason for this distribution could be the same as the one explicated in column three above.

Item 3 : Indicate your home language

All fifty respondents are the native speakers of Luvenda. As a principle, this is pedagogically - and didactically justifiable because it hums well with the principle of Mother-tongue instruction.

Item 4 : Indicate when you started teaching Luvenda

TABLE 3 : INDICATION OF THE YEAR WHEN RESPONDENTS STARTED TEACHING LUVENDA

	Respondents	1979 and earlier	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	TOTAL
URBAN	10	4 1		5				9 1
SEMI-URBAN	20	6	4		4 1	3	2	19 1
RURAL	20	10				2	8	20
TOTALS		21	4	5	5	5	10	50
%		42	8	10	10	10	20	100

4.2.5 Analysis of Table 3

Table 3 indicates that in the urban area, 4 male teachers (40%) and 1 female teacher (10%) started teaching Luvenda in or before 1979. Five more male teachers (50%) were appointed in 1981.

In the semi-urban areas except for 1981, new male teachers were allocated to teach Luvenda on a yearly basis: 1979, six teachers (30%); 1980, four teachers (20%); 1982, five teachers (25%); 1983, three teachers (15%) and 1984, two teachers (10%).

In the rural areas ten teachers (50%) started teaching Luvenda in or before 1979, two (10%) in 1983 and eight (40%) in 1984. An interesting feature in this group is that no new teachers were allocated to teach Luvenda between 1980 and 1982. This will be explicated below.

4.2.6 Interpretation of Table 3

The first vertical column indicates that in 1979 (the year when Venda attained its independence) there were 42% teachers in all the three areas offering Luvenda while 1980 had the lowest number of teachers (8%) with a levelling off for three years (1981-1983) with 10% each and an increase of 20% in 1984. This, however, means that 42% of those teaching Luvenda in 1984 in the schools sampled had been teaching it for 5 years or more. It does not necessarily indicate the total number of teachers at any given time.

This fluctuation of teacher supply in the areas in question may be due to the coming into being of the new state of Venda or the mushrooming of schools and the pupil explosion as compulsory education gained its momentum and acceptability by the populace.

Item 5 : Indicate whether your school has a hall or not

4.2.7 Analysis of Item 5

Two schools in urban areas which constitute 20% and one school in rural areas (10%) had halls, while 70% (seven schools in both semi-urban and rural areas) had no halls.

4.2.8 Interpretation of Item 5

Although there are virtually no halls in semi-urban and some rural areas, rehearsals could still be conducted in the open-air namely, under a tree with the same pedagogical-didactical results especially if the teaching act is in the hands of a good teacher.

Item 6 : The purpose of which the hall is used

The two schools in urban areas with halls use them for morning devotions every school day, debates and local eisteddfod but not for staging drama. The hall in the rural area was also found to be used for the same purposes as well and for church services for scholars as there is no church nearby.

The heavy demand for training scholars on stage drama, the lack of know-how on the part of the teachers and/or lack of lighting in the hall(s) and extensive and demanding school syllabi could have caused teachers to opt for activities like music and sports for which equipment is readily available to offer them to the learners as extra-mural activities rather than the staging of drama which is costly and time-consuming.

Item 7 : Does your school have a dramatic society?

None of the ten schools had or planned to have, a dramatic society. This is understandable because dramatic society can only be established if there is a dedicated organiser or producer to awaken the learners interest, sympathetic material support from the authorities and

elementary or standardised facilities. Unless the establishment of dramatic societies is initiated by the Department of Education, the will of children to dramatise will remain latent.

Item 8 : Are the learners interested in drama or not?

All fifty respondents indicated that the learners are interested in drama.

This could be ascribable to the fact that life itself is the germ of drama hence Hadley, Eric (1985:101) says about the interest of children in drama:

... there would be the squabble for parts, the looking on ahead for when you come in, the nudge in the stomach for people who come in late or slowed things down.

Item 9 : Have you received any substantial stage drama training at secondary, college or university level?

Of the fifty respondents none had received any training in the production of stage drama. Training in stage drama is essential especially in a society which playwriting is still at a nascent stage in order to ultimately create potential future playwrights as observed by Hartnoll, Phyllis (1987:121) who says:

... companies were the training-ground of many fine players, for the eighteenth century which was an age of poor playwriting ...

The greatest actor of the day was undoubtedly David Garrick who had his training in Ipswich circuit under Giffard.

One cannot hope to improve the quality of drama unless the youth receives the necessary training as is the case with children from the Far East who receives their training from (ibid; p.230):

childhood in a severe discipline which teaches control of every movement of the body.

This response helps to throw light on why teachers handle a prescribed play like any other genre. A vicious circle has been created whereby teachers see no reason for presenting a play. This stance could have been encouraged by the conviction that the examination results are more important than public entertainment or community service by the school.

In fact, as a teaching and learning aid, staging drama has multifaceted advantages to the learner as a student, actor and adult-in-the-making, the teacher not only helps the learner to learn how to do something by giving instructions, guidance and by providing knowledge for him to absorb with understanding but also enables him to experience it, reinforce it, retains it and transfers it at the most suitable time and thus change his behavioural tendencies for the better.

Item 10 : At which level in the Senior Secondary School would you prefer that drama should be taught?

(See Table 4: Indication of the level at which drama and stage drama should be taught)

TABLE 4 : INDICATION OF THE LEVEL AT WHICH DRAMA AND STAGE DRAMA SHOULD BE TAUGHT

STANDARDS	YES										NO										UNCERTAIN										TOTAL RESPONDENTS
	URBAN AREA 10		SEMI URBAN 20		RURAL AREA 20		URBAN AREA 10		SEMI URBAN 20		RURAL AREA 20		URBAN AREA 10		SEMI URBAN 20		RURAL AREA 20		URBAN AREA 10		SEMI URBAN 20		RURAL AREA 20								
	*M	*F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F							
6	9	1	19	1	20			9	1	19	1	20			9	1	19	1	20			9	1	19	1	20			50		
7	9	1	10	1	10					9		10					9		10										50		
8	9	1	10	1	10					9		10					9		10										50		
9	9	1	19	1	20																								50		
10	9	1	19	1	20																								50		
TOTALS PER CLASS	45	5	68	5	50					27		30					27		30								20		50		
AVERAGE TOTAL RESPONDENTS	9	1	13,6	1	10					5,4		6					5,4		6							4		50			

* M = Male; F = Female.

4.2.9 Analysis of Table 4

Table 4 gives a favourable pattern for the introduction of drama at all levels in senior secondary schools in urban and semi-urban areas.

The picture, however, changes in rural areas where 50% of the respondents were in favour of the introduction of drama in standard 6 while the other 50% were not in favour of the introduction of drama in standards 7 and 8 while 50% were uncertain about its introduction in those classes.

In the semi-urban areas 53% of the male respondents indicated their positive response to the introduction of drama in standards 6-8 while 47% were against it. 100% of the females in semi-urban areas were in favour of its introduction in all the classes while 100% of the male respondents in semi-urban and rural areas were in favour of its introduction in standards 9 and 10. Both sexes in urban areas were totally in favour of the introduction of drama at all the levels of the senior secondary school.

4.2.10 Interpretation of Table 4

Although the general feeling of the respondents in urban and semi-urban areas is that drama should be taught at all levels of the senior secondary school, some of those in semi-urban areas, would be satisfied to do without it in standard 6 through to standard 8, and a few from rural areas were uncertain as to whether it should be taught or not.

The following could be given as the reason for this:

- * According to the 1972 Primary Teachers' Course syllabus, one prose work, a volume of poetry and a drama were prescribed. They were not to be read in class but to be discussed to enable the lecturer to give guidance on aspects like character portrayal, contents, the authors' language and style, structure, categories and qualities of poems.

According to the above statement, drama was treated like any other literary genre. Since teachers and teacher-trainees are influenced by the contents of the syllabus, it is understandable that some teacher-respondents see no value in the introduction of drama in the lower classes and that its teaching would not differ much from that of other genres like the novel. This became a method that was passed over to the teacher-trainees who in turn applied it in teaching. This explains the reason why the teaching of *Luvenda* is not taken seriously by the principals of school and teachers. This acquired negative attitude towards the subject, influences the learning pattern of the learners as well. The 1981 standards 6 and 7 revised syllabi for Black Languages did not indicate clearly whether drama should be studied or not.

The fact that the standard 6 syllabus states the following on page 3; that there should be *the study for content, language and elementary characterization of three prescribed books ...* the standard 7 syllabus prescribes (also on page 3) *the study for content, elementary characterization, appreciation of beautiful language, thought and imagery of four prescribed books including a book of poetry ...*, means that the prescription of drama was left to the discretion of the Language Board, and that the negative responses of some of the respondents in semi-urban and rural areas, could have been based on the non-prescription of drama in those classes in the past.

It is hoped that an improvement appearing in the 1989 standard 10 syllabus could help bring about change and innovation in the teaching of drama. If this new approach could be introduced in the lower classes of the secondary school and be allowed to permeate through to the primary level, not only will a strong foundation be formed but this could engender the spirit of continuity in the minds of both the learners and the teacher, and thus prepare their minds and develop the individual's potentialities to the utmost (own paraphrasing Archambault, Reginald D 1974:12) through education and stage drama.

This is because says Mursel, J.L. (1954:142) *human beings perform best on any undertaking when it is made possible for them to collaborate freely, and naturally in terms of that undertaking.*

Swanepoel, C.F. (1986:19) also correctly observed that: *The school, college and university are the right places where enterprising students and lecturers may start the resurrection of dramas ... by oral reading, using full casts, even in front of audiences. Imaginative oral reading may well lead to performance, be it on the stage or the arena. This when done regularly, should soon develop into a lasting tradition* (See page 94 above).

Therefore not only should the improvement of stage drama be in the hands of secondary school learners and teachers but there should also be a concerted effort by the lecturers at colleges of education and universities to imbue their students with ample knowledge which they could then pass on to the eager secondary school learners.

Item 11 : Do you agree that "a play is written for the stage"?

All fifty respondents conceded that a play is written for the stage and indicated that they know of no play already in circulation which could be staged with success.

The fact that there are no suitable stage plays in Luvenda could be as a result of the reasons already advanced throughout the study (see Chapter 2) as Swanepoel, C.F. (ibid; p17) says:

*The writing of plays was based on the need to satisfy the requirement of the syllabus. Swanepoel goes on to say that this need led to a rate of production which surpassed the essential care that should have been taken to secure texts reasonably complying with the accepted characteristics of the genre ... (and there is also a lack of) exacting guidance by way of manuals on the essence of drama ...*²⁵

²⁵ Since 1978 to 1990 July, only 8 articles on drama appear in Educamus with only three having to do with African drama by Moleleki, A.M. on Senkatana (Sesotho) in

Together these factors contributed to the emergence of play writing which appears to have been more artificially stimulated than artistically realised (See pages 33 - 35 above).

The fact that the teaching of drama was left to the teacher with hardly any source of reference in the vernacular but only in English and Afrikaans, worsened the problem because didactically one cannot teach a language through the medium of another language, as the home language will always be dominant in one way or another. A language should be taught on its own because it is an entity which the learner needs to appreciate because he is what he is through it. The occasional comparison with other languages however helps to broaden the horizons of the learner through usage and contact.

Item 12 : Do you consider Luvenda plays suitable only for the examination purposes or not?

All fifty respondents indicated that Luvenda plays are suitable for examination purposes only.

This means that a principle has been created whereby playwrights will only satisfy the requirements of the syllabus and consequently the examination. Good playwriting should as Hartnoll, Phyllis (1978:214) puts it, strive for *the perfect balance between good theatre and a social problem of universal application (in order to produce) the world's stock of imperishable dramatic literature.*

It should be borne in mind that the motivation for writing in quantity differs greatly from that of an author who aims at producing work of good quality.

vol.xxvi No.2 pp.29-33, Makaba, C.N. on Idrama (Zulu) in vol.xxxi No.5 pp.10-11 and Mawela, C.N. on Vutlangi/Ntlangu (Tsonga) in vol.xxxii No.6 pp.10-14. The remaining five articles are mainly on Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. This confirms the paucity of this genre in this widely distributed official Journal. (See asterisk under Journals.)

If quality is aspired to, then all other needs and requirements in whatever form, will be satisfied.

Item 13 : Do the students prefer a dramatised Luvenda novel to Luvenda plays or not?

All fifty respondents indicated that students preferred dramatised Luvenda novels to Luvenda plays.

This preference is indicative of the fact that naturally students like to perform and dramatise events which appeal to their emotions and which are realistic and educative. This is supported by the drama competitions once launched by the then Venda Bureau in Circular No. 6/74 in which many schools in Venda took part and which was a great success.

Although there were a few plays already in circulation, none of them were recommended for the stage because they were found to be so unstageable that the organising committee had to resort to novels like Elelwani by Maumela, T.N. and A Si Ene by Madima, E.S.

Some of the respondents have participated in the competitions referred to, as scholars and others as teachers or as part of the audience in 1974 and 1975 and have been impressed by the total support of the whole exercise by the public.

The apparent lack of dramatic societies, is not due to lack of interest or inability to act but it is due to lack of suitable stage plays and the growing negative attitude towards them as they hold nothing challenging in them. This negative attitude towards Luvenda plays, contributes towards poor teaching and learning and has a bearing on the poor performance by learners in Vernacular as compared to content subjects and second languages in external examination.

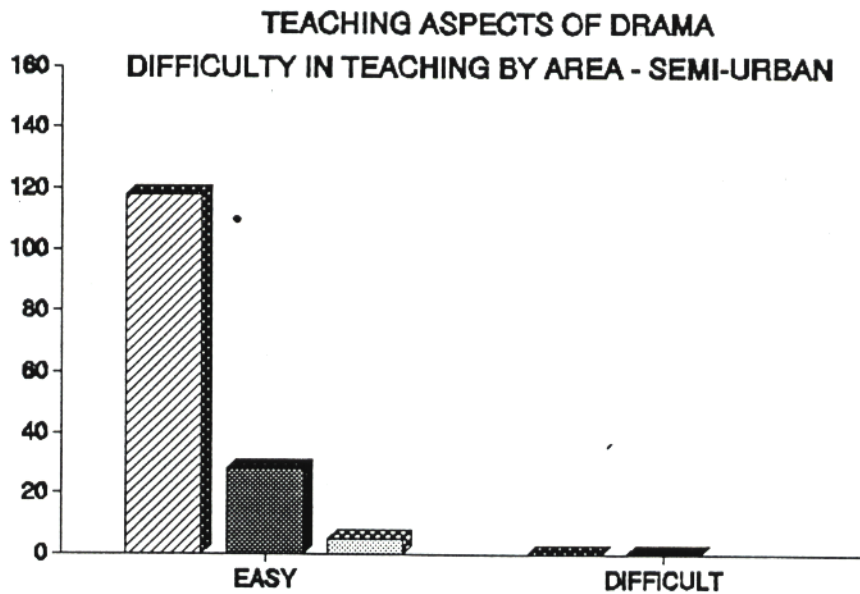
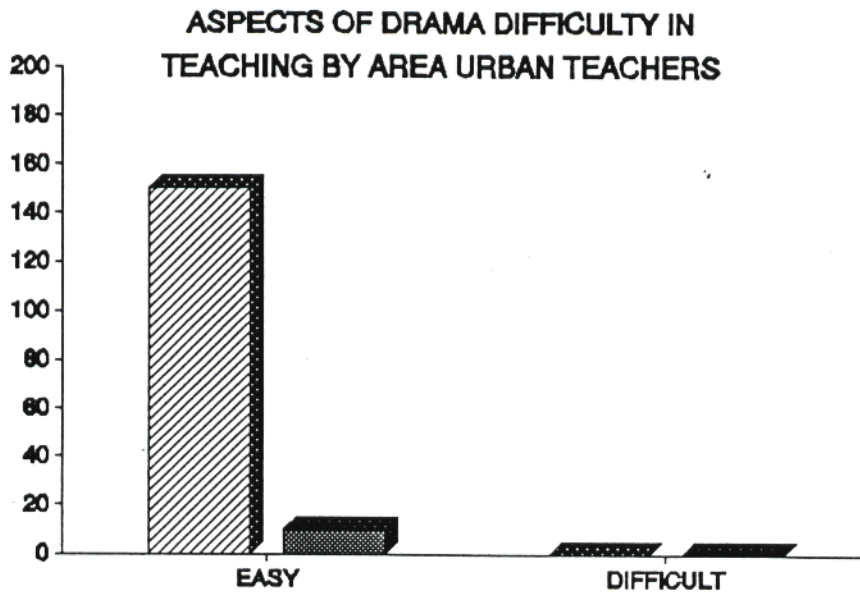
Item 14 : Which novels have been successfully dramatised if any?

A great number of the respondents (80%) in all the three areas listed Elelwani and A Si Ene, as the most popular dramatised novels. Others (20%) also included Ndi Vho-Muthukhuthukhu by Maumela, T.N.

This shows that drama is an art enjoyed by everybody and that if a novel is good, it may be adopted for the stage, radio drama or television.

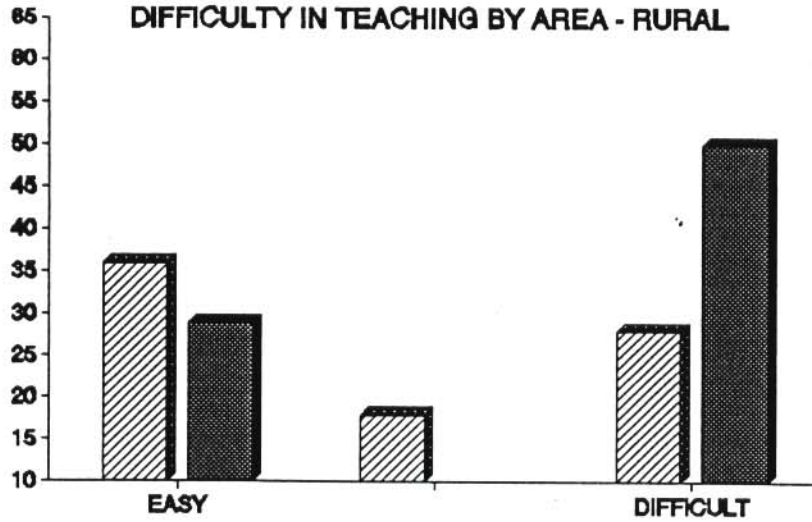
The interest in drama by teachers and learners could be reawakened by organising competitions making use of dramatised novels to enable the learners to have the feel of the stage. This can help in making learners become aware of their abilities to act or to produce stageable sketches and ultimately Luvenda plays and so make a steady breakthrough.

Item 15 : Aspects of drama which the respondents found easy or difficult to teach²⁶

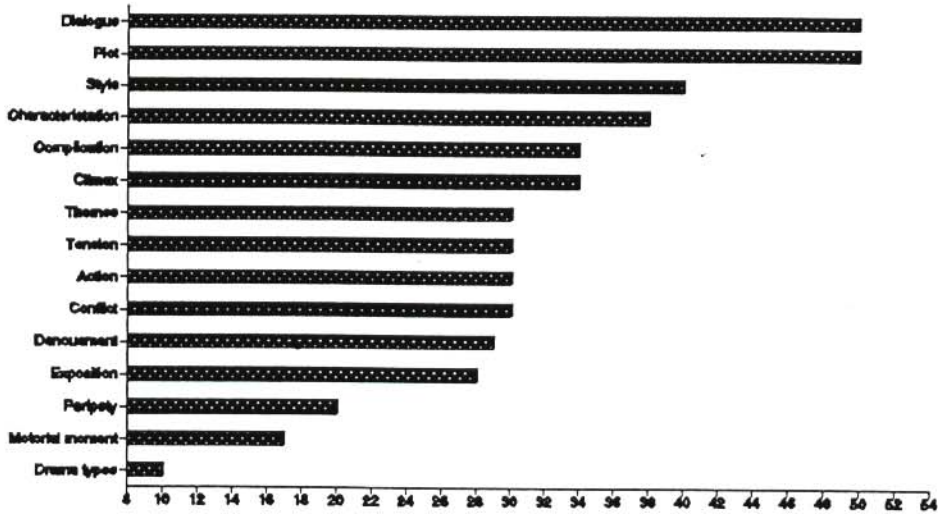


²⁶ The details of the first three bar graphs, have been weaved into the fourth bar graph below.

**TEACHING ASPECTS OF DRAMA
DIFFICULTY IN TEACHING BY AREA - RURAL**



ASPECTS OF DRAMA RANKED FROM LEAST ABLE TO BEST ABLE TO TEACH



4.2.11 Analysis of Aspects of drama in terms of difficulty in teaching by area

4.2.11.1 Urban

None of the teachers found any difficulty in teaching the aspects of drama.
(See bar chart graph 1)

4.2.11.2 Semi-urban

A few teachers indicated to have some difficulty in teaching some aspects of drama. (See bar graph 2).

4.2.11.3 Rural

Many teachers in the rural areas found significant difficulty in teaching the aspects of drama. (See bar graph 3.)

4.2.11.4 Bar graph 4

Bar graph 4 indicates all the aspects of drama ranked from least to best able to teach in all three areas. This graph helps to give a global picture of the position of teaching drama in the areas researched upon.

In all three areas, drama types are not easily identified from the prescribed plays and therefore difficult to teach. The difficulty experienced in teaching the various aspects, decreases until plot and dialogue appear to be the easiest aspects to teach by all teachers.

4.2.12 Interpretation of data in all the areas

The graphs indicate that:

- * the teachers in urban areas have few problems in teaching the aspects of drama as compared to the teachers in the other two areas. There is positive association between higher qualification and easier teaching in urban areas than in the other two areas.
- * the difficulty in teaching some of the aspects could be ascribed to the lack of such aspects in the prescribed play due to the inability of the playwright, the paucity of

Luvenda literature on the genre and lack of training on the part of the teachers. Because they are native speakers, they tend to pay particular attention to the teaching of characterization, style, plot and dialogue which are incidentally the most important areas on which examiners base their questions.

This type of questioning renders the stageability of a play irrelevant in terms of class and examination requirements and gives the playwrights carte blanche to write anything as long as there is a story no matter how deplorable the play on which the examiner can base his questions, is.

Unless an effort is made by both the Language Board and the Department of Education to prescribe only those plays which are stageable, the standard of Luvenda drama will remain low because a wrong model has already been set.

CHAPTER 5 : CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study has attempted to demonstrate that:

- 5.1.1 As a universal phenomenon, drama originated with Creation and therefore with every man no matter how primitive he may be, because man is a meaning-giving-being who through love, work and constructive engagement, always aspires to change tragic events into meaningful triumph.
- 5.1.2 In every society especially in developing communities of the Third world, the elders are observed as the custodians of oral literature which is a life force that binds man to his past, his present and his future, determines his relation with G(g)od, spirits, nature and natural phenomena as the roots of his existence. The roots of man becomes his ground-motive that influences his attitude towards life on earth and in the hereafter as was the theme upon which drama was initially based. (See Chapter 2 above.)
- 5.1.3 The uncompromising attitude of Christianity towards traditional African religion and that of colonialism and Western ideology towards African ideology retarded and even discouraged the growth and progress of drama amongst the blacks with the result that the educated blacks, as Schipper, Mineke (1982:51) observed: ... *looked down upon their own culture and lost interest in it.*

Although this latter observation has manifested itself in a dearth in drama in African languages in general and Luvenda in particular, it should not be taken as fatal in terms of overall culture of the African because, as we have observed especially in Chapter 2 above, man continues to hanker after his roots and tries to express or satisfy this urge through various forms of drama.

Another contributory factor to the dearth in formal drama in African languages could be the paternalistic attitude of the "wisemen" as adopted by some whites towards Africans vis-à-vis things African.

Early white settlers found little (if anything) of value in indigenous African cultural heritage as Mawasha, A.L. (1982:7) quoting the report of an inspector of schools in Natal, Loram, C.T. who believes on the paramountcy of English over the African languages in Black schools, in 1917 said:

Apart from sentiment, there is no reason for wishing the Bantu languages to survive. They have served their purpose. They are not capable of expressing the ideas which new European civilization has brought to the country. They are hopelessly clumsy and inadequate on the mathematical and scientific sides.

This attitude led not only to the dismantling of traditional African value structures, but also to the anathemisation of same. The corollary of this was that with enlightenment, christenization and westernization, Africans progressively developed a negative self-concept. This negative self-concept, however, seems to be reversing since the genesis of Black consciousness (See Gastraw, Shelegh 1987:234).

- 5.1.4 The standard and quality of drama could be greatly improved if the secondary school teachers, lecturers at colleges of education and universities could be encouraged to establish dramatic societies to furnish the learners and students with an opportunity to stage plays (See page 139-140 above).
- 5.1.5 The playwrights should master the tools of their trade in order to produce stageable plays and not to produce plays for school consumption only because this retards dramatic progress.
- 5.1.6 Correct pedagogical-didactical methodology in the teaching of drama should be woven into the structure of a play by using the eclectic²⁷ method (see item 2.5 above).
- 5.1.7 The literature syllabus for standard 6 to 10 should spell out in detail what should be covered in the teaching of this aspect of language (See page 139 above).
- 5.1.8 Playwrights should address problems obtaining in real life in order to gain popularity and acceptability and turn drama into a communal activity as was the case in the traditional African life.
- 5.1.9 Examination results could be improved if the learners were encouraged and guided to stage a play because the dramatic method is one of the best teaching and learning methods. Once this method is mastered, it could be easily transferred to teaching and learning of other school subjects.

²⁷ According to Webster's Third New International Dictionary Vol.1 (1976:719) eclectic here is used to refer to the selection of what appears to be the best or true in various and diverse methods

5.2 Recommendations

The following are recommendations made in connection with the study in order to gain support from the decision makers, authors, teachers and learners to improve the quality and method of drama teaching in Senior Secondary Schools in Venda.

5.2.1 Recommendations to Playwrights

It has been made clear in the study that the Vhavenḁa playwrights appear to be producing plays for the sake of quantity instead of quality with the school as the target group.

It will again be mentioned here that in the production of a play, quality must not be sacrificed for the sake of quantity. Hence a series of rehearsals are imperative prior to the actual publication of the manuscript because in drama, communication is the key towards success. Via, R.A. (1970:159) says:

a play is all communication, communication between actor and actor and between the actor and the audience as they view the play

and according to Schipper, Mineke (1982:1):

the world is a stage, and the theatre a mirror of the world.

In order to mirror the world, the playwright needs to be precise with verisimilitude, characterisation, theme, plot and dialogue. As Gassner, Joseph (1966:211) puts it:

the spectators are always in their senses, and know, from the first act to the last, that the stage is only a stage, and the players are only players, they momentarily identify themselves with the actor(s) as real person(s) in real life.

This means that any character who, according to the readers or playgoers is found to be untrue to life, will not be accepted and thus automatically renders such a play a failure. Characters should portray human nature. As human beings we all recognise temptation and greed, a desire for revenge and the need for reconciliation. These are some of the essentials of life which requires the author to dig deep into his resources to find suitable winged words for his dialogue.

Most African plays leave much to be desired because inter alia, digression, unnecessary greetings and long-winded dialogues diffuse action and strangle and abort the necessary dramatic emotion.

In his unpublished paper presented at the University of Venda on 1 August 1986 Shole, J. Shole (1986:6)²⁸ says about African drama:

The dramas in the African languages have shortcomings ... similar to those in the mystery and miracle plays of the Medieval ages (because they are characterised by) incoherent events, irrelevancies, more narration and less direct enactment, lack of concentration on the structure of action and lengthy dialogue ... which delay action and diminish dramatic tension (because of failure to address selected) pertinent material (which) reflects a piece of reality (See also item 3.2.6.4 above).

In order to succeed, the playwright should bear in mind some of the following important hints which could be of help in producing a good play.

- * find a convincing, realistic and moving story to write about;

²⁸ Shole, J. Shole: A review of drama criticism in the African Languages, 1 August 1986 (unpublished paper read at a seminar on African Languages, University of Venda)

- * write it in lively dialogue which is pregnant with meaning because the success of any play lies in the fusion of action and dialogue;
- * say the story simply, naturally and convincingly;
- * weave acts and scenes together to form a meaningful moving plot;
- * be able to display intrigue, suspense and good planning that is logical and reveals a lot of intelligence by writing plays that excel as literary art, which will also be of value to a wider readership;
- * reflect the ability to apply the tools of the trade;
- * have the public as the target group and present it before the audience to test its impact before publication. Shakespeare and his peers realised the necessity of this. The title pages of plays included a statement like: *as acted before the king* (or something similar) (See pages 29 - 32 etc above).

Playwrights should form an association which could be their mouthpiece in dealing with the publishers or in helping each other on issues of common interest.

5.2.2 Recommendations to Luvenda Subject-teachers

The fact that teachers in semi-urban and rural areas experience problems in teaching Luvenda drama due to the lack of literature on the teaching of the genre, lack of experience or poor academic qualifications as compared to the quality of teachers in urban areas, means that the need exists for the establishment of:

- * a school of drama at black universities as is the case with white universities where drama has become a specialty;

- * dramatic societies at colleges of education and universities which could ultimately be introduced at secondary school level;
- * drama competitions at local, zonal or regional level as is the case with eisteddfod or sports; and
- * a committee of Heads of Department (senior teachers) whose task could, among other things, be to consolidate the views of the subject-teachers concerning the quality of a prescribed play (and other genres) to advise the inspectorate and the Language Board on the matter in order to bring about change and innovation in the teaching of literature in general and drama in particular. This stance could in turn improve the quality of authors and also widen the scope of the readership.

The standard of teaching at senior secondary schools can be improved if the vernacular is not despised by the inspectorate, principals and other school teachers because like other languages, it is an involved subject. In order to avoid ambiguity, the syllabus should be compiled in detail to give the teacher meaningful guidance with relevant examples given where necessary and not to leave everything to the discretion of the teacher because this forces him to leave out those aspects of the syllabus which he does not understand.

The didactical principle of moving from the simple to the complex, the general to the particular or the known to the unknown (see item 2.5 above), should be actualised by introducing drama to lower classes of the secondary school and at primary school level in an elementary form. This will form a good basis for introducing English and Afrikaans plays later.

To introduce drama theoretically as reading material in standard 8 and 10 is unpedagogic because it lacks continuity through the classes for drama is not written to be read only but to be staged to boot. Reading is not an end in itself but a means to an end.

Teachers should make use of the learners to establish school museums in order to help those learners born and bred in urban areas and to preserve the past for others.

The novice should not be allowed to teach Luvenda as this not only degrades the status of the subject but is unfair and discouraging to the learners so that they too could develop a negative attitude towards the language and indirectly towards themselves and their culture.

A person who looks down upon his own language, because it is not taught well, is uprooting himself from his origin and tradition. Such a person becomes dangerous to other people because he may lose direction and meaning to life.

The interest of the learners in their mother-tongue and in themselves, culture and tradition may be successfully regained by weaving all that is their own into drama in order to preserve, perpetuate and uphold their identity as members of a nation with its own roots.

When competitions are held, the winners should be awarded prizes to promote the spirit of goodwill and to encourage learners to stage plays so as to discover their talents.

The immediate reward which an actor gets is applause from the public, commendation, acceptance and recognition by the team to which he belongs. Acceptance is necessary in building up one's self-image which in turn is an underlying factor in successful learning.

If a student learns to accept himself, he will be able to accept other people and to live harmoniously with them without fear. Teachers should therefore aspire to inculcate in the learners the love of their own language in order to strengthen their positive self-concept, and to love and respect their neighbours without applying double standards.

Another method of instilling an interest in what is African is by reviving, promoting and preserving African music because it is a perennial spring with its source deep in antiquity. It is this spring in the heart of man that keeps the throbbing sound of African music alive.

As soon as it is played young and old are kept on their toes to enact the tu' of Vhuthu' (Bontu') like the first heart beat of the origin of life when Creation displayed its ability to create.

If African music is effectively deployed as background and as introduction to acts and scenes, it will not only refresh the players and the audience but will inject fresh blood in the whole system and so capture the minds of the people through spiritual soul searching melody.

As a method, drama dispels stage fright and the fear of expressing one's views in public, and promotes the will to participate, debate, to be open minded, to be original, to have a critical mind, to accept positive criticism, to be creative, to rejoice when victorious, to accept defeat, to make self-introspection, to analyse and to accept personal limits and enrich and improve oneself (see Southern Richard, 1985:25).

Inservice training in drama should be encouraged and promoted because this is where teachers can learn from each other, from guest-speakers and from active participation, to the benefit of the learners, the school, and the community. •

In order to be effective in teaching a prescribed play, the teacher should differentiate it from a novel by using the structure of drama as a mirror by focusing it on the play to determine whether the playwright has complied with the requirements of a good play or not. This approach will not only enable the learners to understand drama better but will help them to determine the strong and weak points of the playwrights as well as determining its type. This method of teaching may even motivate the learners into producing short sketches for the stage and thus unfold their potentialities as prospective playwrights.

The teacher should always bear in mind that as a narrative art in which mankind has learned to present a story to give pleasure and to entertain, the impact of a good drama on the playgoers will always remain spell-binding even if they know what its outcome will be.

Drama is therefore one of the most effective, persuasive and memorable means of conveying truths to the people and thus enable them to re-evaluate their lives.

For the teacher, to ignore the importance of drama, is to ignore one of the most successful teaching and learning methods ever. Enter drama into school, exéunt boredom, routine and staleness, because learners learn more than language from a stage play.

5.2.3 Recommendation to the learners

Naturally every child wants to play because it is through playing that the co-ordination between body and mind is developed. Through active engagement in reading and learning, creativity, originality, insight, the ability to analyse and synthesise facts, to probe into a problem and come up with solutions to bring about change and innovation, is made possible.

This is because man learns better by engaging himself in play that is purposeful and is coupled with insight because playing has, built into it, the elements of challenge, emotion, motivation, meaning, involvement, repetition, and reinforcement all of which are necessary in successful learning.

Through playing, the learners hardly feel the demand of the learning material, the passage of time or exhaustion and this can be helpful in keeping the learners out of the streets and in ensuring order and discipline.

By staging plays in their mother tongue the learners will not only be fulfilling the pedagogical-didactical principle of mother-tongue instruction but will also be acquiring the learning skills necessary in learning with understanding.

The fact that success in one field of study becomes an impetus to face other challenges means that the acquisition of skills in staging African plays could be fruitfully deployed in introducing plays in English or Afrikaans with more understanding. This confirms the

importance and the place of staging Luvenda plays in Education and in developing the learner as a complete being by successfully involving all his life-functions in a play.

Drama in schools could pave the way for the learners to acquire better examination results, for local and national challenges, for more prospects in the radio, film and television industry and for world recognition and acceptance because pedagogically, a child is not educated to fit into his community only but to fit into the wider-community. This can be achieved through relevant education, which is marketable.

5.2.4 Recommendations to the Department of Education and Training

The inborn interest of learners in dramatisation should not be nipped in the bud as is reflected by its absence in the standards 6, 7, and 9 syllabi, but should be encouraged throughout the education system to encourage those with an interest in drama to further their studies and to fulfil the universal principle of continuity in learning which ensures the development of a well balanced adult.

The teaching of African languages should not be restricted to one community only but should be taught across the culture in order to foster a spirit of unity amongst the peoples of South Africa by opening schools to all because it is only those who grew up together who can easily associate and work harmoniously together and thus normalise the situation in the country.

The Department of Education and Training should encourage the establishment of schools of drama at Black Universities by making funds available for this purpose or by inviting donations to support such initiatives and by awarding prizes and scholarships for studies in South African Universities and even abroad.

The syllabus should also highlight the importance of establishing a school museum as a way of preserving the culture and tradition of a community, and not to leave it to the discretion of the teacher as this would not be supported by the principals and the inspectorate because

the school is more examination oriented and unless mention is made in the syllabus, teachers will not include anything extra.

Since acting, listening, watching and repetition are important elements in reinforcing understanding and meaningful learning, drama should be given precedence over music and sports or be given equal treatment in the school syllabus because of its validity and importance in the moral and aesthetic development of the learner.

The Department should also require a detailed but concise teachers' report on the prescribed play in order to assess its relevance and impact on the readership and to stimulate authors to produce quality material. If it comes from the Department, it will surely help to bring about change and innovation for the better instead of retarding progress unawares by prescribing works which are less challenging and less educative even though they could be used for examination purposes.

Examiners should also write comprehensive examination reports to guide the teachers. Most examination reports do not reach the teachers. During this study the researcher only managed to secure one report from one school principal after a thorough search and none from the Department of Education in Venda.

An extract from this report namely, the 1984 standard 10 Venda Paper III Examiner's Report, shows how unhelpful some of these reports are:

Question 3

(i) Comments:

It was difficult for candidates to show how events in the story influenced the plot. Candidates performed poorly on the essay question.

(ii) Principle errors and corrections

Candidates had a tendency to relate the story without highlighting the events which were instrumental in influencing the plot. The various characteristics of drama should be taught.

(iii) Suggestions

Candidates should be taught to distinguish between the various characteristics.

If one were to ask simple questions on the words or phrases that are underlined, one would soon realise that such a report is not helpful to the teacher to make him improve his standard and quality of teaching and the method(s) he uses. Instead, a skeletal report like this only succeeds in making the teacher forget all about it soon after reading it.

Examination reports should aim at bringing about improvement in the quality of teaching and examination results by including examples and even model answers to give an idea of what the teacher is expected to do.

The teacher should, after reading the report, be intrinsically and extrinsically motivated to improve himself to the benefit of the learners of the following year in that class.

The aim of education should not be to test ignorance but to test knowledge in a pedagogically-didactically justifiable manner. The examination report therefore should be such that it enables the weak teacher to improve and the good teacher to excel.

5.2.5 Recommendations to the Language Board

The Language Board should be open-minded so as to allow innovative ideas and recommendations from teachers to come into play because it is only the teacher who is involved in the actual teaching act, who can inject new blood into the system.

The Language Board should also conduct research before formulating new concepts for inclusion in the terminology guide basing them on Afrikaans concepts. The counting system is one of the most controversial problem in Luvenda because the community counts differently from the scholars and it is very confusing to the elders. These are the results of concepts that are formed from an office situation without conducting a research.

Membership to the Language Board should be based on specialisation namely Language methodology lecturers and not only those stipulated by the constitution. This means that if Geology was to be offered in Luvenda, a lecturer in such a content subject should be a member of the Board because he will be the only person able to coin new Geological Luvenda concepts. To leave him out retards progress and the development of the language.

As the highest authority, the Language Board, should in collaboration with representatives of Luvenda subject teachers, prescribe and not recommend literature suitable for school use, as is still the case at the moment.

The Language Board should encourage authors to write for the public and not for school consumption only. Writing for the public encourage people to read Luvenda literature on themes of their own choice and thus inculcate in them the habit of reading to increase their general knowledge and positive mature thinking.

The importance of stage drama to the elders is expressed in an article appearing in Educamus August 1983 Vol. xxix No.8 p.3 which says:

The staging of a drama is a red-letter event to parents and other interested persons, consequently such performances enjoy wide and enthusiastic support. One cannot gainsay the formative influence of such performances on the audiences, especially in those cases where one-act plays are presented on a competitive basis ...

This is indicative of the fact that the Language Board and ultimately the Government, should consider stage drama as one of the priorities in education because, when staged drama provides a social interaction which sets the stage for practice in dramatic expression, thus providing a contextualised setting for the use of or variety of language registers and usages that the learner will need in his linguistic world for as Mawasha A.L. (1976:18) avers in his unpublished D.Ed Thesis:

Man is the only creature capable of abstracting by using symbols to stand for aspects of the existential environment in which he tries to survive. This in turn permits him to transcend space and time in that he is free to move symbolically, backwards and forwards in time. This unique attribute of man is enshrined in his ability to use language. Recalling the past, recounting the present and speculating on the future are by their very nature brain-children of language (and drama) (See figure 1 above).

Language and drama are therefore the internal spiritual expression of man's perpetual existence on earth and a method whereby knowledge is acquired and better understanding of his existence and meaning of life, norms, culture and tradition are preserved to posterity.

The correct teaching of drama and enactment of life as arrested in language therefore, is the best way of giving meaning to life and of balancing the being of man. The correct teaching of this literary art should therefore be deployed and allowed to penetrate the very fabric of the education system in order to bring about positive change and innovation which can only materialise if educationists could jointly plan the future of drama together without politicising it so that it can be better than what it is at the moment because the future of a pragmatic, progressive, united, democratic education system, is what its constructive-optimistic-normatively-proned curriculum designers, hammer it out to be, for the future progeny to immensely benefit therefrom.

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²⁹ Asterisk refers to articles on drama appearing in EDUCAMUS.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire on:

**THE TEACHING OF DRAMA TO SENIOR SECONDARY
SCHOOL LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO LUVENDA DRAMA**

1. Instructions:

- * *Do not write your name on the questionnaire.*
- * *The information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence.*
- * *Put a cross on the answer of your choice.*
- * *Be as objective as possible.*
- * *Your answers should be direct and succinct.*

2. Particulars.

2.1 Location of School: [Urban] [Semi-urban] [Rural]

2.2 Name of Circuit:

2.3 Standard:

.....
PRINCIPAL

.....
SCHOOL STAMP

QUESTIONNAIRE

Kindly complete this questionnaire, it is intended for study purposes with the University of the North.

1. State your highest academic qualifications in the space provided.

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

Matric (Std 10)	B.A. I-II	B.A. III	B.A. Paed	B.A. (Hons)

2. State your professional qualification in the space provided.

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Unqualified	(H) PTC	JSTC	STD	UED	B.A. Paed

3. State your home language in the space provided.

HOME LANGUAGE

Luvenda	N.Sotho	Xitsonga	Setswana	Sesotho	Zulu	Xhosa

4. When did you start teaching Luvenda?

1979 & Earlier	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984

5. Is there a hall at your school?

YES	NO

6. If "YES" for what purpose does it serve?

Morning devotion

Debate

Staging drama

Eisteddfod

Other, specify

7. Do you have a dramatic society at school?

YES	NO

8. Are the learners interested in drama?

YES	NO

9. Have you received any training on stage drama or theatre?

Senior Secondary

College

University

10. At which level in the Senior Secondary School would you prefer that stage drama should be taught?

Standards

6

7

8

9

10

Level

11. "A play is written for the stage". If you agree with this universal statement, is there any play in Luvenḡa which satisfies this requirement?

YES	NO

12. Luvenḡa plays are suitable for examination purposes.

YES	NO

13. Dramatised novels are preferred to Luvenḡa plays.

YES	NO

14. Which novels have been successfully dramatised if any?

15. Which aspects of drama do you find easy or difficult to teach?

THEME(S)	EASY	DIFFICULT
Acts and Scenes		
Phases: Exposition		
Motorial moment		
Complication		
Climax		
Peripety/peripeteia		
Denouement		
Tension		
Action		
Conflict		
Dialogue		
Plot		
Types of characters		
Style		
Type of drama		