

African Male Voices: Representation of women Images in selected isiZulu literary texts; Reality or Idealism?

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DECLARATION

I declare that **AFRICAN MALE VOICES: REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IMAGES IN SELECTED ISIZULU LITERARY TEXTS. REALITY OR IDEALISM** is my own work and that all the source that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

.....

SIGNATURE

IRENE NINI MZONELI- MAKHWAZA

.....

DATE

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late father Aubrey Qinisani, my late brothers; Desmond Zama; Patrick Pinky; Sandile Tesco; and Ncane.

ABSTRACT

In this thesis the research focused on representation of women images in the selected isiZulu literary texts. From the late 1940's up to 1994 South Africans struggled under the apartheid regime. During this period of time Black women were doubly oppressed by their patriarchal and traditional cultures as well as by the apartheid system of government.

With the change of government in 1994, a new era in the history of South Africa was ushered in. The underlying foundations of the new constitution were democratic values of gender equality, non-racial, non-sexist society. It is against this backdrop that the thesis focused on exploring the effects and or impact of perceptions about women within a changing and transforming society in Africa in general and South Africa specifically.

The isiZulu texts selected that were analysed are works of transitional period partly because they were published during the time of political and social transformation. Whilst other texts that were analysed were published during the post-independence period. The rationale behind this was to give a broader spectrum that reflects the reality; as well as to establish whether the socio-political transformation has had an impact on how male authors represent women in isiZulu literary texts. Literary feminist philosophy was employed to highlight whether their depiction is real or idealized.

The study concluded that gender inequality was still prevalent in the depiction of women images in selected isiZulu literary texts authored by males. There was no transformation that had been made by male authors in their portrayal of women characters to reflect the current political and social order.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introductory Background

The Zulus were originally a small tribe in what is today known as Northern KwaZulu Natal. This once small tribe gained its power and popularity under the leadership of King Shaka Zulu. He is the one that united what was once a confederation of small tribes into an imposing empire under Zulu hegemony. The patriarchal traditions and practices of the Zulus can be traced far back to the 10th century. The African cultures and traditions, played an important role in creating perceptions and stereotypes about Black African women, especially in the Zulu culture. Peires (1981:82) maintains that, “men’s domination of women in the Zulu kingdom is well attested in the historical and ethnographic literature. Its origins lie far back in the history of Africa, and can probably never be accounted for except in very broad terms”. He further argues that “the location of the sources of women’s oppression in class societies has been a subject of a certain amount of disagreement among recent feminist writers. While some maintain that men’s domination emerges from the power of the state, others hold that it is rooted in the nature of relations between men and women within the domestic community” (ibid.).

From 1948 to 1994 the peoples of South Africa lived different and parallel lives under the Apartheid system. Communities were divided according to the colour of their skin. Caucasians were branded as white and the rest fell under the category of Black, namely Africans, Coloureds, and people of Indian origin. The African communities were further subdivided into cultural groups or ethnic groups; namely Zulu, Sothos, Xhosas, Tswanas and Vendas. Each ethnic group had its own homeland. The distinctive characteristic of apartheid –as this system was called – according to Smith (1982:20) “was the introduction of a tighter, more systematic, more comprehensive and strictly enforced control by the state over Blacks in their movement to urban areas and in their employment and residential opportunities”. This ideology had an impact that cut across all spheres of the Black people’s life. It regulated the quality of education that was imparted to the Black learners. The

apartheid government had further control over literature that could be read in Black South African schools.

All of the above had an impact on the writers' creativity. Authors of this period, who were predominantly male, found themselves shackled by the Apartheid regulations. According to Smith "(1982:80) "the system of separate development was an ideology that was pursued with single mindedness of purpose: namely to preserve White supremacy , privilege and power whilst maintaining the exploitation of Black labour as a lever of capital". During this era Black women in South Africa found themselves being a double minority. Firstly, they were minors by virtue of the fact that they were Black in terms of their skin colour; secondly they were further confirmed by South African Law that they were minors. Hence women could not enter into any legal agreement or contract without prior approval in writing of their fathers or husbands. They also could not own property. All these laws were discriminatory to women. Discriminatory laws and practices were not only prevalent in South Africa, but in all African states when they were under the colonial rule. However, different African countries experienced slavery and discrimination in different ways. For the purpose of this research literary works from other African countries will be analysed.

It is interesting to note that there is a common thread of patriarchy that is inherent in both the Zulu culture as well as in the Apartheid system. According to the Concise Oxford dictionary "patriarchy is a form social organization in which the father or the eldest male is the head of the family and descent is reckoned through the male line" (Soanes & Stevenson, 2004: 1050). Bryson (2003: 166) maintains that, "patriarchy is primarily maintained by a process of conditioning which starts with childhood socialization within the family and is reinforced by education, literature and religion to such an extent that its values are internalized by men and women alike; for some women this leads to self-hatred, self-rejection and an acceptance of inferiority".

Different sociologists over time have attempted to give broader definitions of patriarchy. Historically, the term patriarchy was used to refer to autocratic rule by the male head of a family. According to Millet,

....our society, like all other historical civilizations, is a patriarchy. The fact is evident at once, if one recalls that the military, technology, universities, science, political office and finance – in short every avenue of power Including the coercive force of the police, is entirely in male hands (Millet, 1986: 25).

Millet (1986:33) further maintains that, “traditionally patriarchy granted merely total ownership over wife or wives and children, including powers of physical abuse and often those of murder or sale”. However, in modern times it more generally refers to social systems in which power is primarily held by adult men. Walby (1990: 16) defines it, “as a system of interrelated social structures which allow men to exploit women”. Her definition is broad and it allows for variability and changes in women’s roles and in the order of their priority under different patriarchal systems. It also recognizes that it is the institutionalized subordination and exploitation of women by men that is the crux of patriarchy; this can take many forms. Walby has further composed six overlapping structures that restrict women and that take different forms in different cultures and different times namely:

The first structure is a state within which women are unlikely to have formal power and representation; the second structure is within the household, where women are more likely to do housework and raise children. The third structure is within work environment, here women are likely to be paid lesser than men. As far as violence is concerned, women are more prone to being abused. Sexuality, women’s sexuality is more likely to be treated negatively; and lastly Culturally, women are more misrepresented in media and popular culture (Walby,1990: 20).

Millet cited in Bryson argued that,

in all known societies relationships between the sexes have been based on power, and that they are therefore political. This power takes the form of male domination over women in all areas of life; sexual domination is so universal, so ubiquitous and so complete that it appears ‘natural’ and hence becomes invisible, so that it is “perhaps the most pervasive ideology of our culture and provides its most fundamental concept of power” (Bryson, 2003: 166).

It is against this backdrop, that the new dispensation was ushered in South Africa. The change from apartheid system to a constitutional democracy in South Africa exhibits signs of a society concerned with abandoning old habits in order to face the challenges of modernity. In fact, the recently democratized society seeks to reinvent itself in distinction from the past dispensation by promoting national identity

formation. The study is situated within a context where the need for change is confronted with persistent residue of old lifestyle. In such circumstances certain models which assist the mind-set shift such as the three step transformation model of freezing, movement and refreezing proposed by Kurt Lewin (in Robbins,1996) become necessary. According to Kurt Lewin's model,

major change from an original state of mind can be effected when the people are taken through a gradual process whereby they are introduced to a new thinking pattern. This objective cannot be easily achieved, because it requires conceptual precision with regard to the elements within an individual or society that requires change. Moreover a mutual commitment to perseverance from all parties involved will be imperative, since the inherent resisting forces between these stages could render this an exercise in futility (Robbins,1996:564).

In this sense, in the context of South Africa's legacy of Apartheid, Lewin's transformation model means that South Africans need to have been substantially "work shopped" in order for them to relinquish the old order while embracing the new one. Regrettably, in real life things do not happen in flawless packages as outlined in the model. Nevertheless, the approach serves as a positive stride towards contribution in the trajectory of transformation.

The constitution of South Africa which was adopted in 1994 strives to address the discrepancies of the Apartheid government which promoted and institutionalised discriminatory practices which limited the civil liberties and rights of non-white South Africans. In the context of the current intense debate about human rights and principles of freedom in a democratic South Africa, the redefinition of gender relations, cannot be put aside. There is no single way through which the resilient tenacity of gender inequalities evident in our society can be approached. For the purposes of this dissertation I have decided to highlight literary texts as one such avenue that can be utilized to address issues of gender iniquities in our contemporary times. This will be achieved by questioning the perspectives contained in select literary texts prescribed for Matric learners and for students at higher institutions of learning. The selection is based on the rationale that these students are either "born-frees" or were at a tender age twenty years ago when democracy was achieved in South Africa. As such the study will probe the contribution these

literary texts have made or continue to make in positively or negatively shaping the minds of young people in issues of gender. By critiquing the content of these literary texts the study seeks to contribute towards the generation of knowledge that promotes values which are in line with progressive constitutions of which South Africa is said to be amongst the best in the world.

In light of the above, a critical analysis of the characters in key literary texts by male authors was undertaken with the focus on the portrayal of female characters which emulate how women are perceived in this transitional society. In this regard, “transition” a term which refers to the transitional stage of South African political landscape and literature. The thesis explores the effects and or consequences of perceptions about women within a changing and transforming society in Africa in general, and particularly South Africa with specific reference to isiZulu literary works; which emulates the reality that despite socio-political transformation the effects of apartheid and patriarchy have not totally disappeared from South African fiction. This will be one of the principle themes of the study which will be investigated through selected isiZulu literary works. Although the political transition period starts with the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1990, and the establishment of a government of national unity in the 1994, this study will include earlier works of fiction which represent a remarkable political phase of South African history; a period of time before the end of rule by apartheid government (i.e., pre-1990). This is consciously done to test the extent to which South Africa can claim to be reflective of democratic values. These literary texts investigate a degree to which the shift away from the ideological determinisms of the past entails the redefinition of other socially influential concepts such as notions of gender in general and images of women in particular.

The study also incorporated works published in the dawn and infancy of South African democracy 1991-2008. Narratives will investigate if there are changing trends in representation of public life and the individual experiences of female characters in the context of an older tradition of patriarchy in society. It will further examine to what extent the persistence and or transition of cultural mind-sets and

stereotypes are reflected and how the representation of numerous female characters in these texts reflect on the sector of South African society that forms the social setting of each text. The key isiZulu literary texts investigated, therefore, are *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi* (Fear of the Frown) by Ngubane (1975), *Ngiwafunge AmaBomvu* (I Swear on the AmaBomvu) by Molefe (1991), *Ababulali Benyathi* (Killers of the Buffalo) by Mngadi (2006) and *Kudela Owaziyo* (Happy is the One Who Knows) by Maphumulo (2008). One of the expectations of the doctoral studies is that they exhibit originality and contribute new knowledge. It is important therefore, to point out from the onset that the study is ground-breaking in that while the focus of the study is isiZulu literary texts written by male authors it also brings forward prominent authors from African countries; as well as Zulu writers whose works are written in English. In all instances the study is confined to works that are considered to be classics. These texts are interrogated and will be referred to, to illustrate a particular point.

1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Study

In the literate world male writers play a key role in changing the perception of women in society along with female writers. African cultural traditions played an important role in creating perceptions and stereotypes about African women. Commenting on Zulu culture, for example, Peires (1981:82) maintains that “male chauvinism in the Zulu kingdom is appropriately recorded in existing historical and ethnographic literature. It originates from the pre-colonial history of Africa, and the subject can impossibly be adequately accounted for except in very broad terms”.

He further argues that “the location of the sources of women’s oppression in class societies has been a subject of a certain amount of disagreement among recent feminist writers. While some maintain that men’s domination emerges from the power of the state, others argue that it is rooted in the nature of relations between men and women within the domestic and cultural context” (ibid). In the Zulu culture for example, women were seen as a good investment to *umnumzane*, head of the household, because should his daughter get married, he would receive *ilobolo* – a minimum of eleven cattle, from the groom. This then would increase the wealth of the bride’s father. Peires further asserts that,

from early childhood women were groomed with household chores because the belief was that they needed to be prepared for their marriages. Enslaving oneself was part of the package so that should one find oneself in a polygamous marriage, one would stand out from the rest. Pressures and punishment exerted by parents and age-mates, no doubt, have played an important role in ensuring that a young woman would conform to the norms and behaviour prescribed for her. Moreover, probably even more compelling in bringing forth her obedience was the fear that if she deviated too far, she would have difficulty in finding a husband and so be confined to the position of a social failure (1981:84).

The roles have been clearly defined between young girls and boys using their gender as a determinant. According to Peires;

the existential discrimination finds its origin in the distinction made between the sexes, male and female. From a young and tender age, girls are introduced to the observance of that which must be avoided when they are in the presence of their superior male counterparts and to adopt an attitude that displays their compliance to this unequal status quo". This is a disposition that is systematically entrenched in her biological development into adulthood and it intensifies at every stage of development. Ultimately this process of intensification culminates in a multiplicity of restrictive sanctions applicable to the married woman (Peires,1981:85).

Hence male voices (authors) of that era confirm and reinforce all of the above in their representation of women in their literary texts. Within the framework which has just been provided, this study is aimed at adopting literature as a way of investigating the role of men in constructing, influencing and or perpetuating notions and trends which depict women as inferior to their male counterpart. It aims at focusing on literary texts as another essential area that should be used to channel our energies in a fight against gender disparities in our societies. In this way it is hoped that works of literary art could be seen to talk to real issues affecting our society in the present dispensation. In essence therefore, the aim of this thesis is to argue that women's social issues should not be the preserve of male critics and writers only. The undertaking of this study introduces a conscious criticism of how male writers' perspectives influence the literary representation of female characters in the Zulu fiction of the transition. It is for this reason that while investigating how African male authors and Zulu male writers in particular, represent women in their literary texts, works by female authors will also be examined to present female voices and or their contribution amidst the silencing paradox of male writers.

1.3 Reasons for Undertaking the Study

By placing its emphasis on male authors, the study wants to challenge the aspect of prevailing societal ideologies that make it difficult for men to change. Like most African men who experienced bitter discrimination during colonial era, Zulu men have also suffered the debilitating psychological effects of Apartheid. In engaging mainly with isiZulu literary works and focusing on male writers in particular, this study hopes to challenge more writers to tackle fundamental ideologies that prevail, which in turn undermine ideas enshrined in the South African constitution which are then not translated into actions. More importantly, the concept of reality versus idealism in the depiction of women is the most significant and will be investigated through an in-depth analysis of works written by men. This remains the responsibility of writers and storytellers to influence societies in realistic ways through, for example, promoting the discourse of equality and respect of human dignity.

A selection of literary works has been made as a point of departure in the exposition of this study and is prompted by the conviction that literature as an artistic form is highly influenced by societal and cultural contexts in which it is produced or read; and vice versa. In addition, Matasa and Muwati (2008:159) note that “there are authors who use their creativity to display a connotative and feigned context that enables them to make an unobtrusive contribution to contemporary issues and not displaying themselves as flagrant”. Literary works are also a reflection of how a particular society has been socialized; and socialization, which in the main takes place within the environment of a family, fulfils an important role in society since it welcomes and incorporates new members into a particular society maintains Zondi (2008:162).

So, literature becomes an interesting form of exposing both domestic and public individual characters as they grow through experiences in the narrative. Literature thus serves as a form and window through which, we see characters’ values, beliefs and norms being transferred. In patriarchal societies for example, individuals are socialized to believe that masculine gender is superior to feminine gender. Some of these patriarchal beliefs, while present in African cultures in general, sometimes focus specifically on the relationship between men and women asserts Zondi (2008: 164).

Talbot (1998:3) observes that, “in such societies being born male or female has far-reaching repercussions for an individual. Gender inequality thus prescribes for example, spaces where male gender may be viewed to be associated with public field while feminine gender gets associated with private space”. These are some of the questions the study intends to investigate in the works selected. In order to give adequate attention to the issue of how African male authors and Zulu male authors of the transition in particular, depict women in their literary works, the study will limit its scope to the selection of modern literature in the form of novels and drama. In this regard, some of the most critical key issues to be investigated will be language, gender and power as reflected in the literary works of these genre. As it was pointed out earlier, other relevant literature will also be incorporated in the study with an aim of engaging deeper with the topic. Further reasons for undertaking this study extend to personal experiences as well as to those that are academic in nature.

1.3.1 Personal reasons for the study

Boshego (2007: 43) argues that, “the author plays an important role in developing readers’ knowledge and understanding about values conferred upon women and men characters”. As such I believe my study is critical as it will inform authors about how their works are received and perceived by readers. Conversely, the study attempts to offer a framework for female readers who consume literature on how to identify prevailing problematic ideology in contemporary literary works. Being a study whose thrust is on African male authors, my interest as a woman in this study has to do with bringing a balanced interpretation of the stories selected. The other point is that I have reflected on my years of past experiences as a woman steeped in the Education profession and who has not just remained in the same category. Having worked as a high school teacher, Lecturer at Colleges of Education and currently a Deputy Chief Education Specialist in Examinations and Assessment I find myself well situated to undertake this study. I have concerns about the following as far as materials and literary texts in particular, that find their way into our classrooms; be it high schools or institutions of higher learning:

- Given that there are Selection Committees tasked with selecting literary texts for high schools and institutions of higher learning, do those committees reflect gender equity in their formation?
- What guidelines (if any) are used to decide on the material or literature that is to be prescribed, especially the home language books / materials?
- What criteria are used in the selection of these books?
- Whose word is final in the selection of those novels or short stories that find their way into the classroom?
- In making their selections, do such committees take into account the enduring (positive and or negative) impacts that a particular choice might have on the students exposed to such writings?

In this regard I am made to think of texts that I have taught to students at one time or another whose reading and interpretations thereof could have left an indelibly distorted images about women in my life. Examples of texts that come to my mind are *Ikhiwane Elihle* (A beautiful fig) written by Molefe and published in 1985, *Isitolo Esasingasebhang* (The Shop next to the Bank) by the same author and published in 1988 and *Ngaze ngazenza* (I put myself in this mess) written by Masondo in 1994. All of these mentioned texts are written by male writers and their storyline reduce female characters to lesser beings; in some cases perceived as even less than human beings while applauding and promoting male supremacy in the male character portrayal. My present study is relevant where some of the texts under review represent the nature of texts prescribed for schools and academic institutions in South Africa's current democratic dispensation.

Gilbert and Gubar (1979:67) note that "if male sexuality is fundamentally associated with the assertive presence of literary power, then female sexuality is linked with the absence of such power". This could not be truer for Zulu culture where women seemed to have been excluded from writing during the Apartheid regime. Of course it is also vital to consider that such scarcity was also as a result of lack of access to education to which women were further victims due to the past dispensation; the remains of which are still felt today. I believe that studies such as this one will help

stimulate publication of relevant literature by female authors where misrepresentations of women might be challenged.

Finally, as a female critic, my aim is to show that women's social issues should not be the preserve of male critics and writers only. While male writers play a key role in changing the perception of women in society along with women, by undertaking this study I seek to introduce a conscious criticism of how male writers' perspectives influence the literary representation of female characters in the South African isiZulu fiction. Therefore, texts by female authors will be brought on board to present female voices amidst the conundrum of male writers.

1.3.2 Academic Reasons for the Study

Firstly, in highlighting the academic reasons for undertaking the present study I find some illuminating thoughts by Blunt and Rose worth bringing forward. They are apt in this discussion as they touch the core of this study. He maintains that:

Conditions under which men and women write are materially different, the social construction of gender affects how the writings of men and women are read, and the interpretations of text are influenced by gender consciousness of individual readers. Patriarchal discourses locate women both inside and outside construction of "literature", making the feminine primarily an object rather than a subject of the gaze and thus desire (Blunt & Rose, 1994:58).

Most scholars who have investigated literary texts have largely ignored gender as a social variable. Despite very extensive gender research, there has been limited investigation into the importance of representation of women in isiZulu literature. With the issue of gender equity currently being a point of great concern in South Africa's young democracy, this study intends to explore the issue within the context of the selected literary texts. It also intends to sensitize writers; both male and female on the importance and impact of character portrayal, especially female characters, in their work.

For Gilbert and Gubar (cited in Green and Kahn, 2003:147) “there is no doubt that literature reflects life, and that experience of life is translated into literature. It is thus not surprising to find that women are estranged from the literary canon which reflects chiefly a male view of life, which is not necessarily women’s experience”. The issues to be investigated in this study will address the question of complacency of African male writers in general, and Zulu male writers in particular, to tackle gender imbalances in line with the transformation agenda. It is my hope that through the selected texts reviewed some answers to the questions posed in this study will be provided.

Secondly, in line with the South African democratic constitution which upholds gender equality, amongst other human rights, literature is a mirror through which any society is able to look at itself will be used to evaluate to what extent there has been progress (if any) in this area. Through an in- depth study of literary texts written by males prior to, and post 1994 one might be able to ascertain whether there is a change in the representation of women. This study seeks to investigate whether there has been any shift from male supremacy towards gender equality and how isiZulu literary texts have contributed to the (re)shaping of societal norms and ideology. I believe that my study will open a robust debate amongst male and female writers that will enrich the body of knowledge in literature from a gender perspective. It will further challenge both female and male writers to give the readers a true picture of a “new woman” of the new South African society who is educated, works as a professional and who controls her own destiny.

Lastly, most of the research of this kind has been conducted mainly from the male point of view. The fact that I am a woman conducting a study about representation of women by men in their writings distinguishes me when considering that I will be able to bring a woman’s voices to the discourse.

1.4 Research Problems and Key Questions to be Asked

When South Africa achieved its democracy in 1994 a new era was ushered in. The new African led government of South Africa crafted and adopted an internationally recognised and admired constitution as its base. In the new constitution, not only

were basic rights for all protected, but they were entrenched in the constitution in the form of the Bill of Human Rights. Through this constitution all women of South Africa were deemed liberated and empowered. All laws that had been discriminatory against women were, henceforth, abolished as South Africa prioritized the transformation agenda. According to Goodwin, (1979:212). “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (as adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, 10 December 1994) in which is embedded the principle of the inadmissibility of discrimination, and which proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights was also adopted. It also guarantees that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, including distinction based on sex” Against this background it becomes imperative that our society transforms all aspects of human understanding; including what we consume in the form of a written word. In the past African male writers, with unconscious bias, generally silenced women’s voices and focused specifically on the voices of men. This situation had a great impact in the way women were viewed by both genders that make the fabric of society. With the above in mind and amongst a number of concerns, the following are key questions that guided the study:

- Does literature, in line with the transformation agenda, provide convincing or idealized images of women?
- Does the portrayal of women by male writers change to reflect the changing social and political order?
- Have there been male supremacy shifts subsequent to South African proclamation of democracy in 1994? If so, how has Zulu literary texts contributed to the (re)shaping of perspectives which promotes tolerance, gender equality and justice? If not, how does this study which focuses on literary texts hope to contribute in mind shifts?
- Does post-apartheid literary production delineate or offer perspective on a “new woman” for the new SA society?
- What does a concept of a “transformed man” mean in relation to post-apartheid literary trajectory?
- What do enlightened women consider to be their role amidst the silencing conundrum of the males’ world?

1.5 Unpacking Crucial Concepts in the Title and their Delimitational Use

For ease of navigation I find it essential to explain some key concepts found in the title of the study as well as the context in which they will be used. This exploration will further contribute to the justification of the adoption of the theoretical underpinnings of my study which is dealt with in Chapter 3. The study is located within the literary context with a thrust in gender discourse. Titled “African male voices: Representation of women images in selected isiZulu literary texts-reality or idealism in the following subsections I provide the definitions of central concepts in the title within the perimeters of this study.

1.5.1 African Male Voices

African male voices refer to the literary works written by male authors of African origin. Gilbert and Gubar (1979:64) maintain that, “historically, writing has been classified as a masculine pursuit as is evidenced through the proportion of male to female published authors. It is associated with paternalism, creation and even Godliness. In the book by Gilbert and Gubar entitled *The Madwoman in the Attic* these scholars perceive a pen as a metaphor for penis”. This study will generally address literary works by African male writers even though the emphasis will be on literary texts by Zulu writers and with reference to selected literary texts. However, in a study of this nature it will be inevitable to include works by African female authors albeit brought forward to add context, illustrate or bolster a particular point. For that reason it should not come as a surprise when works by female authors are mentioned. After all, and in keeping with binary laws of nature (Levi Strauss, in Canonici, 1996) men do not exist in isolation to women.

1.5.2 Representation

The word “representation” is a very important concept in this study. It is a noun that emanates from the verb “to represent”. According to the Oxford Dictionary, to represent something “is to describe or depict it, to call it up in the mind by description or portrayal or imagination” (Soanes and Stevenson, 2004:1220). Representation is, according to Hall (1997:61) therefore, “a process by which members of a culture use

language to produce meaning. It is people in society within human cultures who give meaning to things, and in that way communicate". Hall further asserts that representation connects meaning and language to culture. It means using language to say something meaningful about or to represent the world meaningfully to other people. It also involves the use of language, signs and images which stand for or represent things (ibid.).

According to Hall there are three approaches to explaining how representation of meaning through language works;

They are: the reflective, the intentional and the constructionist or constructivist approaches. In the reflective approach, meaning is thought to be situated in the object, person, idea, or event in the real world. Then language functions like a mirror, to reflect the true meaning as it already exists in the world. Hence the theory that language works by simply reflecting or imitating the truth that is already there and fixed in the world, that is sometimes called "mimetic". The second approach to meaning in representation argues that it is the speaker, and hence in the context of my study, the author, who imposes his or her unique meaning on the world through language. Words mean what the author intends them to mean; thus, the concept "intentional approach". The third approach recognizes this public and social character of language. Things do not mean: we construct meaning, using representational systems, concepts and signs. Hence it is called the constructivist or constructionist approach to meaning in language. It is social actors who use the conceptual systems of their culture and linguistic and other representational systems to construct meaning, to make the world meaningful and to communicate about that world meaningfully to others (Hall,1997:24).

Given that South Africa is now a democratic country, this thesis will align itself with the latter approach, which views the world in a constructionist view. In so doing it will argue that overthrowing the status quo is something that remains in the hands of society as there is nothing intrinsic about the current situation where gender disparity is apparent. Since our understanding of gender is that it is something that is constructed, I believe that by engaging in a study of this nature some long sown seeds of perceiving different genders in a different manner can be challenged and thus deconstructed.

1.5.3 Women Images

Women images refer to character representation and/or portrayal of females in the literary texts. In investigating this concept I will focus on the use of language and gender roles allocated to female characters and the consequences this has on African societies and Zulu culture in particular.

1.5.4 Literary Texts

A literary text is a written work, generally narrative, that is seen as a worthwhile body of work. Literary texts are works of literature that convey a message. There is no consensus on what forms of literature constitute literary texts. Some definitions exclude drama from the category of literary texts. For the purposes of this study literary texts include novels, short stories and drama. Whilst poetry is also a form of literary text which is expressed in verse, this study will limit itself to the forms mentioned above and does not include poetry.

1.5.5 Reality or Idealism

Furst, (1992) and Walder (1995) both agree that “realism refers to a determination to portray life as it truly is. It can further be defined as an interest in or concern for the actual or real as distinguished from the abstract and speculative” attests Harrison (2003:191). Harrison (2003:31) further maintains that, “in literature, therefore, this is an approach that attempts to represent reality of life without idealization or romantic subjectivity. It is the depiction in art or literature of objects, actions, or social conditions as they essentially are”. Al Dabbagh (2012:8) is of the view that, “realism as the depiction of objective reality is an inevitable phenomenon, but its change however, is also inevitable according to the various historical epochs, and according to the change in the writer’s understanding and outlook”. An antonym of realism explained above, is idealism. Chambliss (1996:291) is of the view that, “idealism, on the other hand, embodies an “idealized” view of things- a vision of sorts, a mind’s-eye picture of a utopian condition of affairs in which the realization of certain values is fulfilled and perfected. Ideals as such are an instrument of the imagination. They represent values and revision of how things ought (“ideally”) to stand in the world, even though they do not and indeed cannot do so”. In the context of this study reality means the true picture of life as experienced by women and disseminated through women character portrayal in the texts that will be examined. In a nutshell, idealism refers to the state that reflects what ought to be but which does not exist. At the end of this study and after careful reflection of the literary texts chosen I will be able to ascertain whether the representation of women images in selected literary texts point to the reality or idealism.

1.6 Scope of the Present Study

The study will focus on the literary texts mentioned in 1.1, namely, *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi* by Ngubane (1975), *Ngiwafunge Amabomvu* by Molefe (1991), *Ababulali Benyathi* by Mngadi (2006) and *Kudela Owaziyo* by Maphumulo (2008). As was indicated, some texts from the diverse South African society, prominent English works by Zulu scholars as well as African authors will be brought forward whenever necessary in order to shed light on a particular point.

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1 has served as an introductory chapter whose general aim was to situate the study in line with transformation and democratic imperatives in post 1994 South Africa. It has addressed various areas such as aims and reasons for undertaking the study. Accordingly, by outlining both the academic and personal reasons for conducting the study, the chapter has indicated why the study was conceived in the first place. It has further profiled the problem being investigated and key questions to be answered in the study. Importantly, the chapter has unpacked key concepts found in the topic with a purpose of mapping the direction the study will take while also setting its parameters.

Chapter 2 will deal with literature review. This means that it will engage with previously undertaken studies related to the topic and which I have consulted. Mouton (2001:5) asserts that a doctoral degree “signifies that one has produced new knowledge. It also implies that a person has advanced beyond the level of reproducing and mastering existing knowledge. One needs to have progressed to a level of making a unique contribution to the scholarship in a particular domain”.

Against Mouton’s (2001) statement, the chapter will further justify the importance of my study when viewed in accordance with the amount of background study that will inform new knowledge that will emerge from my study. In addition, this chapter will demonstrate the uniqueness of the study by an eclectic approach in which new knowledge will be integrated with past studies. This method will result in the outcome of the final product making a valuable contribution to studies that endeavour to make our world more equal or egalitarian for both men and women in practical ways.

Chapter 3 will present a theoretical framework adopted in this study. “While in empirical studies the chapter on literature review also covers the theoretical framework informing it” (Mouton, 2001:123), my study will differ in its approach. Being a desk top study which examines literary texts, the two chapters are treated separately, if only for convenience. The theories that will be used in this study are feminist in nature with a focus on literary feminism.

Chapter 4 will report on the methodology that was used to conduct this study. It will offer comprehensive information on data collection processes. The procedure will involve various activities which will progressively introduce the main part of the study; which will be bringing forward the literary texts of this study as well as their analysis.

Chapter 5 will be a continuation of what was begun in chapter 4. Whilst the two chapters have been separated they must not be seen as independent of each other. They are only being separated more for convenience of handling what otherwise would be a cumbersome task as well as to give structure to the thesis. An analysis of the texts that were chosen to represent African male voices in which women images are represented will be undertaken.

Chapter 6 will try to establish whether there has been a conscious or unconscious effort by male authors to transform the representation of women images in their literary text. In order to trace this paradigm shift two African and two Zulu authors’ works will be analysed.

Chapter 7 will be a concluding chapter which will summarise the findings of the study while also providing implications for future research and recommendations.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has laid the foundations of the study by attending to essential elements that the study hopes to cover. These main areas include, amongst others, the aims and objectives of the research as well as the reasons for undertaking the study. It outlined the background to South Africa’s socio-political landscape which I, the researcher, argue is vital in the study of literary texts that I am undertaking. Crucial concepts of the study were unpacked while the research problem and key questions

that this research seeks to answer were also considered. In short, this chapter serves as a scope of the entire study. It is important to highlight that the issue of women images has been undertaken by some scholars before in South Africa and in the entire continent of Africa. Therefore, the next chapter will review literature written by different authors and scholars male and female in Africa and particularly in South Africa. This will be done with a view of presenting new knowledge and closing the gaps in these studies in line with the new dispensation.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

A Literature review is vital in any research if the research results are to be reliable. Polit and Hungler (2001) and Polit and Beck (2008) (cited in Zwane, 2011:10) maintain that “a literature review is pivotal in any study as it provides a correlation between existing past and current research on a particular topic. The literature review also reveals shortcomings and makes proposals in the body of knowledge, thus providing the parameters for a new study”.

Given that there already is a significant body of research in which women are portrayed negatively in so far as they do not satisfy the constitutionalised South African ideal of male writers, a literature review is vital in order to identify possible gaps that require further exploration. This study is concerned with the portrayal of women by male writers in African literature with the emphasis on isiZulu literature. In a study of this nature, women authors cannot be excluded as their inclusion will offer an additional perspective which will augment the analysis of the literary texts selected for this study. This chapter therefore offers a literature review that provides an overview of issues pertinent to the study.

In order to present a systematic approach to the study, and because I can never be in a position to present all the body of literature that has gone into this study, I have decided to incorporate a few examples from a wide range of studies which relate to the topic. They will serve as samples of the scope of work that has gone into this research. There being no single correct method of presenting literature review and influenced by Zondi (2008) where in her study literature review took a thematic approach, for ease of navigation, I have resolved to present for easy reference the review under two broad categories; namely, published and unpublished works. Accordingly, the first section, which will be bulky as it focusses on primary texts related to this study, will concentrate on original works by both male and female authors whilst the second includes unpublished works by Masters and Doctoral students under the following categories:

- Literature review of related literary works by African male authors in the African continent other than South Africa
- Literature review of related literary works by African female authors in the African continent other than South Africa
- Literature review of related literary works by African male authors of South Africa writing in English
- Literature review of related literary works by African female authors of South Africa writing in English
- Literature review of related literary works by African male authors of South Africa writing in isiZulu
- Literature review of related literary works by African female authors of South Africa writing in isiZulu
- Literature review of related Masters or Doctoral degrees.

The rationale for the above organization is that it will allow me to systematically cover a broader spectrum of studies consulted and in the process render credibility to my study. It is also my belief that, after embarking on what I have set to do above, I will have provided a satisfactory knowledge base that would then inform the analysis of the four selected isiZulu literary texts which would further corroborate or refute the primary assumption I had before tackling the study. The study postulation referred to is that, in their literary works of fiction, African male writers, with particular reference to isiZulu writers, have, before democracy, painted a negative picture of women in their writings; a hypothesis that asserts literature as one of the ever present engendering tools in societies. I will also be able to offer my views on whether there has been a substantial shift in the manner in which male authors of the post-apartheid period portray women. For each of the following sub-topics I provide brief summaries of representative texts reviewed which serve as samples in each category. Thereafter I offer some insight into these writings in line with what the study purports to do; which is to examine how women are depicted in literary texts written by African male authors generally; and Zulu male authors in particular. The exercise will, at the end of the study, assist in determining whether these portrayals are a reality or idealism. The inclusion of female authors will also be elucidated upon. I must point out, however, that the last section in this category will not follow the

same pattern; the reason being that they are unpublished works and derive from different context to published works. In the following section, therefore, I provide literature review as outlined above.

2.2 Literature Review of Related Literary Works by African Male Authors in the African Continent other than South Africa

In this section two texts from different epochs in African literature will be discussed; *Things Fall Apart* by a Nigerian author, Chinua Achebe (1958), representing pre-independence period in Africa and *Devil on the Cross* by Kenyan author, Ngugi waThiong'o (1982) representing Africa's post-independence era. The issues raised in these novels correspond with similar trends on the African continent with regards to dominant ideologies during the periods in question.

2.2.1 Chinua Achebe: *Things Fall Apart* (1958)

In this novel, the main character, Okonkwo, is branded as a courageous young man of immense power whose reputation is celebrated across the nine villages and beyond as one who has never been defeated in any wrestling contests (Achebe, 1958). Although he is a respected leader in the Umuofia tribe of the Igbo people, he lives in fear of becoming like his father, Unoka; a man known for his idleness and worthlessness. His father lived a life of luxury and died in shame leaving behind many debts unsettled. Throughout his life, Okonkwo tries not to emulate his father, but, instead to be his exact opposite. From the early age, he creates a good reputation for himself, firstly, by building his own home, and secondly, he works hard as a farmer and a family provider. He is obsessed with the idea of upstanding masculinity and hard work. He has a twelve year old son, Nwoye whose laziness he detests as he reckons the boy will take after his grandfather. At some point, due to his valour, Okonkwo wins a young virgin as his wife. Later on he adopts a fifteen year old boy, Ikemefuna when his family is wiped out during a village faction. The boy regards Okonkwo as his father. A few years after adopting Ikemefuna, the Oracle announces that the boy should be killed. Ezeudu, a village elder, warns Okonkwo not to partake in the boy's killing as they are now like father and son.

However, afraid that he will be viewed as a weakling by his community if he did not kill the boy, he does not heed the elder's advice. He kills the boy himself so as to prove his prowess to the tribesmen. Thereafter one tragedy after another befalls Okonkwo. When Ezeudu dies, Okonkwo experiences a lot of grief since the last time they had talked to each other was when the elder warned him not to kill his adopted son. At Ezeudu's funeral and during performance of some rituals, Okonkwo accidentally kills the elder's son, an incident that results in his being sent into exile with his family. He goes to his mother's village of birth. Back in Okonkwo's village the dead men's tribesmen burn his homestead to cleanse the village of his sin. Christianity comes to his mother's village and to his dismay his son converts. Because Okonkwo is extremely opposed to Christianity, he wages war against missionaries in vain. In despair he commits suicide by hanging himself.

2.2.2 Ngugi wa Thiong'o: *Devil on the cross* (1982)

In *Devil on the cross*, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, narrates the sad story of a heroine, Wariinga, who is a young Kenyan woman whose parents are arrested and incarcerated while she is just two years old. From there onwards her aunt looks after her. Sadly, her aunt's husband, together with the rich old man from Ngorika exploits Wariinga's innocence. But it is the rich old man who impregnates her and consequently robs her of the only opportunity to study and to challenge the immoral society. She considers committing suicide but refrains from doing it. She studies typewriting and shorthand as a way of making a living. She moves to an urban and modern part of Nairobi to find a job. After securing it her boss asks for sexual favours in return for keeping her job. When she objects to his advances Wariinga is immediately dismissed. Instead of consoling her, her lover also walks out on her as he feels she will be a burden on him. When she cannot pay her rent, she is evicted from her flat. Amidst these tribulations, Wariinga contemplates taking her life again; a thought she soon does not give in to. Instead she decides to go back home. While in a bus back home, Wariinga meets a group of females each of who share their own dramatic story about social and economic exploitation. She also meets a man that she thinks she truly loves. However, when the man takes her home to introduce her to his family she learns that he is a son of the rich old man who sexually molested her when she was young. She decides to end that relationship instantly and in anger

pursues and kills his father. From that time onwards she chooses to dedicate her life to the community, especially the working class by becoming their spokesperson.

The younger Wariinga is naturally submissive in her reaction to her oppressors. The older Wariinga on the other hand is more aggressive and even malicious in her approach. As a result she becomes a heroine because of her brave, creative and bright stance against the enemy, compared to any of the man in this novel. She leads when it comes to engaging in class warfare notes Stratton (1994:170).

2.2.3 Representation of Women Images by African Male Authors in pre- and post-independence Literature

In pre-independent Nigeria, the celebration of heroic accomplishments, bravery and tenacity implied that physical strength was admirable which subsequently became a collective yardstick to measure success. Hence the male gender was perceived to be victorious and heroic. Contrary to the popular Western proverb, “behind every successful man there is a woman”, very little is known about women in Okonkwo’s life. In fact, in most cases whenever mention is made of them, emphasis is on what is negative about them. For example, Okonkwo is said to have won a virgin for a wife after he showed heroism. In my opinion this is tantamount to objectifying women that they may be simply given away as a prize trophy. During the week of fasting and peace within the community, Okonkwo does something unprecedented and unacceptable in his community. He brutally beats his youngest wife named, Ojiugo, accusing her of negligence. His action angers the community for he had broken peace of the sacred week. After this regrettable incident, Okonkwo makes some sacrifices to show remorse, however, he had irreversibly shocked his community.

However, the community’s shock is more related to breaking ritual peace than having beaten a woman. Thus, his deed suggests that women can be treated like children, who may be beaten for their mistakes. In fact, when children are corrected they are not mercilessly beaten in the manner that Okonkwo applied to his wife. The other example which shows how unappreciated women are, is seen in the “silence” of Okonkwo’s mother, a woman responsible for raising a hero. The author does not say anything about her, in spite of her raising a fearless hero. When he was exiled it

was in his maternal village that Okonkwo found refuge. That is where he was looked after ensuring that he and his family were in good hands while away from his village. After all “your mother is there to protect you. And that is why we say that mother is supreme” (Achebe, 1958: 94-95).

Achebe’s portrayal of the role of women extends from that of childbearing to the one of giving birth to male offspring. There is an instance in the novel where Okonkwo slaughters a goat for one of his wives when she has had three sons in a row symbolising that culturally it was an honour for a father to have more boys in a family than girls. This also implies honoring the strength of a woman who has successfully birthed sons.

In *Devil on the Cross* Ngugi illustrates an important departure from how women are viewed by African men in post-independence literature. In line with Ngugi’s plot, Wariinga must become an “honorary male” before she can attain heroic standing. The novel is thematically concerned with the concept of how foreign companies and the unethical local elite insatiably exploit the working class in Kenya. According to Stratton (1994:221) “now that Wariinga was well armed with a gun, she was prepared to fight in the struggle against injustice and unfair social system. Her proficiency in martial arts enabled her to attack her opponents furiously using judo kicks and karate chops. She uses a gun at times for men when they treat women unjustly killing them or just breaking their kneecaps”.

Writers of this period pledged to a good cause of gender reform. They firmly demonstrated their concern with women oppression which they wanted to address. That is why Ngugi’s main character, Wariinga is the heroine who provides a model of a ‘new woman’ in the role she performs as the precursor of a new social order. Even though patriarchal thought patterns are still deeply entrenched, the perspective of gender shows a substantial link between the post-independence and pre-independence novels, more generally within the male tradition. Through Wariinga, for example, the range of representation of women in the male literary tradition is significantly extended where women are afforded a status that goes beyond

daughter, wife, mother and prostitute as they also become mechanical engineer, revolutionary leader, and top civil servant, writer, feminist and so forth.

Stratton maintains that,

It is by engaging with women authors in a discourse on gender, that enabled both Ngugi and Achebe in *Devil on the Cross* and *Anthills of Savannah* respectively, to make their noteworthy contribution to the transformation and development of African literature. It was through conversations with women writers, using their status as canonical writers, that enabled them to transform the status of gender from a concealed category to that of a legitimate and important item on the agenda of African men's literature (Stratton,1994:170).

2.3 Literature Review of Related Literary Works by African Female Authors in the African Continent other than South Africa

As stated in the first chapter, men do not exist in isolation to women. For this reason, the novels of Nwapa (1966) and Dangarembga (1988) have been included as examples of women novelists who present their writings from a woman's perspective and thus challenging the notion that women are content with the way male authors portray them. The other reason for including these two authors is that each novelist, to a great extent, draws from individual experiences. The inclusion of women authors in this study is thus critical as it will provide a balance to notions brought to the study.

2.3.1 Flora Nwapa: *Efuru* (1966)

Efuru is set in West Africa and portrays various aspects of Igbo culture. Flora Nwapa is the first female novelist to be published. The central character in the story is Efuru, a strong and beautiful woman. She comes from a distinguished family of Nwashike Ogene, and she was also distinguished herself. Efuru's father is well respected in the community and regarded as a man of valour. During a festival she meets and falls in love with Adizua, who is from a disadvantaged background and is unable to pay the required dowry. Efuru threatens to commit suicide if she cannot have him.

Efuru elopes with him without a bride price being paid for her. With Efuru's assistance and hard work Adizua manages to pay dowry later on. She supports her husband in all possible ways and remains loyal to him. Efuru is admired by both her

mother-in-law and her sister Ajanupu. Right through the novel these three women support each other. Efuru initially struggles to conceive a baby but after a while, they are blessed with a baby- girl and she is named Ogonim. Adizua leaves Efuru and their daughter using trading as a scapegoat. He disappears for months. Not long thereafter Ogonim dies at the age of 2years. Efuru and her mother-in-law try hard to contact Adizua in order to inform him about the passing away of the child, however he could not be found. So the baby was buried in the father's absence. Efuru learns that her husband has married another woman and they have a child. She returns to her father's house. Her father is happy to have her back as he knows she will look after him. Efuru meets Gilbert, an educated man who asks to marry her. Gilbert is a wealthy business man. He treats her well only for a year. The issue of bearing children for Gilbert comes up. Efuru tries in vain to fall pregnant again.

Efuru then organizes a young girl named Nkoyeni to marry Gilbert so that she could bear him a child. Nkoyeni quickly conceived and was blessed with a baby boy. Later on Ogea joined them as Gilbert's third wife. All these efforts failed to keep Efuru's marriage intact. Instead Gilbert disappeared from home and missed Efuru's father's funeral. Thus, her second marriage also fails. She is later selected by the goddess of the lake Uhamiri, a goddess famous for advancing wealth and beauty to her worshippers even though she made them barren.

2.3.2 Tsitsi Dangarembga: *Nervous Conditions* (1988)

The novel begins with a surprising statement "I was not sorry when my brother died". In *Nervous Conditions* the story centres on the Sigawuke family. The story is told from the female character's point of view - Tambudzai (or Tambu), daughter of Jeremiah and Ma'Shingai, a girl who yearns for education but could not have it in the beginning due to her family's dire poverty and the fact that she was a female child. After all, under oppressive male leadership it was not important for a girl to receive education. To beat the odds Tambu kept a small maize garden which she cultivated and sold to get the little education she had. Even then when the cobs were ready for eating they would begin to disappear. As things turned out it was her brother, Nhamo, who stole them and distributed them to his friends. He ridiculed his sister for being a girl with remarks such as:

“It’s the same everywhere...what did you expect...because you are a girl...you can’t study...did you really think you could send yourself to school...” (Dangarembga, 1988:21).

It is only after a tragic death of the same brother who mocked her efforts that Tambu’s rich and educated uncle, Babamukuru extended the offer her; only because the male child he had meant to sponsor died. Babamukuru had hopes that once Nhamo was educated, he would lift our branch of the family out of abject poverty.

The story is about Tambu’s escape from poverty, illiteracy and entrapment. After the death of her brother she is given an opportunity to further her education by her uncle Babamukuru. She then moves from her rural home to the mission house of Babamukuru, that she describes as ‘heaven’. Sending her to the mission school was an attempt by Babamukuru to empower her, so that she could uplift her poor family. Lifestyle at Babamukuru’s house was totally different from life in the rural village. She also got exposed to the western way of living namely: having a maid that took care of the family laundry instead of washing by the riverside. Here she got an opportunity to bond with her cousin Nyasha because they were sharing a bedroom. She also got to understand Maiguru, her real feelings about the entire family.

Because of Tambu’s outstanding performance at school, she gets a scholarship to study at Sacred Heart, Catholic private school. In the meantime her mother, Ma’ Shingayi falls ill. Lucia, her sister, helps her to recovery by supporting her. On the other hand Maiguru fails to hide her disagreement and anger, when Babamukuru splashes money with an unnecessary wedding of his brother. The end of the novel is catastrophic, with Nyasha suffering from a mental disorder.

2.3.3 Representation of Women Images by African Female Authors in Literature

Nwapa portrays life in the Igbo culture, especially as it impacts on women. Set in the village of Oguta, where Nwapa herself lived, the novel tells the story of an independent-minded woman named Efuru. Unpredictable in her actions as she may seem, Efuru represents a multi-dimensional and well-rounded human being with both virtues and imperfections. Following her emotions and against tradition she elopes

with her first husband whom she knows would not be able to pay her bride price. But then again she submits to tradition and undergoes the excruciating female circumcision. Unable to have a lasting marriage or give birth to children like other women in her village she remains firm and strong, maintaining a very prosperous business and standing as a perfect example of generosity, intelligence and care among her peers. Her generosity becomes vivid when she is approached by poor families asking her to loan them money. She responds by borrowing them even when they have not paid back the first loan. She is portrayed as a caring woman. She took Nwosu to the doctor when he was very sick, and she further paid his hospital bill. None of the dibias could tell what was wrong with him. She also took Nona to the doctor when she had trouble with her knee.

She becomes a role model and a catalyst for change in her society as she gradually adopts counter-normative ideas about the role of women. After marrying Adizua, her husband tried to persuade Efuru to go work on the farms. She categorically refuses claiming that she is not cut out for farm work. She is also depicted as a very intelligent woman. She understood the importance of good family relationship. That is why her mother-in-law's sister describes Efuru in the following manner; 'She is a woman among women' (Nwapa, 1966:107). She respects traditional customs and practices. Hence she insists that her marriage with Adizua, her first husband, will not be complete until he pays the dowry and fulfils her people's marriage custom. It is only after those rites have been performed that Efuru feels she is really married to her husband. Although she believes in romantic love and rejects to have an arranged marriage, she, on the other hand, acknowledges man's right to polygamy by finding a second wife for her second husband when she cannot bear children for him maintaining that "only a bad woman would like to be married alone by her husband" (Nwapa, 1966:57). Having realised that going to that extreme did not make her husband appreciate her, opened her eyes to the fact that her life was not to be dictated by a man. Her struggles represent women as more enduring in the face of difficulties, more resourceful in the home front and finance management and better composed in distress situations. Efuru appears superior even to men, especially her two husbands, with respect to her intelligence, success in business and social life. This new perspective which highlights the role of women in Nigerian literature gave a

second generation Nigerian writers a better view of women. Efuru is portrayed as a woman that strives for change in her community, but she is not rebellious against her culture. On the contrary, she shows reverence to the traditions of her people, and she never wishes to overlook or discredit them.

Nervous Conditions, a novel by a Zimbabwean writer, Dangarembga (1988), draws on the life of the author herself, whose invented characters resemble actual events and situations from her own life. It presents first-hand experience of women oppression under male domination. In this sense it is more powerful as it persuasively situates the position of women under male authority. Tambu thus becomes a voice of other voiceless women in the story. The very opening statement "I was not sorry when my brother died" (Dangarembga, 1988:1) is a powerful statement that demonstrates dissatisfaction with unequal opportunities for men and women in colonial Zimbabwe. It describes circumstances which lead to Tambu receiving good education which only materialised because of the death of her brother.

Lucia is Tambu's aunt. Lucia is initially described in this manner: "There is nothing of a woman there. She sleeps with anybody and everybody, but she hasn't borne a single child yet (Dangarembga, 1988:128). To affirm her weak morals, she falls pregnant after sleeping with two men that are related to one another. However, she finally escapes polygamy and liberates herself by getting employment at the mission school and later registers as student at the same school.

Nyasha, is Babamukuru's daughter and therefore Tambu's cousin. Nyasha is Babamukuru's daughter who attended school in England. We see her struggling to come to terms with African culture; his father's attitude of being "mr right and perfect family". She is a very rebellious daughter. Her rebellion ended up not being successful at the end.

Being a highly educated woman trapped in Babamukuru's spell, Maiguru also represents yet another angle of male authority within the Zimbabwean society. Though highly educated, with a bachelor's degree from South Africa and a Master's degree from England, Maiguru could not have control over her finances. As such "she could not use the money she earned for her own purpose and had been

prevented by marriage from doing things she wanted to do”(Dangarembga, 1988:103) Not even international exposure could remove chauvinistic attitude in Babamukuru even as far as his wife was concerned.

This further suggests that patriarchal power should be understood beyond day to day women oppression due to males being providers. *Maiguru*, was in a worse situation than her fellow womenfolk; for her education did not provide what she had hoped it would; hence it was not equivalent to liberation; a phenomenon that must have discontented her. Educated as Babamukuru’s family was, none of them endeavoured to work towards changing the entrenched mindsets of their society. Male superiority was something that was entrenched in Shona culture and that challenging it could almost be viewed as profane rendering it difficult if not impossible challenge.

Tambu is the main character in this novel. After receiving a scholarship to study at a private convent school, Tambu got a lecture from Babamukuru :

As for you, we think we are providing for you quite well. By the time you finish your Form Four you will be able to take your course, whatever it is that you choose. In time you will be earning money. You will be in a position to be married by a decent man and set up a decent home (Dangarembga, 1988:183).

Such speeches irritated Tambu, who represents a modern woman, because for her marriage was not the main objective of living. She actually sees marriage as an animal with tentacles that threaten to disrupt her life before she even starts owning it. Engendering, in Tambu’s life, had thus been something she had been exposed to long before she even became conscious of what was happening around her. As maintained by Talbot (1998:7) “(p)eople are ‘gendered’ and actively involved in the process of their own gendering”.

Ma’Shingayi, represents the image of traditional African woman, who thinks that her major task is to bear children raise them in a traditional way, by teaching them the basic skills of surviving in this life. Tambu’s mother, is not consulted about her daughter, Tambu’s imminent educational prospects. Hence she looks on helplessly as her daughter is “dragged” into the same situation that she claims ‘robbed’ her of her son, Nhamo. As an uneducated woman within the homestead her plight is even worse since in her context she cannot challenge men, let alone educated men.

Tambu's mother represents all other women who have learned to accept the fate of being woman; when she says:

This business of womanhood is a very heavy burden. How could it not be? Aren't we the ones who bear children? When it's like that you can't decide today I want to do this, tomorrow I want to do that, the next day I want to be educated! When they are sacrifices to be made, you are the one who has to make them. And these things are not easy; you have to start learning them early, from a very early age. The earlier the better so that it is easy later on (Dangarembga, 1988:16).

The awkward situation about this state of affairs is that Ma'Shingayi could not even share her predicament with Maiguru even though they were married to men who were brothers. This demonstrates the insidious silencing effect of the patriarchal power in this society. "In patriarchal communities such as the one in Dangarembga's *Nervous Condition*, the sex of the child whether male or female had far reaching consequences for an individual" confirms Talbot (1998; 3). The above statement could not be truer for Tambu. She had been unconsciously "schooled" in matters of the superiority of the male child, the practice of a female child being responsible for the domestic space and prioritization higher education for male children maintains Murray (1999:50). This situation is a living testimony that the position of a girl child is a precarious one.

Of African and Black women's writing, it is *Nervous Conditions* that most vividly articulates, through the portrait of different generations of African women, the extent to which emancipation, justice and all that women desire remain a constant possibility. The two novels examined above have illustrated the powers vested in women. They have shown the extent to which women succeed amidst tribulations. Through their protagonists, Efurú and Tambu, Nwapa and Dangarembga respectively, give voice to women by depicting them as multi-dimensional heroines amidst misfortunes that they encounter; thus proving their resilience and fighting spirit.

2.4 Literature Review of Related Literary Works by African Male Authors of South Africa Writing in English

In this section I bring forward for consideration, two texts by African male South African authors who write in English. The first book, *The Heart of Redness* by Zakes Mda (2000) is set in two interconnected time precincts: the time of Nongqawuse's prophecies (1856-1857) and the post-apartheid present. The second, *The Memory of Stones* by Mandla Langa (2000), talks about hardships such as exile that some families had to go through before reaping the fruits of democracy.

2.4.1 Zakes Mda: *The Heart of Redness* (2000)

This novel has historical roots of the Xhosa tribe. It is about the historical mass suicide that took place when the Xhosa tribe was deceived by a false prophetess named Nongqawuse and Nombanda. Later on joined by Nonkosi. In *The Heart of Redness* (2000) Mda re-examines the well documented historical account of the 1850s in the Eastern Cape village of Qolorha when the prophetess Nongqawuse conveyed a prophecy supposedly received from the Xhosa ancestors. The prophesy was that:

Nongqawuse saw messengers Naphakade; "The strangers said I must tell the nation that all cattle now living must be slaughtered. They have been reared by contaminated hands because there are people who deal in witchcraft. The fields must not be cultivated, but great new grain pits must be dug, new houses built and great strong cattle kraals must be erected. Cut out new milk sacks and weave many doors from buka roots. The Strangers say that the whole community of the dead will arise. When the time is ripe they will arise from the dead, and new cattle will fill the kraals. The people must leave their witchcraft, for soon they will be examined by diviners" (Mda, 2000:60).

The radical prophecy split the community into two camps of the Believers and the Non-believers. The prophesy divided families, as it did with Xikixa's twin-boys named Twin and Twin-Twin. Animosity did not stop there but it continued for generations. The descendant of Twin, Zim, became a believer and Twin –Twin's descendant, Bhonco, also became an Unbeliever. The feud and competition ravaged the two families's generations for decades. Zim married NoEngland and they were blessed with two children; a boy named after his great grandfather Twin and the girl also

named after her great grandmother Qukezwa. Bhonco's wife was noPeticcoat. They were blessed with one daughter Xoliswa Ximiya.

The novel's setting is at Qolorha- by-the-Sea. The homestead is invaded by a highly educated man called Camagu. He comes to this village in search of a woman, called NomaRussia, that he met in Hillbrow Johannesburg. He ends up settling at Qolorha. He starts dating a highly educated daughter of Bhonco, named Xoliswa Ximiya. Xoliswa is also the principal of Qolorha Secondary School. After dating Xoliswa for a short while he gets attracted to Qukezwa, Zims daughter. His move strained the relationship further between the Believers and Unbelievers.

When the western developers came to Qolorha with a proposal of building a casino in the area, they were supported by Bhonco and the Unbelievers. The Believers on the other hand were totally against the casino project. Instead of building a casino in the area, they preferred that natural indigenous trees should be preserved as natural heritage, that would be an attraction for tourists.

2.4.2 Mandla Langa: *The Memory of Stones* (2000)

In *The Memory of Stones* the central story is set at Ngoza, an area that was a war zone in KwaZulu-Natal around 1996. During the Apartheid era the legitimate occupants of Ngoza were forcefully removed to give way for erection of a military base. When the story begins the lawful residents have been reinstated in their land of origin in accordance with the decision of The Land Claims Court. Under the leadership of Baba Joshua a church, called Temple of the New Jerusalem is started; symbolic of a return from displacement. The group wanted to forget the past which had been epitomized by deceitfulness, shame and a potential to weaken hope (Langa, 2000:23). Baba Joshua was married to Nomonde and they were blessed with two children; son Jonah and a girl named Zodwa. Jonah died whilst in exile.

As the community was still celebrating their return to Ngoza, Baba Joshua's health deteriorated. Not all community members supported Baba Joshua. There was a small fraction of an opposition group under the leadership of Johnny M. Johnny M was a gangster tycoon, who wanted to infiltrate the sect's privacy in order to

confiscate the land and build a casino where the church was constructed. In that way he would reinforce his control over the region. When Baba Joshua was on his death bed he pronounced his only surviving daughter, Zodwa to be his successor.

Even though Zodwa does not initially consider settling in her village she is persuaded by many female and male characters to lead them, as she is seen as the most enigmatic leader with an ability to provide a much needed direction to their community. However, her chieftaincy was opposed by two contenders, namely, Johnny M (a coldblooded criminal) and Zodwa's uncle Mbongwa. Despite their individual personal motives, both candidates are emboldened by their patriarchal attitudes to challenge Zodwa's legitimacy as a leader. Mbongwa, a strong traditionalist, stood against Zodwa because he believed that they "cannot bear the idea of being ruled by a woman" (Langa, 2000: 221). Furthermore, both Johnny and Mbongwa felt that Zodwa was an embarrassment and a disgrace to her community because she had a love relationship with Horwitz, a white man.

Equipped with a law degree, she reluctantly took on the reins; an action which upset the traditionalists in the community as they did not want to be led by a woman. Johnny M wanted to take an advantage of that situation by appointing Baba Joshua's underhand brother-in-law Mbongwa as the new leader at Ngoza. The reason behind his plan was that Johnny M knew that he would actually be the one leading the community as Mbongwa would be his lapdog.

Zodwa is guided and supported by strong women like Nozizwe, MaNdlela, Nerissa and Benedita. Amongst Zodwa's supporters is Mpanza, a man who also came back from exile abroad. Zodwa did not know that Mpanza was responsible for the death of her brother Jonah. Jonah was assassinated by Mpanza and other comrades when he was erroneously alleged to be a government informer. Even before Baba Joshua's burial Johnny M launched an attack against Zodwa and the believers of New Jerusalem. Mpanza came up with the strategic tactics that the believers used when they were attacked by Johnny M's faction. This endeared him to Zodwa. Johnny M, after killing many people, was apprehended by the police and imprisoned

for a very long time. In the spirit of peace, Baba Joshua taught the people to forget the past, on the contrary Zodwa wanted them to reclaim it as their own and keep it as the repository of their collective memory (Langa, 2000:340).

2.4.3 Representation of Women Images by African Male Authors Writing in English

The significant purpose of cattle in Mda's *Heart of Redness* was that of *lobola*, bride wealth, used to appropriate the productive prospective of womenfolk. They were the bond of this society and the prime indicators of status of wealth. Through the character Nongqawuse, the narrator reveals the degree of the woman's power in traditional society. Mda shows the revered role of the prophetess in traditional Africa. In fact, in that society, the woman is seen as the custodian of traditional lore as she can play the intermediary role between the world of the dead (the ancestors) and that of the living. Therefore, in religious or spiritual matters the woman is given a public recognition, as exemplified by the devotion of several men (such as Twin in the story) to the prophetess.

Mda's characterisation of women in the narrative also adopts a nuanced approach in exploring and representing female roles. It is remarkable that Nongqawuse, a young unmarried woman, should have claimed power on the subject of cattle, and the fact that her predictions were addressed to the resource through female fertility. *The Heart of Redness* juxtaposes two distinct depictions of women in contemporary Qolorha by accentuating the resentment between believers and unbelievers; in other words, between traditionalists and modernists. The women at the centre of the novel indicate Mda's contribution to a gender trajectory. Xoliswa is endowed with privileges of a modern woman. Her exposure to modern education and broad world view due to local and international travels make her eligible for the position of principal of Qolorha-by Sea Secondary School. Her leadership position is undeniable in the village, where men and women alike fear and respect her. She is considered by the villagers and her colleagues as the only person capable of explaining the values of modernity or progress. Xoliswa Ximiya is portrayed as a powerful woman with remarkable status on the public stage. She has a strong personality and epitomises

an emancipated and independent African woman. She is also decisive. When she realises that there is no progress in her home village, she takes a decision to leave Qolorha- by- Sea.

The negative aspect about her though is that she can be seen as arrogant. She is represented as a modern woman who did not believe in ancestors presenting themselves as snakes. To highly civilised people like Xoliswa Ximiya, isiXhosa costume is an embarrassment. Xoliswa's views wearing isikhakha as part of their history of redness. At times she lacks humility when she addresses those under her authority where she uses authoritarian discourse resonant of patriarchal speech when addressing them. Her behaviour shows her determination to break all prejudices about women by establishing her 'masculine' power in traditional environment.

Qukezwa's central role in promoting the cultural fabric of her community gives her an important position in this society. She has a deep knowledge and understanding of the trees that grow at Qolorha- by-Sea. She impresses Camagu by showing the value she attaches to nature. She whistles and sings all at the same time. She can also play umrhube, which is a musical instrument. Both Qukezwa and Nongqawuse share supernatural abilities. Both are teenagers and because of these supernatural abilities they find themselves advising the elders around them instead of the other way round. They are from different times but they mirror each other. Mda contrasts the image of an educated woman with that of a woman committed to local tradition. Unlike Xoliswa, Qukezwa is closely associated with heritage which includes mastery of traditional lore. Like her father, she stands on the side of the Believers. Qukezwa advocates the revalorisation of African traditions.

Mda indicates an appreciation of traditional knowledge by his appreciative portrayal of Qukezwa's personality. She is proud of her rural identity and strongly articulates her views about the necessity of preserving African traditions and customs. It is interesting to note that all prophetesses were young girls. Men like uMhlakaza were just facilitators or interpreters of the prophecies. Other than well-known prophets

Nongqawuse and Nombanda another one came up. The new prophetess arose at the banks of the Mpongo River. She was Nonkosi. She was an eleven-year-old daughter of a well-known traditional doctor called Kulwana (Mda, 2000:181). No England is a flat character. Not much is said about her except the fact that she bewitched a girl called NomaRussia that used to work with her. NoPetticoat is portrayed as a traditional rural Xhosa woman, who finds pride in wearing her traditional gear namely the red –ochred isikhakha dress and bead-work necklaces. Though uneducated, NoPetticoat represents intelligent women. After noticing change and financial freedom enjoyed by women that were members of the co-operative, she decided to stop working at the Blue Flamingo Hotel in order to join the co-operative. She is also a very vocal woman even on political issues. She complained about people that are elected to lead them. Her concern was that people that are put in positions were people that were unknown to the community of Qolorha- by- Sea.

The manner in which Mda has deliberately chosen to depict the highly educated Camagu is such that he represents the new man who understands women's needs. His co-operation with rural women suggests the epitome of wholesome change of men's attitudes towards women. Camagu is fascinated by local women's skilful mastering of the techniques of harvesting seafood. He realises that no man can equal them in this field and helps them to be more productive. The enterprise has helped the women of the co-operative to be financially independent. As a result they do not care about receiving stipends from their husbands who work in mines. Camagu plays an active role in supporting women's self-actualisation in the public sphere. This is a problematic idea in as far as it suggests that women require men to champion their initiatives and their spokesmen, but it is a step forward from hegemonic patriarchal ideas about women's role in commerce

Despite the improvement in the portrayal of women characters in Mda's novel, traditions are still predominant in Qolorha, preventing women from complete enjoyment of their rights. The reference to adultery in the text, for instance, demonstrates women's dilemma in this community. Although men are active accomplices in adultery, nobody dares to blame them for their actions.

In *Memory of Stones* Langa (2000) depicts Zodwa as fit to lead her community after her father's death due to the kind of education she has been exposed to. However, she is not Baba Joshua's first choice but the absence of her brother who died at the army, she unintentionally becomes the next successor. The author deliberately gives Zodwa's chieftaincy position as a way of supporting emerging female leadership in African societies. The alteration of gender roles shown in the narrative epitomizes the need for redefinition of gender relations in a society dominated and even ruled by patriarchal beliefs. Langa allows his characters to explain that good leadership is needed to improve the state of poverty in their community as well as throughout the whole continent of Africa. Through Zodwa, the author seems to suggest that being exposed to diversity can help to make a good synthesis of life principles from different cultures and allow access to different kinds of skills. Her good leadership is recommended by many supporters across gender and age lines. She typifies the ideal female chief who can promote the liberation of women in this traditional setting.

Nozizwe is portrayed by the author as a woman endowed with spiritual and supernatural powers. In the novel describes Nozizwe as a 'strong, almost sexless woman, that is small but gives an impression of being larger than life' (Langa, 2000: 14). Through his celebration of womanhood, the writer seeks to break binary division between men and women as it exists in patriarchal societies. By creating a female character with whom traditional leadership can be entrusted, Langa makes a powerful statement that in the post-apartheid South Africa; that women, like men, have a vital place in the country's governance. Even in contemporary politics women such as Advocate Thuli Madonsela, South Africa's Public Protector, effectively fulfil such roles.

In Mda and Langa's novels we see male writers of the post-Apartheid epoch resolute to portray women in a constructive light. Their heroines are given positions of authority and power. Mda's women characters appear to experience diverse forms of treatment from their male counterparts, depending on the male's principles. The depiction of Qolorha women of the mid-nineteenth century reveals that they once enjoyed a privileged public status, as they were the prophets of the community.

2.5 Literature Review of related Literary Works by African Female Authors of South Africa Writing in English

The two novels examined in this section differ in time and context. Whilst Tlali (1987) presents women's experiences in the work place during Apartheid, Makholwa (2013) explores women power in handling their day to day challenges in response to male exploitation in post-Apartheid South Africa.

2.5.1 Miriam Tlali: *Between Two Worlds* (1987)

Set in Soweto outside Johannesburg, *Between Two Worlds* is one of the most remarkable novels produced in South Africa that recounts the experiences of black people under apartheid. Originally published under the title *Muriel at Metropolitan*, the novel that can be regarded as Tlali's autobiography as it describes her working experiences, was banned for some years. It is about a girl called Muriel who narrates her experiences during the apartheid era in South Africa with particular reference to what was going on in the workplace. Apartheid was a well-thought out system that separated white South Africans from non-whites in every sphere of life. Muriel, a black woman, is hit by the reality of segregation at work on her very first day as an employee at a retail shop. She is hired as an administrative clerk but is not given the resources that are essential for her to perform her duties; she is not given an office to work from like the rest of her white counterparts. Instead she is shoved to an enlarged roof space, part of which is used as a workshop. To make matters worse she is not even permitted to use the same ablution facilities used by white ladies.

At her place of work Muriel also learns that any black person, regardless of their age, is called a boy or girl. Thus, there were, for example, lorry-boys and boss-boys. She was always closely watched by the two white ladies who were also employees. At times they fabricated lies against her to the business owner. It did not take long before she had an argument with one of the white colleagues. Despite all of this Muriel remained calm. It took her time to realise that no matter how hard she worked and no matter how truthful she remained to her job she did not find joy in it. The author expresses this state of things aptly when she says:

To go on working at Metropolitan Radio would be torture. Every time I was forced to be loyal to the firm I would get those cramps deep down in my entrails. Every time I asked for a customer's pass book, I would feel like a policeman, who in this country is a symbol of oppression. I would continue to feel like a traitor, part of a conspiracy, machinery deliberately designed to crush the soul of a people (Tlali, 1987:140).

It was her mother's telephonic advice that made Muriel realise that she was actually wasting her time by continuing to work at this white man's shop. The urgency in her tone was evident in the following words:

I would sooner have you selling cakes than sitting in there and asking people's passes. There is no hope for you there. You will never be able to do anything for yourself (Tlali, 1987:139).

This was a final wake-up call for Muriel who finally decided to resign. The novel, *Between Two Worlds* deals with themes of Apartheid, including racial inequalities, racial alienation, and gender inequality. We are presented with a doubly oppressed Muriel- oppressed for her skin and oppressed for her gender. She is further oppressed and alienated by being put in a position where she asserts illegitimate power by asking black men and women for passbooks. Gender inequality was a critical component of the Apartheid system as it created an unregulated second class citizenry within an already oppressed group.

2.5.2 Angela Makholwa: *Black Widow Society* (2013)

The setting of the novel is in the urban area of Diepsloot in Soweto. In 1994 when South Africans were finally seeing the light of freedom and independence, three well respected businesswomen-Talullah Ntuli, Edna Whitehead and Nkosazana Dlamini formed the Black Widow Society. This was a secret organisation aimed at liberating women entrapped in mentally and physically abusive relationships. Women whose husbands were abusive, adulterous or who exhibited any kind of evil approached the society to initiate "the ultimate solution". Assisted by their impeccable and privately appointed gunman and ex-convict Mzwakhe Khuzwayo, the trio operated in a hidden fashion.

The BWS was run professionally like all other organisations. This organisation was unambiguous about almost everything it represented. Its core principles were: trust, honour, secrecy, sisterly love and protection. Its objective: to eliminate the suffering of women in the hands of men (Makholwa, 2013:36). It held Annual General Meetings and had a financial manager. The organisation also had a philanthropic programme that had the following objective: “producing a new breed of woman who would be given the type of education that would empower her to avoid the kind of decisions that had led most of the black widows to their ill-fated marriages and partnerships” (Makholwa, 2013:17).

Mphikeleli Ntuli and Tallulah are a well known successful couple in the neighbourhood. The wife is a successful business woman who runs a string of family businesses whereas Mphikeleli is a prominent surgeon and a political activist. The relationship of this couple was perfect up until Mphikeleli paid ilobolo and also bought her a beautiful house. After falling pregnant the situation at home degenerated. Mphikeleli started cheating with other women and he also started beating her up. The BWS provided Tallulah a safe haven and some familial ties that she was lacking.

The second couple is Thami and Lloyd Mthembu. They are part of the new Black middle class of South Africa. This is proven by their house which is at the palatial golf –estate. Two weeks after celebrating together their fourth anniversary, Thami is served with divorce papers by her husband. Thami’s divorce papers were served unexpectedly whilst she was at work. She was devastated. Lloyd Mthembu got his senior position, as Director General of Foreign affairs because of the ANC political connection of the Mthimkhulu family, his in-laws. Thami’s father, Caiphus Mthimkhulu was a struggle veteran. Salome gave Thami sisterly moral support and even gave her a referral that was going to investigate Lloyd moves.

Nokuthula Simelane marries her high school sweetheart named China Gumede. China Gumede is a successful black entrepreneur, well –educated, who has climbed through the ranks, and was described as a ‘self-made-man’. Nokuthula lost shape and style after bearing their children. She sort of neglected herself, focusing more on raising their children. That made China lose interest in her and started viewing her as a liability. China was beginning to be attracted to the new breed of women who spoke, ate and dressed differently from Nokuthula. He then started dating

Charmaine Mkhize and ended up impregnating her. Nokuthula hires men to kill China on his way home.

Salome, a “satisfied wife” especially attracts everybody’s sympathy as her husband infects her with HIV/AIDS. The Black Widow Society is careful about measuring the merits of each case that is brought to its attention. Salome’s husband made a mistake of expecting her to deny her HIV infection (by him) though it was medically diagnosed. He dismissed her claims and instructed her to abort the child she was carrying. The main reason why she could not divorce him was the ante-nuptial contract she had signed which prejudiced her financially. She further felt that she needed to be vindicated for her HIV infection and his general philandering.

The novel ends with Mzwakhe on a rampage to kill all BWS members. He puts them through a lie-detector test, where he asks them questions one by one. When a member fails the test she is eliminated. Mzwakhe killed eight members. However, the surviving members manage to kill Mzwakhe. After cleaning up the crime scene Tallulah and Edna fled from South Africa whereas the rest of the surviving members chose to remain in South Africa.

2.5.3 Representation of Women Images in Literature Written by African Female authors in English

In *Between Two Worlds* the heroine shares with the reader her fears, concerns, trials and tribulations. The author seeks to highlight the evils of the apartheid ideology that was perpetrated by the then Afrikaner government against the Black people of South Africa.

Muriel is portrayed as an educated and intelligent young woman during this era. She is proud of who she is. She is also depicted as a decisive woman. This is evident when her colleagues complained to the boss that Muriel was using their toilet. Muriel had the following thoughts going through in her mind:

I knew the laws of this country did not allow Blacks and Whites to share same facilities, and I was not going to stage a one- woman protest against them (Tlali, 1987:22).

She lived and worked in the urban area, but she had not forgotten the kind of respect that is accorded to a man in the black culture. Though her high position at work gave her the authority to send people anywhere, she still felt entrapped by traditional African customs as reflected in the following:

I was reluctant to send him (Johannes). How could I? He was a man and I was a woman. According to our custom a woman does not send a man. We reserve a place, an elevated place, for our men: thought Muriel (Tlali, 1987:27).

While some critics have found Tlali's work "unaesthetic and informal" in one of the papers delivered for international audience in defence of her work she boldly says:

To....the critics...We black South African writers ...are writing for those whom we know are the relevant audience. We are not going to write in order to qualify into your definition of what you describe as "true art". Our main objective is not to receive ballyhoo comments on our works. What is more important is that we should be allowed to reach our audience. Our duty is to write for our people and about them (Clayton, 1989:278).

In *Black Widow Society*, Tallulah was the brain behind the establishment of this organisation although her role was behind the scenes. Talullah is the the godmother of this organisation. She is tough, ruthless and single-minded in her purpose. She is the one that most people love to hate. Tallulah is the hero in this novel. She is portrayed as a bold, intelligent and brave woman. When Mzwakhe started killing the BWS members, she stood up against a gun- waving man, saying: "*If you have to shoot anyone, shoot me. I'm the one who started this. If you suddenly want to punish us for our deeds, punish me!*" (p265). Yet underneath her hard exterior lies someone who truly believes she has a purpose to serve namely, to save women from abusive marriages. There is also a vulnerability to her, which she is only able to explore through her unusual escapades.

Edna Whitehead is the pacifist among the three. She is a businesswoman who is thorough in her administrative duties, which aid in keeping the wheels of the society turning. Nkosazana Dlamini is very different from the older ladies; for one thing she is a lesbian who has never been married. She is more interested in fiscal aspects of

the organisation. Each triumph equates to a significant financial benefit for the Black widows society, as a portion of the life insurance payout goes to the society. For Nkosazana, this becomes an increasingly more important goal than the philanthropic principle of the organisation.

The storyline suggests that domestic abuse, which is a very real and painful part of South African daily life, transcends class divide. It's something that goes on in both the upper and lower levels of society. This violence against women has ripple effects such as rape and violation of women's rights in different spheres of life. It is a societal ill that needs all South Africans to engage more with and come with strategies to eliminate it. According to Mahala (2008) women should be afforded by societies the opportunity to deliberate and to address social and political issues that are vital in their lives as women.

These are some critical factors that are essential in reshaping our literary forms; otherwise there can be no national literature to speak of. The meaning of renaissance is best defined in literature when there is contribution by writers with diverse stories- including women stories told by women.

2.6 Literature Review of Literary Works by African Male Authors of South Africa Writing in isiZulu

In this section I have opted for texts that were written at different periods in the history of South Africa; one during Apartheid era, *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* by Nyembezi (1961) and *Ikhiwane Elihle* by Molefe (1985); towards the dawn of democracy reading. The reason for this choice is to establish the kind of shifts in the way society constructs males and females in the Zulu society as depicted by male writers.

2.6.1 Sibusiso Nyembezi: *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu* (1961)

This traditional novel is set in Nyanyadu, near Dundee where the community primarily lives on subsistence farming. A certain Mr C.C. Ndebenkulu writes a letter to the Mkhwanazi family announcing his coming. In this letter, he further instructs his

host to invite local farmers to a community meeting. On arrival at Nyanyadu, he introduces himself as an esquire, *isikwaya*, meaning a “V.I.P” and *inkinsele*, a very rich person. During the meeting, he announces his goal of transforming the economy of this ‘backward’ society in line with the standards of white people. He shows up at a time when the community is grappling with government's Land Rehabilitation Act of 1945 according to which black farmers are to limit their livestock in order to avoid soil erosion.

The prospect of reducing their cattle which constitutes the core of their wealth is viewed with extreme dismay and trepidation. Ndebenkulu offers to render the people of Nyanyadu the service that will assist them in the implementation of the stressful statute. He proposes to find a market where he will sell the cattle for the exorbitant amount of R160 per head; an extraordinary price in the 1940's. He convinces the people of Nyanyadu that the strategy will be a great move towards making all Nyanyadu families rich. After lengthy discussions in which women have been excluded, Ndebenkulu's host, Mkhwanazi and the men of Nyanyadu agree to the deal. When MaNtuli, Mkhwanazi's wife hears of the decision she tries in vain to convince her husband to desist from their plan. He does not give heed to his wife's call. MaNtuli shares her predicament with the women in the area who are equally disappointed at their husband's unperceptive minds.

Before Mr C.C Ndebenkulu's departure from Nyanyadu, he is summoned by the king to the royal house, to address the community for the second time. After making thorough investigation about Ndebenkulu, Mkhwanazi's son, Themba and his friend Diliza involve a detective police man in the matter. The detective police man deems the boys' story similar to that of a conman the police have been in search of, for a long time due to similar crimes he committed in several parts of the country. A chase follows and Ndebenkulu is arrested as he is about to board the train to Pietermaritzburg with cattle belonging Nyanyadu families.

2.6.2 Lawrence Molefe: Ikhiwane Elihle (1985)

The title of Molefe's 1985 novel, *Ikhiwane Elihle* (The beautiful fig) is based on the Zulu proverb that says: *Ikhiwane elihle ligcwala izibungu* which means the fig that looks beautiful on the outside is usually rotten inside. The novel is set in the semi-

urban area of Hammersdale. Hammersdale is a township that located in the outskirts of Pinetown and also not far from Pietermaritzburg. In the novel, Thoko Mncwabe, is an attractive shebeen queen. She is described as a fat woman with heavy bottom, that is why the author uses the following words “*isitutubheka sesidudla*” (p1) from Hammersdale. She entertains sexual relationships with three men: Diesel, an earlier lover, who has just returned from Maputo, duly married; Msiphozi, whom she truly likes because he is kind and considerate, although he is engaged to be married to Lindiwe; and Magaya, who helps her mainly with transport when she needs to have liquor brought to her shop: she says she is not really in love with him, but he is useful, and is easily repaid with a romp under the blankets. The novel begins with the first encounter between Msiphozi Hlengwa and Thoko. Magaya Hadebe is Thoko’s boyfriend from Georgedale, not very far from section one. On Msiphos’s first overnight visit at Thoko’s house, Thoko gets a surprise visit on the following morning from her known boyfriend Magaya. Magaya becomes very suspicious of Msiphozi. However, Thoko manages the situation successfully, making sure that her two boyfriends do not meet each other in her bedroom.

The novel revolves around the ingenious ways she invents to keep the three men apart, in spite of her grandmother Thilayila's warnings that what she is doing flies in the face of traditional behaviour and she can only expect sorrow out of her multiple relationship. On the fateful Friday Diesel was the first boyfriend to arrive at Thoko’s house. He was followed by Magaya who was ready for a war. Msiphozi was the last to arrive at the scene simply because he was a pedestrian. Magaya caught Thoko red handed. She was in bed with Diesel Mchunu. Magaya shot Diesel dead. In retaliation Diesel’s relatives from Mophela attacked Thoko’s home and murdered both Thoko and Magaya in full view of gogo Thaliyila and the Mpumalanga community. Out of the three lovers only Msiphozi is left, to lick his wounds and to reflect on how stupidly he was seduced by a double-faced woman.

2.6.3 Representation of Women Images by African Male Authors Writing in isiZulu

Literature reflects attitudes, beliefs and assumptions that prevail in that society. In *Inkinselela yaseMgungundlovu* the perceptions of male supremacy over women override the plot. Within the traditional Zulu system and perpetuated by misconceptions about *ilobolo*, bride price, men regard their wives as commodities

that they can use as they please (Zondi, 2007). Men who hold such notions perceive women as species who have no say in matters that require critical resolutions. The attitude of Mkhwanazi, a host to the trickster, is therefore a result of a social culture rather than of the author's originality. In this novel, Mkhwanazi's wife, MaNtuli, represents the emerging class of powerful women movements that challenge established patriarchal hegemony. In this novel, the general society expects certain behavioural pattern from MaNtuli, which include loyalty to the husband, reverence, diligence and meekness. Thus men take it for granted that their women will accommodate everything in good faith. A woman is not expected to challenge or go against societal norms. Thus when Ndebenkulu began to suspect that MaNtuli and her children were close to discovering his tricks, he started to poison Mkhwanazi's mind against them. He portrays MaNtuli as a person who lacks integrity in matters that require men's opinion, and into which Mkhwanazi buys, Ndebenkulu says:

*Kodwa sengiyabona ukuthi kwenza nje umqondo obuthaka
womuntu wesifazane, umqondo ongakwazi ukuqikelela
ingozi (Nyembezi,1961:44).*

(I now realize that it is because of the feeble-mindedness of a woman, a mind that is incapable of seeing danger [that she does not understand your concern about us].

In literature language is never unbiased but actually mirrors the tendencies of the influential group. When Ndebenkulu and Mkhwanazi address the two women, they use a sexist language that shows great disregard for women maintains Gumede (2002:63). Ndebenkulu uses bitter irony because he has been touched on a raw spot: mother and son know he is evil, although they cannot prove it yet. Scorn is the coward's answer when he cannot find a defence. The assertion that rural women are more vulnerable than urban women may be an indication that oppression is rampant in rural areas. Mkhwanazi does not find anything wrong with belittling his wife before a stranger. But Ndebenkulu is worse when it comes to denigrating women who show greater insight than men. Now that Mkhwanazi is sure to be superior to his wife, he might show his superiority with a chauvinistic act: he threatens his wife with physical violence.

*Iyekeleni le nto ngoba niyangithukuthelisa. Ngizothi ngisuka lapha ngibe
ngilimaza umuntu. (Nyembezi,1961:50).*

(Stop that [MaNtuli and your children], because you make me angry. I might find myself harming a person).

Physical violence against women and children cannot be culturally or legally condoned. It is a disturbing everyday occurrence in South African society that highlights the inferiority of the victims. In the novel, MaNtuli and her daughter Thoko are preoccupied with food preparation in the kitchen, whilst men, on the other hand, are kept busy by a serious discussion of matters of economic importance, the sale of cows. In that way MaNtuli ends up being excluded from the matter that directly affects her. She actually represents all other women that were also not invited to Ndebinkulu's meeting. This pattern, namely marginalisation of women in important matters that have an impact on their lives, seems to be prevalent in most Zulu literary texts, observes Gumede (2002:70). The salvation of Nyanyadu is as a result of MaNtuli's foresight and forbearance. She is portrayed as an assertive woman who stands her ground. Her vision and forthrightness amidst the conundrum of her husband's silencing tactics ensures that Nyanyadu cattle; the main source of this community's livelihood is rescued. MaNtuli thus represents change that is taking place in Zulu society; from a strict patriarchal home structure to one of collaboration between equal partners.

Ikhiwane Elihle was published during the apartheid era in South Africa. This period was also characterized by women having no rights. Zulu women in particular were oppressed by both the apartheid regime and the patriarchal Zulu culture. The very title of this novel gives a picture of the imbalances of that era. Thoko's behaviour, that of dating three boyfriends simultaneously was and is still viewed as the characteristics of a prostitute by most people. The Zulu tradition and culture condemns such behaviour from a woman. Whilst it is regarded as taboo for the woman to date more than one man, it is however, celebrated when a man dates more than one woman and it earns him a title of '*isoka*'. This illustrates gender inequalities ingrained in the Zulu society's psyche where the same behaviour is judged differently for different genders.

Thoko is also portrayed as a golddigger and prostitute. The author creates an impression that it is accepted as a norm, especially among Black communities, that urban or township women are unfaithful / cheaters. Hence the author says:

(Diesel) wayengazi kodwa ukuthi kusale kwakhonya bani ngenkathi engekho. Wayengathandi kodwa nokukubuza lokho ngoba amantombazane asemalokishini uyawazi- awakwazi ukuhlala engaqomile kuphele amasonto amathathu! Isingabekwa ecaleni-ke eyeminyaka emibili (Molefe,1985:72).

(Diesel) was not sure as to who dated his girlfriend during his absence. He did not even want to ask anyone, because township women are notorious for being unable to live without a man for three weeks! Two years is too long a period for them to wait.

She owns a liquor business. In spite her financial independence she dates Magaya, that she does not love, so that she can use his car for stock deliveries. The author does not project the deceitfulness of his male characters. Two of Thoko's boyfriends are men in committed relationships. Diesel is a newly married man and Msiphos is engaged. Both these men are unfaithful and have neglected their respective partners. Therefore, the author perpetuates the gender bias in this novel, where men's indiscretions are viewed on a lighter note in contrast to the woman's behaviour which is judged harshly.

Thoko's grandmother Thilayila, represents the old Zulu traditional women, who have the strong belief in Zulu patriarchal culture and practices. In the Zulu culture old women are generally revered for their foresight and wisdom. In the novel, the grandmother is positioned as the voice of reason, who continuously warns Thoko that her unconventional behaviour will ultimately lead to a tragic end, which it inevitably does. The author successfully perpetuates the patriarchal agenda, by using the character of an old "wise" woman to illustrate that if one does not adhere to the cultural norms, one is in fact exposing oneself to possibly tragically fatal consequences.

2.7 Literature Review of Works by African Female Authors Writing in isiZulu

The two texts analysed in this section are *Yekanini* and *Hawu Ndlalifa!* written by Joyce Gwayi and Damane respectively. The first one combines fictitious and factual events of a royal woman, Nandi and the hardships she went through when she

became pregnant and bore a son who was going to be a legendary king of the Zulu nation, Shaka Zulu. The second text explores perceptions about urban women. I deliberately selected these two stories as they are representative of texts dealing with Zulu women in the pre-colonial era and after democracy.

2.7.1 Joyce Gwayi: *Yekanini!* (1976)

Yekanini! is a novel based on the life and rise to power of Shaka, king of the Zulus. The title of this novel is a Zulu exclamation describing emotions of astonishment. The novel gives accounts of the trials and tribulations of Shaka's early childhood. Though the novel has a historical bias, it also focuses on the role played by Nandi, Shaka's mother in the rise to power of her son.

Being a princess and a first born daughter of the king of Elangeni, Nandi marries the king of the Zulus named Senzangakhona. Even though polygamy was an accepted tradition and practice among the Zulus at the time, Nandi was not well received in the royal household because she brought along a baby boy, Shaka. Even as a young boy Shaka proved his capability as he would not tolerate any bullying from his half-brothers Dingane, Mpande and Mhlangana whilst playing with them. As a result of these minor fights, Shaka became very unpopular especially amongst the other wives of Senzangakhona. As a result Shaka was insulted and given derogatory names.

After getting complaints from different wives about Shaka's bad behaviour, king Senzangakhona decided to chase away both Nandi and Shaka. They returned to Nandi's homestead at eLangeni. During their stay there Nandi fell in love with a man from the Qwabe clan, Gendeyane and begot another boy-child. When there was famine in the land Nandi was asked to leave again since her family could not feed her and her children. She then moved to the Qwabe clan. They finally settled with the Mthethwa clan under king Dingiswayo. This was where Shaka perfected his fighting skills in preparation for taking over the Zulu kingdom.

2.7.2 Emelda Damane: *Hawu Ndlalifa!* (1997)

The plot is based on the Zuma family which has two sons, namely, Sikhulu and Mgobhozi. The main character is Sikhulu and he happens to be the eldest son. According to the Zulu culture the first-born-boy-child is called *indlalifa* which means an heir. The title of this book is an exclamation that expresses shock and/or disappointment at the heir's behaviour. Sikhulu is based in the city of Johannesburg and his family lives in the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal. He meets Dumazi, a shebeen (or tavern owner) woman who is far older than him and they fall in love and get married without their parents' knowledge. In fact the two hardly know each other. It goes without saying that the fact that the woman was much older than the man and that no *lobolo* (bride wealth) talks were entered into between the two families- the whole thing was taboo. Moreover, Dumazi does not disclose to Sikhulu that she has a son; instead she introduces her son to Sikhulu as her nephew.

Shortly thereafter Sikhulu hears of a business opportunity and abusing his status of being an heir, travels to his home in the rural village to seek financial assistance for the new venture. During his visit he reveals three important issues to his parents: that he has a wife in Johannesburg; he has bought a supermarket there and that he urgently needs cash to buy stock. The news infuriates his parents who despite their anger grant their son the funds he so desperately needs. Soon thereafter, Sikhulu's father falls ill (evidently from the stress associated with his son's homecoming and news he shared with the family) and subsequently dies. On his death-bed he pronounces that all will be inherited by his wife and younger son. After the funeral, Sikhulu demands all the money donated by the community to the Zuma family as a bereavement gesture and goes back to Johannesburg. After a short while, he also sells his father's cattle to enrich himself while constantly reminding everyone that he is the *indlalifa*. Due to the stress that Sikhulu puts the family through, his mother also falls ill and then dies. Sikhulu takes full control of the family estate and expands his business. When he thinks the business is sustainable one disaster after another befalls him; his blocks of flats which he lets out are washed away by floods and his shops are burned down. In frustration he decides to go back home to ask for forgiveness for squandering the family wealth.

2.7.3 Representation of Women Images in Literature Written by African Females writing in isiZulu

It is important to note that there are other novels that have been written about the history and rise to power of king Shaka. This novel, in particular, reveals the plight of women in polygamous marriages. Written by a woman, Nandi who is generally portrayed negatively in male written works such as will be illustrated shortly, is depicted as a good mother who is very protective and supportive to her children. She is illustrated as a caring woman who suffers with her children, against all odds; when Shaka was under the threat of the Zulus whilst staying at eMachunwini, Nandi sacrificed her own comfort at KwaQwabe and took her children to KwaMthethwa. At the same time Nandi is portrayed as an assertive and decisive woman. When she was approached by Gendeyane by the river, addressing her as if she is a single woman, she was quick to discipline him saying:

Ngihloniphe-ke ngokuthi nkosikazi (Gwayi, 1976:65)

(Please show me some respect by addressing me like a married woman)

Another remarkable feature in this work, is the sense of aesthetic that Gwayi demonstrates in describing Nandi's beauty. She writes:

UNandi, intokazi yaseLangeni, eNguge, yayinhle ngaleso sikhathi, ingekho indodana yenkosi eyayingathi uma iqonywe yiyona ingaziqhenyi ngaye (Gwayi,1976:43).

(Nandi, lady from Langeni, at Nguge, was so beautiful at that time in such a way that all princes would have been proud to have her as a lover).

In most of the male written works as demonstrated by praises of Nandi, the above compliment is either ignored or omitted. Validating the extract above, in the book entitled, *The Washing of the Spears*, Morris (1965,44), offers a charming account of Nandi beauty. However, like all other male authors, he chooses to describe her as ferocious sturdy maiden. This is an unfair description of mother of a man behind the formation of a powerful Zulu nation. One has to take a quick look at *Izibongo zikaNandi* (Nandi's Praises) to appreciate what I am talking about. In the praises of Nandi, mother of the most influential king in the history of the Zulu nation, the theme of sexual misconduct is highlighted by the sexually explicit language that runs through them. The *imbongi* (bard) uses his poetic license to put her down by using

the two opening lines which gets repeated at the end of her praises thus emphasizing his stance with Nandi:

*UMathanga awahlangani,
ahlangana ngokubona umyeni* (Cope, 1968:175).

(She whose thighs do not meet, they only meet on seeing a husband)

Within the male tradition of *izibongo*, the *imbongi* managed to bring Nandi down. Other female characters such as Mkabayi, Senzangakhona's sister are portrayed as being very supportive to Nandi. Mkabayi, Shaka's paternal aunt, also became Nandi's pillar of strength whenever she needed help. The message conveyed through Nandi in this novel is the resilience of women amidst adverse circumstances.

In *Hawu Ndlalifa!* MaNdlovu is portrayed as good mother who has strong traditional values. She loves and respects her husband, Zuma. She is also very assertive. She is a liberated rural woman who speaks her mind even on issues that affect her son, Sikhulu. She is consulted by her husband on all issues affecting the Zuma household.

The author juxtaposes MaNdlovu's character with that of Dumazi, her son's unlawful wife who is portrayed as an urban woman who would do anything to get money. She owns a tavern and sells liquor in her own house to make a living. She twists the truth at every opportunity she finds in order to secure a good life for her son, that she never mentioned to Sikhulu. She also lies about her age to Sikhulu. She is a compulsive liar.

What is worth noting in this story is that traditional principles are held in high esteem by women who have been brought up in that tradition. This is why MaNdlovu deplores evils that are mainly associated with the city where women are said to disrespect traditional value system such as demonstrated by Dumazi. Literary onomastics, a science of naming, suggests that every society values naming as a reflexive facet of its culture even though in varying degrees (Zondi, 2010). Dumazi's name suggests the disappointment she turns out to be; both to her family and her

husband's when she leads a wayward life. Thus female authors such as Damane also disapprove of such behaviour.

2.8 Literature Review of Related Literary Studies Which Resulted in Completion of Master's or Doctoral Degrees

Several graduate students of African literature have channelled their energies in reviewing literary works with the objective of examining the portrayal of women images in these writings. Gumede (2002) explores the portrayal of female characters in selected Zulu texts to determine whether the female characters are represented in a positive or negative light. He concludes that due to patriarchal system abuses are levied on women and that, to a very large extent, men are the culprits who hide behind culture for their oppressive actions. Commenting on the extent to which some men impose their power on women, Gumede comments that they also erroneously and naïvely subscribe to the belief that violating a virgin will cure them of HIV/AIDS, thus contributing to the ruin of many women's lives.

A comparative study by Mdletshe (2011) engages with the question of how male and female authors depict female characters. This study is relevant to this thesis as it contributes to the knowledge base of this research. . However, by only examining Zulu language literary texts and excluding texts from other South African cultures and African countries, Mdletshe narrows her scope of study and potential findings. Over and above relying on texts by authors writing in isiZulu, this current study includes representative literature from the broader African context with the objective of testing the universality of how women are portrayed in African literature. The value of Mdletshe's study is that it considers the necessity to discuss both male and female authors as it fosters impartiality in the manner in which the study was designed.

Other research studies worth commenting on are those on Xhosa literature. In her study, a female researcher, Masuku (1997) investigates the portrayal of female characters in selected isiXhosa drama. Her focus is on works by male authors and she concludes that due to their patriarchal orientation, Xhosa male writers depict

female characters in an inferior manner when compared to the male characters. Similarly, Peter (2010) examines Xhosa male writers and their adverse depictions of female characters and contends that the apparent physical difference between males and females may be a contributing factor in females being stereotypically portrayed in a negative light by male writers, and thus perceived as weak and incompetent by society as a whole. He calls for scholars of literary studies to aggressively confront this mind-set which he regards as socially constructed. These emotional and physical differentiation experiences between males and females, he adds, have resulted in different perceptions of life as they impact on women and men. He observes that few male writers, even those who are concerned about gender inequalities, have succeeded in portraying female characters with which female readers can identify with. He believes that female readers are entitled and desire to see their own experiences depicted in such literary works. As such he invites female writers to take a lead in expressing their own ideas about women's status in literary texts, and thus correct or complement the bias of certain perspectives about women (Peter, 2010:193).

Mathye (2003) conducts an enquiry into a selected number of Tsonga novels in which the portrayal of female characters against the backdrop of patriarchal values are made. This study reveals that women have always been oppressed in line with their cultural, traditional, social and ideological norms. The study further finds that the patriarchal nature of this society is directly responsible for the mindset informing Tsonga literature. This assumption is arrived at after discovering that male authors clearly exhibit patriarchal bias by depicting female characters as comfortable with the status quo, while female writers present a different picture. As a female scholar, Mathye views oppressive practises such as condoned by patriarchy as deplorable. Female authors reflect this stance by often creating female characters that undermine patriarchy by resisting traditional values. For example, Mathye (2003) observes that novels by female writers advocate freedom from social bias based on sexual differences and fight for gender equality in Tsonga society. Tsonga female writers therefore support transformation of some Tsonga beliefs and cultural norms in line with the changing times. Another difference between male and female authors

in this society is that both genders are determined to portray their own gender characters as protagonists.

The aforementioned studies have been confined to Zulu or Xhosa cultures in their exploration of the depiction of female characters, implying a uniquely Nguni phenomenon. However, their respective studies are valuable in that they have initiated a much needed discourse on gender representation in fiction. In South Africa's democratic dispensation any study that addresses gender disparity issues is seen as an important contribution regardless of the extent to which it has been investigated.

Of particular interest is the study that was undertaken by Machaba (2011). Being a woman she studied Tsonga tradition focussing in particular on the portrayal of women images in Xitsonga literature. Her research confirmed that male authors are biased in their depiction of female characters. By studying a variety of genres in this society, such as novels, poetry and proverbs the author discovered that gender played a crucial role in the depiction of characters in all the above genres. The study also demonstrated the extent to which gender differentiation was embedded, as in the Xitsonga tradition this differentiation begins at birth. She refers to the message given to the father on the arrival of his newborn. When a male child is born, the message given to the father is *wa matlha* [you have begotten a spear] and *wa xirhundz* [you have begotten a grain basket]; if it is a female child (Machaba, 2011:164). Thus the underlying implication already at birth in the imagery conveyed through "spear" and "the grain basket" is that the male instantly obtains the status of being a man destined for public life while female is associated with domesticity. In this sense, on the one hand the boy child is associated with male masculine activities such as those of hunting and protecting the community while on the other hand, the birth of a girl child is associated with feminine domestic activities such as pounding, cultivating the field and drawing water from the river.

The examination of the selected novels in this study also reveals that the Xitsonga cultural norms of marriage are no longer strictly adhered to. This is represented through some of the female characters who defy their culture by remaining single and thus asserting the liberal feminist perspective that culture confines women and

that a woman's individual interests take precedence over that of the general society. The analysis also reveals the underlying male bias in the manner in which female characters are illustrated in a stereotypical way and depicted as gold-diggers, treacherous, greedy, bullies, prostitutes, passive, dependant and traitors in the selected novels by both male and female authors. With regard to the female novelists, their depiction of women characters are far more balanced, as both negative and positive traits are evident in their presentation of their female characters (Machaba, 2011:164-165).

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has laid the foundation for the selected literary texts that are explored further on in this study. The next chapter will delineate the theoretical orientation of the study which will contribute to the analysis of the four selected Zulu literary texts that form the core of this study.

CHAPTER 3: PARADIGMATIC AND THEORETICAL ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

3.1 Introduction

Whenever a researcher investigates a research problem of any kind, the investigation is guided by a particular view or approach; hence the concept of a paradigm, an idea propagated by Kuhn (1970). “It simply refers to an elementary familiarization with theory and research or the whole system of a philosophy that influences the nature of the enquiry for researchers” attests Neuman (1997: 25). In this sense paradigms can be said to stem from the researcher’s world view or from the research question. Amongst paradigms regulating research, positivism, interpretive, critical social science and feminist approaches can be mentioned. Each technique is related to different traditions in social theory and as such involves different research proficiency (ibid).

Vithal and Jansen (2006:17) contend that a theoretical framework is crucial in any research if the conclusions to be reached are to be reliable. Thus, the theoretical framework may be aligned to a paradigm. When perfectly merged, a theoretical framework and a paradigm provide coherence and a well-developed explanation of a phenomenon or event under investigation. This study involves textual analysis with the focus on African male depiction of women and will draw on feminist paradigms. Using literary works as the point of departure, this study investigates the role of males in manipulating and / or perpetuating notions and trends that prevent women to rise above self-oppressive views about their own roles in society. In focusing on texts wherein women’s voices are silenced and those of men promoted, the study explores the impact such texts have on changing (or not) ways women are viewed by both the men and women who make up the fabric of society. Inspired by Zondi’s (2008) study which was approached from a multidisciplinary perspective and which yielded conclusive results, this study considers feminist orientations with an emphasis on literary feminism. To demystify the concept of feminism, it is imperative to highlight aspects of literary feminism as it is fundamental to this study. This is

important as it will shed light on why literary feminism is more relevant in this study when compared to other forms of feminism.

The other purpose of this chapter is to present theories that provide a fundamental background to this study. These theories help to substantiate the discussion and analysis, as well as form grounds upon which to support arguments. These theories thus anchor the thinking and frames of reference in all subsequent chapters. It is also important to point out that this chapter does not have a specific author from whom I draw; instead it builds on different accounts of authors under the umbrella of feminist and representation theories while providing a broad perspective of the debates within the feminist movement over time.

3.2 What is Feminism?

There are some scholars who feel that feminism serves a particular group of people as it does not address the needs of all women. It is a term which was theorized and espoused by white women in Western culture and encompasses an agenda that was intended to meet the needs and demands of that particular group. For this reason, it is reasonable for white women to identify with feminism and the feminist movement. However, to present this western white middle-class discourse as representative of issues faced by all women would be misleading. It is for this reason that various definitions have been devised to best suit the needs of the various racial groups, including black women. This chapter will examine the thought provoking and various points of view presented by different scholars, expounding on feminism. Hawthorn (1992:63) defines feminism as “a set of political ideologies employed by women’s movements to advance the agenda of women’s equality and to end sexist theory and practice of social oppression”. Korany [et. al] (1993:86) maintain that, “feminism firstly, is a theoretical paradigm in social theory that seeks to advocate and enhance women’s political emancipation in a predominantly patriarchal world; secondly, it is also a movement that mobilises for gender equality. Hence, feminism encompasses many varied activities and contexts”. They further affirm that those who subscribe to feminism have a number of things in common (ibid.). They share a firm commitment to gender equality, an agonizing awareness that such equality is far from being achieved, and a continuing desire to work towards such equality.

Feminism is an extensive concept, that could be divided and discussed under three significant viewpoints in feminist thinking and research, that is, Liberal feminism, Marxist feminism and Radical feminism. In order to appreciate what each perspective entails a brief synopsis is offered on each one of them. Since the study deals with African societies, in particular, a line of thought that deals with African Feminism will also be included. Literary feminism which is the main theoretical framework that will inform this study, will be explained and its preference specified.

3.2.1 Liberal Feminism

According to Bryson (2003: 139) "Feminist demands for equal rights started from the claims that women are "as good as men", that they are entitled to full human rights, and that they should be free to explore their full potential in equal competition with men".

As Williams (1988) cited in (Robbins, 2000:22) points out, liberal is a word which implies freedom elaborates on this point and observes that freedom takes place within limits, which are sometimes widely drawn for those with power. Robbins (2000:28) further asserts that, "liberal feminism which generally originates from bourgeois positions of relative comfort have had to extend their sphere of activity to address the structures of oppression that discriminate against women who occupy positions of multiple marginality by virtue, for example, of their class and gender, or race and gender or any combination of these facets". This notion is affirmed by Betty Friedan in her book 'The Feminine Mystique' (1963) wherein she argued that, in the United States since the Second World War, earlier feminist dreams of education and independence had been displaced by an all-pervasive 'feminine mystique', through which women had been manipulated and persuaded into the belief that their only fulfillment lay in domesticity" (cited in Bryson, 2003:140). Liberal feminists believe that the solution to the problems faced by women lies in changing ideas and cultural practices.

3.2.2 Marxist Feminism

At the core of Marx and Engels belief, “was a view of history and society that saw the world constantly changing and progressing, and that insisted that liberal ideas of individual rights, justice and human nature were not universal principles, but the product of a particular period of human history. The key to understanding the process of historical development lay, they argued, not in the ideas that people may hold but in their physical productive activity” maintains Bryson (2003: 56). Engels unequivocally argued that rape and violence against women were inherent in the family from inception. According to Smith;

The man took command in the home also; the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude; she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children...In order to make certain of the wife's fidelity and therefore the paternity of his children, she is delivered over unconditionally into the power of the husband; if he kills her, he is only exercising his rights (Smith, 2013:2).

Engels (cited in Smith, 2013:2) further argued that, “the epitome of the monogamous family in class society is grounded in double standards. From its very beginning the family has been accorded its precise character of monogamy for the woman but not for the man”. What emerges from the Marxist tradition on women's liberation is:

that women's issues have never been viewed theoretically as being solely the concern of women, but it was viewed holistically as the concern of all revolutionary leaders, male and female. That is why feminism has been under attack ever since, in a bid to misrepresent feminists as a group of bitter, selfish and humourless women who either do not like men or are not attracted to men; thus spending their lives steeped in a victimhood mentality, imagining that they see sexism everywhere they look (Smith, 2013:5).

Gimenez, (2000) on the other hand, makes this observation about Marxist feminism that:

the key position of Marxist Feminism is to attempt to deconstruct the doubly subordinated role of women by the capitalist system and patriarchy. This thinking makes a direct casual connection between capitalism and the subordination of women. This perspective believes that women are an exploited class in the capitalist mode of production, both by their husbands within families and by employers in the paid labour market. The strongest criticism of this thinking is the fact that, patriarchy predates capitalism by several thousand years and therefore cannot be understood as a product of capitalism. This perspective also ignores the fact that male dominance continues in non-capitalist countries such as China (Gimenez, 2000:20).

Criticism offered by African Marxists, on the other hand, is dismissive of the notion of class and the “class struggle” because of having its foundations in a non-African economic construct, that is, capitalism and has thus far concentrated on the ideological critique of African literature as opposed to the other topics such as women images or representation in said literature. Onoge (cited in Olaniyan and Quayson, 2007:473) asserts that, “this critique of the social-world outlook of African writers, as represented in their texts, is that it is founded on a firm sociology of the exploitative capitalist nature of the colonial social order”. He further argues that “the conceptual representations and evocative images, which inculcate the universe imagined in a writer’s poem, story or play, have not been clearly specified by Marxist critics whether they are progressive, reactionary or reformist” (ibid). “The implications of this whole approach for feminist theory are profound. Firstly, the family and sexual relationships are, like other forms of social organization, placed in historical context: neither eternally given nor consciously planned, they are a product of a particular historical situation and therefore open to change” maintains Bryson (2003:58).

The ideas of African Marxists, particularly what ought to be considered as the ‘natural’ role of women in society, are pertinent in this study as it will become evident further on in the study

3.2.3 Radical Feminism

Radical feminism is a perspective within feminism that calls for a radical reordering of society in which male supremacy is eliminated in all social and economic contexts. Radical feminists seek to abolish patriarchy by challenging existing social norms and institutions rather than through political process. This includes challenging the notion of traditional gender roles, opposing the sexual objectification of women and raising public awareness about such issues as rape and violence against women. Bryson confirms the above with her statement that,

Radical feminism firstly claimed to go to the roots of women’s oppression, and it proclaimed itself as a theory of, by and for women; as such, it was based firmly in women’s own experiences and perception and saw no need to compromise with existing political perspectives and agendas. Secondly it saw the oppression of women as the most fundamental and universal form of domination, and its aim was to understand and end this; here ‘patriarchy’ was a key term (Bryson, 2003:163).

According to Ruthven (1984:35), “the objective of radical feminism is to crash that androcentric dominance which makes women feel that their own sense of ‘reality’ is at odds with the ‘reality’ they are expected to conform to”. Some African women scholars felt that some of these theories were focused on addressing western women problems, therefore not really relevant to their situation, and that prompted them to come up with alternative theories. It must be pointed out that the study distances itself from such radical thinking.

3.3 African Feminism

As an African female researcher undertaking this study, it would be an oversight to ignore African Feminism completely, since feminist activism has continually been a part of African society in a radical way. Their focus has constantly been a mobilised commitment to uproot patriarchy, imperialism and injustice against women. In much pre-modern Africa, there were powerful women who were respected because they possessed economic, political and spiritual power. There were warrior women similar to the Amazons or Fon women of Dahomey, or royalty who used their powers to demand justice, like Makeda of Ethiopia, Nzinga of Angola or Mkabayi of Zululand (Salami, 2012). However, it is also true that women who were not fortunate to be born into spiritually empowered clans or who were not wealthy traders or born of royalty would face subjugation due to their gender. They would, for example, often be married off at a young age. Contrary to popular belief, monogamy was as common in many African societies as polygamy was; not necessarily by choice, but because only wealthy men could afford several wives (ibid.). Either way, with the exception of lovers who would flee their communities so that they could live together peacefully without interference, the purchase of several wives was the end goal for many households, wealthy or not. In this way they contributed to a structure that saw wives as the property of the husband and his lineage (Zondi, 2007). That is not to say that married life was all that mattered to women, or that polygamy did not come with advantages for women, like independent trading, finances and legal rights.

Modern African feminism can be traced back to philosophers and activists of the 19th and 20th centuries such as Bantu Women's League in South Africa or Egyptian Feminist Union which was established in the 1920s. According to Salami (2012:6) the term feminism in Africa is obviously an import just like every other English or Portuguese term is. However, the feministic concept is not an import in the very slightest. They did not call it feminism but there have been women who were feminists.

Surviving records of married women at the time (i.e., pre-modern Africa) suggest that although the majority of women may have found the marital institution agreeable, or at least did not revolt against it, there were those who disagreed. Those women were simultaneously feared, respected and in some historical eras, persecuted. The case at hand is that of Mkabayi, the paternal aunt of the King of the Zulus, Shaka. Although she was a very beautiful woman, she preferred to remain single for the sake of the Zulu kingdom (Zondi, 2006). The Antinga cult, which spread from what is now Ghana, to Nigeria, is an example of a group that killed women who were deemed social hermits (Salami, 2012:16). The words used to describe these women in many African languages translate into associations with spiritual power, nature and motherhood but when European languages were adopted, they became known as witches.

Kalu (2001:15) notes that most creative writers in post-colonial Africa assume the influence of an African narrative tradition and culture in their works. She maintains that, although depictions of the African woman's experiences restate her position and power within African understanding of the world, it has been difficult to define the efficacy of these relationships in the scripto-centric new dispensation. Colonialism's early focus on writing as a male-dominated activity created obstacles for the education of women and the early exploration of women-centred ways of knowing in the African knowledge base. Kalu (2001) further argues that African feminism explores the inscription of the African woman on the continent and the diaspora. Recognizing her constraint in many areas of contemporary experience, it highlights

the need for an extension of boundaries so as to facilitate validation of her participation as a woman.

Tripp [et.al] (2013:34) confirms that, “African feminism usually adopts an explanatory stance and emphasizes understanding of African cultures and social systems. In this sense it is evident that the feministic concept is not an import in the very slightest. Even though it was not called feminism there have always been women who were feminists”.

In light of the above, it is important to note that while western feminist critical theory serves a useful purpose in analysing some of the more universal myths about women, not everything found in the isiZulu context will fit into Western ideology. Arndt (2001:69) believes that, “there is a diversity of feminisms that is responsive to the different needs and concerns of different women and defined by them for themselves”.

3.4 Feminist Literary Criticism

According to Tyson (1998:82), “literary criticism is the evaluation, analysis, description, or interpretation of literary works. It is usually in the form of a critical essay. An in-depth book review can sometimes be considered as literary criticism. It may explore a particular literary work, or may look at an author’s writings as a whole”. In this sense feminist literary criticism is literary analysis that stems from a feminist vantage point or theory. Tyson further contends that:

Feminist literary criticism is literary criticism informed by feminist theory or more broadly by politics of feminism. Its history has been broad and varied, from classic works of the 19th century women authors such as George Elliot’s *Middlemarch* (1872) and Margaret Fuller’s *Women in the Nineteenth Century* (1845) to cutting edge theoretical work on women studies and gender studies by third wave authors primarily concerning themselves with feminist discourse within ethnically, sexually, and economically diverse and divergent from white heterosexual-contexts. It is also concerned with less obvious forms of marginalization such as the exclusion of women writers from the traditional literary canon (Tyson, 1998:83).

Opperman (1994: p1) states that, “to understand the nature of feminist literary criticism and its alternative approach to literature, one needs to first understand

some aspects of its history". The history of feminist criticism goes back centuries ago. Opperman maintains that,

Feminist literary criticism became a notional concern with the dawn of the new women's movement- a departure from almost exclusive focus on the issue of women's suffrage - initiated in the early 1960s. It started as part of the international women's liberation movement. Promoting women's ideal reality within the domestic realm, this impression had reduced the character of women to sexual and social passivity (Opperman, 1994:5).

Elleman (1968) and Millett (1970) were among the first to unmask the literary history of women images. They also entered into a dialogue about the prevailing stereotyped images of female fictitious characters. Abrams (et al.) (cited in Oppermann,1994:1) confirm this notion by quoting Aristotle who declared that that "The female is female by virtue of a lack of certain qualities," and St Thomas Aquinas' belief that a woman is an "imperfect man".

Reaffirming this notion many years later in *The Subjection of Women* (1869), John Stuart Mill expressed slavery very cuttingly when he said, "All men, except the most brutish, desire to have in the woman most connected to them, not a forced slave but a willing one, not a slave merely, but a favourite. They have, therefore, put everything in practice to enslave their minds" (cited in Abrams et. al. 2006: 991). Virginia Woolf is regarded as "an important precursor in feminist criticism with her novel, *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and numerous other essays on women authors and on cultural, economic and educational disabilities within what she called 'patriarchal' society that have prevented women from realizing their productive and creative possibilities" (Abrams, 1999:88). Abrams (1999:88) further maintains that, "a much more radical critical mode was launched in France by Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), a wide-ranging critique of the cultural identification of women as merely the negative object, or 'Other' to man as the dominating 'Subject' who is assumed to represent humanity".

In her book, *Sexual Politics* (1969), Millett exposed negative images of women as passive sexual objects in the contemporary fiction of the day. In fact, before Millett, the negative images of women both in society and in literature had produced equally challenging debates and conscious responses, such as that of Mary Ellman's *Thinking about Women*(1968). Opperman assert that,

Elleman's somewhat humorous treatment of the stereotypes of women in literature written by men makes Elleman one of the pioneers in the development of contemporary feminist criticism. With her and more forcefully with Millet, feminist criticism has generated much public debate in women's rights and in their search for equality in society (1994:5).

It is not astounding, therefore, that most of the 19th century female writers foregrounded woman as the subject of their novels, or conveyed female experience in their literary rebellion against their calculated exclusion both as women and as authors maintains Opperman (1994:2). During this era women playwrights generally evoked a centralised object of power although it contested their aim of creating a resistance discourse. The centralised object of power was the male authorial dialogue. Most of the novels written during this era by women used the house as a dominant image, because, like their protagonists, female writers were almost entirely confined to the house. Their experiences were not as broad as their male peers, since they were segregated particularly from business life. Consequently, the novels show a relatively stagnant way of life. Although the female writers favoured a subjective voice in their fiction due to their limited experience of the world, they were aware of its disadvantages (ibid.).

First of all, in a world where the woman is regarded as the object, and not a subject who could participate in its affairs, the subjective voice was suggestive of a reaction against standard morality. The female writer had to balance the principles-being both object and subject- so as to be acknowledged for publication. The contribution of women writers to humanist principles is typified by female uniqueness that counteracts what they saw as the basically damaging and anti-humanist male outlook and position in society. Therefore, female identity is represented as subject in process; a subject that is always in progressive motion (Opperman, 1994:7). Showalter states that,

In its earliest years, feminist criticism focused on exposing bigotry of literary practice where women images are presented in stereotypical manner in literature. She notes that such practice is the embodiment of literary abuse or textual harassment of women in classic and popular male literature. In this way women find themselves excluded from literary history (Showalter, 1985:5).

She further maintains that, “what feminist criticism seeks ethically, is to decipher and simplify all the hidden questions and answers that have always masked the connections between textuality and sexuality, genre and gender, psychosexual identity and cultural authority” (Showalter, 1985:36). During this period, women authors were being revisited and reviewed, and male writers were also exposed to a new feminist inspection. The continuing result has been nothing less than serious consideration of the ways in which certain power relations are inscribed in the text that we have inherited, not merely as a subject matter, but as the unquestioned, often unacknowledged given of the culture (ibid.). This study seeks to revisit the selected male- authored texts and expose them to feminist inspection.

Focusing on Black writers and in line with this study, Smith (in McDowell) asserts that,

Black female authors use a noticeably black female language to voice their own thoughts and those of their characters. It is only most recently that the western feminist critics have acknowledged that many of their practices of language usage are sex-derived, sex-associated, and/or sex-distinctive. They have also acknowledged that the ways in which men and women adopt and influence language are indisputably sex-related (McDowell, 1985:189).

Andrea Benton Rushing in McDowell (1985:192) has endeavoured in her series of articles to answer questions surrounding how images of women in literature should be engaged by Black feminist critics. She maintains that, “critical categories of women, based on analyses of white women characters, are Euro-American in derivation and hence inappropriate to a consideration of Black women characters”. McDowell further asserts that,

Regardless of which theoretical framework Black feminist critics choose, they must have an informed understanding on Black literature and Black culture in general. Such foundation can give this scholarship more texture and wholeness and possibly obstruct some of the problems that have had a negative effect on the criticism (McDowell, 1985:192).

In line with requirements placed on Euro-American Black feminist critics, this study of selected texts will bring to bear this dual understanding of African, but also distinctly, Zulu culture and literature.

3.4.1 Literary Feminist Philosophy Preferred in this Study

Having provided the above crucial points on the overview history of the discourse on literary feminism some thoughts on literary feminist discourse are worth highlighting. Since the 1970s feminist criticism absorbed itself in broad debates about the representations of women in literary tradition and the breakthrough of the remarkable tradition of female writing. Spender (1980: 166) affirms that, “these novels were essentially represented almost entirely by women. Critics like Dale Spender, Elaine Showalter, Juliet Mitchell, amongst others, have explored the reason why “to be seen as a woman writer” was “to be seen in a subcategory”. Women, then, began to revolt against the imposed literary categories and judgements, by openly challenging and interrupting the logo-centric tradition. Opperman (1994:6) maintains that, “books such as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) and Elaine Showalter’s *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) have paved a way for more and more thorough studies of gender and sexism in literature”. Opperman further argues that,

the main critical studies of women writers from the perspective of the female tradition create the first serious feminist criticism. Showalter’s *A Literature of their Own* is a representative example. In her analysis of the historical development of women’s writing, Showalter presents three important stages. Firstly, the imitation of the mainstream literary tradition: second, the protest against the standards of this dominant tradition concerning social values and rights: and third self-discovery which aims at a search for identity (Opperman, 1994:6).

Alternatively Gilbert and Gubar’s contention is that,

artistic ingenuity, which is traditionally recognized as a male quality, is in fact a patriarchal superimposition upon women writers who find themselves confined within it. Gilbert and Gubar especially emphasise the metaphor of paternity in reference to the concept of authority as the legitimised masculine idea in the ownership of texts. Associating “author” with the father image, then makes him the father of his text and of the reader’s attention. Again, the author/ father becomes the proprietor of the subject of his text, namely those figures, scenes and event (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979:7).

From the male perspective then, since the owner of the text is the author, he is entitled to the control of all his images. Women, thus, had to conform to the male standards of the images of femininity in their own writing. According to Fetterley (1978: 152), that is the outcome of a patriarchal prophecy that to be human is to be male.

In the following discussion some thoughts on the Literary Feminist philosophy of Robbins (2000) and Al-Dabbagh (2012) is presented as these form the cornerstone of this study. The rationale behind their inclusion is the contradictions they bring to the discourse within the issue of representation. As a point of reference, the title of this thesis as well as the first chapter in which the key concepts were discussed 'representation' forms the central idea. This is because it also expands on reality versus idealism which is also a crucial concept explored in the introductory chapter.

This theory will assist in determining whether the authors selected are able to depict convincing female characters in their works or whether they represent characters within their own perceived realities. Even though other scholars on literary feminism whose ideas are in line with Robbins (2000) and Al-Dabbagh (2012) will be referred to, it is the philosophies of Ruth et al. that will underpin this discussion. To this end an opening statement by Robbins is apt:

...and if literature is one of the privileged representations of the images presented in literary and artistic texts ...[these] are powerful because of the power accorded to literary images of women [which] are the obvious starting point to begin a critique of the place of women in society at large. Representation is not the same thing as reality – which is in itself part of the problem. It might also be seen as part of the solution. The analysis of literary representation of women and their difference from real women's lives might well be a fruitful place to begin an analysis of that reality [because] the images we see or read about are part of the context in which we live! If we can read these images differently we can go some way to altering our perceptions of reality, we can see a need for changes: and when we have seen, perhaps we can bring it about (Robbins, 2000:51).

According to Al-Dabbagh,

within Socialist literature, studies of the relationship between the development of socialist literary theory and the process of cultural transformation in modern societies cannot be separated. It is divided into two main parts: the first part outlines the theory and the second examines its reflection in actual literary works (Al Dabbagh, 2012:1).

He further maintains that, "the key issues, like the position of the writer in society, the relationship of the old and the new in literature, and the much discussed relationship between the "creator" and the "audience" has to be examined" (Al-Dabbagh, 2012:1). These are more broadly explained by regarding them as more than abstract cultural problems and, instead, considering them as social issues that can only be settled at the level of practice.

Al- Dabbagh (2012:1) asserts that, “the primary condition for any successful investigation is to start off by connecting literature to society. Literature and ideas generally do not exist in a vacuum. They are always a means of preserving a particular social system or the means of transforming it in accordance with certain material conditions”. He further maintains that,

Ideas and culture in all societies, then, can be divided into two principal kinds: the ideas and cultures of the ruling classes which seek to defend and preserve the existing system; and the ideas and cultures of the revolutionary classes which seek revolution and the transformation of the existing system. It must, however, be emphasized that all those ideas and cultures, except when scientifically socialist, are alike in that they are *essentially* exploitative, seeking either to defend an exploitative system or to change it and replace it by *another* exploitative system (Al Dabbagh, 2012: 2).

The same applies to literature as a component of culture. Hence Al- Dabbagh (2012:3) advocates that, “the exploitative content of earlier literature must be completely rejected, although its artistic forms and styles could be utilised in the service of creating new contents”. According to Bryson,

Social feminists believe that it is only in the context of a general movement to economic equality that the needs of all groups of women, rather than those of an elite minority, can be met. Socialist thinking also advocates for the abolition or reduction of the division of labour. It is argued that, rather than specialising in one limited task, workers should be enabled to express themselves in a variety of ways, so that work becomes a form of human contentment rather than alienation and degradation”(Bryson, 1999:17).

In early socialist thought, there was opposition to the division of labour between women and men. This general idea ties in with recent feminist analyses, which holds that women should be enabled to do ‘men’s work’; that men should develop their caring and nurturing qualities through participation in family life and child rearing; that sexuality should be liberated from gender stereotypes; and that ascribed and limited gender roles should be ended. For instance, women can now do physically demanding work such as driving tractors, bricklaying, which was previously the preserve of the male. In this study socialist theory is pertinent as it will allow for the opportunity to explore the portrayal of women in the texts selected. In this study, it will also be interesting to investigate how male writers view women’s roles against the democratic and transforming dispensation and whether they would depict women in more realistic or idealised ways. Showalter asserts that,

there are two distinct modes of feminist criticism, and to conflate them is to remain permanently mystified by their theoretical potentialities. The first mode is ideological; it is concerned with '*woman as reader*' with woman as the consumer of male-produced literature, and its subjects include the images and stereotypes of women in literature. The second type of feminist criticism is concerned with "*woman as writer*" with woman as producer of history, textual meaning, genres and structures of literature (Showalter, 1985:128).

This is not all feminist reading can do; it can be a liberating intellectual act, as Adrienne Rich proposes:

A radical critique of literature, feminist in its impulse take the work first of all as a clue to how we live, how we have been living, how we have been led to imagine ourselves, how our language has trapped as well as liberated us, how the very act of naming has been till now a male prerogative, and how we can begin to see and name – and therefore live- afresh (Rich, 1979:35).

Ruthven (1984:70) maintains that "an obvious place to look for androcentric tendency in a patriarchal culture is in representations of women in literature and visual arts including the media". She further asserts that, "one of the earliest forms of feminist criticism centered on what was called 'images of women'. This was the time when literary critics were still debating whether the symbolic figures which turn up in literature were universal 'archetypes' or culture-specific 'phenotypes'. According to Ruthven,

To study images of women in a patriarchal society is to unsurprisingly engage in contradictory purposes. On the one hand, there is the desire to unmask the oppressive nature of stereotypical representations which, converted into role-models, offer an alarmingly limited view of what a woman can expect of life. On the other hand, there is the hope that by providing opportunities for thinking about women, and by comparing how they have been represented with how they ought to be, women's self-awareness will be heightened by a process known as consciousness-raising (Ruthven, 1984:70).

This study aspires to uncover the overbearing nature of stereotypical representation of women images in the selected isiZulu texts which also may/ or not provide disturbingly narrow outlook of what Zulu women can expect in life.

This study hopes to highlight the plight of women images in African literature especially in the selected isiZulu literary texts. By unraveling the prejudices and negativity of women images in the selected texts, the study endeavours to inspire both

men and women to write stories that portray women in a positive way. Ferguson (in Ruthven 1984:71)) notes that the problem with investigating the images of women in literature is “fighting the depression which builds up as the fundamentally harmful reflection is recorded story after story”. Ruthven confirms Ferguson’s notion when she states that:

Women’s lives have usually been envisaged in relation to men’s lives, as daughters, mothers, mistresses and wives of men. As a result they have been seen either in terms of a single role psychologically significant to men; as virgins, temptresses, bitches, goddess or in terms of their single social and biological function in male society preparing for marriage or married (Ruthven, 1984:73).

In Chapter 5 of this study the selected texts will be analysed in order to establish whether notions, such as the one stated by Ruthven, are also identifiable in Zulu literary texts. Ruthven (1984: 83) also notes that, “Many of the conventionally sanctioned ways of representing women in literature appear to be not only anti-feminist but also anti-female, and to be powered by a loathing of women which sees them as a root of all evil”. She is of the view that,

theoretically, there is no reason why research into images of women in literature should not enrich our understanding of literary conventions by supplementing earlier studies of those reductionist practices which simplify human beings into types (or stereotypes) capable of being manipulated for a great variety of literary effects, ranging from the farcical to the tragic (Ruthven, 1984: 72).

The study of a female tradition in literature has gone beyond limits set by the traditional canon both in its theoretical, political and literary assumptions. For this reason feminist literary criticism has become, to put it in Moi’s (1987:82) words, “an urgent political necessity”. The subtle underlying challenge being, “how to avoid bringing patriarchal notions of aesthetics, history and tradition to bear on the female tradition?” (ibid.). Modern critical theorists warn against reading a text with the main objective of deciphering its meaning, for that poses a danger of imposing some kind of restrictions on the texts. Hence, if feminist literary criticism is to get recognition within a theoretical field of literature, it has to evade the reductive act.

Opperman (1994:5) argues that, “if feminist criticism wants to generate new analytical methods in its reading of literary texts, it can only achieve its aim by challenging and disrupting the patriarchal tradition within its dominant discourses, that is, by working from within the tradition”. The problem that feminists experience is

that as soon as they draw attention to contradictions of patriarchy, they become vulnerable to counter- attacks on the contradictions of feminism maintains Ruthven (1984:33).

Sparg (2014:11) asserts that, “before the first and second waves of feminism, feminist literary criticism, broadly and simple, was concerned with the politics of women’s authorship and representation of women’s condition within literature”. Al-Dabbagh (2012:7) maintains that, “socialist literature on the other hand goes further by demanding the truthful depiction of society in its revolutionary development. It involves linking revolutionary realism with revolutionary romanticism, which serves, through the use of imagination, in the depiction of future development in society “.

Feminist criticism is also concerned with less obvious forms of marginalization such as the exclusion of women writers from the traditional literary canon. Tyson maintains that,

unless the crucial or historical point of view is feminist, there is usually a propensity to give an inadequate representation of the contribution of women writers. Though a number of different approaches exist in feminist criticism, there are some common areas that exist. Amongst these can be mentioned oppression of women by patriarchy, economically, politically, socially and psychologically. In every domain where patriarchy reigns, woman is the ‘Other’: she is marginalised, defined only by her difference from male norms and values (Tyson, 1999:82-83).

Recent critical theories of literature claim that there is no single reality or any dominant narrative that can bind the individual writer in any way. As a result a plurality of diversified narratives have flourished.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a general approach towards theoretical orientations that inform the direction of the study. A broad background of different kinds of feminisms was provided with the objective of clarifying why literary feminist philosophy is the most preferred in this study. Chapter 4 now turns to the methodology that will be integrated with theory in the exploration of the texts selected.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Research is a systematic way of gathering knowledge. It follows, therefore, that research data is methodically conveyed; hence the indispensability of a chapter on methodology in any research. In line with the above assertion this chapter presents an account of the research design which Mouton (2001:55) describes as a blueprint of how the researcher intends to conduct his/her research. Elucidating the point further Polit and Hungler (2001) construe research design as the researcher's overall plan for finding answers to the research questions.

4.2 Research methodology

Amongst several definitions of what research methodology is Leedy's (1997) and Hammell's (2002) are appropriate to this study. Whilst Leedy (1997) views methodology as an applicable structure/base within which the collected data are positioned so that their importance may be distinctively visible. Whereas Hammel (2002) perceives methodology as philosophical and hypothetical aspects of how the research should advance taking into consideration the nature of the problem to be addressed. In essence, therefore, these definitions mean that the objective of outlining research methodology is concerned with the description, the types of data that the research project need and how that data were collected, organised and analysed. It is essentially, an umbrella term that refers to the research methods and techniques that are used in the process of implementing a research design as well as fundamental ideas and conventions that underlie their application. Research methodology comprises the description of research instruments, data collection and data analysis methods that are applied in the study.

Since this study is primarily qualitative and evaluative in nature, it will focus on four primary texts. It will follow a text-focused method in order to achieve the aims and objectives detailed in the introductory chapter of this work.

The study will follow a narrative approach. Heikkinen and Syrjala (2002) cited in Moen (2006:4) define the word narrative as "a word that originated from the Latin

noun and verb *narrario* and *narrare*, which means a story and to tell a story respectively". A narrative is a story that tells a series of events that are important for the narrator or his/her audience. Wertsch (1991) cited in Moen maintains that,

when narratives are analysed within and on the basis of a sociocultural context, one has to bear in mind that the individual and her/his context are entwined. When individuals tell their stories, they are not isolated and independent from the context informing their narratives. On the contrary it is important to remember that the individual in question is irreducibly connected to her or his social, cultural and institutional setting. Narratives, therefore, capture both the individual and the context (Moen, 2006:4).

The person is a political being in as far as he or she navigates communities and a political macro context. This point is corroborated by Carter (1993) who maintains that;

human beings come to understand sorrow or love or joy in particularly rich ways through the characters and incidents we become familiar with in novels or plays. The richness and nuances cannot be expressed in definitions or abstract propositions. Thus narratives, being a discursive form that draws together diverse events, happenings and actions of human lives, can only be demonstrated or evoked through storytelling. Narratives are therefore inevitably linked to language. In this sense stories cannot be viewed simply as abstract structures isolated from their cultural context (cited in Moen, 2006:5).

According to Sikes and Gale, (2006:137) "In pursuit of the research; narratives are usually related to qualitative methodologies and methods. The association between the two, is influenced by the type of data that qualitative research gathers and works from, as well as with the manner in which that data is analysed or interpreted and then re- presented as findings".

Clandinin and Connelly in Moen (2006: 6) maintains that "the narrative approach is a frame of reference that provides the researcher with a platform to reflect from, during the investigation process. It is also a research method as well as a form for representing a research study. From this perspective, the narrative approach is seen as both phenomenon and technique". Taking the point further Gudmundsdottir (2001: 226) validates the narrative approach when he argues that, it is situated within the qualitative or interpretive research method. Implicit in what has been discussed so far is that narrative research is an on-going interpretive process. Moen asserts that,

When a story is selected among several other possible stories, that point marks the beginning of an analysis and it continues for the duration of the entire research

process. Interpretation does not bring the research process to an end with its research report. Instead the opposite happens, the final account opens itself up for a wider range of interpretations by others who read or learn about the report (Moen, 2006:7).

The above statement by Moen (2006) is in line with this study. The selected texts mark the start of a debate and analysis that will not end with this study, but instead will open a broader debate and interpretations. This point will be revisited when recommendations are made at the end of the study.

The thesis offers a textual analysis which is to be understood as an interpretative analysis focused on reading, examining, analysing and comparing the more implicit issues in addressing how novels and drama stories written by male authors 'represent' the images of female characters. This implies that the characters' dialogues, their emotional and moral behaviour and their actions in the story resemble those of real people in everyday life. However, some scholars believe that the author's perceptions and beliefs impact on his/her depiction of characters in his/her texts. Robbins (2000:59).maintains that, "patriarchal thought has created an incoherent version of femininity, in which the women who live it are trapped and for which they are blamed. Their 'nature' is culturally constructed; but the construction is disguised-and, after all, nature is precisely the thing that one cannot change".

After reading Millett's book entitled *Sexual Politics*(1968), Todd (1988) deduced that Millet held a view that literature was 'mimesis'. The Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines mimesis as "the imitative representation of real world in art or literature "(Soanes and Stevenson,2004:907). Todd (1988:22) uses this hypothesis "to develop a notion that gender is a culturally learned sexual identity. For centuries, women have been deceived into thinking and believing that sexual identity is a natural given". Todd's hypothesis is corroborated by Ruthven in her statement that;

It is not a question of deciding what a woman 'is' by nature, but of examining what she is assumed to be in society or culture in which she lives, how those assumptions came about, whose interest they serve. For seeing that different societies 'construct' women in different ways, it is clear that 'woman' is in fact a culturally variable construct, which each society produces for a particular purpose (Ruthven, 1984:36).

Following from the above, Todd after reading Millett's *Sexual Politics* came to the conclusion that Millett has perhaps falsely presented literature as mimesis in as far as it relates to women. Todd thus develops the argument of gender as a culturally

acquired sexual identity; acquired in as far as literature creates or constructs the gender normative within a cultural context.

Humm (in Zuma), emphasizes the fact that,

literature read with a feminist eye should demonstrate the following: since women's social reality, as well as men's, is informed by gender, therefore the representation of female experience in literary form is thus gendered. He also affirms that representation of women in literature, whilst it does not depict inborn characteristics of real women, it might disturb the traditional symbolic order or the language system of patriarchy. This is an important idea as it is through this window that both male and female writers can disrupt problematic societal gender ideas simply by writing their representation of women. While accepting openness of literary form as being gendered, Humm also expresses the view that women do not receive their true representation in texts (Zuma, 2009:60).

This study does not rest on the assumption that information from texts is reflective of reality but intends to go as far as disrupting the traditional symbolic order in analyzing and commenting on the representation of women images as represented by male authors in the selected isiZulu literary texts. In the study of this nature, therefore, the narrative research method, as an approach has been chosen as an appropriate method for this kind of desk top study.

4.3 Research design

The Business Dictionary defines research design as, "a detailed outline of how an investigation will take place. It includes how data is to be collected, what instruments will be employed, how the instrument will be used and the intended means for analysing data collected" (Businessdictionary.com). Polit et.al (2001:167) maintains that, "a research design is the researcher's overall for answering the research questions or for testing the research hypothesis". Burns and Grove (2003:195) define a research design as "a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings". Therefore, one can conclude that research design forms the structure of any scientific work. It further gives direction and regulates the research. Social research needs a pre-determined design or structure before data collection or analysis can commence. A research design goes further than a work plan which simply details what has to be done to

complete the project. The work plan will flow from the project's research design. The function of research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables the researcher to answer the initial questions as clearly as possible. According to Yin (1989:29), "research design deals with a rational problem and not with a detailed coordination problem. Therefore acquiring pertinent evidence necessitates stipulating exactly the type of evidence that is required in order to answer the research questions, to test a theory, to evaluate a programme or to accurately assess some phenomenon".

4.3.1 Research approach

Since the study is qualitative in nature, a qualitative research approach is appropriate. Pope et.al maintain that,

Qualitative research is usually associated with a social constructivist paradigm which emphasises the socially constructed nature of reality. She believes that a qualitative approach gives freedom to the researcher to identify a prototype on the basis of information that has been collected. It is about recording, analysing and attempting to uncover the deeper meaning and significance of human behaviour and experience, including contradictory beliefs, behaviours and emotions" (Pope, 2000:116).

In the case of this study, through qualitative research approach, the researcher will analyse characters in the selected literary texts that resemble, in most cases, what happens in the real world. "A qualitative approach further enables the researcher to acquire in-depth understanding of people's experiences rather than information which can be generalised to other larger groups". According to Kirsch, cited in Zuma

qualitative researchers characteristically position their work in the appropriate historical and cultural background. They also concede that there are complexities and multiplicities of human experience. It is through this type of research that a substantial amount of data about the lives of women is gathered. Furthermore, results based on a qualitative type of enquiry show that there are different ways of representing women's realities which can influence societal structures and policy making (Zuma, 2009: 76).

In this study qualitative data are collected to investigate the representation of women images by male authors in the selected Zulu literary texts. This study does not merely employ qualitative enquiry but is influenced by the feminist principles whose deliberate focus is on gender. The emphasis is on examining whether there have

been changes in Zulu literary texts reflecting the recent gains brought about by democracy in South Africa. Creswell (2007) summarises the distinctive aspects of qualitative research approach as explorative, descriptive and contextual. Since these characteristics are present in this study, it is fitting to clarify their relevance.

4.3.1.1 Explorative research

Qualitative research is explorative in nature. Creswell (2007) posits that, it is the type of approach that is used when there are few earlier studies to which reference can be made for information. In this specific field of research, there are a few earlier studies that have been conducted some of which were discussed in Chapter 2. Furthermore, there can be no exhaustive qualitative or quantitative analysis completed on both the lived experiences of women as well as the multiplicity of engendering perspectives the male writer adopts in the process of constructing the female character. In exploratory research a variety of sources might be used to provide insights and information. Researchers doing exploratory research have to adopt a flexible attitude towards collecting information in this type of research and be constantly asking themselves what lies beneath the surface of what they are learning or seeing. “A researcher or decision maker requires exploratory research if she/he has the following objectives in mind namely: to define more precisely an unclear or ambiguous problem and to increase her/his ability to grasp meaning or to gain a better understanding of a subject in that way deepening his/her insight” notes Clow and Stevens (2009:50-51).

Sebunje (2015) concurs with Clow and Stevens (2009) that, “the aim is to look for patterns, ideas or hypotheses rather than testing or confirming a hypothesis. The focus is on gaining insight. It involves researching issues in more depth, so as to provide a deeper understanding” (research-techniques.com). The representation of women images in selected Zulu literary texts written by male authors, orientates the study towards the exploration and interpretation of some aspects of gender inequality that exists in Zulu society and which filters through literature written by its people. Society’s knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and fears are evident when one explores the underlying messages in the works of Zulu male authors as far as women are represented in the selected texts. To achieve the aims and objectives of

the study as outlined in Chapter 1, feminist literary criticism will be employed to qualitatively analyse the female characters as portrayed in Zulu literary texts selected for this study.

4.3.1.2 Descriptive research

Qualitative research also has descriptive features. It seeks to describe phenomena as they exist. It is used to identify and obtain information on the characteristics of a particular issue. Descriptive research goes further than exploratory research in examining the problem since it describes the characteristics of the issue. It is designed to depict the participants in an accurate way. A research investigation may include descriptive research, but it is likely that it will also include explanatory or predictive information. According to Flick (2007:7) “descriptive research involves in-depth depictions of the participants’ experiences that goes beyond a report of what is observable on the surface. It also seeks to uncover their feelings, and interpret meanings of their actions”. This intense description develops from the data and the context. The task of the researcher involves describing the location, by giving a visual picture of setting as well the events and the situation. He/ she also has to describe the people that live in this location by giving verbatim narratives of their perceptions in context. This study will analyse the selected texts using the approach mentioned above namely that of describing the location and giving a picture of the setting and the situation. The methodology centres on the way in which human beings make sense of their subjective reality and attach meaning to it. Social scientists approach people not as individual entities who exist in a vacuum, but explore their world within the whole of their life context.

4.3.1.3 Contextual research

Within the current study, the qualitative research method is found to be appropriate since it is concerned with understanding people and the social cultural contexts within which they live. This is because, as it was mentioned earlier, literature serves as a mirror of society. In *Zulu Oral Traditions* (1996) Canonici points out that the study of setting is essential for a proper understanding of a text, be it oral or written.

He further explains that setting or milieu consists of the physical place, the historical period, which is the period of the events and that of the writer as well as the cultural background of a work. This is pertinent in literary analysis as it is essential to keep in mind these parameters of the narrative, especially its historical period. This means that a description of both the period during which the fictional events are supposed to have happened, and the period during which the author is writing are indispensable in research that focuses on literary texts. This background should assist in identifying the social problems and the social circumstances literature brings to the fore. Hence, for this study, the texts that have been selected reflect different periods in the history of South Africa.

4.3.2 Data gathering instrument

The foregoing chapters serve as evidence of the groundwork that has been done in this study. The study will use primary sources in the form of four selected texts for the investigation to be undertaken namely: *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi* (Ngubane, 1975), *Ngiwafunge AmaBomvu* (Molefe, 1991), *Ababulali Benyathi* (Mngadi, 2006) and *Kudela Owaziyo* (Maphumulo, 2008). The above mentioned works were carefully selected in line with the aims and objectives of the study as outlined in the first chapter of this study. Works by other authors will also be referred to whenever it becomes necessary to emphasise a particular point. In this regard, some of the works presented in the literature review chapter will thus serve as a point of reference from time to time.

4.3.3 Data presentation

The method that will be followed in the analysis of the selected texts will take a similar approach to that applied in the literature review chapter (cf. Chapter 2). Chapter 2 dealt with themes in the portrayal of women in literature. The study builds on the themes already discussed while progressing to new arguments within the dialogue. In order to add nuance to the dialogue on the portrayal of women images in the isiZulu literature, the study will draw primarily from the texts in question. Accordingly the analysis of the texts selected for this study will be organised as follows:

A summary of each of the stories will be provided immediately followed by an in-depth analysis of the female characters in each literary text. In so doing the study will focus on the following features;

- gender inequality
- gender stereotypes
- portrayal of women images and
- an evaluation of representation of women images

4.3.4 Data analysis and interpretation

The emphasis in this section is on the methods or strategies used to analyse the data gathered. Cresswell (1994) maintains that data analysis is a process of organising and interpreting the data. Data analysis involves manipulating data in order to generate information; this means that data analysis is about making sense of text or image data. It is important to group similar trends into categories and to identify common patterns that can help derive meaning from what seem unrelated and diffused (ibid.).

The study will offer a textual analysis which will be interpretative in nature. Pope et. al. (2000:114) maintains that, “texts are characterized by the inference of general laws from a particular instance using content analysis to create categories and explanations. Qualitative research uses diagnostic categories to describe and clarify social phenomena”. According to Chowdhury (2015:1135) a multiplicity of qualitative research reveals that, “qualitative data analysis methods are generally done by coding, sorting and sifting qualitative data. There is strong evidence that qualitative data analysis also involves more than these data indexing and categorising activities”. For that reason the main female characters from all four selected texts will be analysed using feminist literary theory. The following categories will form the main part of the discussion.

4.3.4.1 Gender inequality

In most patriarchal societies of the world, Africa included, women have experienced gender inequality in one way or the other; be it in the work place or in the home environment. The pre-colonial era to date African cultures have maintained and practised gender inequality. One of the aims of this study is to investigation whether there has been a move in literature written by males, towards reflecting (in their

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work) that South Africa is now a democratic country, where all people are equal. de Laoretis (in Zuma) asserts that,

cultural interpretation of sex into gender and the unevenness that is representative of all gender systems across different cultures are assumed to be methodically connected to the design of social imbalances. She further states that the sex - gender system is a socio-cultural construct, a semiotic apparatus, a system of representation which gives meaning to individuals within the society (Zuma, 2009:57).

Structures like a family, for instance, are institutions where society mirrors its application of cultural manifestations. The study is concerned with the issue of cultural principles in that they afford men a powerful position in society and specifically in the family. It is within the family contexts that hierarchies of power are produced and in turn fixed in our societies. Basing this argument on the stories under investigation, the study presents arguments that the representation of male and female characters in specific gender roles may be informed by expected cultural behaviour.

4.3.4.2 Gender stereotypes

Miller (1982) in his book entitled *In the Eye of the beholder: Contemporary issues in Stereotyping* defines stereotype in the following manner;

the word 'stereotype' is derived from the Greek words '*steros*', meaning solid, and '*typos*', meaning the mark of a blow, impression or model. The term was first used to describe a method of printing designed to duplicate pages of type. A metal plate, cast from a mould, was used instead of the original form. A link to contemporary usage is the idea of duplication, that all products of the stereotyping process would be identical. Another feature was rigidity or permanence. Miller goes on to say that 'stereotype is a relatively rigid and oversimplified or biased perception or conception of an aspect of reality, especially of persons or social groups where grouping races or individuals together make a judgement about them without knowing them' (Miller, 1982:4).

Masuku's (2005:17) definition is based on a more socially understood interpretation. Hence she maintains that, "the stereotype is an overgeneralization of characteristics that may or may not have been noticed. It often contains a seed of truth that is unbiased and thus misleading". This study focuses on the issue of cultural principles in that they afford men powerful positions in society and specifically in the family. It is

within family structures that chains of command are created and in turn fixed to our society.

In this sense stereotype is a concept related to role, yet distinct. It can be defined as a “picture in our heads”, it is a composite image of traits and expectations pertaining to some group. Our language employs stereotyping as it is aligned with societal expectations. Stereotypes 'order' the world through particular categorizations of persons. In Zuma (2009:61) Nayar maintains that, “the stereotype preserves sharp limits and also translates the “other” into a set of static attributes. Most texts present women as ‘the other “and in turn predict/ expect that to be a universal belief”.

Robyn (1993) is of the opinion that attention to gender stereotype is another subject wherein feminists criticism can usually be identified as the stereotypical way of tormenting female characters in a male-dominated society. Some feminists pungently believe that these male playwrights depend upon this distinction as a key to fighting essentialism, or a deterministic view that fate is a product of biology. Some writings perceive female characters as individuals lacking in competence and resentful of males in their communities. These writings see males as the only sex in which any value resides. In the selected texts of this study the analysis takes the form of a close reading of these male literary texts which are deconstructed by means of searching for the unfairness of male writings and their failure to portray any positive image of female characters.

4.3.4.3 Portrayal of women images

The study will investigate the general perceptions regarding female characters as portrayed in many of the literary texts written by males. There is an indirect threat under which women live due to the portrayal of the lower status of the representation of female characters in literary works written by male authors. The next chapter seeks to map out the cultural perceptions of African male writers towards females and the gender discrimination in their literary texts. This study thus examines the plight of female characters. The research further attempts to inspire women to tell their own stories about their own experiences of life.

4.3.4.4 Evaluation of representation of women images

In this section the findings, based on the analysis of data, will determine whether a male author of a particular novel or drama represents women images positively or negatively. Furthermore, whether his depiction of women images is real or idealistic, since the key to an evaluation is to make a value judgement. Taking into consideration the time of publication of each text in the contextual qualitative tradition, the study will argue whether the portrayal of women by male writers has changed to reflect the socio-political order in South Africa post 1994. The selected data source will enable the selection of ideas for the analysis chapter which will ascertain whether there has been issues of gender power and male dominance shifts, subsequent to South African proclamation of democracy in 1994. It will also determine whether male authored isiZulu literary texts have made any contribution towards reshaping the shared ideology which promotes tolerance, gender equality and justice in the society. Guided by the analysis findings the study seeks to show whether post-apartheid literary production does delineate a “new woman” for the new South African society.

4.4 Reliability and validity

According to Phelan and Wren, (2005) “reliability is the extent to which an assessment tool produces constant and dependable results. Internal consistency reliability is a measure of reliability used to evaluate the degree to which different test items produce similar results” (chfasoa/com). Phelan and Wren further state that, “validity refers to how well a test measures what it purported to measure and no other variables” (ibid.). To test validity of this study a formative validity approach will be employed. The significance of this type of validity, is that, “when applied to outcomes assessment, it is used to assess how well a measure is able to provide information that will help improve the programme under study” asserts Phelan and Wren. In the context of this study, the selected literary texts taken from different periods leading to democracy will serve the purpose of ensuring the required reliability and validity.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has proposed a methodology that the study will follow. It has further given a detailed outline of how the investigation will be conducted. In providing and explaining the features of the qualitative research approach, namely, the explorative, descriptive and contextual aspects, this chapter has paved the way for revealing the strength of the study. While all of these characteristics are present in the study, it will become evident in the next chapter how their effectiveness balances one another.

The chapter has also described the logistics of data; how it was collected, will be analysed, interpreted and presented. Guided by the systematic research design discussed in this chapter, the ensuing chapters will focus on exploring and analysing the four literary texts selected for this study.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF SELECTED TEXTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses issues of inequality as they appear in gender-specific roles that our society promotes and preserves in textual forms. The analysis sees such categories of difference and inequality as mutually constitutive. It aims to analyze the representation of women images as represented in the selected literary texts using the theory of feminist textual analysis and the theory of representation of character. According to Heyes (2002) in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,

feminism is both an academic commitment and a political movement. Feminism seeks justice for women and to end sexism in all forms. It is the intention of this work to shed light on the injustice texts render in representing female characters with the aim of engaging writers in emancipating women; especially by representing them positively in their writings (plato.com).

In the context of this study, texts are viewed through a feminist lens in terms of representation, gender inequality, stereotypes and gender roles pertaining to the issues emanating from cultural manifestations and link to the gender of the author. This study is largely informed by the feminist theory and intends to reveal and challenge discrimination of any form against the representation of women characters in isiZulu literary texts. It will achieve this by revealing that these forms of oppression are mostly to the detriment of women. The representation of characters is mostly overshadowed by cultural manifestations of society and usually negatively represents women's roles in texts. Nayar's (2006) cited in Zuma's definition of representation includes the norms of meaning-generating practices. He asserts that;

character representation is linked to power, the practices of ideological domination and selective marginalization. Nayar further maintains that representations obtain their common base of understanding from larger cultural ideas regarding women and minorities. Character representation is thus not viewed at face value, but has to be seen as linked to culturally-held opinions about women. Intolerable as it may be, in the society from which the literary texts are taken, women's characters and roles are both objects to be possessed and controlled by masculine power. Most texts depict situations where males dominate and control women under the pretext of culture (Zuma, 2006: 56).

As Mills (1995:68) puts it, "close analysis may assist the reader to become aware of the approach that language choices may serve, which usually turns out to be

stereotypical. Language is one of the means that is used to communicate knowledge and as such may be biased”.

Texts as products of speaking or writing, are not value -free and on this basis are equally in need of analysis. This study examines the social membership of the author in relation to the manner in which female characters are represented. It challenges inequality as a form of discrimination against a particular social group. Any representation constructed by a more powerful social group can stand unchallenged as truth. This study investigates the representation of women in particular as it is underpinned by forces of oppression, male domination and power and challenges such practices as being patriarchal.

In the following section is a synopsis of each of the texts selected as that exercise provides a point of departure for this discussion. This is followed by analysis of the text in line with the categories mentioned in the methodology chapter where the following features were identified: gender inequality, gender stereotypes, portrayal of women images and an evaluation of representation of women images. Moreover, translations (from isiZulu to English) of parts of the texts will be provided. This will be done in order to reinforce and build on those of descriptive translation theorists who maintain that translations can never be exact parallels of their originals. The reason being that every translation involves a certain amount of manipulation for a certain purpose maintains Hermans (1985:46). According to Bassnett-McGurie (2002) and Lefevere (1992) cited in Shuping (2013:56) all rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Taking the point forward, Lefevere and Bassnett maintain that, socio-cultural context in which translations take place should be considered at all times when translating. These scholars argue that translations are never produced in a vacuum but that they are part of a larger system and should therefore be described in terms of the target system (Shuping, 2013:57). The study will take these views into consideration when translating the isiZulu texts into English.

5.2 Synopsis of the novel *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi* (Ngubane, 1975)

The novel takes place during the Apartheid period in South Africa. The period in which the author wrote is contemporary to that period of time depicted in the novel. There are two conflicting settings of a rural and urban nature. As such two parallel forces characteristic of those environments are at play. These are Buthunqe and Durban respectively and both are located in KwaZulu-Natal. The discussion is confined to what goes on in the rural village of Buthunqe as this is where most of the events which are directly related to this study take place. Moreover, the urban environment serves the purpose of linking the study to how one female character that is central in the development of the plot finds refuge when patriarchal forces stifle her. One could argue that this aspect of the narrative adds nuance in that the women are not universally unequal but that gender inequalities are more prevalent in rural settings as opposed to urban. This would then subtly problematise context as opposed to universal patriarchy.

The story revolves around the families of three men, Zulumacansi, Manamuza and Masovenyeza, who live in the rural village of Buthunqe in KwaZulu-Natal. Zulumacansi leaves his village to go in search of work in Durban. He finds work as a domestic worker for a white lady. He uses his earnings to buy cattle back home in the village where cattle are regarded as a symbol of respect. He knows that amassing livestock would earn him the status of being a real man—*umnumzane* (head of the family) in the eyes of his mother and sister, Qimbile, since his father had passed away. Furthermore, the cattle would warrant dignity and respect for him among his peers in the village. Even though he is considered an *isigwadi* or *isishimane* (a man who is not popular with girls), he hopes that his newly acquired wealth in the form of livestock will change his situation amongst the Buthunqe maidens.

Manamuza is married to KaMemunce with whom they have nine beautiful daughters and a son. He attaches high value to his daughters only as far as the wealth they will bring him in the form of *lobola* cattle. One of them is already married to a chief and

that gives him additional status to be his *induna* (chief's right hand man). The third man is Masovenyeza, a polygamist with six wives; one of them being Bongani, Manamuza's daughter. He is a chief and a traditionalist that does not hesitate, when angry, to take out his knobkerrie and beat his wives, neighbour, children or chickens. He is easily irritated and his wives constantly live in fear of him and his knobkerrie named *Sabisabafazi*, which when literally translated, means "frighten women".

After learning of Zulumacansi's newly acquired wealth, Manamuza negotiates with him to marry one of his daughters, Bajwayele, who already has a man in her life whom she loves dearly. But when her father decrees that she marries Zulumacansi, neither she nor her mother can convince him otherwise. Meanwhile Zulumacansi demands the outstanding cows from Masovenyeza which he was supposed to pay during *lobolo* negotiations for his sister, Qimbile. He needs these without delay so that he can add them to what he already has when paying *ilobolo* for Bajwayele. However, Masovenyeza is not in a position to do that just yet and the battle culminates in a court case. This traumatizes Qimbile who is aware of the outstanding cows but who, due to the fear she has of her husband, may not blame him. Married to Zulumacansi against her will, Bajwayele becomes a headache to both families as she constantly runs away from home to prove that she does not love Zulumacansi.

5.2.1 Gender Inequality

5.2.1.1 Gender Inequalities in Manamuza's Family

Married to Manamuza, KaMemunce is portrayed as an uneducated woman who occupies an inferior position in the marriage. She submits to the authority of her husband even in matters that concern their daughter's happiness and tolerates verbal abuse from Manamuza from time to time. Manamuza makes his authority felt. The unkind words he utters to his wife when she tries to present her daughter's side of the matter regarding her forced marriage are worth quoting as they demonstrate his unwavering authority while keeping KaMemunce in her place:

Iyeke lendaba nina kaBongani. Ayisakulingene. Sekungeyami (p39).

(Stop involving yourself in this matter Bongani's mom. It is beyond your authority. It is mine).

Yilokho engifuna ukwazi. OkaNomadinane lomuzi; uthi mina ngaphakathi nangaphandle. Ingane engaphakathi kwawo lomuzi kufanele ihloniphe owami umthetho. Uma ingeke ikwenze loko mayiphume ngesango ihambe, ibheke eMkhumbane (p39).

(This is what I want you to understand. This house belongs to Nomadinane; it belongs to me, everything that is in it and outside it belongs to me. A child that lives in this house must respect my rules. If that child does not want to do that, that child must leave this house and go to Mkhumbane).

These words support the assertion that traditionally a married Zulu woman did not have a say in the affairs of the family regardless of how long she had been in that family. This was not an issue which was open to negotiation. Women themselves understood and accepted that situation without challenging it. That is why KaMemunce responds to her husband in these words:

Qha phela, kakade umnimumuzi nguwe...Angizanga namuzi mhla ngishiya okaMemunce (p39).

(Anyway you are the owner of this house...I did not bring along my house when I left Memunce's family).

Culturally the elders of the clan and men are typical objects of respect due to the fact that they are either older and have earned the respect by their life experience and work, or that they represent the lineage and are related to the ancestors of the group. This also involves the concept of religious mediation in cultures where the ancestors are also the family tutelary spirits: the oldest male is also the family priest. The socio-political and religious structure of the clan is then copied and expanded at the levels of district and nation, where local chiefs and national leaders take on the widened responsibilities of the family patriarch. In matriarchal societies, however, the situation would be reversed; and the females of the group hold the highest position in the social and religious hierarchy; a situation that is very different in Zulu society which is situated in patriarchy.

When Manamuza coerces Bajwayele to marry Zulumacansi, KaMemunce submits to his authority even though she knows how unfair he is being to their daughter. The words of the mother to her daughter demonstrate her surrender and acceptance of a

status quo in which the man's word is final. According to KaMemunce, indeed, Bajwayele has to marry Zulumacansi as he will be able to take good care of her. This is how she comforts her ill-fated daughter:

Kulungile Bajwayele, sale usuhamba mntanami. Uyintombazane. Umhlaba lona ubuswa ngamadoda(p43).

(It is fine Bajwayele, just go my child. You are a woman. The world is controlled by men).

As a woman and mother, KaMemunce is rendered voiceless in matters related to women's rights such as the right to choose a life partner. Through her acknowledgement of women as powerless beings without authority she promotes gender disparities. Even though she tries to make herself heard at a family meeting specifically called to address Bajwayele's forced marriage to Zulumacansi, she cannot dissuade her husband to choose a marriage partner for their daughter. She is also depicted as a person who has surrendered to a culture that allows parents to command those under their authority even in matters such as choosing life partners. This is evident in KaMemunce's words to her daughter where she says:

Kuliqiniso loku okushiwo nguyihlo Bajwayele ukuthi usukhulile. Kuliqiniso futhi ukuthi kulisiko lakithi elihle ukuba ingane ikhonjiswe umuntu ophilile, ingazilahli ehuzwini elizodlala ngayo (p41).

(When your father says that you are now a grown up woman, he is right. He is also right that our beautiful tradition permits choosing a loyal man for the daughter lest she falls into the wrong hands).

The above scenario is well captured in Fubara (2012:103) where she sums up the precarious state of women in the phrase "Do what you are told woman!" She finds these words to be always a weighty force of masculinity which must be obeyed with absolute subservience.

The other instance where gender inequality comes to the fore in this novel is during the family meeting at which Bajwayele's fate is announced. The sitting arrangement dictates where women should sit; Bajwayele and her mother are seated on the floor on the left side of the house designated for women. Manamuza addresses his family whilst lying on his back in his bed, and when one considers the magnitude of the

matter under deliberation, it is clear that Manamuza does not attach any importance to it in as far as how it is going to affect his daughter. It could only mean that Manamuza considers the subject as trivial even though it weighs heavily on his daughter. Gender disparities are also evident where there is no etiquette for men during this family meeting, where men may address their families standing or lying down while women are expected to sit in a designated area.

Also of significance at the family meeting is the dialogue between daughter and father where, like a lamb to the slaughter, Bajwayele gives in to her father's wishes without objection. Her father says:

Usukhulile manje, Nomadinane. Ngifuna-ke mntanami ukuba ungilandele izinkomo kwabozalo lukaBhekokwakhe. Mina yihlo sengicabange ngabona ukuthi laphaya kulo mfana kaBhekokwakhe, uZulumacansi, ungafike ukhonzele thina inkonzo enhle (p40).

(You are an adult now, Nomadinane. I want you my child to fetch cattle for me from the Bhekokwakhe family. I, as your father, have decided that from that Bhekokwakhe's boy, Zulumacansi, you can be our good ambassador).

Bajwayele responds in these words:

Ngiyezwa baba (p40)

(I hear you, father).

These words are crucial as Bajwayele repeats them during the meeting:

Ngiyakuzwa loku okushiwo ngubaba (p42).

(I hear that which father is saying).

In fact when they are repeated Bajwayele resorts to formal speech, *ukuhlonipha*, where she addresses her father in the third person. Words are powerful conveyors of messages. What appears to be an insignificant emphatic word “-ku-” in *ngiyakuzwa*, it also serves the purpose of accentuating Bajwayele's unconditional surrender to her father's demands; at least that is the impression she gives everyone present. Bajwayele has experienced the authority of her father towards her mother and as such she seems to have assimilated her mother's response to her father's subduing authority. She dares not go against the rules imposed on her by her family, which

also claims tradition to be the order of the day. Thus, even in matters of the heart she has to put her father's wishes first (Zondi, 2013). It is ironic that the coercion happens after both parents have acknowledged that she is a mature woman, yet she is not permitted to make up her own mind. It is instances like these that prompt Zondi (2005) to argue that a woman is brought in as a "commodity" to "do the job" of producing children for the man and his clan. This idea resonates in Gumede (2002:37) who says: "Men were not compelled or pressured to take a particular woman as a wife. They enjoyed the freedom of making their own choices". Commenting on the character under review here Gumede states that, Zulumacansi is seen in this novel exercising his freedom in decision making. I guess owning a big number of cows gave that power and freedom (ibid.).

Manamuza and the arranged marriage points to erroneous beliefs about *ilobolo* and opens room for elaborating on and rectifying such misconceptions. In the Zulu culture *ilobolo* (bride's dowry) developed from the tradition of giving gifts to the bride's family in gratitude for first giving birth, and then raising and ultimately parting with such a valuable part of the family; the bride to be. It became the means to ensure the parents' control over the regenerative processes of society. According to Gumede,

in Zulu society *ilobolo* has several additional functions namely, to validate that the intended husband has the ability to acquire the means of sustenance for himself, his bride and for their future family. *Ilobolo* also serves as a means to exchange the good will of the ancestor spirits of the two clans since the cattle are the property of the family spirits (Gumede, 2002:46).

However, respect, followed by absolute obedience, is seen as opportunity for abuse by some power-hungry heads of family who will stop at nothing to ensure their daughters are married off into wealthy families. Such fathers often look forward to their daughters' wedding in order to replenish their kraals, *isibaya* as is evident in this novel.

Bajwayele feels hurt, humiliated and degraded by her father's actions; however, she does not rebel or even make her feelings known to her father. Once married to Zulumacansi and before she runs away from him, Bajwayele fulfills the expectation of a new bride. In a traditional sense, a Zulu woman is not married to her husband

only, but to his entire family. A newly-wed has to prove that she is worth the cattle paid to her father by committing herself to household chores. Tradition demanded that a bride shows her competence by doing chores that would demonstrate that she was the “right” material for building a family. In this novel *Bajwayele* is portrayed as a traditional Zulu woman who, in spite of her anger, fulfills what tradition wants of her. That is why the author names in detail what she does for Zulumacansi’s family:

Avuke njengabo bonke omakoti uBajwayele, lapho kuthi ntwenzansi, anikele emfuleni, abuye namanzi. Asuke lapho eze etsheni egaya ukudla, abase, apheke. Uyavuka wonke umuzi kaBhekokwakhe usebabingelela ngekhofi elishunqayo. Nasekuthezeni kwazi yena (p46).

(*Bajwayele* woke up very early like all other married women (brides) to fetch water from the river, grind the maize, make fire and cook. By the time the Bhekokwakhe family wakes up, she was ready to serve the entire family with hot coffee. She also fetched firewood from the forest).

As mentioned earlier in the study, engendering in *Bajwayele*’s life, like Tambu’s in *Nervous Conditions*, had thus been something she had been exposed to long before she even became conscious of what was happening around her. Talbot (1998:7) maintains that, “from a very early age people are gendered. When the process of engendering takes place they themselves become active participants in their gendering”. Sheafor and Horejsi (2008:579) asserts that communities become accustomed to their everyday experiences by interpreting them. They also deal with power and relationship struggles within and outside their families using established gender norms as a resource. The in-laws pride themselves if the new bride enslaves herself. If she is deemed lazy the gossip usually circulates very quickly as is seen in Flora Nwapa’s (1966) novel when Omirima is gossiping with Amede about her daughter-in-law:

She learnt it from the white woman. That’s what I told her. I said to her, you are not an idle white woman. Women of our town are very industrious. They rise when the cock crows. Husbands of white women are rich, so their wives can afford to be lazy. An idle woman is dangerous, so I told her to her face (Nwapa, 1966:193-4).

This is the test that women in male dominated Zulu societies have to pass in order to be accepted as a worthy member of her newly acquired family.

5.2.1.2 Gender inequalities in Zulumacansi's Family

Qimbile, who is a sister of Zulumacansi, is also one of Masovenyeza's six wives. She is at the heart of the conflict that exists between her husband, Masovenyeza and her brother, Zulumacansi. Masovenyeza did not pay all the *ilobolo* cattle when he married Qimbile. That was when their father was still alive. Zulumacansi remembers that Masovenyeza owes him cattle when he realizes that the cattle he has managed to buy with his earnings are not sufficient to pay the entire *ilobolo* for Bajwayele; daughter of the highly reputable Manamuza. He loses his patience when Masovenyeza does not meet his demands. Of significance here is the fact that both Qimbile's mother and her daughter do not form part of these conversations; they are simply by-standers in a matter that directly concerns them. The reason for their exclusion is solely gender based. According to the Zulu culture, *lobolo* negotiations are conducted by men. However, in the absence of Zulumacansi's late father, his mother should have been formally informed and engaged on the matter. However, they only become involved when Zulumacansi needs their support when matter is taken to court.

Qimbile is portrayed as a powerless woman who contributes virtually nothing to the issue that unequivocally concerns her. While initially she is not part of the talks when the matter is taken to court she finds herself torn apart emotionally as she knows that her *lobolo* was not paid in full. She recognizes the legitimacy of the outstanding balance of cows. However, she does not dare express this view as she is aware of the consequences of doing that. Thus her reasons for choosing to support her husband are driven by fear:

Azazele yena ukuthi kuyothi kufikwa ekhaya uMasovenyeza athathe iwisa lakhe lokushaya abesifazane, ayelethe igama wathi nguSabisabafazi, aliphelelisele lonke edolweni kumkakhe. (p24)

(She knew that if she did anything unacceptable when they get home Masovenyeza would take out his knobkerrie set aside for beating his wives, which he named Sabisabafazi and break her knees).

It is important to point out the role of patriarchy and maleness in this context. "Women are there for the benefit of men and to make men happy, even if at times it is at the expense of their own integrity" notes Chukwuma (2012:90). Zulumacansi's father is no longer alive but his mother is. By virtue of being the eldest boy in the family he assumes the status of being a provider for the whole family. Regardless of

the presence of his mother, he is still the head of the family by social and economic dictates. His mother cannot be entrusted with authority because she is a woman. This means that even the family cows which belonged to his father pass on to Zulumacansi. One would be inclined to think that, out of respect for his mother, if for nothing else, Zulumacansi would, at least inform her of his intention to demand outstanding *lobolo* cows from Masovenyeza (Zondi, 2013).

In the novel, *Inkinsela YaseMgungundlovu*, MaNtuli and her daughter Thoko are excluded in a matter that directly impacts on them as well. Instead of being part of the discussion, they are kept busy in the kitchen preparing meals that will be served to men. Men discuss matters of economic importance in their community, the sale of cattle. This is the situation that Zulu literary texts reflect; the marginalization of women in important matters that impact on their lives (Gumede, 2002: 70).

5.2.1.3 Gender inequalities at Masovenyeza's Family

The extent of gender inequalities that exist between Masovenyeza and his wives is clearly evident in the manner in which he treats them, as if they were his children. He also expects them to respond to his call instantaneously. Even though in the following passage the author expresses their precarious situation humorously; his unpredictability continually keeps his wives in check. On his arrival at his home on the day he loses the court case between himself and Zulumacansi, Masovenyeza asks for drinking water to which the response is:

Baphuma bephangelana abesimame beyofuna amanzi. Babuya nawo bamnika (p29).

(All the women came out rushing through the door in order to get him some water. They brought it to him).

What is evident here is that the behavior of Masovenyeza's wives towards their husband is driven by fear rather than respect or love. These women are depicted as submissive and even skittish in the face of his authority. The word *baphangelana* (meaning each one of them rushed to answer his call lest they experience a torture of some kind) for such a simple request, when one of them could easily have given him water. The above extract, provides a vivid image of women on edge from their

terrorizing husband. The allegorical use of this word '*baphangelana*' presents what Axel Olrik, when dealing with Epic Laws of the Folk Narrative, terms "the law of tableaux scenes" (in Canonici, 1996:50). According to this description there are some scenes in the narrative with dominant images that characterize major events which seem like sculptured or painted situations. The picture created by the author in the choice of his words in the quotation above enables the reader to visualize emotionally abused women who constantly live in fear even where there should be none at all.

Polygamy is an acceptable but not a mandatory practice in the Zulu culture. This is validated in this novel, where for example, Manamuza has one wife. By accepting their positions as women in a polygamous union, Masovenyeza's wives already compromise themselves. While it was a common practice for uneducated rural women to participate in this kind of marriage agreement prior to 1994, Mkhize and Zondi (2015) observe that the practice is currently being embraced by enlightened and educated women in the 21st century. The difference here is that these women enter into these unions fully aware of the implications. Polygamy was a common practice in patriarchal African societies, including the Zulus. Stratton (1994) asserts this when she describes the status of women in Umofia in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*:

They were mere objects circulated among their menfolk, willed, for example by a father to a son as a part of an estate, or traded for a bag full of cowries. The only escape, it would seem, from this demeaning classification is for the woman to outlive the men who could own her (Stratton, 1994:25).

What is worth noting is that, while women are excluded from the male domain of community power, men are permitted to intrude into the domestic domain. The prohibition of women from entering a male arena is absolute, reinforced tacitly and explicitly, that is why Masovenyeza's wives remain silent on the court case between their husband and Zulumacansi.

The study will not have done justice to the work if it failed to highlight that Ngubane's portrayal of urban women at Benoni differs significantly from the women of Buthunqe. They are depicted as economically independent. They hold power and authority in their households. Some of them do not hesitate to beat men that are their employees when something goes wrong in their businesses. The author creates a sharp contrast between the rural women of Buthunqe and those of the city of Benoni. He attributes prowess to these urban women as a reason for their financial independence. However, in spite of all the power, authority and control that these women seem to enjoy, the author portrays them as still entrapped in the shackles of patriarchal Zulu traditions since they remain aware that there are traditional spaces which are taboo to them; such as the *ilobolo* negotiations where only men take the lead. This is clearly evident in the text where traditional and uneducated Manamuza is formally invited by one of the families in Benoni to lead the *ilobolo* negotiation proceedings. His knowledge of Zulu tradition and culture as well as the fact that he is a man elevates his status in Benoni.

5.2.2 Gender stereotypes

Robbins (2000: 220) is of the view that, "the critique of stereotypical representations has to take place within a particular context". For example, most cultures contain the stereotype that men are strong and courageous while women are weak and fainthearted. So, if a man shows fear, he is viewed as lacking in manliness. Robbins (2000: 220) further argues that "whilst stereotypes present themselves as unchanging, as constants no matter what the history and the geography, the class and culture, to take them at face value, as it were, is to render them as untouchable truths". That fixes them and places them beyond the reach of a critique that demands change as part of its political agenda. These elements of life cannot be divorced from literary creativity. Intrinsically woven into Ngubane's work are a number of social issues including gender which is located in historicity, politics and governance that informs the publication of the novel in 1975.

Colonialism is a factor which has influenced the development of African literature. In South Africa, the apartheid system of governance also added its own impact to the

canon. Women were thus double minorities in their own country. Over and above discrimination based on the colour of their skin women were further prejudiced due to their gender; a phenomenon usually found in patriarchal African societies. Stratton (1994: 171) notes that, "African male writers challenge the racial codes of colonial discourse and attempt to subvert them. What is also observable is that African male writers in turn adopt certain aspects of gender coding of their supposed enemies in their representation of African women". She thus concludes that the voicelessness of the black woman is a trope with a very long history, one that could be traced from Shakespeare to Chinua Achebe.

During the court case between Zulumacansi and Masovenyeza, Masovenyeza is afraid that he might lose the case to Zulumacansi- which indeed he does. An assistant lawyer, Daniels, stereotypically associates his client's uncertainty on the outcome of the case as belonging to the world of women where men have no share. He says:

Musa ukungenelwa ingebhe wena. Zizothini izalukazi zakuboZulumacansi uma sezikubona usuqhaqhazela?(p25).

(Do not be scared. What will the old women from Zulumacansi's household say when they see you shaking like this?).

Clearly, Masovenyeza's feelings prove that men and women share psycho-emotional aspects. When faced with adversity or threatened with the unknown, they also become intimidated. On the contrary, Daniels attributes such feelings to women, whom he depicts as the only beings capable of being intimidated.

Again, the importance placed on male children above that of female children emerges strongly in this novel where KaMemunce prefers to be called *nina kaDumezweni* (mother of Dumezweni) rather than *nina kaBongani* (mother of Bongani) even though Bongani is her older daughter. It is a common practice in the Zulu culture for a woman to be known as a mother of her first-born child irrespective of the child's gender. However, in KaMemunce's mind, Dumezweni, an only son, is more important because it is through him that the family lineage will be continued (Zondi, 2015).

It is a common Zulu belief that pretty women are lazy as they waste a lot of time taking care of their beautiful faces. This was the case with people in Zulumacansi's

neighbourhood who held similar stereotypical views with regards to Bajwayele which, through her efficacy, she repudiated:

Bonke abantu bamangale njena ngoba kubo kaMagayi kwakwaziwa ukuthi abantu abahle kuvama ukuba babe ngamavila, balibale ukuma phambi kwesibuko, beziphaqula ubuso kuze kushone ilanga (p46).

(All people at Buthunqe of Magayi were shocked by Bajwayele because beautiful women are usually very lazy, what occupies them is standing in front of a mirror, making up their faces till the end of the day).

Paradoxically Zulumacansi, whilst working in Durban, had the same tendency of admiring himself in front of the mirror. This led to his employer deciding to shave off his beard, no- one associated his actions with laziness.

5.2.3 Portrayal of Women Images in *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi*

Literature reflects attitudes, beliefs and assumptions that prevail in that society. In *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi* the perceptions of male supremacy over women are perpetuated by misconceptions about *ilobolo* which in turn tend to give men the upper hand in viewing wives as commodities that they can use as they please (Zondi, 2007).

Mahala (2008) asserts that the role of women in society should include addressing the social, political and human questions that are central to their lives as women. These are some critical factors that are essential in reshaping our literary forms; otherwise there can be no national literature to speak of. The meaning of renaissance is best defined in literature as the presence of conditions where writers contribute diverse stories- including stories about women told by women. In the following section selected female characters in this novel are analyzed so as to obtain a richer picture of how women images are depicted by the male author of this novel.

5.2.3.1 A brief analysis of the portrayal of women in Manamuza's household

Firstly, KaMemunce does not successfully challenge the Zulu tradition of choosing the husband for one's girl-child. She voices her views on the issue of *ilobolo* which fall on her husband's deaf ears. The following words from her husband completely paralyze her:

Nguwe lona nina kaDumezweni okhweza ingane phezu kwami. Ngithi ngiyitshela umthetho wami, wena ube uthi ayinhlanhlathe. Ukwenzelani lokho? (p42).

(You are the one causing my child to be disrespectful towards me. I am giving her my instruction and you are telling her to be disobedient, why are you doing that?).

Secondly, Bajwayele represents the minority of women who try to rebel against cultural dictates that undermine women's potential and intelligence. As a daughter, her father expects nothing but absolute respect and obedience from her, even on issues that should be entirely hers to deliberate upon. That is why she rebels against her forced marriage and escapes from it. She fully understands that once she is handed over by her father to a man that she does not love, her situation will change unfavourably. Since she was born and raised at Buthunqe the author depicts her as possessing an element of naivety typically associated with rural people. When she flees to Benoni where she knows nobody there and has no resources to survive once there; her sole consideration is her freedom which she wins at the cost of life as she previously understood it. She says:

Ngangingaphethe ngisho indibilishi yodwa lena. Kodwa ngangizwa kahle nasegazini ukuthi ngiyohamba ngezinyawo ngiyoze ngingene ngaphakathi eGoli. Kwakungasahambi mina lapho. Kwase kuhamba inhliziyo (p96).

(I did not have even a penny. But I could feel it in my blood that I would walk on foot until I reach Johannesburg. I was not the one who did the walking, but my heart was the driving force).

She does not run away only once. After being pursued and found she escapes again; making a statement that she would do it time and time again until everyone left her alone. She remains resolved to disentangle herself from the shackles of patriarchy after stating her position to her husband, that neither he nor her father would have control over her heart and mind.

Chilala (2013) is of the view that:

the male writing tradition has influenced the depiction of male and female characters, as well as relationships between male and female characters. Female characters are generally portrayed in pejorative terms as gossipers, weak vessels, cowards, gold diggers, manipulators and destroyers of men. On the other hand men have generally been portrayed in more affirmative terms as brave, decisive, strong and concerned with the serious matters of life (in Chirambo and Makhokha, 2013:92).

5.2.3.2A brief analysis of the portrayal of women in Zulumacansi's household

Zulumacansi's mother is portrayed as a voiceless woman. All she does is support Zulumacansi in his endeavours to claim *ilobolo* cattle from Masovenyeza. When approached by her daughter, Qimbile, to discuss the rumours circulating in Buthunge that her brother is demanding outstanding cattle from her husband, all she has to say is:

*Pho singabe sisenzani mntanami, lokhu sekonakele sekonakele?
Okufanele ukuba sikwenze thina ukuba samukele umakoti ngazo zombili,
simjwayeze ekhaya (p45).*

(There is nothing that we can do my child, because what went wrong is wrong. What we need to do as a family is to accept/welcome the bride with both hands, make sure she feels at home).

It is astounding that Qimbile's mother is looking forward to welcoming a new daughter-in-law, Bajwayele, regardless of how this happens. The fact that the demand for cows by Zulumacansi unsettles her daughter is not a priority as far as she is concerned. As long as Zulumacansi gets his way and brings the new bride home—this is all that matters. Thus, her son's contentment, fleetingly supersedes that of her daughter whom she asks to agree to the way she sees things, as illustrated in the extract above. It has already been highlighted that Qimbile is also uneasy about the subject of the cattle as it puts her at loggerheads with her husband. Thus, she is emotionally disturbed as she cannot present her real feelings on the matter.

5.2.3.3 A brief analysis of the portrayal of women in Masovenyeza's household

Masovenyeza has six wives. In this novel, with the exception of two women, the wives of Masovenyeza are reduced to objects as their names are not mentioned in the novel. Only Qimbile and Bongani are mentioned, albeit under a cloud as Qimbile's *ilobolo* was not paid for in full and she is at the centre of the feud between her family and the family she marries into. Bongani is portrayed as one of the objects that her father sold to the highest bidder in order to enrich himself with *ilobolo* cows. Furthermore, her father gained the position of *induna*, (the chief's right hand man) by virtue of marrying Bongani off to Masovenyeza. All of Masovenyeza's wives are kept

in the background in order to increase his masculinity and prominence. They are also not treated with respect and love by their husband; as maintained by Fubara, (2012:103) who says he “rules [them] with heavy hands”. These women find themselves in a male dominated world where the man is everything and the woman is nothing. Mezu (2006:212) describes this kind of situation, “as the world where, in domestic terms, women are quantified as part of men’s acquisitions”.

5.2.4 Evaluation

According to Fubara (2012:102) “A male author’s literary tradition entrapped within masculinity provides insight into the disadvantaged female existence as manifested in the novels. He portrays women suffering from various forms of domestic and gender based violence, such as wife-battering at the hands of their intimate partners”. Such writers often use derogatory and negative language to describe their female characters. Talbot (1998) views language as one of the powerful tools in the subjugation of women. It is thus not surprising that Ngubane’s (1975) female characters in the novel are passive, inhibited and underdeveloped as opposed to the male characters that are depicted as symbolizing power and control. Thus, Mezu’s remarks in context are apt where she concludes that:

...the reason for women’s neglect and marginalization can obviously be located in a pre-colonial, patriarchal past where man ruled supreme in the manner of the Roman paterfamilias, where the woman was a possession as wife, an object of batter and exchange as a sister or daughter, to be defined only in terms of her relationship to the man and never as an autonomous entity. (Mezu, 2006:33-34).

An investigation into the events that take place in this novel reveals that the author captures the essence of his society as he fully understands his milieu, where women are relegated to the background while men are held in the highest esteem. The question is whether this novel represents women images accurately, taking into consideration the era during which it was written. If one also looks at the context of the novel, one can conclude that, it is true that women were oppressed and abused by men under the pretext of culture. This did not only happen in the Zulu culture but in other African cultures as well as demonstrated by Zondi (2013) where she compares Zulu and Shona cultures. In her study she deduces that culture knows no

boundaries since educated women such as Maiguru still fall victims to their husbands by virtue of being patriarchal societies where they have no voice as far as decision making is concerned.

5.2.5 Conclusion

This section has shown that women images, in the literary works written by a male author in the colonial era were mostly portrayed negatively. Women were rendered generally voiceless in the economic as well as the social sphere. This was the position prior to South Africa becoming a democracy. The system was such that Blacks were underprivileged and the situation was worse for women who had to also tolerate their already burdened men. It is important to keep in mind that images of women in literature reflect the masculine vision because literary tradition was in the hands of males who had control over the written tradition.

In the next section a drama penned by a male dramatist in 1991 will be analysed. During this period South Africa was at the dawn of her democracy and discussions on the importance of human rights and gender equality were becoming more frequent. Taking the period of publication into account one will be able to ascertain whether any change manifests in the representation of women images.

5.3 Synopsis of the drama, *Ngiwafunge amaBomvu* (Molefe, 1991)

This drama is set in the rural area of Zululand during the period 1990-1994, the era of South Africa's political transition. The author is writing in a period when significant political changes were taking place in South Africa; however, this was still some time before democracy was achieved in 1994.

Mgidi Ngubane is the king (or chief)¹ of the Ngubane clan. His right hand man (*Induna*) is Msanka. Msanka is married to MaGubeshe and they have a son named Zaba. In the village, there is also a Majola family that is blessed with beautiful twin

¹For the purposes of this literary text, the words king and chief will be used interchangeably to mean the same thing.

girls, Thulisile and Thulile. During that time it was the norm and a tradition for the king, chief or leader to have his own traditional healer or *inyanga*. In the case of the king or chief, the task of a traditional healer was to advise the king on matters related to his health and safety as well as facilitating his connection to his ancestors. In the context of this story, Mgidi's traditional healer is Mzwezwe. This literary work challenges the Zulu tradition of forced marriages.

When Mgidi wants to get married, he chooses Majola's twin-girls without first courting them. The reason for him wishing to marry both girls stems from a Zulu traditional belief system that dictated that it was taboo to separate twins (Nyawose, 2000:15). The inseparability of twins is documented in customs such as *ukugingisa*, the killing of the surviving twin. Even after the disappearance of this custom the remaining twin still had to undergo a certain ritual. The twin was placed in the same coffin with the dead twin and exposed in the open grave intended for the burial of the deceased twin. The family elder spoke to the ancestors to appease them and thereafter the surviving twin was pulled out of the coffin while the dead twin was left in the grave for burial (ibid.).

After the Chief had made his choice, no one consulted the twins in order to ascertain whether they were comfortable with the king's wishes. The twin's father, Majola, felt honoured that his daughters were going to be married into royalty and that he was going to acquire wealth in the form of *ilobolo* cows paid for them. As expected, the twins were later married to the king.

On arrival at the royal house, one of the twins, Thulile adapts well in the new environment while the other, Thulisile does not. She is rebellious and resistant towards a custom that she recognizes as having interfered with her private affairs. She was already in love with Zaba, son of the chief's *induna* when she was chosen by the king. She demonstrates her defiance by refusing to eat the food prepared for her. Each girl has an *impelesi*, a maid that accompanied her to her new family. According to Zulu tradition the task of Khonzeni and Nokufika, Thulisile and Thulile's maids respectively, is to assist the newlyweds with chores and to help them settle in their new home. Thulisile remains stubborn even as they try to persuade her to open her heart to the king. The consequences of her insubordination could lead to all of

them being punished; even by means of death. They remain aware that Thulisile's heart is with Zaba. Unaware that one of his queens is in love with Zaba, the king appoints him as a member of the royal intelligence. This gives the lovers an opportunity to meet secretly whenever opportunity presented itself. Thulisile refuses to sleep with the king until the king asks Mzwezwe to prepare *izintelezi*, a love potion that would soften her heart. The trick worked, but it did not stop the young lovers from continuing their private affairs. That meant that Thulisile was sleeping with both the king and Zaba.

Thulisile falls pregnant. Before long, the king finds out that Zaba is sleeping with his wife. Shortly after this discovery, the king informs Zaba's parents about the problems he is creating in the kingdom. They are petrified. The king is not certain though, whether or not he is responsible for Thulisile's pregnancy. Thulisile later experiences problems during childbirth. These become worse when the Ngubane ritual of cutting the smallest finger had to be performed. Mzwezwe tries to do that but it became virtually impossible until Thulisile confesses that the chief was not the child's father and that the father was Zaba. The chief is very angry and humiliated. He orders that both twins, their maids, Zaba and his parents be put to death. However, he changes his mind as he regards bravery and honesty as acts not deserving of death. For the couples' courage, they are granted a right to get married and Zaba is given a senior position at the palace.

5.3.1 Gender Inequalities

5.3.1.1 Gender inequalities at Mgidi's royal household

The king marries the Majola twins without their consent. One of the twins accepts the arrangement while the other finds the ruling as an infringement on her rights. Thulisile challenges the traditional practice of arranged marriages when addressing her maid, Khonzeni. She says to her:

Khonzeni ake ungitshele, wena ungavuma nje ukuthi wehlukaniswe nesoka lakho? Ungavuma uma inkosi ithi gana umfana wayo manje, ushiye uMzinto wakho? (p2)

(Khonzeni, tell me, would you agree to be separated from your lover? Would you agree if the king were to force you to marry his son now and would you leave your boyfriend, Mzinto?).

Even the twin's maids find the king's actions unacceptable. This is shown in one of the conversations they have where Khonzeni tells Nokufika that:

Inkosi Nokufika inezinye izinyathelo ezingahambisani nenqubo eyejwayelekile. Okokuqala nje, aweshelwanga lawa makhosikazi avele alandwa ngoba ngawomfokazana. Kade ezokweshelwa ukuba kade ezalwa ebukhosini (p43-44).

(Nokufika, the king, is doing things that are against tradition. Firstly, the king did not court these women. They were simply fetched from their home because they are daughters of a commoner. If they were from royalty, the king was going to follow a different route).

Young women are expected to preserve themselves for their future husbands while the same cannot be said of men. When the chief has a discussion with Msanka about his knowledge of the Majola twins, Msanka puts emphasis on their chaste state. This is, amongst other things, what makes them eligible for the king. In Msanka's own words:

Ndabezitha, amakhosi akwaMajola kawanasici. Ngokwazi kwami abengakangeni ebuqhikizeni. Inkosi ikhethe amaklumela azothi ngamahlanga abe esengaphansi kwesandla sikaMbomvu (p5).

(Ndabezitha, the Majola twins are chaste. As far as I know, they have not even met boys. I think the chief has made the right choice, for by the time they get ready for such acts, they will already be under your care).

According to Zulu tradition, the chief has absolute power over his people and land. This includes choosing wives. Once the king had chosen a woman to become his queen there was no stopping him. However, the fact that girls were required to save their virginity for that special man did not count where a king was concerned. In most African societies, a woman's virginity is one of the most important criteria that are considered when a man wants a wife. According to Chukwuma (2012:103), this kind of situation "depicts inequality of gender morality in the society". The author goes on to say that the woman remains the man's property whose immaculate morality must be intact, but never the man's (ibid.). Gender inequalities expressed in the story is relevant in the present day context where in the the annual Umhlanga Reed Ceremonies only virgin maidens may participate (Buthelezi, 2013). There is even a

myth that the reed will break upon presentation to the king if the girl is no longer a virgin (ibid.). It is at this ceremony that the Zulu king, normally, picks a maiden that he will make his future wife; in addition to the already existing ones.

In this drama under discussion the king is aware that one the twins is unhappy and uncomfortable with the arranged marriage and yet he does not find it necessary to establish the reason for her desolation. Talking with his *induna*, the king says:

Pho Msanka yini ebangela ukuthi eyodwa yezindlovukazi zami ihlahle amehlo sengathi inyamazane ivalelwe esibayeni sezimbuzi? (p6)

(Tell me Msanka, what is the cause of one of my queens to open her eyes wide like a buck that finds itself stuck in a kraal meant for goats?).

When Thulisile rebuffs sharing the king's bed, the chief does not enter into a discussion with her to resolve the issue but rather he chooses to involve an outsider to solve his marital problems for him. Thus, Mzwezwe is tasked with administering a love potion to Thulisile so that she can fall in love with the king. On another occasion, the king invites his *induna* and Majola, the father of the twins to discuss issues of royal lineage. To this end the three men deliberate on which one of the queens will produce an heir. The king says:

Manje ngithanda ukwazi lapha kini ukuthi uma indlovukazi ithola indlalifa ezobusa iyasuka nenye ithola okufanayo, sizothini ngalokho? (p7)

Now I would like to find out from you what will happen if both of my queens give birth to baby boys, which one of them will be my successor and what will we do about that situation?)

This conversation attests to Zondi's (2008b.) view that that polygamy contributed to a structure that saw wives as the property of the husband and his lineage. The statement further confirms the argument by some feminists that in patriarchal societies women were seen as objects for production of the man's family. In many cultures, including that of the Zulu people, issues pertaining to giving birth are the domain of women. The following statement by Kalu supports this view:

In traditional African practice, keeping men away from birthing space as well as the birthing process largely had to do with the fact that in some instances men lacked knowledge of what to do and in other instances, the process in its traditional setting necessarily is the domain of women-whose

participation is both normalised and structured (Kalu, in Chukwuma, 2012:70).

In this story when Thulisile's labour becomes difficult, the author brings men into that conversation. The complications experienced by the queen become men's concern. Nowhere in the text are women heard conversing about it. Rather it is the king and his *induna* that are seen at the forefront of this scene. It would perhaps have been befitting for the author to give women some voice as it is obvious that the king was acting on the reports given to him by midwives. However, it is clear that women are silenced even in the spaces where, by virtue of being female, their voices should be presented even if not heard. The announcement the king makes upon the arrival of his son is certainly informed by the message received from the midwives:

...undlunkulu utholele isizwe isandla sakusasa (p63).

(...the queen has produced an heir for the nation).

The silencing of women is so evident in this text when their role as nation builders could have been accentuated. The fact that the king utters the words cited above attests to the status that women should be accorded.

The joy expressed by the king towards the sex of the child highlights what Machaba (2011: 164) pointed out in a study among the Tsonga where the birth of a male child is announced in heroic terms such as *wa matlha* (you have begotten a spear) in contrast to *wa xirhundz* (you have begotten a grain basket) if it is the female child. This attitude explains gender inequality inherent in patriarchal societies, one such being the Zulu society. Men pride themselves on this hegemony as aptly expressed by the king in conversation with his men:

Selokhu adabuka amaBomvu kasizange iSilo sibhekane nabafazi enkundleni! Umfazi liqulwa engekho, afike sekulungiswe iwisa aphihlizwe a..! (p81).

(From the beginning of the amaBomvu clan, it has never happened that women become part of the discussions. A woman's case is discussed and a decision is taken in her absence, she only comes when a knobkerrie is ready to kill her!)

5.3.1.2 Gender inequalities in Majola's household

Majola is the father of the twin-girls, Thulisile and Thulile. When the story begins the king has chosen his daughters for wives. It is true that according to the Zulu culture, at that time, the king's word was final. The least that the girls' family could have done was to tell their children of the king's plans and to ask how they felt about it. That would have presented Thulisile with an opportunity to inform them of her future plans with Zaba. Even though there is no guarantee that her desire would have been entertained- it would, at least, have saved them an embarrassment of their ignorance about what was going on with their children; instead of learning this for the first time after the girls had been married off to the king. Like objects, the girls were simply transferred from one man's authority to another.

As if they were commodities, when the king was unhappy with one of the twins, he invited their father to give an in-depth description of the girls' individual personalities and attitudes using a 'return to sender' approach. Majola, himself, uses an unpleasant language when describing his daughters to the king. He uses the prefix "-ku-" (it) to refer to them:

Lokhu okunye kunamehlwana acijile, kunamatata, kunenhliziywana eshesha ifike esiphethweni, kanti lokhu okunye kubheke phansi (p8).

(One has sharp eyes, is impulsive and is short-tempered, whereas the other one is humble).

The approach used above is sanctioned when used for very young children. It would generally be people other than parents who will refer to their children in that manner. In the above context, these girls are at a marriageable age and are married to the king. It is strange that a father should talk about his own children using language normally employed when referring to an item or object. Zondi and Canonici (2005) maintain that the concepts can be described as a reference to or a description of something concrete by means of which the author wishes to express something else that is linked to it. They go on to say that what is being alluded to, while using well-known and often striking imagery, creates a clear impression of what is being said; and these can be things which are concrete, perceived by the senses, or even abstract.

Chilala concurs that, “sometimes the author uses adjectives or prefixes that are intentionally and carefully selected in order to project the intended image of the ‘object’ being discussed” (2013:99). Thus, in the context of this story, the girls are viewed as objects. In the entire drama, all that is known about the mother of the twins is that she is MaSiphahleni. The author renders her passive and silent to the point of almost being non-existent.

5.3.1.3. Gender inequalities in Msanka's household

On discovering that Zaba was the father of the male child to whom Thulisile had given birth, the king summoned his father, Msanka. He then sent a messenger to fetch Zaba. Instead of heeding the king's call Zaba tied the messenger onto a pole in his home. He was annoyed at the messenger for delivering the king's message as the king had deprived him of his lover. When she discovered her son's cruelty, Zaba's mother gently persuaded him to release the man:

Kahle mfana wami, mkhumule. Kanti uthunywe yinkosi? Uzothini uyihlo eyinduna yenkosi? (p35)

(Calm down my boy, untie him. Isn't he the king's messenger? What will your father say since he is the king's right hand man?)

Despite the fact that his mother asks him kindly to release the king's messenger, Zaba does not listen to her. He only begins explaining why he has acted in that way after the arrival of his father. The author seems to support the notion that a woman's voice does not matter, no matter how right she may be. This raises a question about the role of a woman as the procreator and nurturer. Amongst the five pillars of female power that Chinweizu (1990) upholds, the womb or mother- power is the greatest. Praising it Chinweizu says:

O womb, your power is great! You are the biological foundation, the taproot of female power. As the goal net into which a man must shoot if he is to procreate, you are the part of a woman for which he will pay almost any price. And because you are priceless to him, you hold untold power over him, like a fabulous gold seam which rules a prospector's life (Chinweizu, 1990:19).

5.3.2 Gender Stereotypes

As defined earlier, stereotypes are generalised and biased perceptions by one social group about another which leads to making a judgement without knowing them (Cardwell, 1996). Adhering to these stereotypes, female characters are often portrayed as either stubborn, rebellious, cheaters/ prostitutes, and irrational or fearful. Hence Chilala (2013:92) goes on to say that, “women characters are generally stereotypically portrayed in negative terms as gossipers, weak vessels, cowards, gold diggers, manipulators and destroyers of men concerned with the trivialities of life”.

In this drama, the author depicts Thulisile, the protagonist as stubborn and rebellious when she refuses to sleep with the king. Zaba, on the other hand is represented as brave when he faces the king about his unfairness for marrying his dream girl. This portrayal is nothing short of bias. In African literature, there is a common thread of gender bias in the portrayal of female and male characters. In this story, the author projects Thulisile as a cheat when she sleeps with Zaba while married to the king, disregarding the nature of how she found herself in that marriage. Implicit in that depiction is that she was cheating with Zaba, thus confirming the gender stereotypes defined above.

The other women in the drama are depicted as fearful characters. They are fearful of the king, his *induna*, his spies and the community at large. The author makes them preoccupied with how the society will judge them when Thulisile is caught. All their conversations centre on what will happen to them when the king finds out that Thulisile is in love with Zaba. By contrast, men are shown to be brave, powerful and fearless warriors who are ready to die for what they believe in. This state of affairs is apparent in what Zaba tells the king when threatened with death row together with his entire family and those close to them. Begging the king to spare them he cries:

Ngicela uNdabezitha abasindise abazali bami kanye nabo bonke abantu abazofa ngenxa yami nale ntombazane. Ngiyafunga phambi kwenkosi nabaphansi kanye noMvelinqangi ukuthi bonke laba bafa nje bangikhuzile (p89).

(I am appealing to the king to save my parents and all people that are going to die because of this woman and me. I am making this oath before the king, the ancestors and God that all of the people that are going to die did admonish me against what I was doing).

Being a man, Msanka was also fearful of the king's reaction towards him as his *induna* on discovering that he was not the father of the child. When the king interrogated Thulisile's maid and when she started confessing that she knew Zaba and Thulisile were lovers, Msanka fell down on the floor. That was an evident sign of fear because, as a king's right hand man, he was supposed to be his eyes in the royal palace. In this way the author suggests that men too are capable of anxiety albeit negligible when positioned alongside the rampant terror amongst the "weaker" women.

5.3.3 Portrayal of Women Images in Ngiwafunge amaBomvu

5.3.3.1 Analysis of the depiction of Thulisile

Thulisile, a protagonist in this drama, is portrayed as a rebellious and stubborn woman. From the start she shows her dissatisfaction with the arranged marriage by refusing to eat food served to her at the royal household. She further refuses to visit the king's bedroom. As a result, the king calls in his traditional healer, Mzwezwe, to force the queen into his bedroom with some love potion. When talking to her father, Mzwezwe reiterated that Thulisile was a rebellious woman:

Elenkosi kalibuyi lilambatha Msanka. Uma libuye lilambatha, kukhona isidumbu esizophuma. Okubi nje ukuthi sibhekene neshinga lendawo. Ayibhenywa le ntombi egane inkosi namuhla (p17).

The king's word is final, Msanka. If it is not the case then someone will die. What is bad here is that we are faced with a very stubborn person. She is a hard nut to crack).

Because of Thulisile's resistance and stubbornness, Majola was called to the king's palace. After describing each girl's personality in the way indicated in 6.2.2 above the king substantiated Majola's view:

Ngingasho ukuthi ulishinga undlunkulu. Uma elishinga ufuna ngimkhombise ukuthi akukhona enkundleni yamashinga lapha, kusemzini kaQuqudithambo wasemaBomvini (p62).

I can validate that the queen is very obstinate. I need to show her that this is not a place for stubborn people, this is the royal house of Ququdithambo of amaBomvu).

When her maid, Khonzeni tries to persuade her to conform despite her lack of love for the king, she responds;

Yima Khonzeni, angiqhaqhazeli nga lento engikutshela yona. UMgidi ngithi ukuba ube yindodana kaNomkhubulwane uZaba engumuntukazana, njengoba engumuntukazana njena, nguyena uMgidi obezoba ngumuntukazana kimi, uZaba abe yindodana kaNomkhubulwane. Futhi vele nje kimi uZaba uyindodana kaNomkhubulwane (p3).

Listen here Khonzeni, I am not scared to tell you this. Even if Mgidi were *Nomkhubulwane's* (the goddess of rain) and Zaba was a son of a commoner, to me Mgidi would have been a son of a commoner and Zaba would have been the son of *Nomkhubulwane*. In fact, to me Zaba is the son of the goddess, *Nomkhubulwane*).

Nomkhubulwane is the Zulu goddess of rain, nature and fertility. Over 200 years ago a special field was ploughed by the whole village collectively. This communal field was never weeded or harvested right up to the next ploughing season and the cycle would resume again Berglund, (1976) and Thorpe (1991). In order to express her deep emotional and spiritual connection with Zaba, Thulisile refers to this deity, Nomkhubulwane. Also regarded as Mother Earth, a festival in honour of this goddess was held annually. By associating her feelings for Zaba with this supernatural being, Thulisile is emphasizing her resolve that no mortal will take her away from the love of her heart.

The concept of Nomkhubulwane is relevant in the present (2015) context of South Africa, where drought has become a serious concern. In the province of KwaZulu-Natal prayer (*izimbizo*) gatherings are being held to pray for rain. Various media broadcasts propose going back to immortals such as Nomkhubulwane in times of distress. Optimistically, one might argue that the resurgence of the popularity of precolonial deities that are not subjected to gender bias is perhaps a step in the right direction for post-apartheid South Africa.

In mentioning Nomkhubulwane, Thulisile has communicated her stance in as far as her relationship with Zaba is concerned. Even if Mgidi were a son of a powerful spiritual goddess with ultimate power greater than that of Nomkhubulwane, she would still not love him; a powerful testimonial indeed. This proves that she has no regard for the king when it comes to the matters of the heart; hence, she ranks Zaba

not only as a king of her heart but also as a son of Nomkhubulwane. This is how traditional Zulu culture regarding arranged marriages is profoundly challenged. She is resolute in her decision that she loves nobody else except Zaba. She further challenges the Zulu cultural belief that twins are one person (Nyawose, 2000:15); a notion that her maid also upholds. She disputes that view by explaining that had that been the case, her twin sister, Thulile, would also be in love with Zaba; and that was not so.

According to Zulu tradition, disregarding the king's authority was punishable by death. The character Thulisile seems adamant to do that. Her bravery runs through this drama and becomes clear in the last scene after the sanctioning of her execution. This is what she tells the people gathered:

Ngangingeke ngiyiqome noma ngabe yayiyisesheli sami esinemithi ehlanganiswa yinyanga enamandla ngaphezu kwazo zonke izinyanga esinazo lapha eMabomvini. Yiqiniso engicela ukulifela lelo (p91).

(I would never have fallen in love with the king, even if he courted me with the help of the strongest love potion put together by the greatest traditional healer available at Mabomvini. That is the truth I am prepared to die for).

She further infers that marrying a person that one does not love is the same as death itself.

5.3.3.2 Analysis of the depiction of Thulile

Thulile accepts and embraces traditions and cultural practices of the Zulu people without questioning some of their oppressive features. Her own father, Majola, describes her as the 'calm one'. She is also portrayed as a woman who has been raised in a traditional setting and therefore who understands fully what is expected of her as a woman. This is clear in her conversation with Thulisile when she says:

Akukhulunywa kanjena lapha ngaphakathi komuzi wenkosi. Dadewethu, lalela lapha, ugane ebukhosini wena manje. Uyindlovukazi. Inkosi akulona isoka lakho, yinkosi yesizwe okufanele uyizalele indlalifa ezobusa. Musa ukukhuluma ngamasoka lapha (p12).

(You are not supposed to speak like that in the king's palace. Listen here, my sister, you are now married to the king. You are a queen. The king is not your boyfriend; he is the king of the nation that expects you to produce an heir for him. Stop talking about boyfriends here).

Thulile represents women who have accepted male power, authority and domination. She is portrayed as a weak character that is ready to subject herself to a life of servitude that a patriarchal system demands of women. Like the women of Umuofia in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, she is content with her lot. Stratton (1994:35) asserts that in remaining silent, "women consent to their status as the property of a man and to their reduction to a level lower than a barn full of yams in their role as signifiers of their husband's wealth". Thulile appears to be the epitome of the women referred to by Stratton above.

5.3.3.3 Analysis of the depiction of the twins' maids, Khonzeni and Nokufika

Khonzeni and Nokufika are maids for the two queens. Both girls adhere to Zulu traditions and practices. They do not find anything improper with the patriarchal system. That is why Khonzeni warns Thulisile of the consequences of her insubordination. The following words attest to this:

Kahle Thulisile. Ngeke ilunge le ndaba uma ulwa. Zithobe. Inkosi uma isikukhetile ukuthi yigane isikukhethile. Akukho okungenziwa, kodwa mhlawumbe zikhona izaba ezincane umuntu angazenza (p2).

(Calm down Thulisile. Fighting will not solve this problem. Humble yourself. If the king has chosen you to marry him, then he has chosen you. There is nothing that can be done to change that situation. However, there may, perhaps be other ways of dealing with this matter).

The maids are both represented as constantly living in fear because of the actions of other people. From the beginning of the story, they are intimidated by Thulisile's actions. They are also scared of the king's spies, *izinhlozi*. In the whole drama that unfolds at the palace, they have no voice. Khonzeni is only consulted at the end when she is expected to reveal the truth behind the paternity of Thulisile's son. Her usefulness only happens when she has to confirm crucial information, that Thulisile and Zaba are indeed lovers and that they have been meeting secretly behind the king's back.

5.3.3.4 Analysis of the depiction of MaGubeshe

Magubeshe is the mother of the antagonist, Zaba. She represents motherhood within traditional Zulu society. She is portrayed as a powerless and voiceless woman. She has no authority over her own son. When Zaba refuses to untie the king's messenger, all she could say was:

Uzothini uyihlo eyinduna yenkosi?

What is your father going say since he is the king's deputy?)

She is depicted as an ordinary Zulu woman who is entrapped in patriarchal Zulu traditional practices and culture. She is the wife of an *induna*. Despite this, she does not receive special treatment befitting her status. Like women of eMaBomvini she still fetches water from the river. Her own son does not elevate her status as the woman who brought him into the world. She is helpless when her son does not listen to her in the matter concerning the release of the king's messenger whom he held hostage. While the author explains the gently manner in which MaGubeshe approached her son, he does enable Zaba to positively respond to his mother.

5.3.4 Evaluation

Robbins (2000:28) asserts that, "liberal feminism, which generally originates from bourgeois positions of relative comfort, have had to extend their sphere of activity to address the structures of oppression that torture women who occupy positions of multiple marginality by virtue, for example, of class and gender, or race and gender or any combination of these facets". Accordingly, for her, liberal solutions typically focus on changing ideas and cultural practices, such as rewriting textbooks or reforming legal codes. She thus perceives authors as having a major responsibility in bringing about this change. Al-Dabbagh (2012:vii) on the other hand argues that the status of the writer in society forms one of the key subjects, as it is more than purely a theoretical issue or an abstract cultural problem. Rather, it is considered to be a social issue that can only be settled at the level of practice.

Taking the argument forward, Tembo (2013:113) maintains that "at times authors fully take advantage of cultural norms, values and beliefs to centre on female

characters in a novel. They do this by bringing forth scenes, characters and events in a manner that is sexist in orientation". With an exception of Thulisile, most of Molefe's women characters are silent in the face of their oppression and objectification under the amaBomvu patriarchal system. That situation renders them vulnerable. In Stratton's (1994:25) view, women like these could be seen to be simple objects passed around among men folk and at times traded for a bag full of cowries. The difference in the case of amaBomvini society, is that it was cattle that they were traded for. In literary texts of this nature, women are juxtaposed against a fully-fledged male-dominated society, which on many occasions appears to dwarf its female counterpart asserts Tembo (2013: 114).

In *Ngiwafunge Amabomvu*, women are not afforded a platform to voice their needs. They seem always to be trapped in a patriarchal dispensation. The twins are trapped, as they grow up under the authority of their dictatorial father and they are further entrapped by the absolute power enjoyed by Mgidi, as the king of the *amaBomvu*. The author of this drama tends to engage in the objectification of female characters, that is, he refers to them as if they were mere objects to be admired, owned and used by men. This comes out clearly in the statement uttered by the father of the twins in one of the conversations with the king:

Ngangithe ngiyazibheka lezi zingane zaba zibutubutwana zamamatheka, ngezwa inhliziyi yami ingibuza ukuthi yisiphi isandla esizobhidliza lobubukhazikhazi basemaBomvini (p7-8).

(Whenever I looked at these bouncing babies, they would smile at me, and my heart said to me; which hand would destroy this beauty/ treasure of maBomvu tribe).

Majola talks of his children as if they were trophies in a display cabinet to be used as décor, in much the same way as colonial literature. It is for this reason that Ngugi in *Devil on the Cross*, created an image of Wariinga in which he sought to deconstruct perceptions like the one observed above. He writes:

Today's Wariinga has decided that she'll never again allow herself to be a mere flower, whose purpose is to decorate the doors and windows and tables of other people's lives, waiting to be thrown on to a rubbish heap the moment the splendour of her body withers. The Wariinga of today has decided to be self-reliant all the time, to plunge into the middle of the arena of life's struggles in order to discover her real strength and to realise her true humanity (wa Thiong'o, 1982:160).

Pragmatically speaking, one could conclude that overall, *Ngiwafunge AmaBomvu* does not pay attention to women as people with a potential of being empowered within their society. The author juxtaposes his female characters against what Francis Moto (2001:22) calls, "a seemingly insuperable obstacles built around society's prejudice against women. These impediments are culturally sanctioned and enshrined behaviour which unashamedly and unjustifiably favours males".

The important question to be asked is whether Molefe's representation of women is based on reality or on an idealised perception by a creative male author. Taking the time of the publication of this work into consideration and the context of the drama, one would conclude that his conception and presentation of women in rural areas in South Africa is real. However, it is clear, that his use of language, particularly the choice of words and expressions point to negative stereotypes of women.

5.3.5 Conclusion

It was mentioned earlier that this drama was written by a male towards the end of the Apartheid era. At this point in time one of the most democratic constitutions in the world was being formulated. Human rights and gender equality were issues that were being robustly debated, thus one would expect that literature written around this time would reflect a slight change from the traditional perceptions of the earlier literary texts. However, one observes that as late as in the 1990s women were still alienated from the very issues that touched the core of their human rights. Instead, they were made to believe that tradition was an answer to anything that they were not expected to question. Their inferiority was naturalised by the ahistorical identity that Molefe and other male authors have constructed for their gender: women as passive objects, subjugated, acted upon, never acting in their own right.

In the next section, the drama *Ababulali Benyathi* written by a male author fourteen years after South Africa became a democratic country will be analysed. During this period, a number of changes are observable including the country's Constitution and issues of governance. The previously marginalised and disadvantaged groups were eagerly awaiting service delivery of benefits that had, prior to this time, been reserved for the minorities. The question that is pertinent in this study is whether in their literary texts Zulu male authors of this time represented this transformation as far as the depiction of their female characters is concerned.

5.4 Synopsis of the drama, *Ababulali Benyathi* (Mngadi, 2008)

The title of the play originates from a Zulu proverb "*Ababulali benyathi balala ucwayimbana*" which, when literally translated, means "The killers of a buffalo lie low". Used figuratively, the saying implies that people of remarkable deeds usually keep a low profile or remain in the background. The drama is set in an unspecified rural area. Nevertheless, it is representative of areas reminiscent of traditional leadership during the Apartheid regime. Under this system the chiefs ruled the area according to hereditary family lines. Shortly before the establishment of a democratic government of national unity the country was ravaged by violence that was driven by political differences among Black South Africans. Traditional leaders in the entire country felt threatened by the new structures of governance which were a foreign concept to them. In the province of KwaZulu-Natal the situation was worse than anywhere else in the country. In the researcher's rural home town of Mtubatuba many people died during this power struggle. The community was divided into two groups; namely those that supported the system of chieftancy of the Mkhwanazis and the other group who favoured the newly democratically elected leadership of the community. The conflict spread like wild fire to the neighbouring urban townships such as Esikhawini because that is where the two opposing groups lived side-by-side in bachelor flats.

In this drama, the author outlines the root cause of the tension, conflict and the power struggle between traditional leadership and municipal structures brought

about by democracy. On the one hand, Shandu who is a chief has the support of his wife MaNgema, his right hand man, an *induna* by the name of Dlamini and some community members. On the other hand, there is Duma, a democratically elected councillor who is backed by his wife, MaShezi, his assistant and secretary Mbandlwa as well as some community members. The conflict that is central in development of the plot happens as a result of the community meeting called by the councillor and his secretary without first informing the chief and receiving his approval. The first meeting is disrupted by Dlamini and the chief's supporters. The incident ends with an injury to Mbandlwa and Dlamini's imprisonment. When the tension is at its peak, the two women, MaNgema and MaShezi (wives of Shandu and Dlamini respectively) meet to deliberate on the issues. Their recommendations that the two men cooperate fall on deaf ears as neither of the men want to take the blame for what is happening in the area. Consequently, the councillor and his secretary organise yet another community meeting without the chief's knowledge. The result is bloodshed. Dlamini and his entire family are tortured and Mbandlwa is killed. These gruesome incidents lead to the chief suffering a heart attack. At this point some interventions take place and order is restored.

5.4.1 Gender Inequalities

5.4.1.1 Gender Inequalities in the chief's homestead

The chief's wife, MaNgema is an educated and intelligent Zulu woman. Her husband consults her on socio-political issues. During such discussions she provides him with valuable advice. Despite this, she is still trapped by traditional values and ways of thinking. When the chief's *induna* walks in during a serious conversation, she quickly retreats to her place as a woman, namely the kitchen, leaving her husband with these words:

Baba, nango uDlamini. Angiphume nginishiye. Phela amadoda kufanele axoxe kahle ewodwa (p16).

(Baba, here comes Dlamini. Let me leave you. Men should be left on their own to discuss issues).

MaNgema always retreats when Dlamini comes to their home. She seems to understand and to have gracefully accepted that a woman's place is not with men but in the kitchen. Hence, after giving men their space to discuss political issues, she serves them tea. Here the author uses the same pattern that is common in male-authored African literature, where female characters are pushed to the periphery by pre-occupying them with petty household chores such as is demonstrated in MaNgema. Stratton (1994:25) confirms this when she asserts that "women are systematically excluded from the political, the economic, the judicial and even from the discussions regarding community life". What is bizarre here is for the author to discharge such duties as serving tea to MaNgema, a woman who is married to the chief, instead of leaving that responsibility to the maids. According to Bryson (1999:10) "all fit individuals, including women are eligible for equal rights and opportunities to engage in political issues of the community". However, that is not the case with MaNgema where the chief has something to discuss with his right-hand man. His faith in his wife seemingly vanishes when the *induna* walks in. While the chief finds his wife's views worthwhile when they are on their own he does not want her around in the presence of outsiders. An involvement of a qualified teacher who had sacrificed her profession in exchange for being with her husband may have added value and could have been welcome. More so since the decision, as manifested in the chief's statement in his conversation with his wife, was not hers:

...Phela uhleli nje ungafundisi ngoba yimi kanye nobaba esanquma ukuba ube yinkosikazi yenkosi egcwele. Wawungeke ube yiyo egcwele ube ufundisa. Cabanga nje inkosikazi yenkosi idelelwa yizingane zabafokazana. Okubi kakhulu-ke nawe utholakale ulawulwa nguthishanhloko ongumfokazana (p15).

(...You are not practising as a teacher because my father and I decided that you should be a full-time wife of the chief. You could not have been a queen whilst working as a teacher at the same time. Think about it, a queen ridiculed by children of ordinary men. What would be even worse would be to see a queen being managed by a principal who is a commoner).

Hadjitheodorou (1999:8) attests that "traditionally, marriage and motherhood are often used by society as the bench mark by which to gauge a woman's social development and success. This is not unexpected when one considers the massive weight of the structural, cultural and ideological processes which are brought to bear

upon these women". The above statement by the chief bears testimony to the fact that women were not involved in decision making, even on issues that affected their own lives, hopes and childhood dreams. MaNgema's dream of being a professional teacher was shattered by a man who was supposed to love and support her in fulfilling her dreams and aspirations and who, nevertheless, was an accomplice in decisions that saw her relinquish it.

5.4.1.2 Gender Inequalities in Duma's household

MaShezi is a well-educated woman who was born and raised in the township of KwaMashu in Durban. Her perception on life differs from that of rural women. She is a liberated woman who sits with men and reflects on socio-political issues. When Mbandlwa, the councillor's secretary visits her husband, Duma, they sit together and discuss political issues. However, when she offers advice that is different from that of her husband, he quickly calls her to order:

Hheyi! Hheyi! Kanti usudleni wena? Lezi zinto ozishoyo zombili angizamukeli! Lungamane luchitheke uphoko! Lutho mfazi! Ngeke! (p33).

(Hey! Hey! What is wrong with you? Both of your suggestions are not acceptable. Even if it means things go wrong! Not at all woman! Not at all!).

The word '*umfazi*' is a Zulu word that means 'married woman'. It is not used under normal circumstances because it has derogatory undertones. The respectful word meaning wife in isiZulu is *nkosikazi* or *mkami*. Duma uses this word to remind his wife that no matter how educated, intelligent or liberated she may think she is, she is still a woman under a man's authority. While believing in the democratic values which emphasize gender equality, the Duma family are still entrenched in differentiated gender roles as manifested in MaShezi being responsible for the domestic sphere and Duma for the public sphere.

MaShezi relentlessly tries to convince her husband that he has to work together with the chief in order to accomplish his envisaged projects. But Duma continually ignored her, simply because she is a woman. Instead of listening to her he took Mbandlwa's advice. Thinking aloud, in praise of his assistant, Duma juxtaposes Mbandlwa's wisdom (in contrast to his wife) with that of the biblical figure, Peter:

...uMbandlwa umdlula ngamalengiso uPetro wasebhayibhelini ngoba lowo wamphika uJesu ngesikhathi sobunzima. Izeluleko zikaMaShezi ngiyazizwa nje kodwa okushiwo uMbandlwa yikho engikukhethayo ngoba sasinaye sehla senyuka sizama ukufaka umzabalazo kule ndawo (p40).

(...Mbandlwa is far better than Peter from the bible because Peter denied Jesus when things were tough. I do hear MaShezi's advice; however, I choose to listen to Mbandlwa because we were together in the Struggle).

The author uses a biblical analogy in which he credits Mbandlwa more than Peter in that as much as this apostle loved Jesus –when he found himself challenged he renounced and betrayed Jesus. His stance demonstrates Duma's level of trust that he had in Mbandlwa rather than his wife.

Zulu traditional laws bestow ownership of the homestead to the head of the family, *umnumzane*. By virtue of her marriage to Duma, MaShezi seems to think that they have joint ownership to their home. When they enter into an argument with Mbandlwa and she orders him out of her home her husband reprimands her making her aware of the place she occupies in her society. Duma informs her:

Akayi ndawo uMbandlwa! Wena wazogana lapha! Lo muzi ngokababa! Musa ukusiklolodela ngokuthi kukwakho lapha! (p58).

(Mbandlwa is not going anywhere! You are a married woman! This house belongs to my father! Stop bragging that the house belongs to you).

MaShezi faces the reality of life in a patriarchal society. She soon discovers that the most democratic constitution of South Africa has not changed her husband's outlook on life nor has it changed her status as a woman in the Duma household. Hence her husband asks her these questions:

We MaShezi! Ubani umnumzane kuleli khaya? Ungalingi ukhulume ngaleyo ndlela kuMbandlwa. UMbandlwa ngunobhala wami futhi sisuka kude naye. Wawukuphi seqa izinkalo naye sizama ukukhulula abantu? (p57).

(MaShezi! Who is the head of the household in this home? Don't you ever talk to Mbandlwa in that manner again. Mbandlwa is my secretary and we have a long history together. Where were you when we criss-crossed the country fighting for the people's liberation?)

As an enlightened woman from a semi-urban area MaShezi thought that by being married to Duma, what belonged to him was also hers. Gender inequality, as a phenomenon, transcends class, race and cultures. When MaShezi argues with

Mbandlwa and Duma, she is shocked by her husband's behaviour, who goes into frenzy and says:

Mfazi ndini thula! Ngithi thula Mfazindini! (p57)

(Shut up silly woman! I say shut up silly woman!)

When this reality becomes a reality to MaShezi, she reacts by returning to her home in KwaMashu. This kind of indifference seems common in male-dominated societies. In Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, for example, Okonkwo uses a similar kind of reprimand to his first wife where he instructs her to do as she is told. He further asks her when did she become one of the *ndichie* of Umofia?" (Stratton, 1994:26). This confirms the assertion by Robbins (2000: 22) that "...freedoms take place within limits; for those with power limits are widely drawn".

Both women in the play explored are heroines; the chief acknowledges that in the end where, in his letter to the community, he admits that they have been instrumental in the reconciliation of the two factions. Sadly, at that point in time both assistants of the rivalries, Mbandlwa and Dlamini are dead. One would have expected the chief to delegate powers of addressing the community to one of the two women behind the newly found peace but the author denies them that platform to address the public because they are women. Instead that task is given to another male, Mazongolo. What unfolds in this drama confirms that, in spite of the most democratic constitution in South Africa that promotes gender equality, men still regard women as inferior beings that cannot address the nation. This could be a result of the unconscious inspirations of the text itself- whereby an author such as Mngadi (2008)- concentrates on the textuality of the text rather than on a purely thematic account of its workings (Robbins, 2000:112).

5.4.2 Gender Stereotypes

Stereotyping, an overgeneralization of characteristics that may or may not have been observed in fact often contains an element of truth that is impartial and thus misleading. Perceiving it as a "picture in our heads" Masuku (2005:17) maintains that "it can be viewed as an image that is constant in the social mind, although it is somehow inaccurate". Women from the KwaMashu township are often

stereotypically perceived as gold-diggers, rebellious, dishonest, and immoral. The community that initially inhabited this township was moved from the notorious Cato Manor because of the Group Areas Act of 1950. According to this Act, each racial group was expected to live in its own residential area. KwaMashu, then became a residential area for Black people only. As a semi-urban area, KwaMashu has a long history of brutality, corruption and other social ills. The author uses KwaMashu to project the stereotypical perception that women from KwaMashu are evil. In one of the conversations between Duma and his wife he shares with her the stereotype that views her as *isikheliyane* (a prostitute) simply because of her place of birth, KwaMashu. These are his words:

Angithi nawe bakubiza ngesikheliyane saKwaMashu? (p55).

Isn't you are also called a prostitute from KwaMashu?

Calling someone's wife a prostitute is a very serious offence among the Zulu people. It is an insult that could easily lead to court cases and even bloodshed. The author projects the stereotype through the community gossip. What is worth noting is the reaction of Duma to this circulating gossip. He is not angered by it and seems neither surprised nor bothered by it.

Ngcangca observes that "marriage elevates the status of both men and women in patriarchal societies, especially in the Zulu community. It bestows upon them new rights and a measure of respect" (1987:5). Hence Mbandlwa is ridiculed and given the name '*impohlo*', which is a name given to a man who is long overdue in getting married. *Impohlo* is not a derogatory name. Again, the bias towards men becomes glaring when one compares the 'names' that are given to the two characters via the community gossip. A woman is said to be *isikheliyana* whereas a man is given a name *impohlo*.

The negativity and stereotypes surrounding women from urban areas are further revealed in MaNgema's conversation with her husband, Shandu when she says:

...UMaShezi bengimthatha njengomuntu wesimame ofana nabaningi besimame baselokishini, abangazi nanyaka ngokuhlonishwa kwamakhosi (p50).

(...In my mind MaShezi was like any other woman from the township, who have no respect whatsoever for traditional leadership).

Prostitution remains a big issue in male-authored novels and drama. The tendency is to give this label to women who are promiscuous but not used when men cheat on their wives. Machaba (2011:38) asserts that such double standards have also been observed in Zimbabwean literature (Gaidzanwa, 1985) where the expectation of fidelity from sons and husbands is taxing on women in a way that it is not for men, since men are not penalized for adultery while women are. This is and has been an observation and concern of many other feminist literary critics. Urban women are often perceived to be materialistic hence they are often referred to as gold-diggers. This stereotype was discussed in the chapter on literature review where Molefe's (1988) *Isitolo Esasingasebhange* was examined. Again, in *Ababulali benyathi* Mngadi (2008) subtly assigns this stereotype to MaShezi when he puts these words in her mouth:

Ha! Ha! Ubani ongayeka ukujabula esesimweni esifana nesami? Uthi wubala baba uqala ukuhola le mali osuyihola? Angithi ngikhuluma nje usuyakhulekelwa wena(p13).

(Ha! Ha! Who would not be happy to find themselves in a position like mine where my husband earns the kind of money you are paid. As we speak, people have started to worship you).

Machaba (2011) observes that Masuku's (1997) findings in her study of *Images of women in some Zulu literary works: A feminist critique* were that,

Zulu authors make use of various stereotypes in their depiction of female characters. Furthermore, female authors maintain a similar standpoint on the portrayal of images of women characters as their male counterparts, namely that of a woman as a witch, a femme-fatale, a Delilah, a submissive and naïve being and also as a materialistic being (Machaba, 2011:15).

Gumede (2002:58) asserts that "social change entails a point of departure and one of arrival. By this assertion he means departure from the traditional position of oppression and stereotyping, and arrival at a situation of mutual respect and

equality". Women are at the vanguard of change because they are in a situation that urgently demands change, especially with regard to their rights, their role in society, and the position of their children. Men will place obstacles in the way of change because they have the most to lose. Therefore, it is incumbent upon female writers themselves to start writing novels and drama that project the positive strengths of women.

5.4.3 Portrayal of women images

5.4.3.1 MaShezi

Like most literature around the world, African literature initially portrayed women negatively. This is in line with Kalu's (2001:14) observation that the role of women in society is constantly interrogated and "for centuries women have struggled to find their place" in a world that is predominantly male oriented. Imprecise and incomplete portrayals of female characters immersed early African works. Phindane (2012) believes that this may be largely due to the fact that African literature was first written by men whose education was put above that of women. Educated men not only came from a patriarchal background but they were educated by missionaries and colonisers who also came from similar backgrounds.

MaShezi is portrayed as an educated Zulu woman, who had been raised in the KwaMashu township. She is the heroine in this drama and depicted as an assertive woman. She is vocal in her support of the democratic structures of the new dispensation in South Africa and sits with men, Duma and Mbandlwa to discuss critical socio-political issues in the community. From the beginning of this drama she challenges men when she addresses both Duma and Mbandlwa. The following statement illustrates this:

We Mbandlwa! Musani nina ukuvumela abantu besidala banilusele ebumnyameni. Tshengisani ukuthi nina aniyona imfuyo kodwa ningabantu. Uthini uDlaminyana lo? (p23).

(Mbandlwa! Do not allow people with ancient ideas to lead you to darkness. Show them that you are not just animals but human beings. What is this silly Dlamini saying?)

She also challenges the traditional Zulu structures of authority and the culture itself, when she says:

Ukuthi imithetho ishaywa ngubani, lokho akunamsebenzi kodwa iqiniso ngukuthi intando yeningi ayimnikazi wamuntu. Uma bebambelele osikwenimpilo, bayabheda ngoba amasiko amaningi asaguqulwa amanye ayekwa ngakho ukuthi izikhathi ziyaguquka, kanjalo namasiko kumele ahambisane nesikhathi. Phela ngabe sisagqoka izidwaba, nani nigqoka amabheshu! (p23).

(The issue of who makes the laws is not important; the truth is that no one owns the majority rule. If they are still stuck in tradition they are wrong because many customs have changed and others have remained the same due to changes in the times; so customs must go with the times. We would still be wearing traditional skin skirts and you would be wearing cowhide kilt).

MaShezi is also portrayed as a woman who has clear knowledge and understanding of her democratic rights; however, the author limits her power. Her views are acceptable to her comrades only when she speaks against the reigning chief, Shandu. As soon as she changes her mind, and starts persuading them to humble themselves before the traditional structures of the chief they ignore her opinions. She is soon reminded of her place and silenced. Instead of engaging with the comrades as equals, the gender card is drawn.

Women-battering was a common practice in male-dominated societies and especially amongst the Zulus. Since women were regarded as belonging to their husbands, that made them vulnerable to physical abuse by men. After the liberation of South Africa from colonial rule, women's rights were protected by the Constitution's Bill of Rights. Clearly, the elected councillor Duma did not understand this. That is evident in the manner he talks to his wife:

Uzwa kanjani wena? Angisilo ivaka mina! Futhi vala lo mlonyana wakho singaze sethusane! (p33)

(Do you ever listen? I am not a coward! Again, close that small mouth of yours before I hit you!)

MaShezi is silenced and threatened with a beating. The author chooses to use insensitive words such as the diminutive *umlonyana* to refer to MaShezi's mouth. By

using such meanness in addressing his wife, the author shows the disrespect with which Duma treats his wife. She represents many women in South Africa who face similar threats every day of their lives, in spite of believing that they are liberated. The character, Mkhwanazi in *Inkinsela yaseMgungundlovu*, explored in the literature review did not listen to his wife MaNtuli when she persuaded him not to give his cattle to Ndebenkulu. It was almost too late when he realised his mistake.

Gordon explains that the social construction of motherhood and marriage is deep-rooted in our psycho-social make-up. As a result a particular culture, social and structural construction is presented as natural and intuitive (Gordon, 1990:61). These women are trying to transform their identities and create their individual profiles in the context of social relations. Their struggle to reconstruct their lives differently is, however, perceived as negative and rebellious. The author portrays MaShezi's life as life filled with contradictions. She is an educated woman but financially dependent on her husband, hence her excitement about Duma's salary from the government. She seems to have knowledge and understanding of democratic policies and laws of the new dispensation but does not know her personal rights. In the same way, Maiguru, in Dangarembga's (1988) *Nervous Conditions* earns her salary but it is her husband that has the final say on how it is to be used.

The author also describes the softer side of MaShezi, as a peace-loving person. She does not hesitate to take the initiative, for the sake of peace. She humbles herself by approaching MaNgema about the political issue at hand. The two women engage in a robust discussion where they both display good leadership qualities. That is reflected in the tone of their conversation when MaNgema says:

Isenzo sakho nendlela ocabanga ngayo kuyangiphoqa ukuthi ngisho ngithi ungomunye wabafazi abangalakha lelizwe. Eqinisweni inkani namagqubu akubuyiseli muntu. Kunalokho kwandisa amathuna nezililo ezingenasidingo (p48).

(Your action and the way you think drive me to view you as one of the women that can build this country. In fact, stubbornness and grudges do not benefit anyone. Instead they increase the number of graves and crying unnecessarily).

In this episode, the author clearly displays the power of the woman. However, most men do not like to take the advice from women. MaShezi fails outright to persuade

her husband to show the chief some respect. The author turns her into a heroine that runs away from the situation when the situation becomes problematic. She escapes to her place of birth and only returns when the fighting factions are ready to reconcile.

5.4.3.2 MaNgema

A teacher by profession MaNgema has absolute respect for Zulu tradition. She has a profound knowledge and understanding of the functioning of the traditional Zulu structures and its protocols. She is depicted as an intelligent woman whom the chief consults from time to time yet she remains on the periphery. Because of this we see her offering words of wisdom in the most respectful way whenever she is called upon to do so. In her role as the wife of a chief she does not rebel against the fact that her advice to her husband is limited to their household. In fact, she endorses her position by withdrawing from the presence of men whenever Dlamini, the *induna* visits their home. In this context, Burman (cited in Chukwuma, 2012:95) who views traditional womanhood as “both a site for strength and a site for struggle” is correct. While portrayed as the voice of reason in the private sphere she is not vocal in the public domain, attesting to Robbins’ (2000:59) view that “woman is a mass of contradictions”. Her contribution is welcomed and acknowledged privately yet not in public.

Mathye’s (cited in Machaba, 2011:16) observation is that “novelists depict female characters against the backdrop of patriarchal cultural, traditional, social and ideological norms that lead to the oppression of women. She also finds that male authors reflect a bias in favour of patriarchy by depicting female characters that cling to traditionalism” like MaNgema. What is interesting is that the chief takes MaNgema’s advice as opposed to MaShezi whose husband does not find her contribution valuable.

5.4.4 Evaluation

Literature is tasked with the responsibility of reflecting what happens in society. Perceptions that dominate the minds and actions of characters are those upheld by authors of those works of fiction. Boshego (2007: 46) argues that, “as the creator, the writer has at his/her disposal the manipulative powers enabling him/her total

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control over both the speech and actions of his/her characters. Different types of characters are created, used and disposed at the writer's will and purpose". In many African texts, the female gender is stereotyped. Fonchingong (2006:136) contends that "male writers who investigate women also assist in supporting an institutionalized and one-sided vision of female heroism in African fiction". This point further endorses the fact that the presentation of the female gender is mostly biased.

The storyline of this drama is based on actual incidents that took place in South Africa in the mid-1990s. This was a period of bloodshed caused by lack of tolerance in South Africa and in the province of KwaZulu-Natal in particular. This was because of the clashes between the new democratic form of government and the traditional system to which communities were accustomed to. This drama offers a different perspective of female characters in contemporary African literature where some characters are bold in communicating their opinions. According to Hadjitheodorou (cited in Phindane, 2012: 208) "traditionally the main objective of marriage was for a woman to secure a home where she would enjoy the privileges and benefits of motherhood. In this drama the author portrays two females as stabilizing forces in the nation building effort". They proved that one did not need to be a warrior to bring about much needed harmony in one's community. Women should not always be seen as passive creatures whose role is to have babies and perform household chores. Rather, they must also be seen as matching men in their ability to undertake similar adventures, albeit adopting different avenues.

Like Chinua Achebe in *Anthills of the Savannah*, Mngadi does open up some spaces for women as intellectuals who are vocal and active people in the community. Achebe situates his female character Beatrice at the centre in his story to underscore the fact that a woman can be a source of strength and hope in the face of conflict and adversity. Equally, Mngadi provides MaShezi with a similar role where she plays an important role in resolving problems facing her community.

Mngadi, however, differs from Achebe in that his women characters remain in the background. In spite of the fact that they are assertive women who want to be the pillars of a harmonious, peaceful and stable community, the author silences them by refusing them to voice their brilliant ideas. Both MaShezi's and MaNgema's views are confined to their families. Their husbands recognize their value in the private domain, but overlooks their influence in the public domain. The community is not yet

ready to listen to women's views, let alone being addressed by a woman. At the end of this drama, the two women are vindicated in their pursuit for peace.

South Africans boast of having achieved liberation, however male supremacy is still a dominant factor in this drama. Women's voices are mainly 'visible' in the private spheres of their homes. How can a man who is democratically elected threaten to beat up his wife? This is proof that liberation on paper does not necessarily change the mindset of its citizenry. Women still have no place except escaping back to their homes as MaShezi did.

The important question to be answered is whether the portrayal of women images in this drama is reality or idealism? Wellek and Warren (cited in Chukwuma) assert that:

Truth in literature is the same as truth outside of literature i.e. systematic and publicly verifiable knowledge. The novelist has no magic short cut to that present state of knowledge in the social sciences which constitutes the 'truth' against which his world, his fictional reality, is to be checked (Chukwuma, 2012:27)

As Nnoromele (2010:182) states, "the concept of the 'universal woman' does not exist. The reality for African women is neither standardized nor embodied in a single identity. The female existence is as multifaceted as the women's different backgrounds and intrinsic personalities".

Davies (1988:86) is of the opinion that "the artist has the power to create new realities" and that women are "neither victors nor victims but partners in struggle". However, Masuku (2005:186) concedes that, "accepting change is difficult, especially for men who are culturally groomed to believe that they are superior to women. The majority of men feel insecure about change, especially change that rearranges the power structure. This then leads to resentment and anger, bloodshed and ultimately a breakdown in society". They do not realize that culture is dynamic and they also need to adapt to the changing circumstances. Masuku strongly believes that male and female writers should represent women more positively and that this ideal can be achieved only if they become progressive feminists, committed to a just society. Robbins (2000:68) on the other hand, argues that, "it is probably

irrational to expect that any theoretical approach to literature can bring about absolute change in human conditions. She further maintains, however, that a critique that exposes a problem is still worth pursuing even, if it cannot change the world. It is a tool, a part of an ongoing process and not an answer in itself”.

In *Ababulali Benyathi*, Mngadi seeks to make sure that his women characters do not metaphorically lie low but that in reality they become ‘invisible’ despite the value they add in the unfolding events in their community.

5.4.5 Conclusion

The events in the drama analysed signals a departure from the thematic traditional Zulu literature where women were traded for cattle or made to endure demeaning experiences typical of traditional polygamous marriages. The reference to ‘...typical of traditional polygamous marriages’ is deliberate because even in the present dispensation women still enter into these unions albeit their own choice. This situation is discussed in Mkhize and Zondi (2015) where they expound on the positive side to polygamy. Recounted by enlightened women who voluntarily opted for such marriages, their first-hand experiences suggest that such marriages are, in fact, not always detrimental as hitherto perceived (Mathonsi and Gumede, 2006). By shifting the focus from the usual pattern of work written by male authors where women are completely accorded an ‘invisible’ status, this literary text is an attempt to transform the status of women by opening spaces for them, even if only slightly.

A pertinent question that needs to be answered by male writers of this epoch is, how long will it take them to create female characters who will reflect the tenets of the country’s Constitution. Another equally important question is how far male writers of this era are prepared to represent women as independent individuals in their own right. Finally, for authors who are taking transformation a step forward as far as the representation of female images is concerned, are they convinced that change is not an option, or are they merely doing so to gratify female readers? These questions are vital as they will shape a future where women will be held in high esteem, regardless of their backgrounds.

The next text to be analysed is *Kudela Owaziyo* by Maphumulo (2009). The period of its publication is characterised by transformation in the country's government structures including the revival of the African spirit of Ubuntu. An inclusion of a literary text of this nature is thus critical in order to determine whether the male literary canon is being transformed.

5.5 Synopsis of the drama, *Kudela Owaziyo* (Maphumulo, 2009)

The drama is set in a semi-urban area; a township located in Mandeni known as Chappies. The protagonist is Mdaluli Memela. He is married to MaMlanduli and they have three daughters; Londiwe, Khombephi and Nenelezi. The eldest, Londiwe is currently studying towards a Nursing Degree at Mangosuthu University of Technology. Mdaluli also has two neighbours, Mbhebhezeli who is his friend and Manqina, a work colleague. As the plot unfolds, the main character, Mdaluli is engrossed in a serious conversation with Mbhebhezeli. He looks disturbed as he shares a nagging dream which he had and which is responsible for the mood in which he finds himself. In his dream he saw a group of African males who spoke a language which was alien to him. They seemed intent on excluding him in what they were talking about. No matter how hard he tried to follow their conversation he failed to grasp the content; a situation that seemed to entertain the group.

While still troubled by that situation, the strangers disappeared as if into thin air. As he was still trying to make sense of what had just happened, a great storm ensued. It was so heavy it made him lose all hope of survival. Within the Zulu belief system even though not every single dream requires consideration some are never to be taken lightly. This was one of them. He had a premonition that something bad was going to happen. His fears were confirmed by his friend who told him that in his opinion, the storm was indeed a bad omen (Maphumulo, 2008:15). He returned to his home but did not share the dream and its possible import.

The following day Mdaluli reports to work as usual only to be confronted with bad news which would have a debilitating effect on his entire family. Due to economic

pressures the locally based Iron, Metal and Steel Company for which he worked and whose headquarters were in London, had had to shut down and relocate overseas, resulting in the retrenchment of all its employees, including Mdaluli. Things were happening faster than he had anticipated and the timing was wrong; his daughters' tuition fees were due and Londiwe depended on her father for funds to complete her nursing career. He discussed possible alternatives with his friend and after reflecting on a few prospects, they finally arrived at the conclusion that Memela had to sharpen his building skills and return to the building trade which he did before he was employed by the firm that had just shut down. This thought, coupled with the support of a fellow retrenched colleague, gave Memela the much needed courage to break the news to his family who were supportive and understanding.

He decides to start a construction business and his business does not thrive because of competition. His business competitor, Chivenga from Mozambique is a skilled builder. Moreover, he charges his customers far less than Mdaluli, hence his popularity in the community. Out of frustration, Mdaluli starts beating his wife and daughters. Londiwe reports him to the police for domestic violence. He is jailed for physically abusing his wife and daughters; however, MaMdaluli withdraws the charges against her husband. As soon as he gets out of prison, he chases his daughters out of his house. He also tries to bewitch Chivenga. When witchcraft fails, he ambushes him and assaults him. He is charged for attempted murder and assault with grievous bodily harm. He is imprisoned for the second time. Whilst in prison, he repents and calls Chivenga and his daughters to apologise. He asks for forgiveness. Chivenga withdraws the case against Mdaluli. After his release, he decides to go on holiday to Sudan. Whilst there, Sudan is hit by a great earthquake. On hearing the news, his family exclaim '*Kudela Owaziyo*', meaning "happy is the one who knows the fate of Mdaluli".

5.5.1 Gender Inequalities

5.5.1.1 Gender inequalities in Mdaluli's household

MaMlanduli is an ordinary uneducated Zulu woman that is still shackled by a patriarchal system. Elaine Showalter (1991:3) argues that "the late 19th century was

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a period of 'sexual anarchy', a period in which gender definitions were acutely threatened by a variety of social changes". Robbins confirms the statement by Showalter that,

During this period the separate spheres of men and women were respectively the worlds of competitive work and domesticity. She further asserts that as an ideology it defined men as active and women as passive. Men worked outside the domestic sphere while women were confined to the home. This binary oppositions structured all social thinking about the relationships between the sexes (Robbins, 2000:221).

In the context of the drama under examination, all the changes in the system of government and the new democratic constitution have not changed anything in MaMlanduli's life. She is still financially dependent on her husband. Hence after learning about her husband's retrenchment from his job, she laments:

Wewu! Ezibuhlungu azipheli bakithi. Kazi sizoba yini lapha ekhaya ubaba wekhaya engasasebenzi. Ngaso impela-ke lesi sikhathi izindleko abhekene nazo kulo muzi, zithe bhe. Wo hhe! Ngiyazisa mina ntombi kaQholwane! Sife olwembiza ngempela-ke uma kunje (p30).

(Wow! Painful news never ceases to happen. I wonder what will become of us when the family head is unemployed. This happens at the time when this house is faced with a lot of financial responsibilities. Wow! What will become of me, Qholwane's daughter? We are finished).

Such dependency of women was a norm in male- dominated societies. The wife was burdened with childbearing and rearing as well as the domestic chores. At times she was treated like a child herself. Hence MaMlanduli is correct when she refers to her husband's retrenchment as doom for the entire family. In patriarchal societies, as attested to by Stratton (1994:25) "women are systematically excluded from the socio-political discourse of the community". Stratton's notion is supported by Tembo (2012:120) where he states that, "the girl, in patriarchal societies, is moulded to become a dutiful mother under her own mother's training and uncompromising guidance. For all the girls raised in this type of cultural milieu, there is nothing in life except gaining experience in responsibilities of home. This pattern repeats itself when the mother faithfully and diligently transfers the same roles to her offspring". MaMlanduli cannot imagine what life would be without her husband's income.

After losing his job, Mdululi becomes a very bitter man and begins to be mean in the way he treats his wife. On one occasion, for example, when his wife kept repeating that supper was ready and that they were waiting for him he retorted:

Kanti uzwa kanjani wena mfazi? Lisho ukuthini leli gama elithi angifuni? Ngiziphoke-ke manje ngidle yize noma isimo singangivumeli? Wangifundekela kangaka nje wena? (p52).

(Woman, do you ever listen? What does the word 'no' mean to you? Must I force myself to eat even though I do not feel like it? Why are you pestering me?)

The woman's inferiority is evident in the above statement. It is worth noting that when things are good between a woman and a man amongst the Zulus, she is commonly referred to in Zulu as '*mkami*' meaning 'my wife' or *makaLondiwe* meaning 'mother of Londiwe'. However, as soon as there is disagreement then the wife ceases to be *umkami* and becomes *umfazi*. The observable trend in Zulu literature is that once a wife is called *umfazi*, what usually follows thereafter is wife-battering. Maphumulo follows the same trend in this drama. Shortly after calling her *mfazi* Mdaluli continues:

Nx! Aha demed man! Usulokhu ungicefezela into ebhekephi nje wena mfazi ngibe ngizilandulela lapha kuwe? Yini ngisole nje sengathi akusekhona ukuthi ufuna isizathu sokungakufuni ukudla kodwa usufuna inhliziyi yami wena? Uyazi ukuthini? Usuzoze uyithole –ke lento oyifunayo. Sengikubone kahle wena ukuthi uyayeshela le mpama yami, isizoze ikuqome-ke ngoba nakhu usolukhu uyinakashela (p53).

(Nx! Ag damn you! Why are you nagging me you woman because I have told you I do not want food. Why do I suspect that it is not about me not wanting food but that you actually inciting me? Do you know that you are going to get what you want? I have realised that you want me to slap you and I will if you continue irritating me).

Mdaluli beats his wife and their daughter, Londiwe tries in vain to stop her father from physically abusing her mother:

Hhayi! Hhayi! Kahle bo baba ngamawala. Pheza manje! Ayisile phela le nto oyenzayo. Wubudlova lobu. Wukuhlukumeza lokhu okwenzayo. Kwathi kuphunywe umkhankaso kazwelonke wokuqeda udlame lwasekhaya kodwa wena walokhu uqhubeka nokushaya umkakho? Uthi uyabona nje ukuthi uzidonsela amanzi ngomsele ngale nto oyenzayo? (p54)

(No father, no. Stop it now. What you are doing is out of order. This is abuse. What you are doing is offensive. Everyone is out there on a campaign against domestic violence and yet you continue beating up your wife? Are you aware that you are inviting trouble?)

Mdaluli ignores her because she is a child and a female at that. Mdaluli slaps both of them. The author captures the scene vividly in the way he describes it:

Khona manjalo kuqhume impama esheshayo ngokulandelanisa eduze, ezihlathini zabo bobabili, abadukle ngesibhakela baze bawe babonakale sengathi babephelelwa umoya. Abakhahlele baze bawe bayothi fofoloziphansi (p54).

(Immediately thereafter followed a quick slap one after another on both their cheeks, then followed the fist punches and as they fell down it looked like they were choking. He also kicked them until they fell down).

Here a man is seen using his authority and masculinity over powerless women that he is supposed to love and protect. The woman is therefore in a losing situation; when a man victimises her, it is justified because culture demands that the woman be subservient to the man. Chilala (2013:100) maintains that when a man yearns for the woman, he is not to be blamed because it is not his fault. It is a woman's fault who has cast a spell on him; she is a witch. The relationship between the couple is strained due to Mdaluli's physical abuse. The issue of gender inequalities between men and women is evident when Mdaluli tries to coerce his wife into having sex with him despite the prevailing circumstances. In spite of that Mdaluli demands his conjugal rights in this manner:

...Yini sengathi uyashesha ukukhohlwa nje wena mfazi ukuthi ngakulobola ngezinkomo ngazishaya zaphelala zonke esibayeni sikayihlo. Manje-ke usufuna ngikuncenge-ke ngiguqele ilungelo lami lasemshadweni elisemthethweni. Uthi awufikelwa umcabango wokuthi ngakulobola ngothi lukamentshisi nje wena? (p60).

(...Why does it look like you have a short memory woman, you forget that I paid all the *ilobolo* cows to your father. Now you want me to kneel down begging for my legitimate marital rights. Don't you think I paid match sticks as *ilobolo* for you?)

Ilobolo has dominated Zulu literature for decades. There has been an ongoing debate amongst scholars on its significance and relevance. It has further divided the Zulu nation into two groups; those in favour of retaining this custom and those who feel that it leads to exploitation and the objectification of women. Other than the abovementioned factors *ilobolo* further promotes inferiority in women who sometimes believe their husbands are not wrong in the manner they treat them because they

were paid for asserts Gama (2004:112). For some men it totally changes the relationship itself because the partners immediately become unequal.

Children in traditional Zulu societies were expected to respect their parents. The 21st century play presents Mdaluli as if he lived in the times gone by. Nowadays, while children are still expected to respect their parents they also may share their views with their parents in an open family platform. In the drama Londiwe calls in the police with the aim of protecting her mother from being beaten up. Mdaluli interprets his daughter's action as that of a daughter who lacks respect. This is why he says:

Izinkunzi ezimbili zingehlale esibayeni sinye...Mina nendodakazi yami uLondiwe sibanga ubukhulu kulomuzi, kusobala-ke ukuthi sonke sesingomakhonya izinkunzi ezimalundalunda. Sekumele kucace-ke manje! (p80).

(Two bulls cannot stay in one kraal...My daughter, Londiwe and I are fighting over authority in this house. It is clear that we are now both in control, the two big bulls. Now is the time for things to be clearer!)

Manhood is equal to power. According to the Zulu culture the man had absolute power and authority over everything in his house that includes wife, children, cattle, goats, farming land and the house itself. This kind of ownership was moderated by the Constitution of South Africa that guarantees rights for women and children. In spite of all these changes Mdaluli still sees himself as the 'bull' of the home that should be placed on a pedestal no matter what he does to his family.

5.5.2 Gender stereotypes

As defined earlier, stereotypes are generalisations about a group of people whereby set of characteristics are attributed to this group. Urban women are perceived as gold-diggers and prostitutes whilst rural women are perceived as traditional, uneducated and foolish. These stereotypes are evident in most Zulu novels and dramas. In *Kudela Owaziyo* these perceptions come to the fore through the characters Hlengiwe and MaMlanduli. Hlengiwe meets a complete stranger, Chivenga, whilst on a job-seeking mission. Chivenga starts courting her but Hlengiwe's does not love him because he is a (*kwerekwere*) a foreigner. However, after seeing his work and realising that he is a builder she changes her mind. Instead

of referring to Chivenga as *kwerekwere* (a derogatory name used to refer to African foreign nationals in South Africa) she expresses words of envy:

Phela bengiwubuza ngoba ngisalandelisa ngenkulumo ethi uyadela lowo muntu wesifazane okuganile ngoba kusho ukuthi uhlale evuka ngaphansi kophahla lwendlu edonsa abantu abedlula ngendlela ngenxa yobuhle nokukhanga. Kubi okwamanga nokukufela umona phela mfowethu, uhamba wedwa wena inkosi impela. Phansi umona. Unehono elibabazekayo ngendlela eyisimangaliso phela wena (p25)

(This is a follow up question because I wanted to say; happy is the woman that is married to you. She ought to be happy because everyday of her life, she wakes up from the beautiful house that attracts passers-by. Truth be told and jealous pushed aside, you are the best. You have an amazing and outstanding talent).

Her changed attitude and reaction towards Chivenga is driven by materialism. She has her own boyfriend, Manqina, whom she truly loves. That is evident in her thoughts when she thinks aloud:

...Lokhu okuyikwerekwere uma ngikwabela inhliziyu yami ngiyobe ngiqonde ukuzixhaphazela khona nje ngoba ngiyazi ukuthi khona phela kucubuza amagabade ngemali lapha kubantu besimame...Ngifuna 'kuchame' lokhu lapha kimi kuyothi kungadiza kuphundleke kuze kuqothuke izinkophe bese ngikwala-ke mina umgangela ngaleso sikhathi (p34).

(If I give my heart to this foreigner, I would be doing it so that I can dig money because I know that he likes making women happy by giving them money.....I want him to "pee" all the money, by the time I am finished with him, he won't have a penny and I will then openly end the relationship).

The author uses this character, Hlengiwe, to emphasise the stereotypical perception that city women are gold-diggers and prostitutes.

A woman from a rural or urban area does not need to have had sexual relationships with many men in her life to be labelled a prostitute. The word 'prostitute' is also loosely used by men as an invective against any female person. Mdaluli also uses it when swearing at his daughters saying:

Baphume balibhekisa ngaphi labonoyile bakho mkami, hhe? Ngithi bashone ngaphi ukuze ngibalandele ezithendeni yikhona ngizosale sengiqeda nya ngabo? (p82).

(Which direction did these prostitutes of yours my wife take, he? I am asking what direction did they take so that I can follow them and kill them?).

It is very unusual for the father to use this derogatory word when referring to his own children. The author deliberately allows Mdaluli to use the word 'prostitutes' when referring to his daughters to show that stereotyping has no boundaries.

On the other hand, rural women are being perceived and also depicted as foolish people who are prone to making stupid decisions. MaMlanduli is battered by her husband Mdaluli, for an issue that could have easily been resolved through a discussion. Instead of protecting herself or screaming for help she admonishes him:

Kulungile! Ngithi ngishaye uze ungibulale uma uthanda kodwa okusalayo wukuthi uyoyithola ngifile lento oyifunayo. Akumele ume ngeqholo lokuthi wangilobola ngoba ufuna konke ngempoko nangendlovu yangena (p61)

(It's fine! You can beat me to death if you like, but there is one thing that you should know is that you will only get what you want when I am dead. You cannot boast about the lobolo you paid in order to get whatever you want).

After her husband has been charged with assault and domestic violence, she is the first person to pay him a visit and forgives him. This is what she has to say to her husband that had been beating her a day before:

Ingani phela ngiqonde ukukukhombisa baba wabantabami ukuthi anginanxa neze nawe mina, nginjalo nje futhi angikubambele magqubu ngokwenzekile izolo. Ngithanda wazi futhi ukuthi akusimina okubizele amaphoyisa, naphezu kwakho konke lokho angikujabuleli neze ukulethwa kwakho lapha (p72).

(I want to show you father of my children that I am not angry at you and I do not hold any grudge against you in connection with what happened yesterday. I would also like you to know that I did not call the police and above everything seeing you here does not make me happy).

The author depicts MaMlanduli as a foolish character that gracefully accepts physical abuse by her husband because she is a traditional, uneducated rural woman and therefore does not understand her rights. Some women will take responsibility for

the abuse levelled by men against them. They blame themselves for having provoked their husbands and therefore conclude that they deserve to be beaten up.

5.5.3 Portrayal of women images

5.5.3.1 MaMlanduli

MaMlanduli is portrayed as an uneducated traditional Zulu woman. She shows absolute respect to her husband. She behaves in a manner that reflects that before getting married, she was pre-warned about the difficulties that she might encounter in her marriage. She seems to have been programmed on how to behave in particular circumstances. Other than traditional beliefs and values, her financial dependency on her husband renders her vulnerable to all kinds of abuse.

She has no voice in her house even on issues that pertain to her very being. In normal marriages engaging in sex is consensual, but in her case her husband tries to force himself on her. Technically if a person coerces another person to unwillingly engage in sexual acts with him or her that is considered as rape in South Africa; regardless of the fact that they are in a relationship or even married. She is depicted as a woman who has no knowledge or understanding of her rights. She allows her husband to beat her whenever he likes and does not want this physical abuse reported to law enforcement offices. This is evident when she addresses the police officer, who had been called by her daughter when she could not stand her mother's beating anymore. MaMlanduli explains her situation to the police officer:

Nizoke nilonqe-ke maphoyisa ngoba mina mnini wendaba angikaze ngimmangalele umyeni wami. Yikho lokhu nje okunguLondiwe okuphaphayo osekuzenza ungqaphambili njengensumpa odabeni olungaqondene nakho (p67).

(Policeman, you will be disappointed to hear that, as the victim that I have not laid any charge against my husband. It is this child, Londiwe that is being too forward who has done so while interfering in matters that are none of her business).

MaMlanduli is also portrayed as a person who is powerless, foolish and naïve, with no control over her own children. When her husband chases the girls out of the

house, she stands by her husband. The author positions her as a woman preoccupied with minor issues, such as serving food. As a result she reminds her daughter Londiwe:

...Yini sengathi uyakhohlwa nje wena ukuthi nakuba ibhodwe lisaya eziko nguye uyihlo lona. Wenziwa yini wena ukhohlwe nawukuthi njengoba kusaba nesimemo esikuphoqayo ukuba uvakashela ethoyilethi nje, kungenxa yokudla okudlayo okuthengwa yimali yakhe njalo lomuntu osekulula kanjalo nje ukuba umnikele ezandleni zomthetho?(p70)

(...Why does it seem as if you have forgotten that it is your father who provides food for this family? Have you forgotten that he is a reason that you still go to the toilet? And yet you find it easy to hand him over to the law enforcement offices).

Because of her financial dependency, MaMlanduli does not understand what rightfully belongs to her children, hence she reminds them about the good that Mdululi is doing for the family:

Ukhuluma kanjani kodwa uma ukhuluma kanjena noyihlo ekuzala mntanami? Usekufundisile uyihlo ngezimali zakhe waze wabambelela ezinkanyezini phezulu wasemfundweni ephakeme ngalolu hlobo? kodwa wena phezulu kwakho konke lokho umbonga ngepuleti lamasi...(p69).

(Why do you speak to your own father like this my child? Your father has paid exorbitant amounts of money towards your higher education and this is how you show your appreciation...).

In *Second Sex* De Beauvoir (cited in Robbins, 2000:57) argues that, “there is no authentic reason why women should be regarded – or should regard themselves- as inferior to men in society. She maintains that, in almost every known society women are seen as less important beings and men on the other hand are seen as their significant ‘other’”. MaMlanduli is portrayed as a very subordinate person that is willing to do anything that her husband wants. At times, she finds herself doing wrong things; however, she is more than willing to do them, as long as they keep her husband happy. When MaMlanduli pays her husband a visit while in prison he shares with her that he was responsible for the plan to bewitch Chivenga and further requests her to be his accomplice by gathering information about Chivenga’s health condition. Her reaction to her husband’s request is as follows:

Ungabe usathandabuza wena baba. Luyekele ezandleni zami lonke loludaba. Ngizolulandelisisa kahle mina ngibe nesineke nalo. Uma kuya

ngoba lolu lwazi oludingayo ngiluthole ungakaphumi lapha, ngiyobuya ngokushesha sengizokwazisa ukuthi kuqhubekani (p75)

(Do not have any doubts father. Leave everything to me. I will follow up the matter closely and patiently. If I get the information that you need whilst you are still here, I will come back quickly to give you a full report).

The situation in Mdaluli's household speaks to what Millet cited in Robbins (2000:64), perceives as the inequality of power in which women are largely seen as submissive and helpless in the clutches of the male lovers or writers who control the sexual encounters.

5.5.3.2 Londiwe

Londiwe is depicted as a young and educated girl whose education makes her understand her rights as a child and also all basic human rights. This is shown in her response to her mother, who is of the view that she should bow down to her father's abuse since he pays her school fees. She responds to her mother in this manner:

Wenza okufanele phela uma engifundisa, njengomzali enganeni yakhe njengoba kuyilungelo lami ukufunda ngize ngigogode, kodwa ngaphezu kwalokho umthetho awumvumeli nangengozi nje ukuba angishaye...Wenake uma uzoshaya izandla ubekezelele ubaba ekuxebula ngemvubu sengathi uyihhashi, okwakho lokho (p69).

(He is doing the right thing as a parent if he pays for my education because I have every right to education, but regardless of that the law does not allow him to beat me up. If you are going to sit back and allow him to beat you with a sjambok as if you are his horse that is your own problem).

She represents the 'new woman' who has been born and raised in a democratic society where men and women enjoy equal rights. According to Robbins (2000:265) a new woman, "believes in equal rights, equal pay for equal work, in universal suffrage, in racial equality, and in equality of opportunity regardless of gender, race, sexuality or disability". Londiwe is portrayed as an assertive young woman who is prepared to stand her ground in fighting domestic violence. She also understands the procedures that need to be followed by a complainant in a domestic violence case. That is evident in her conversation with her sisters:

Abantu besilisa abenze nje badinga ukuboshwa ngempela. Kungagcini lapho futhi. Kuphindwe kucelwe nencwadi yesivikelo emaphoyiseni ukuze

ibengabele ukwenza noma yini kuwe ngesihluku. Mina ukuba umuntu owenza njengobaba uganwe yimina nje, bengingamgeza igilo libemhlophe qwa ngimkhombise ukuthi angisiyona neze into yokudlala (p63).

(Men who behave like my father need to be sent to jail. It should not stop there. One should also ask for a protection order from the police so as to protect oneself from further potential abuse. If I were to be married to someone like my father I would show him that I am not ignorant).

5.5.3.3 Khombephi and Nenelezi

Khombephi and Nenelezi are the two younger sisters of Londiwe. There is not much that can be discussed about them except that they play a supportive role to their older sister. When Londiwe and their mother were beaten up by their father, they were the first ones to scream for help from the neighbours. They share the same outlook on life as their sister on many social issues. When Mdalulli chases Londiwe out of his house the two girls responded to their father's orders as follows:

Ngeke yenzeke leyo nto! Phinde! Sishaya phansi ngonyawo sithi ngeke! Akahambi udadewethu lapha ekhaya. Okungenani singahamba sobathathu phela...(p81).

(That will not happen! Never! We are putting our feet down and we are saying no! Our sister is not leaving this home. Otherwise the three of us will leave...).

They showed their commitment to the democratic values that their sister stood for. They also displayed a clear understanding of the process that follows once domestic violence has been reported.

5.5.3.4 Hlengiwe

Hlengiwe is portrayed as an uneducated township woman. Her main focus is a struggle for financial survival. She is prepared to do anything for financial gain. That is why she is prepared to date and possibly marry the moneyed Chivenga even though she does not love him. In her mind dating Chivenga will benefit her since the man she really loves is unemployed. She represents the stereotypical image of urban women as gold diggers and prostitutes as Chilala attests that:

while female characters are generally portrayed in negative terms such as gossipers, weak vessels, cowards, gold diggers, manipulators and destroyers of men, concerned with trivialities of life, men have generally been portrayed in more positive terms as brave, decisive, strong and concerned with the serious issues of life as is noticeable in Chivenga (Chilala, 2013:92).

Immediately after getting information about Chivenga's strategy of making more money for his business, the first question she asks from Chivenga is:

Ngabe usunaye umakoti mfowethu? (p24).

(Are you married?)

This is an odd question from a woman who has just met a stranger. Her lack of common sense becomes evident when she is faced with an identity document problem. It disappears and when she applies for another one it comes back from the Department of Home Affairs with incorrect personal details; she now has Chivenga's surname. Instead of enquiring how that has come about she shares it with Chivenga who is excited that she has no problem becoming his wife. Chivenga then takes advantage of her and lures her into marrying him:

...Futhi-ke mina ngiyokulobola sengathi ngithenga ibhayi uma uke wavuma ukuba singene esivumelwaneni somshado (p86).

(...Paying *lobolo* cows for you will be so easy for me, it will be like buying a piece of material, on condition that we enter into an agreement of marriage).

Hlengiwe is depicted as a desperate woman who would do anything for a man who is ready to pay the price in any form whether money or *ilobolo* cattle.

5.5.3.5 Zenyezile

Zenyezile is an ordinary government employee, who has been trained to work as a social worker. She provides her services where they are needed by counselling the victims of domestic violence. She is an enlightened woman of the 21st century. She represents a host of women who are employed and therefore financially independent. The portrayal of Zenyezile confirms that education is the crucial liberating force in the lives of women in South Africa.

Her knowledge is not confined and limited to her work issues but stretches beyond, and that becomes evident when she guides Londiwe on financial assistance available to disadvantaged students. The kind of assistance and guidance that she is seen offering to Londiwe is in line with the concept of sisterhood. Dill (1983:131) concedes that, “the concept of sisterhood has been an important unifying force in contemporary women’s movements. By stressing the similarities of women’s secondary social and economic position in all societies and in the family; this concept thus serves as a binding force in the struggle against male chauvinism and patriarchy”.

5.5.4 Evaluation

The drama takes place in an urban area at Mandeni, not far from the city of Durban. The period around which it is published is 2009. South Africa had enjoyed fifteen years of democracy. During this period every South African citizen from the urban and rural areas knew something about the basic human rights; literate or not. Yet the author creates a character like MaMlanduli whose behaviour is, somehow, unrealistic. No normal woman can be whipped all over her body and when the police arrive at the scene, then pretend that nothing has happened. Some of the author’s female characters, especially MaMlanduli and Hlengiwe are not credibly portrayed. It is worth noting that his female characters do not change in response to their particular social or historical situations, but instead remain true to conservative gender characteristics attests Stratton (1994:36).

Looking for a safe-haven when under threat is a natural instinct of all living beings. Protecting one’s own children is a natural instinct in most women. However, in this drama the opposite occurs in MaMlanduli’s response to her husband after chasing his daughters away and who wants to know where they went. MaMlanduli replies:

Baphume bashona ngapha...baba. Angikholwa ukuthi usengabathola uma kungakhona umuzi asebengene kuwo nezicabha maqedane bacela ukubhaciswa (p82).

(They ran towards this direction father. I doubt that you will still find them because they might have sought refuge from one of our neighbours).

The important question to ask is what happened to the natural protective instinct of a mother who is always ready to protect her children with her life if need be. It is abnormal for a mother to offer assistance to a person who wants to injure her own children. The role of a woman as a protector is further highlighted by Okonkwo's uncle Uchendu in *Things Fall Apart* which was reviewed in this study. He maintains that, "a mother's supremacy resides in her role as a protector. Just as a child seeks sympathy in his mother's hut, so a man finds refuge in his motherland" (cited in Stratton, 1994:28). The depiction of Mdaluli's daughters is credible in the new dispensation. They behave and speak the language of the times. They take prompt decisions when necessary. When faced with domestic violence, they know exactly where to go for help.

The issue of *ilobolo* is also significant in this text. Cattle are used as a decoy to entice a woman into marriage, as did Chivenga to Hlengiwe. It is further used by men as a means of peace offering. Towards the end of this drama Mdaluli apologises to Chivenga for all wrong things he had done to him. Chivenga accepts his apology, and as a sign of his commitment Mdaluli capitulates:

...Ukuba bewungakashadi nje bese ngizokuganisela enye yamadodakazi ami lana ngikwephulele nelobolo ukuze usale sewuba ngumkhwenyane engizigqajayo ngaye. Phela izandla ziyagezana (p109).

(If you were not already married, I was going to make an offer that one of my daughters should marry you. Furthermore, I was going to give you a discount when paying *ilobolo*, so that you would be a son-in-law that I would be proud of).

The author shows how a traditional Zulu custom has changed over the period of time to become a dangerous tool in the hands of oppressive and abusive men. The question is whether this reflects the reality of females living in the townships of South Africa in the 21st century. The answer is, not in urban areas. It is worth noting that the language used by the author when referring to foreigners as *amakwerekwere* is discriminatory and derogatory, especially because South Africa has experienced violence based on xenophobia not once but on many occasions.

It begs the question whether the author's depiction of women images is reality or idealised. The portrayal of characters such as Londiwe, Khombephi, Nenelezi and Zenyezile, are real. They reflect real life children and behave and react to situations

in a realistic manner. On the other hand, MaMlanduli's character is unreal. *Kudela Owaziyo* does not show a male supremacy shift, instead it depicts men as still being dominant partners in their relationships with women fifteen years after democracy.

5.5.5 Conclusion

The contents of this drama reflects a change from the conventional trend in Zulu literature, which had a setting in a traditional rural community under the authority of a Zulu monarch or chief. For decades literature has had images that Robbins describes as follows:

Images all depend on the woman's supposed relationship with the male. The absent male figure to whose love the young girl aspires, who marries the young wife, fathers the young mother's baby and dies leaving the widow, suggests the extent to which femininity is supposed to exist only in terms of its dependent relationships with the male (2005:55).

Kudela Owaziyo is set in a semi-urban area and some of the characters are educated and skilled. The system of government is democratic with a legislative framework that seeks to protect the rights of all its citizens irrespective of gender, race or religion. However, in spite of all these changes the content seems to have lagged behind; hence an observation that women are still beaten by their husbands, as observed in this drama. Commenting on Achebe's work Stratton remarks that;

despite his critical position, he does not relate the ferocity of masculinity to the surfeit of power that a patriarchal society makes available to men. Hence he does not advocate for the dismantling of the structures of male domination. Instead he advocates for the incorporation into the male personality of qualities traditionally associated with the feminine (Stratton, 1994:37).

The same assertion could be made about the author of this drama. In spite of the brutality of his protagonist, at the end of the story, the author imbues him qualities associated with women, that of asking for forgiveness and peace-offering.

CHAPTER 6: TRANSFORMATION OF THE AFRICAN MALE WRITERS

6.1 Introduction

For the purpose of this chapter the study will revisit the work of two African male authors and two Zulu male authors. This exercise is undertaken with a view to establishing whether any metamorphoses has taken place in their representation of women images.

6.2 Chinua Achebe

6.2.1 *Things Fall Apart* (1958)

Things Fall Apart is a classic novel written by Achebe (1958) before Nigeria was liberated from colonial rule. The summary of this novel is provided in the literature review. Since its publication various authors, both males and females have provided a literary criticism of *Things Fall Apart*. The storyline of the novel centres on Okonkwo who is the protagonist in this novel. The reader is afforded a glimpse of the traditional customs and culture of the Igbo tribe through the people of Umuofia. What has been of concern to many feminists a few decades ago was the question posed by Stratton (1994), “how could things fall apart for whom they were never together?”

Stratton further notes that,

Things Fall Apart was written and published in the years preceding Nigerian independence in 1960, a transitional period when political power was being transferred from colonial rule to a Nigerian male elite. *Things Fall Apart* legitimizes this process whereby women were excluded from post-colonial politics and public affairs through its representation of a pre-colonial Igbo society as governed entirely by men (Stratton, 1994: 27).

Throughout the novel Okonkwo’s prowess as a warrior, wrestler and political leader in Umuofia remains dominant. The use of a male person as a central character facilitates the presentation of the fictional world through a male perspective leading to the exclusion of female insight. Marriage is an expectation in the Igbo community and the fully-grown daughter in her prime is the pride of her family. This is the reason

why Okonkwo persuades his daughter not to marry in exile so that he will benefit from the honour that her marriage will bring. The greatest expectation is that of motherhood that brings the new generation and ensures continuity.

Okonkwo looks down on women, thus he beats his wives. Clearly more women than men in *Things Fall Apart* have been presented as inferior human beings. The few women with privilege and power appear to be the only ones vested with religious authority in the community. Therefore, the novel is said to be inherently masculine and displays ostentatious male strength. One can conclude that *Things Fall Apart* reveals a serious male bias. “Despite his critical stance, Achebe does not relate the brutality of masculinity to the excess power a patriarchal society assigns to males. Hence, what he advocates is not a dismantling of structures of male domination, but the incorporation into the male personality of qualities conventionally associated with the feminine” observes Stratton (1994:37).

6.2.2 Anthills of the Savannah (1987)

The setting of *Anthills of the Savannah* is Kangan, an imaginary country in West Africa, where Sam a military officer- also known as His Excellency, has taken over power through a coup de'tat. The national tragedy is relayed by three friends: Ikem, Chris Oriko and Beatrice. The political crisis in the novel escalates to counter coup de'tats, power games, political assassination, feminist agitation and many other incidents. The political turmoil in the novel stems from class struggles and power play, which are arguably fuelled by cultural materialist imperatives.

Ikem's has a girlfriend, Elewa, who is semi-literate and works as a shop assistant. She is pregnant with his child. Chris' fiancée Beatrice is a well-educated woman, and holds a position of administrator at one of the state offices. Beatrice has known Ikem from childhood. She works for Sam therefore she has links to all the major characters. She observes the government activities and Chris and Ikem's reactions. Beatrice expresses her concerns to Chris and Ikem that their approach to the problems is not the solution simply because they are not connected to the people and the land.

Sam commands Chris to fire Ikem from his position as editor of the National Gazette but Chris refuses. Sam strongly believes that Ikem is involved in the 'protest' staged by the delegates of Abazon. Ikem is fired and soon thereafter he addresses a student group at the University of Bassa. In this gathering Ikem even makes a joke about the regime minting coins with Sam's head on them. This very joke is turned to propaganda against Ikem. He is accused of wanting the president to be killed. Ikem is taken by the state police and charged of treason and conspiracy. He is later shot and killed.

Chris realises how dangerous Sam has become and goes into hiding after using his contacts within the international press to publicise the truth about Ikem's murder. With the assistance of Emmanuel, a student leader, and Abdul, a taxi driver, he is able to leave Bassa and heads for Abazon. Meanwhile the government of the day demands Chris' arrest and further threatens anyone who withholds information about Chris' whereabouts. Whilst travelling by bus, Chris hears the news that Sam has been killed and his regime overthrown in another coup. Whilst still on the bus, Chris witnesses a woman named Adamma being dragged off by a soldier to be raped. Chris rushes to her rescue and the soldier shoots and kills Chris. Emmanuel, Abdul and Adamma return to Bassa to share the news of what has happened with Beatrice and others. Although Beatrice is grief-stricken, she is able to host a naming ceremony for Ikem's child, born after his murder. Men traditionally perform the ceremony, but Beatrice fulfils this role here. She names the child Amaechina, a boy's name which means "May the Path Never Close".

6.2.3 Transformation in the representation of women images by Chinua Achebe

Women, in *Things fall Apart* have no voice and are powerless as indicated in chapter 2. Achebe shows male superiority over females as part of the design of his work. The only women that are afforded some respect by men are those that are imbued with spiritual powers. Achebe has been accused of minimizing the place of women in his novel through the androcentric portrayal of marriage as the enslavement of women and the exploitation of their labour. The wives of the main character

Okonkwo are abused, beaten and intimidated by their husband, who ridicules women as weaklings. When his third wife fails to make his afternoon meal ready at the prescribed time, Okonkwo goes to her hut, questions his other wives, and eventually beats the aberrant spouse (Stratton,1994:26). Acholonu in Azodo makes this observation about Achebe that:

Achebe's earlier works, whether set in the urban or rural environments, the women are invariably made to live, be seen, and appreciated essentially through their husbands, lovers or children. The resultant artistic invisibility, coupled with the disability of inferiorized and stereotyped characterization, is a necessary technique for proving the man's undisputed superiority and masculinity. This conscious marginalization of the womenfolk cannot but result in the creation of women who are more of outsiders than insiders in the complex drama of existence (Azodo, 2012: 44).

Achebe appears to have overlooked the female communal power, in *Things Fall Apart*. Instead he places undue importance on male power and privilege without acknowledging the female counterpart. Okonkwo's wives and mother are kept in the background in order to project Okonkwo's masculinity and prominence. Okonkwo attributes strength and power to men because he comes from a society in which patriarchy encroaches oppressively on every sphere of women's way of life maintains Mezu (2006: 212).

Bicknell cited in Nwagbara (2012:136) observes that, Beatrice, in *Anthills of the Savannah* exemplifies Achebe's commitment to giving meaning to womanhood against the demands of traditional values. Through Beatrice's actions in the novel, it is understandable that she renounces the fact that women are restricted to mere mother type roles in the society Beatrice is Achebe's first central female character in the novel and depicted as an independent woman. According to William (1977: 54), "she is Achebe's ideological and aesthetic contribution to the whole arsenal of debates to rid our world of gender chauvinism- and to make it more accommodating and more humane. Therefore, this change in artistic presentation is a transition from gender inequality to equality, which is an indication of a changing practical consciousness". Beatrice is given the authority to name a new- born child which signals change in the power relations of the Kangan community. Beatrice is more than a character in *Anthills of the Savannah*, she symbolises a new Nigeria and a new world, where gender equality, human rights and socio-economic stability will

hold sway in the society. Her persona in the novel arouses a sense of renewed and liberated womanhood asserts Nwagbara (2012: 151).

6.3 Ngugi wa Thiong'O

6.3.1 A Grain of Wheat (1967)

A Grain Of Wheat is an account of events in a Kenyan village leading up to Kenya's independence. The novel weaves together several stories set during the state of emergency in Kenya's struggle for independence (1952-1959). The title is taken from the Gospel according to St John 12:24. At the beginning of the novel, as independence approaches, Mugo receives several visitors. They persuade him to speak at the *Uhuru* celebrations and become their political leader because he had led a hunger strike whilst in detention.

Gikonyo is madly in love with Mumbi, however, he has a rival named Karanja. Mumbi chooses Gikonyo and they get married. Soon after getting married, Gikonyo is arrested for being a rebel and spends six years in concentration camps. He remains in detention even after he confesses his allegiance to the Movement. The Mau Mau revolutionary movement refers to some Kenyan people, mostly Gikuyu, who fled to the forests and prepared to rid Kenya of the British colonizers and Africans supporting the imperialist project. They refer to themselves as the "Kenyan Land and Freedom Army" and solidified themselves through the practice of pledging which was known as "the oath" (Ongaro, 2004:63). Whilst Gikonyo is detained, Mumbi, in a moment of weakness, sleeps with Karanja. Afterwards she jilts him. Karanja is rejected because he embraced the white government rule. When Gikonyo returns home, he discovers that his wife has had a child by another man, Karanja. This angers Gikonyo, and he refuses to talk about the child or to share a bed with his wife. In order to overcome his anger he throws himself into his work.

Gikonyo's wife, Mumbi had a brother called Kihika who was a rebel fighter from the village; he is regarded as a local hero because he was captured and publicly hanged. Mugo initially denies knowing anything about Kihika's death, but later struggles with guilt and ultimately confesses that he had betrayed Kihika. He also

betrays Karanja by turning him in to the government. Gikonyo, after being hospitalized realises that he needs to start communicating with his wife in an attempt to reconcile.

6.3.2 Devil on the Cross (1982)

The synopsis of this novel was provided in chapter 2 (2.2.2: 27) of this study. Therefore, this section will provide a brief summary. *Devil on the Cross* depicts irony at its best - with a devil on the cross instead of Jesus. Ngugi wrote this work in his own language, *Gikuyu*. The novel opens with a devastated and disillusioned Wariinga who is escaping from modern Kenya. Wariinga is fired after rejecting advances from her boss Kihara. Unfortunately for Wariinga, her boyfriend, John Kimwana jilts her and she finds herself in financial difficulties. She is evicted from her shack because she can no longer afford to pay her rent.

Confronted with all these problems she decides to go to Ilmorog. On her way there she reminisces about her childhood dreams of becoming an engineer. She remembers clearly how her dreams were shattered by the rich old man Waigoka. On her way to the Devil's feast Wariinga meets Gaturia and they fall in love. Gaturia plans on introducing Wariinga to his parents. It turns out that Gaturia's father is the rich old man that impregnated Wariinga. She takes her revenge by killing the old man.

6.3.3 Transformation in the representation of women images by Ngugi wa Thiong'O

The study attempts to trace the notable development in Ngugi's strategies of women empowerment in the two novels. Ngugi shares the belief that change is a gradual process and needs long-term tactics. It is also obvious that African women have often been subjected to negative stereotypes and their contributions have been neglected or even omitted. The exclusion of females from social settings and their being denied rightful opportunities to stand up for themselves in their communities also "gives substance to the marginalization of females from important decision making processes in their communities and families" observes Peter (2010: 203).

In *A Grain of Wheat*, the Mau Mau movement include both men and women. Women freedom fighters make up a small percentage of the total movement. Gender inequality becomes evident when one considers that Gikuyu women had very limited access to decision making during the Mau Mau era. This small percentage hence seems a considerable achievement for women to leave their home and take up the struggle. Wangu Makeri is portrayed as a woman who was powerful since she ruled over a large section of the population in Muranga. Her reign has a sad and unusual ending; she dances naked in the moonlight. Thereafter she is removed from the throne and becomes the last of the great Gikuyu female leaders.

Wanjiku, is the mother of Mumbi, Kihika and Kariuki. She is portrayed as a woman with low morals. She is known for prostituting her beautiful girls. Wanjiku keeps a regular supply of food, so that when men arrived she excused herself and discreetly leaves the hut to “*give them food*,” she would tell Mumbi (Ngugi wa Thiong’O, 1967:73).

Mrs Margery Thompson was an unfaithfull wife that cheated on her husband from time to time. She is used by the author to show that lust transcends race and status when she flirts with Karanja.

Mumbi represents the traditional rural women of Kenya. She brings happiness to Gikonyo’s mother. She finds a daughter in Mumbi with whom, even without the medium of speech, she shares a woman’s joys and troubles. “The two go to shamba (farming plot in Swahili is called ‘shamba’) together, they fetched water from the river in turns and cook in the same pot” (Ngugi wa Thiong’O, 1967:95).

The author provides gruesome details of Gikonyo’s feelings after his discovery that his wife Mumbi had a child with another man. Since he considers Mumbi as his own property, he states:

The woman who had sighed under Karanja’s sweating body could not live. He would kill her. He would strangle her until she gasps for mercy, with saliva flowing out of her mouth and her eyes bobbed out (Ngugi wa Thiong’O, 1967:114).

Because of her brother’s activism in politics, Mumbi finds herself also embroiled in the politics of the day. However, she is neither actively involved in the struggle against colonial oppression nor involved in the decision-making within the Party. Like

many other male characters in male authored novels, when Gikonyo is angered by Mumbi, he calls her a “whore” (Ngugi wa Thiong’O, 1967:159).

Many women went to the forest voluntarily. The notion of associating women with food often arises when one looks at one of the tasks of those who remained behind in the villages, as they supported the movement by secretly transporting weapons and food to the fighters. “To minimize any distractions Mau Mau women were banned from having sexual relationships and /or engage in prostitution with the enemy. They could only flirt with the enemy for the purposes of gathering vital information when required to do so” notes Kanogo (1987:145).

The issue of women objectification rises to the fore with this conditional clause. In spite of the above, Ngugi does acknowledge these women and celebrates their limitless sacrifices and their contributions to the struggle for freedom and the liberation of Kenya. Ngugi’s belief is that, especially in *A Grain of Wheat*, heroic women provided invisible support to the movement. He wants to demonstrate that if African women had not been such an inner force, Kenya would have never achieved her independence.

In *Devil on the Cross*, Ngugi makes a conscious effort to portray women as strong, independent human beings. Hence Wariinga has become a figure of female activism against post-colonial patriarchy. She belongs to that outstanding breed of Ngugi’s women, that Palmer describes as “fearless, resilient, resourceful and resolute” (1979: 6). Initially Wariinga is depicted as an object that is abused by men. Wariinga makes a life changing decision never to sell her soul to the Devil for money and never again to be owned by another man. She is no longer “a woman in chains.” She actually liberates herself and her people from the ghost of colonialism.

Wariinga is also a victim of her culture which indoctrinated her in the belief that as a woman she is worthless. Her neo-colonial culture causes her to be alienated as she is convinced that her appearance is the source of all her wretchedness. Though beautiful, Wariinga still believes that as a Black woman she is not beautiful enough because she is dark. According Sadek (2014:178) “she has been listening to the voice of the colonizer and is deluded by his definition of beauty. Hence she applies Ambi cream on her face in order to bleach her dark skin, so that she can look like the

colonizers". Her past experience at the hands of inconsiderate men has also turned her to a pessimistic person.

Wariinga begins to study as a secretary and then continues with her studies until she obtains a degree from the technicon as a mechanic. She becomes a representative of the working-class women in their tireless search for recognition in the society. Ngugi creates Wariinga to unveil his understanding of the predicament of females in a post-independence state. Wariinga has broken the common misunderstanding about women by patriarchal societies who believe that women's jobs are limited to housework. "The accomplishment of her life ambition to train as a mechanic goes a long way to illustrate how hard the disadvantaged in the society have worked to improve their condition, in spite of the vicious attempts by males to denigrate them" observes Uwasomba (2006:103).

6.4 B. P. Maphumulo

6.4.1 Kudela Owaziyo (2008)

The last play to be analysed was Maphumulo's *Kudela Owaziyo* (2009). The observations discussed in the previous chapter reveal that, although the play was published in the post-Apartheid era, gender inequalities were identified in the text. Women are depicted as inferior beings that are beaten by men as and when they wished; and they are also voiceless on domestic matters as well as on economic issues. They are also portrayed as being dependent on men. MaMlanduli and her daughters are dependent on Mdaluli and Hlengiwe is dependent on Chivenga.

6.4.2 Ngifuneni Emlotheni (2015)

Six years later Maphumulo has written another play entitled, *Ngifuneni Emlotheni* (2015). The title of this play, literally translated means "Look for me from the ashes". The brief summary of the drama is as follows: The drama is set in the rural area of Eshowe. The protagonist is Mgudluzi Msomi who lives with his mother and his daughter Thobekile. Thobekile is fourteen years old and she is in Grade 10 at Mhlakaza Secondary School. Mgudluzi is an unemployed and troublesome man at his home. His mother is referred to as *Gogo* in the narrative which means

grandmother in Zulu. The play starts when Mgudluzi plans with a friend, Ngoloyi, to abduct Thobekile, his daughter. The plot was for Ngoloyi to abduct her from school so that it looks like he was practising the *ukuthwala* custom of the Zulu nation. The word *ukuthwala* has many meanings. In this play *ukuthwala* refers to the act of abducting a school girl with the hope of forcing the marriage negotiation process. This practice was done when it is proving difficult to do so under normal circumstances.

Nkosi and Wassermann explain that,

in a crude sense this is done by the actual carrying away of a young woman by a group of young men to the house of a young man who aims to marry her. In most cases during the process of *ukuthwala* the prospective husband is there with a group of his peers to identify the woman he loves and whom he intends to carry away with marriage as the intention. Sometimes he is not there on the day of *ukuthwala* but had already pointed her out to his peers, or if the woman is from the local area, she is already known (Nkosi, M & WassermannJ.2014:133).

It is crucial to highlight that *ukuthwala* is not something new or foreign to the Zulu culture, but it is an old practice of the Zulu nation. In some instances before *ukuthwala* is executed the man must have courted the woman and failed. In other instances a woman is forcefully taken away from her home without having met the prospective husband she is going to marry. Normally intensive research about the targeted woman is carried out by the prospective husband and relatives. The purpose of this research is to gain information about the targeted woman; for example, it has to be known how often and when she goes out, be it to the shop, to the river, to the fields or to school in order to locate her easily. Nkosi and Wassermann further maintains that,

Knowledge about her friends is also equally important as this works in the prospective husband's favour in conniving with her friends and even with her sisters who would take her out of the home for her to be carried away without her knowledge. Furthermore, a prospective husband does so having coerced his own family. The preparations include a detailed briefing of what will be done by his parents and sisters when the "bride to be" arrives at his home as there are rituals to be performed in welcoming the "bride to be". None of the rituals can be performed without the prior approval of the family (Nkosi, M & WassermannJ.2014:133).

Whilst in class, Bawelile, the Zulu teacher, is removed by Ngoloyi at gunpoint and he then abducts Thobekile. In return for this successful abduction Ngoloyi pays Mgudluzi thirteen cattle as ilobolo. Gogo reports the matter to the police. The police investigation ensues. Thobekile is driven by her abductor's home in Gauteng. At Ngoloyi's home she meets his mother MaSkhosana. Thobekile is very rude to both Ngoloyi and his mother. When Ngoloyi demands his conjugal rights from Thobekile, she fights back and escapes from the Nhlapho household. Unfortunately for Mgudluzi all the lobolo cattle die. Thereafter he is apprehended by the police and charged for planning and colluding with the abductor of his own daughter. Ngoloyi, Bawelile, Gogo and the school principal all become state witnesses against the accused Mgudluzi. Mgudluzi is sentenced to thirty years in jail. Thobekile returns home and throws a big thanks-giving party, thanking God for her academic achievements and escape.

6.4.2.1 Portrayal of women images in Ngifuneni Emlotheni (2015)

Thobekile is the heroine in this play. Initially she is depicted as a rural girl who is naïve. The author tries to remove her from the dungeons of poverty and ignorance to being a successful woman of the twenty first century.

She is abducted from school by a stranger. However, along the way to Gauteng the author allows her to engage with her abductor like people that have met before this incident. She is also portrayed as a very rude and rebellious woman. She is very rude to MaSkhosana, Ngoloyi's mother. This kind of behaviour is not in line with the Zulu culture where children are expected to respect elderly people irrespective of the circumstances. The language that she uses when addressing MaSkhosana is not that of a rural school-going child. She is an educated girl who fully understands her constitutional rights; however, she remains voiceless throughout the play. When she is left at home with Ngoloyi's mother, she does not scream for help nor does she make an attempt to escape like an abducted person would usually do.

Bawelile is depicted as a dedicated teacher. She is a weak character that cries whenever faced with a challenging situation. She cried when she was threatened by Ngoloyi with a gun. She also cried when the principal invited her to a meeting in order to discuss rationalisation and redeployment issues within the school.

Bawelile is not a convincing character. The author's portrayal of Bawelile is idealised. She is made to do things that do not happen in real-life. After the abduction incident, her reaction when visiting Gogo is typical; however, beyond that visit she behaves in an unrealistic manner. She develops an unusual relationship with Gogo that can be described as ideal, namely taking Gogo to the park. Gogo is depicted as a strict parent with strong family values. She is a candid character. She challenges her son on matters relating to her granddaughter's education. Gogo is an enlightened woman of the 21st century. Her son Mgudluzi turns a deaf ear to her advice. She is also portrayed as a fearless and decisive woman. After suspecting her son's involvement in the abduction of her granddaughter she alerts the law enforcement agencies. In the Nhlapho family MaSikhosana is depicted as a helpless and silenced woman. She looks on helplessly as her son brings home a school-girl that he introduces as his wife. When Thobekile addresses her rudely, she opts to report her to Ngoloyi and threatens to leave her home.

6.4.3 Transformation in representation of women images by B.P. Maphumulo

The setting in the two plays is in the same area of Mandeni. Both texts are written after South Africa's independence. The author still portrays women as inferior characters that are beaten by men in both plays. What happens to MaMlanduli in *Kudela Owaziyo* also happens to Thobekile in *Ngifuneni Emlotheni*. Male domination in Maphumulo's literary texts transcends time, place and age. Physical abuse against the weaker sex seems to be theme that runs through his two plays. Bawelile is confronted by a man at gunpoint within the school premises.

Some of his women characters are coerced by men into having sexual intercourse that borders on rape. MaMlanduli was beaten up by her husband Mdaluli in *Kudela Owaziyo* (2009) for refusing to be raped. Thobekile fights desperately against Ngoloyi who demands conjugal rights after paying lobolo cows to Mgudluzi in *Ngifuneni Emlotheni* (2015). Women repeatedly find themselves in the knuckles of men in Maphumulo's plays.

Paying the bride price, *ilobolo*, was and still is one of the traditional customs of the Zulu nation. The purpose of this practice has been clearly explained by many Zulu

writers for decades, including Gumede. It was and is paid by man who intends to marry a particular woman. The process of paying *ilobolo* is not a one-day event. The groom, after dating a woman for an unprescribed period may decide to marry his fiancé. There is usually a mutual agreement between the two parties to get married. It is only then that the groom's family selects reputable members of the family and sends them to go to the bride's family for *ilobolo* negotiation. The representatives of the groom's family are called *abakhongi*. Through the process of negotiations, a good relationship then develops between the two families. During the pre-colonial and even post-colonial period cows were paid as *ilobolo*. With the change of time and change of lifestyle money is now paid instead of cattle.

Beautiful as this practice was, it gradually became a means of acquiring wealth by greedy fathers. *Ilobolo* became a dangerous tool of abuse in the hands of male dominated societies. Thus, *ilobolo* is a theme that runs through in many African as well as Zulu literary texts. Maphumulo's male characters see women as objects. To them *ilobolo* is seen as a token of appreciation that is exchanged amongst men, when a man has done well. Hence Mdaluli, in *Kudela Owaziyo* after reconciling with Chivenga, tells him that, if he was not married, he would have given him one of his daughters. Mgudluzi, in *Ngifuneni Emlotheni*, hands over his daughter on a platter to a stranger, so that the abductor can pay him *ilobolo*.

Clearly there is no noticeable change in the representation of women in both plays written by Maphumulo. He gives his female characters understanding of their rights and the law but they are still entrapped in the patriarchal system. He empowers his female characters with knowledge of the verses in the Holy bible. However, in both plays he portrays his women characters as victims; MaMlanduli and her daughters, in *Kudela Owaziyo* are victims of domestic violence; his heroine, Thobekile, is herself a victim of physical abuse in *Ngifuneni Emlotheni*. He refuses his female characters financial freedom and independence in both dramas with an exception of Thobekile. MaMlanduli is financially dependent on Mdaluli; Hlengiwe is also financially dependent on Chivenga; Gogo is also financially dependent on her son Mgudluzi. The important question is when are Maphumulo's women characters going to be financially independent and free from being subjugated under male power and authority. The principal of Mhlakaza secondary school, in the author's mind, could not have been a woman, he had to be man. The author wrote this play with the hope

that it would be prescribed as a literature material in schools. The big question is what messages are we sending to our growing children?

6.5 L. Molefe

6.5.1 Isitolo Esasingasebhange (1988)

Isitolo Esasingasebhange is a novel written by Molefe before *Ngiwafunge Amabomvu*. The meaning of the title of this novel literally translated means- 'a shop next to the bank'. The novel was published by Molefe during the apartheid era in South Africa. The novel's setting is in the urban area, Pietermaritzburg. The story is about a gang that committed a series of crimes ranging from car hijacking, robbing banks to murder. The gang is comprised of ten men and two women. The gang's name is *amaHarangu* and its leader is a male, named Yocwatha. The two ladies that are members of the gang are Khosi and Susan. This gang is notorious for its advanced criminal tactics in and around Durban. The storyline starts with the gang having identified its target in Pietermaritzburg, a supermarket located next to the bank. This supermarket belonged to the Bhengu family. Khosi is delegated by the leader, to seek employment at Bhengu's shop. She uses her attractive and beautiful body to lure Sandile, a security guard of the shop. Sandile falls in love with her at the very first encounter and promises to persuade Mr Bhengu to employ Khosi. MaMNguni, is Bhengu's wife. She assists her husband in managing their supermarket. However, she is in hospital to deliver their second baby. Her absence created a vacancy that is then filled by Khosi. The employment of Khosi at the shop enabled the gang members access to all information in connection with the business and the Bhengu family.

Mr Thela, who is Bhengu's neighbour, is held hostage in one of the rooms of his own house. After securing the job, Khosi organises a plan for Sandile's abduction and he is also sent to Thela's house. Bhengu is approached by a member of the gang with a proposition to rent his shop for five months. He is coerced to sign all legal documents for the lease and then the gang takes over the shop. After taking over ownership of the shop, Bhengu is also abducted. Another project that Yocwatha, initiates is that of robbing the bank next to Bhengu's shop. That is done by digging a very deep hole that leads into the bank. Whilst busy on that project, they also work out a strategy of

stealing stock from the local wholesale store. The wholesaler notices the loss in stock. He then involves the police. Thereafter the police do their own investigation which culminated with a chase of robbers. Finally, they are all apprehended and imprisoned. Khosi and Susan are full participants in all these projects.

6.5.2 Ngiwafunge Amabomvu (1991)

Ngiwafunge Amabomvu (1991) is a drama that is one of the selected literary texts that was analysed in chapter five. Its setting is in the rural areas of KwaZulu Natal under the king of the Ngubane tribe. The observation made was that Molefe represented her women as weak, voiceless, helpless and as inferior beings. The context of the drama and the period allowed things that are in the content of this play. At this stage of South African history, the country was still under colonial rulers although Nelson Mandela, the struggle and liberation icon was released, however, the country was not yet liberated from its colonial masters. The storyline is about the twin-girls that are forced to marry the king of amaBomvu. This was a well-known and acceptable practice amongst the patriarchal Zulu tribes, for the king to choose his wives from his own tribe. The king's wish was law. As mentioned in the summary of this play, in chapter 5, one of the twin-sisters Thulisile is totally against the idea of being forced to marry the king.

Molefe's women in *Ngiwafunge Amabomvu* are uneducated and are also dependent on men. Men make decisions which influence and shape the lives of women without collaborating. This is evident in the portrayal of Thulisile and Thulile; again when Thulisile's child is born, men are all around her deciding on naming the child and performing rituals without consulting her. In the author's mind women had no rights whatsoever. In this play women are viewed as flowers that are supposed to adorn the royal house of *amaBomvu*.

6.5.2.1 Portrayal of women images in *Isitolo Esasingasebhange*

In *Isitolo Esasingasebhange* women are portrayed negatively. They are depicted as thieves, liars and untrustworthy people. This novel follows the trend of portraying urban women in particular, as prostitutes who are ready to sleep with any men as

long as they can get what they want; which can be money or information. In this novel we see women being used as objects by male characters. Khosi, is a very pretty and attractive woman. She is used to lure whichever man she comes into contact with, so that the gang members can get inside information and access.

MaMnguni is a minor character. She is stuck in hospital in Durban where she will deliver her baby. In spite of the minor role she plays in the whole story, she is also portrayed negatively. The *amaHarangu* are able to hold Thela hostage in his own house without anyone noticing, because he did not have a good relationship with his neighbor, the Bhengu family. The relationship between the two neighbours, Bhengus and Thelas had been spoilt by MaMnguni.

Susan is one of the *amaHarangu*. She, like Khosi, is used by her gang leader as an object. When they wanted to gain access to the Bhengu household, she was used. She is the one that was responsible for kidnapping Selina, Bhengu's maid. The two women are also portrayed as brave women. When faced with a challenging situation they do not hesitate to pull a gun. The stereotype about urban women runs through the novel. Hence Sandile had this to say about women in urban areas:

UKhosi intombi enhle enenhliziyo embi kanje! Kanti kuliqiniso kangaka ukuthi ikhiwane elihle ligcwala izibungu! (Molefe:26)

(Khosi is such a beautiful woman with a "bad heart". It is true that a beautiful fig is usually full worms).

6.5.3 Transformation in representation of women images by L. Molefe

There is no identifiable and significant change in the way Molefe depicts his women images in the two books. The only difference is the setting. The play being set in the rural area whilst the novel setting is urban.

Women in *Ngiwafunge AmaBomvu* are voiceless as they are exchanged from one man to the other, as it happened to the Majola twin-girls Thulisile and Thulile. In *Isitolo Esasingasebhange* Khosi and Susan take instructions from their male boss Yocwatha. The two women are reduced to commodities. Khosi and Susan brave as they are portrayed, however, they do not take decisions about the operations of *amaHarangu*. In *Ngiwafunge Amabomvu* the twin-girls are also handed to the king by their own father in exchange for cows. In *Isitolo Esasingasebhange* Khosi is the

gang leader's girlfriend. One would expect her to be protected by him or rather to enjoy special privileges instead she is prostituted by the man that claims to love her.

Majola's wife in *Ngiwafunge Amabomvu* is as helpless as Selina and MaMguni are in *Isitolo Esasingasebhange*. The changes in the constitution of South Africa have had no impact in the literary works of Molefe. Clearly neither time nor space changes how Molefe portrays his women characters.

6.6 Conclusion

The African authors are committed to change. In their latest works both Achebe and Ngugi have women as their heroines. The strength of their women characters is portrayed through a man's lens; therefore Wariinga has to carry a gun and shoot to kill to prove her strength. Being a secretary is a job that is often associated with women, now to confirm the change and the positive image accorded women by Ngugi, Wariinga furthers her studies and qualifies as a mechanical engineer. Beatrice, on the other hand, is given the power of naming which is a ceremony that is hosted and conducted by men. This illustrates that African male writers are slowly evolving. Molefe is not making observable changes in his portrayal of women images. Maphumulo's work could be defined, using Kurt Lewin's three stages of change, as being at the unfreezing stage. The next chapter will give an overall findings of the study.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

Leininger (1994) advocates the idea that after completing a study the researcher should be expected to synthesise, organise, interpret and provide creative formulation of the findings from the data gathered in order to arrive at a convincing conclusion. The aim of this chapter is, thus two- pronged. Firstly, it will provide general observations by summarising some shared aspects that address the key questions asked in the study in respect of the selected texts. These are contained in the previous chapters. It will also bring to a coherent whole what was established in subsequent chapters. This will be accomplished by commenting on the alignment of the study's theoretical framework and methodology as a way of attesting to how different aspects of the study have brought the study to its closure. Secondly recommendations are offered as, in the process of undertaking this study limitations became evident.

7.2 General Observation

In all the books selected for this study there was no instance when there was, a woman who was not portrayed as inferior, helpless, voiceless and or foolish. This idea was present in all four selected literary texts. This trend can be traced back to the past centuries. Many of the traditionally endorsed ways of representing women in literature seem to be not only anti-feminist but also anti-female. This tendency appears to be driven by an aversion to women, placing them as the root of all evil. According to Ruthven (1984:83), "different cultures and different religions have their own myths to confirm this notion about women. In the pagan tradition it was Pandora who opened the box from which all the world's evil emerged. In the Christian religion, paradise was lost because Eve tempted Adam". To oppose this negative sentiment, the Elizabethan poet Emilia Lanier was to point out that Jesus Christ was "begotten of a woman, borne of a woman, nourished of a woman, obedient to a woman, healed women, pardoned women, comforted women" (ibid.).

Gender inequalities are a reality that is present in all the selected works written by male authors. Women images are represented as helpless victims who cannot break away from the shackles of male domination. They are depicted as people who seem to understand the language that preludes their physical abuse. Words such as 'mfazi' are a warning for what will follow. The abuse ranges from verbal abuse, in the form of insults to physical abuse namely slapping the face or at times being whipped. Women-battering is a common theme in isiZulu literary texts. Physical abuse seems to know no boundaries where women are concerned; its victims are not only uneducated but also educated women. In *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi*, a novel written during the apartheid era, women characters are beaten by male characters. Manamuza beats his wife KaMemunce, an old woman and also beats his daughters. In the same novel Masovenyeza beats his wives. The majority of the women characters in *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi* are rural and uneducated. In *Ngiwafunge Amabomvu*, a drama written prior to 1994, women are beaten and tied with a rope for being disobedient to the king. Women characters are portrayed as rural and uneducated. All women characters, in *Ababulali Benyathi*, are educated. Being a post-apartheid work, one would think the approach would be different since the buzz word in the country was 'democracy'. In spite of the socio-political changes that were taking place in the country, the author presents a character like MaShezi who experiences abuse at the hands of her husband, Duma.

In the drama, *Kudela Owaziyo*, also written after 1994 and set in a semi-urban area, female characters such as Londiwe are educated. In spite of her high level of education, she and her sisters, together with their mother, become victims of physical abuse. Domestic violence in the selected isiZulu literary texts transcends time and space. Women were beaten up during the apartheid and even post-apartheid period. Thus it may be argued that literature as a mirror of society should reflect characters that are convincing and authentic and that a reader can identify with or aspire to be like. It is important to note that for MaMlanduli and, Bajwayele, Masovenyeza's wives, Thulisile, MaShezi and kaMemunce shedding tears appears to be an obvious means of sublimating their dependence existence to male power. According to Tembo, "major female characters leave the stage only after the patriarchal society sees their 'breaking point'. This appears to be a premeditated

narrative strategy employed by the author to augment the idea of female submission in the text because in crying, nobody says anything” (Tembo, 2013: 118). This view held by Tembo is evident throughout the literary texts dealt with in this study.

Ilobolo (bride price) remains a contentious issue in the Zulu culture and literature produced by this society. It is a traditional practice that has been abused by greedy fathers as their self-enrichment tool. This was evident in the analysis of *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi* and *Ngiwafunge Ambomvu*. In both plays, fathers are driven by the pursuit of self-enrichment and status in the community to marry off their daughters to the highest bidder. In the Zulu culture being an *induna*, the chief’s right hand man was a senior position that all men aspired to. A man could be promoted to this position because of his bravery during the war or because of his riches determined by the number of cattle he owned. It also entitled him to be paid more cattle as *ilobolo* when his daughters got married. All these factors put together further perpetuated greed and violence against women within households. As a result of this high price paid by the husband-to-be, some unscrupulous husbands gained a sense of ownership and authority over their wives.

What is worth observing is that in all four selected texts men do not listen to women, thus rendering them voiceless. In *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi* Manamuza does not listen to his wife, kaMemunce’s advice on Bajwayele’s marriage issue and does not listen to Bajwayele herself. In *Ngiwafunge Amabomvu* Zaba does not listen to his own mother. The chief, Ngubane, himself, is not impressed by Thulisile’s quest for the truth but is extremely impressed by Zaba’s bravery. In *Ababulali Benyathi* Duma does not listen to his wife, MaShezi’s advice, but instead allows himself to be misled by Mbandlwa, his secretary, because he is a man. During a reconciliation meeting the platform to address the community is not given to at least one of the two women responsible for bringing peace about but it is the Rev Masongolo who gets given the platform; for the simple reason that he is a man. Mdaluli, in *Kudela Owaziyo*, also does not listen to the advice given to him by his wife, MaMlanduli nor his daughters Londiwe, Khombephi and Nenelezi. Literary works irrefutably contain features which can only be labelled misogynist in nature. Ruthven (1984:84) questions the reasoning behind literature that presently still contain misogynistic features,

especially in a period that is not dominated by an expressivist view of writing as an outburst of the writer's personal opinions.

Gender stereotypes were observable in the selected literary texts. Female characters were portrayed as rebellious, gold-diggers, foolish and prostitutes. Bajwayele, the heroine of *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi*, and her mother are portrayed as rebellious women. Stupidity is also evident in the portrayal of Masovenyeza's wives who had so much accepted as a norm, their physical abuse by their husband with a shambok, that was given a name *Sabisabafazi* (Scare women).

Thulisile, in *Ngiwafunge Amabomvu*, is also depicted as a rebellious woman who cheats on the chief. MaShezi in *Ababulali Benyathi* is also portrayed as a rebellious woman and as a prostitute from KwaMashu. In *Kudela Owaziyo*, Londiwe is depicted as a rebellious woman that challenges a man, her father, in a manner that is unacceptable even to her mother. In the same drama Hlengiwe is presented as a gold digger and prostitute, who would do anything to get money even if it means marrying a man she does not love. MaMlanduli is portrayed as a stupid woman who would rather sell her own children in order to gain favour with her husband.

Bryson (2003:159) asserts that, "many recent writers have also drawn on postmodernist ideas to argue not simply that manmade knowledge is incomplete because it excludes women, but that *any* attempt to establish universal principles and objective knowledge is inherently misguided and incapable of realization". In line with the above argument one can conclude that the act of writing can never be objective. Hence there is no objective reality in literature, and writers frame "reality" with their own interpretation of the context in life.

7.3 Specific Observation

One of the aims of the study was to investigate whether literature provides convincing or idealised images of women. Ruthven believes that:

to study the images of women in a patriarchal society is to engage unavoidably in a paradoxical purpose. On the one hand, there is the desire to expose the oppressive nature of stereotypical representations which, transformed into role-models, offer an alarming limited view of what a woman can expect of life. On the other hand, there is the hope that by providing opportunities for thinking about women, and by comparing

how they have been represented with how they ought to be, women's self-awareness will be elevated by the process known as consciousness-raising (Ruthven, 1984:70).

Misrepresentation of women has a history that dates far back. The powerlessness and subservient posture of the woman in African literature brings to mind Zulu Sofola's (cited in Ojukwu) contention that:

The first damage was done when the female lines of authority and socio-political power were destroyed and completely eliminated by the foreign European/Arabian male centred systems of authority and governance. That was the first death blow to our psyche and the beginning of de-womanization of African womanhood...She became and remained only an extension of her husband, as was/is the case in the western world, and a mere shadow as in Arab culture. Consequently, she developed an incurable dependence and inferiority complex...Gradually, she grew to be irrelevant, ineffective, redundant, and dull, good only as an ornament, a wall flower-if allowed to be by her egocentric almighty husband (Ojukwu, 2012:286).

Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi, *Ngiwafunge Amabomvu* and *Ababulali Benyathi* provided realistic images of women living during that time in South African history. The portrayal of women also matches the context of both the novel and the drama. "The usual criticism from those who study images of women is that women tend to be conceived of only in terms of their relation to men, and the point is made as if this were surprising in a literature appreciated by heterosexual society" (Ruthven, 1984:72). Ngubane, Molefe and Mngadi, like Achebe have tried to tell the truth using "systematic and publicly verifiable" data such as the historical fact of colonization, the realities of African socio-cultural institutions, sexist proverbs and sayings to interpose the story (Chukwuma, 2013: 38). Their portrayal of women images also reflects the South African reality.

The lives of the majority of women, especially in the rural areas in South Africa have not changed. The question is why do the likes of Masovenyeza's and Mdaluli's beat their wives and mothers of their children and render them voiceless? The answer lies between dependency and muscular brute force. Normative values dictate subservience of the female especially in the home environment. Even the financial and material gains of the wife, in some patriarchal societies, belong to the husband and can be disposed of at will.

The second pertinent question is: Does the portrayal of women by male writers reflect the changing social and political order? Zulu male authors in the selected texts showed that they are still trapped in the thematic style of writing that predominantly stresses the significance of *ilobolo* and its blind interpretation. Women become commodities by virtue of having been paid for. These two themes run across all the selected texts including those written post 1994. The tradition-based novels like *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi* and *Ngiwafunge Amabomvu* portray woman as pathetically down-trodden, voiceless and powerless. A woman is viewed as property and maltreated for no reason. Chukukere (in Ojukwu, 2012:286) maintains that the man is the woman's lord. MaNgema and MaShezi in *Ababulali Benyathi* confirm Chukukere's (in Ojukwu, 2012:286) assertion that "Indeed no matter the level of education, relations between the husband and wife are based on an unequal asymmetrical power relation in which the woman expects orders from a man and gives total submission in return. The man's privilege is to command his wife that occasionally may lead to physical abuse". In studying *Kudela Owaziyo*, the author Maphumulo has used some of his female characters, namely Londiwe and her sisters, as signposts in the metamorphosis of South Africa. Mdaluli's daughters are depicted as knowledgeable women who have a potential of becoming financially autonomous and thus liberated women. However, despite their education and in-depth understanding of their rights, they are still voiceless at home and find themselves entrapped by the patriarchal system in which their mother is trapped. Fubara rightly states that, "each stage of the woman's shifting status becomes a pointer to the changes of the political history of that particular country" (2012:108). Women images in *Kudela Owaziyo* are pointers of changes in South Africa's political history. Ruthven maintains that:

Hypothetically, of course, there is no reason why research into images of women in literature should not facilitate our understanding of literary practices by supplementing earlier studies of those reductionist traditions which streamline human beings into types (or stereotypes) capable of being manipulated for a great variety of literary effects ranging from absurd to the tragic (Ruthven, 1984:72).

South Africa is a democratic country, but when it comes to people's mindset shift one observes that there has not been any drastic changes. This is evident in the works of authors who still depict women in literature as if they were still bound to patriarchal shackles. This might be due to cultural practices that are resistant to change. In

Ababulali Benyathi and *Kudela Owaziyo*, for example, it appears that the inability to change and adapt prevents self, community, and cultural progression. As argued by Wingard (cited in Chukwuma, 2012:308) that, “it is difficult to exonerate tradition when one’s cultural practices are as destructive as the discrimination inflicted by an earlier regime”.

The aim of the study was to investigate whether there have been male supremacy shifts subsequent to South Africa’s proclamation of democracy in 1994. If so how have Zulu literary texts contributed to the (re) shaping of mentality which promotes tolerance, gender equality and justice? If not, how does this study hope to make a meaningful contribution? It would appear that there has not been observable male supremacy shifts post 1994. In the two plays published a decade after democracy women are still depicted as voiceless as they were prior 1994. The power struggle between males and females in literature is accurately expressed by Okereke (in Azodo,2012). In this essay she scrutinizes male-female relationship in two works by Chinua Achebe; *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* that are based on the traditional Igbo society. These are relevant since gender relations are also a major concern in this study. In her argument Okereke asserts that:

In their relationship with their husbands, the women are shown to be constantly on the defensive while their husbands are on the offensive. The men’s constant wrangling over their wives’ shortcomings in everything has a negative impact on women It puts women eternally on the defensive either justifying their actions or trying to absolve themselves. This is evident in the relationship between Okonkwo and his wives in TFA [Things Fall Apart] and that between Ezeulu and his wives in Arrow of God. This leads to constant tension in everybody around, including children, when the man of the house is angry and screams accusations and insults on his wives. Such behaviour is psychologically corroding for the woman. She is automatically intimidated by the man who in turn feels masculine in his bullying attitude, from the manner of communication of the partners. Achebe exhibits the marital relationship to be the power structure within which the man is seen as the superior, the master and the woman as the inferior, the servant, who not only serves the man but is also afraid of his tantrums (cited in Azodo,2012:43)

The scenario described above resonates in *Uvalo lwezinhlonzi* where women are terrified by men’s tantrums. The relationship between Manamuza and his wife as well as Masovenyeza and his wives attest to what what Okereke says above. In fact in *Ababulali Benyathi* as well as *Kudela Owaziyo* the relationship between Duma and his wife and Mdaluli and his wife respectively also echoes Okereke’s words.

Clearly, more women than men, in the selected isiZulu literary texts, have been presented as inferior human beings. All four of the selected literary texts do not contribute towards reshaping the mentality which promotes tolerance, gender equality and justice. *Kudela Owaziyo* stands out as being retrogressive as far as tolerance is concerned. The author uses a discriminatory and derogative word *isikwerekwere* throughout the book to refer to the language spoken by foreign nationals; a word that endorses xenophobia. Gender equality still remains a dream that all women in Africa aspire to. Rose Acholonu (in Diala-Ogamba) advocates that, “feminism should be optimistic and enthusiastic in its recognition of the symbiotic relationship between the genders as well as the appreciation of the woman’s potential growth and development which has to be harnessed and nurtured for the benefit of the family, and the society at large”(Diala-Ogamba, 2012: 56).

This study has exposed gender inequalities that were inherent in patriarchal societies and the influence it had on literature, especially authored by males. With this in-depth examination of women images in isiZulu literary texts it is hoped that authors and scholars will in future make a conscious effort to portray women positively for the benefit of the country. It was highlighted earlier in this study that women are the nurturers of the nation, so if they are portrayed negatively in literature and in media, as gossipers, foolish, prostitutes and the likes, that will continue to have a negative impact on the young women who are the mothers of future generations.

Another important question that this study sought to answer was whether post-apartheid literary production delineate ‘new woman’ for the new South African society. Inherent in this question are the preferred attributes of the ‘new woman’. A brief historical background will shed light on what is meant by this term. Since the 1970s, the interest in the ‘new woman’ has flourished, with numerous attempts to capture her complex nature and continue the lively debate that raged in the last decade of the 19th century. According to Mendes,

The ‘new woman’ concept surfaced during the time of great social change. During this period notions about sexuality and gender had become complex. The rationale behind this complexity was increased awareness of homosexuality, and the rising number of women who were finally making their voices heard. There have been

arguments about when the idea of 'new woman' was born and the general consensus is that it was born in the 19th century (Mendes, 2013:4).

The new woman concept addressed a number of contentious issues, including marriage, maternity and education for women. The 'new woman' was a new concept in both fiction and in the periodicals. Mendes (2013:4) further asserts that, "without warning she suddenly appeared on the scene of man's activities, as a new creation. The 'new woman' then started demanding a stake in the struggles, the responsibilities and the honours of the world, in which, until then she had been a insignificant person". In this sense, do post-apartheid literary productions define the concept of a 'new woman' for the new South African society? If one assesses the two plays under scrutiny, namely; *Ababulali Benyathi* and *Kudela Owaziyo*, which are plays produced at least fourteen years after the establishment of a democratic government in South Africa, the answer is 'No'. After the analytical study conducted it appears that our literature has not started to delineate a 'new woman'. South Africa has powerful women such as Advocate Thuli Madonsela, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, and Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka who occupy senior positions in government and who represent the country internationally. The slow transformation in the literary canon confirms that challenge within the literary tradition also needs redress.

Equally, the concept of a 'transformed man' should not be neglected while resolving the question of a 'new woman'. What does it mean in relation to post-apartheid literary trajectory? One would not be able to answer this question unless one knows its meaning. According to Gardiner "transformed men attempt to envisage gender equality as a society without differences based on one's anatomical gender. They allow women to choose their jobs, and sexual freedom already common to men" (Gardiner, 2002: 35). For Gardiner (2002) masculinity studies and feminist theory would help address fundamental questions about the scrutiny and understanding of masculinity in contemporary society. The study examines the ways male privilege and power are constituted and represented and delves into the effect of such constructions on both men and women. This study seeks to overturn previous paradigms about identity, victimization and dominant and alternative forms of masculinity to advance new dialogues between masculinity studies and feminist theory. Looking particularly at literature, masculinity studies and feminist theory link

the analysis of masculinities with feminism's ethical and political agenda for the future (ibid.). Such a link, authors believe, could reveal the persistence, that is elusive and diverse, of male entitlement and has the potential of also creating a more enriched and revived feminism for a new century and generation.

Botha and Ratele (2012) disagree on whether to call themselves feminists or not. Botha believes that it is not only conceivable for a man to be a feminist, but that it is courageous and morally desirable. To Botha (2012:15) African male feminism is an amplification of *ubuntu/botho*. Ratele fully agrees that *ubuntu/botho* is a reversal of any form of oppression. Both of them view feminism as an articulation of this philosophy of non-oppressive rationality: "I am because you are and you are because I am". At the simplest level Mbuyiselo opines that 'to be a feminist male means to embrace values that seek gender justice'

Kopano (cited in Botha and Ratele: 2012) feels that given the power of words the use of the term feminist for men should be used with caution. For him the best term for men working with women on gender equality is pro-feminist. Botha and Ratele assert that:

it is not important to consider what men call themselves to be fundamental as their active support for struggles against gender inequality, sexual and gender based violence, or any other issue relevant to women's struggles against patriarchal domination. However, at a strategic level, it is important, that men should desist from being opportunistic, undermining the gains made by women-led feminist movements. The struggle should be fought together, with women leading the gender struggle (Botha and Ratele, 2013:16).

Of interest to the study is what do enlightened women consider to be their role amidst the silencing conundrum of the male world? Women need to transform into a noticeable voice. Fubara (2012:109) maintains that "using the women as signposts in each of Achebe's novelistic worlds, for example, suggests that the liberation of the nation rests on the shoulders of women". The same is true for South African literature. The country needs more women who will challenge the conventional way of viewing women. Such women should, therefore be assertive, forceful, educated and financially autonomous; a rounded personality equipped to occupy leadership positions to bring about the redemption of the nations (ibid.).

The role of women is to grab the literary canon and start telling their own stories. Through literary works that women will write, it is not only the African communities that would benefit from their balanced view, but the entire international community. The works of female authors like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's entitled. *We should all be feminists* (2014), Joyce Gwayi's *Yekanini!* (1976) and many others cannot be undermined. Instead they need to be elevated and given the status they deserve.

Robbins (2000:77) suggests that there needs to be "a new method for woman-centred criticism, a method that will give women the attention that they deserve. It has to be a method that does not make women vanish into androgyny or masculinity, a criticism which is neither ladylike nor unladylike rage". She further claims that Black feminist criticism has in the past focused its attention not only on the content of black women's writing, on its (mediated) reflections of experience, but also on the forms, images, metaphors and plots that this writing expressed (ibid.). However, there are many tasks ahead for African feminist critics, not the least of which is to attempt to formulate some clear definitions of what Black feminist criticism is. McDowell prefers;

to use the term simply pertaining to Black female critics who study the works of Black female writers from a feminist or political perspective. However, the term can also be relevant to any criticism written by a Black woman regardless of her subject or perspective. It can also apply to a book written by a male from a feminist or political perspective, a book written by a Black woman or about Black women authors in general, or any writings by women (McDowell: 1985:191).

McDowell further maintains that,

Black feminist critics cannot afford to be preoccupied with choosing the most appropriate theory to adopt. The most important thing, regardless of which theoretical framework Black feminist critics choose, is to come to grips with Black literature and Black culture in general. Such a foundation would give this scholarship more texture and comprehensiveness. It perhaps could even prevent some of the problems that have had a vitiating effect on the criticism (McDowell,1985:192).

The understanding of African history and culture serves as a crucial basis for the study of literature. McDowell firmly believes that the contextual approach to African women's literature exposes the conditions under which literature is produced, published and reviewed. This approach is not only useful but necessary to African feminist critics. (ibid). According to Robbins (2000:194) "its emphasis involves viewing African women's writing in the context of African women's writing, rather than measuring it against some apparent universal standard of western feminists or

reading it as a mere adjunct to the writing of black men or of white women". While insisting on the validity, usefulness and necessity of contextual approaches to Black women's literature, the Black feminist critic must not ignore the importance of indepth textual analysis.

The onus is on the African enlightened women to write good quality stories that will enrich and nurture both boys and girls in the right direction. Robbins admits that,

no one can claim that feminist literary theories will change the real conditions of women's lives overnight". She insists that change is what they should strive for. She strongly believes that, "if feminism has a 'destination' or an end-point, it is the destination that will be reached by making the links between our historical oppression and the current oppression of those other women (2000:266).

The road ahead is not going to be a smooth ride for African women writers and African feminist critics. Adichie (2014: 3) acknowledges that since the word 'feminist' is so heavily loaded with negative baggage, especially among African societies, the struggle cannot be deterred.

7.4 Recommendations

Women should refrain from regarding themselves as victims of the patriarchal and apartheid system in the case of South Africans. Instead of lamenting, they should start contributing to the transformed literary canon which evinces a positive female perspective; and the political climate in South Africa allows them to do that. Although Adichie (2014:4) contends that gender is not an easy conversation to have as it makes people uncomfortable, sometimes even irritable, its status quo should not be left unchallenged. She further maintains that both men and women are resistant to gender issues and are quick to dismiss it as a problem because it is an uncomfortable subject to engage with (ibid.).

As an African woman employed by the Department of Education in the capacity of Deputy Chief Educational Specialist, my concern is the impact of reading novels and plays like those that were selected for this study at school as prescribed literature material for young girls. In the process of this study some colleagues made me

aware that what I thought were concerns with regards to isiZulu literary texts and Zulu male authors was not restricted to this society, but that it is observable across African cultures. Thus negative representation of women images seems to cut across different African languages available in the country. I also concur with them as works such as those of Machaba, Mathye and many others consulted as part of an extensive literature review supported the above notion.

African languages committees should be established whose functions would include the screening of set books that are going to be prescribed for schools. These should be books that promote gender equality and tolerance. It should also be literature that discourages gender-based violence. School girls need novels that tell stories of what women of strength have achieved, so that they can look up to them and in that way develop a positive self-image. Literature is meant to entertain and educate as well as build the nation and not to perpetuate evil.

The challenge of changing the mind-set of children should not only be the responsibility of schools and teachers. Parents should also be part of the movement towards social change. Household chores should be assigned equally amongst children without gendering tasks; for example, both girl and boy children should be taught how to cook and clean the house. This would gradually change the thinking that domestic chores are for girls and outdoor responsibilities are for boys. Different types of media also have a very important role to play in undoing past stereotypical thinking. Large companies rely on media for marketing their products. What if advertisements on South African television were to show male characters using a washing machine to advertise a washing powder, for example? The African male writers need to consciously make radical changes in the way they represent women of the 21st century.

Finally, it is hoped that this study is one of the many attempts that have been made to break the deafening silence and isolation of African female scholars and African women writers. The four selected literary texts cannot guarantee to have done justice to this broad and multidisciplinary topic. However, the selected texts cover a wide period of time in the history of South Africa; namely one novel written during the apartheid era, one play written during the transitional period and two plays written a

decade after liberation. Despite the contributions that this study has made to the feminist critical reading of isiZulu literature, it cannot cover all the isiZulu literary genres. Of interest will be further studies that compare the depiction of women images in post-apartheid isiZulu novels, drama and other folklore genres authored by males as opposed to those written by female authors.

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