

**FROM THE LENS OF ISIXHOSA FEMALE WRITERS: FEMALE PROTAGONISTS
AND THE USE OF NON-CONFORMITY IN CHALLENGING GENDER ROLES IN THE
POST LIBERATION ISIXHOSA LITERATURE**

by

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts in African Language Studies

in the subject


University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence
African Languages

at

University of Fort Hare

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January 2022



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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is the result of my own work; except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Fort Hare or any other institution.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explored the way women are presented in five isiXhosa literary works by female writers in post independence South Africa, with particular focus on how non-conformity is used to challenge gender roles. The study analysed two novels entitled *Iqhina lomtshato* (1995) by Nomlamli Mayosi and *Uzenzile akakhalelwa* (2016) by Yolisa Madolo, as well as four drama books titled *Nyana nank'unyoko* (1997) by Yoliswa Taleni, *Akwaba* (2004) by Thenjiswa Ntwana, *Hamba nam ndipheleke* and *Imida* (2015) by Nompumezo Buzani. Structural, Afrocentrism and African feminism were used to guide the study. The structural theory gave the researcher to review language constructs in relation to gender, African feminism and Afrocentrism gave the researcher the lenses to view gender issues within the African context, in line with the peculiar challenges that women continue to face in the content.



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Another important factor which is the focus of the study is the depiction of women by female writers, in order to challenge the roles that are given to women. The question that one ask then is: How do female writers lend their voices to female characters to address gender issues in society, with particular focus on gender roles? This thesis argues that the five isiXhosa female writers, who are contemporary African women writers, have noticed gender related assumptions and in their works, they are making an attempt to debunk these assumptions. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the existing debates on gender and division of labour.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr G.V Mona who has motivated me to pursue my love for literature since undergraduate studies, for his guidance during the writing of this project.

I would be failing if I did not mention Dr D Spofana my co-supervisor, who also guided me during this project.

This work is dedicated to three very important people in my life: my late mother Nokuphumla Namse Victoria Zeleni (born Menze), my father Baqekile Zeleni and aunt, my Godmother, uDadobawo namely Notalabe Christina Zeleni. Thank you for your support and guidance.



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CHAPTER 1

1.1 Background and rationale to the study

The world over, literature is replete with stories that seek to define who women are, how they should behave, the roles they should play in society and their relationship with men and their families, among other things. Writers of books thus play a 'God' like role in giving life to characters, deciding what they do, how long they live, when they die and how they die. In presenting their characters, writers have a strong influence on how men and women are viewed and view each other in society, hence, literature is rarely written for the sake of art, but to communicate, teach, conscientise and change the views of the readers. The impact of literature in society, makes it necessary to explore how characters are presented in literature, be it male or female, hence, this study.



This study explores the use of non-conformity by female writers to challenge gender roles in society. That is, the researcher explores how female writers depict female characters in selected literary works to challenge societal issues that affect women, especially the division of labour. This will be done by analysing six literary works that were written by five female writers post independence in South Africa and these are two novels: *Iqhina lomtshato* (1995) by Nomlamli Mayosi, *Uzenzile akakhalelwa* (2016) by Yolisa Madolo and four drama books *Nyana nank'unyoko* (1995) by Yoliswa Taleni, *Akwaba* (2004) by Thenjiswa Ntwana, *Hamba nam ndipheleke* (2015) and *Imida* (2016) by Nompumezo Buzani. Post-independence books were selected because it is assumed that they represent the lives of characters in the post independence era, as such, they can speak to the current debate on the division of labour between men and women.

The term non-conformity that is in use in the study, generally refers to failure to follow or abide by societal rules. Nail, Macdonald and Levy (2000) explain that non-conformity refers to a behaviour or belief, that is not in line with established standards or norms. Generally, every society has rules that govern how people behave towards one another. Rules are generally embedded in the culture of a people and expressed in their everyday lived experiences. Rules determine what people can or cannot do situations, thus, they sanction the behaviour of people in a community or a particular culture. Toury (1980:55) explains that norms are acquired by the individual during his/her socialisation and always imply sanctions – actual or potential, negative as well as positive. In simpler terms, members of society learn rules that govern their society by being raised in that society and this is true of women who are usually conditioned to behave in a particular way in line with their cultures.



In every society, there is high expectancy that set rules will be adhered to, but in every society, there are those who defy these rules, and they are usually referred to as deviants or non-conformists. Non-conformity thus is usually related to their words or actions that deviate from the expected norm. In the selected literary works, there are marked cases of non-conformity by female characters who use their voices and behaviour to challenge the status quo, hence, this study explores how non-conformity is used by female writers to challenge gender in the isiXhosa culture.

The issue of gender, which in simpler terms refers to relations between men and women in society, has been on the spotlight for a long time. Many writers have written and critiqued the way women are represented in literature and/or are treated in society at large, in a bid for fight for equality between men and women. Many debates now zero on

issues of division of labour at home, leadership positions for women in the public sphere, abuse of women and children, access to opportunities, reproductive health of women and equal pay among others. These debates show that there are still many challenges in society with regards to the way women are viewed and treated both in the public and private spaces, making it not only important, but also necessary to continue carrying research on gender studies. This study does not address all the above-mentioned issues but dwells on the division of labour between men and women in the isiXhosa culture.

In this study, female writers are selected because it is hoped that they bring a fresh perspective in the way women are depicted in novels, after decades of misrepresentations at the hands of male writers. The history and development of literature in Africa, has been and continues to be dominated by men. During the colonial era, men were given opportunities outside the home space where they could earn some money, whilst most women remained at home as nurturers for their families. This reality was widespread throughout Africa, hence, Ploeg (1977) writing about Tanzania states that some students attended schools that were run by the German government which trained Africans to be interpreters, clerks, teachers and to fill other administrative functions within the colonial government, these opportunities were almost completely unavailable to young women. Men also had access to education, with limited opportunities given to women, thus, giving them added advantages over women. Access to education was the springboard for the rise of literature in Africa, and men were well positioned to fill in that space. Fonchingong (2006:14) explains that the unfortunate truth about African literature is that most literary works were done by men, because they were given educational opportunities first, during the colonial era. The problem with men presenting women in

literature is that they do it in such a way that women tend to lose their identity in the 'maze' of who men think they should be in society. Ngara (1989:34) explains:

African literature tends to reflect the interests of male members of the African intelligentsia. I wish to draw the attention to the fact that in most novels of the early period, i.e. novels written before, say, 1970, the hero is almost inevitably a male member of the African intelligentsia - Camara in *The African Child*, Waiyaki in *The River Between*, Obi in *No Longer at Ease*, Odili in *A Man of the People* and so on. In all these and other novels of the time women play a secondary role in the affairs of society and the principal female characters are portrayed as adjuncts to the main male characters. In typical fashion the hero sees himself as incomplete unless he possesses a girlfriend or wife. Thus, female characters are not introduced as individuals in their own right but are part of the array of devices used to portray and develop the male hero.

From the statement above, women are seen as appendages to men, without a clear identity of their own. Thus, the independence of women is seen as a threat and treated with suspicion. In most male novels, a dichotomy exists of 'good woman' vs 'bad woman'. Women who abide by cultural norms, who are wives, mothers and long suffering are usually considered as 'good women' and those who are independent, have a voice and dreams are usually presented as 'bad women' and these are usually punished severely with terrible sicknesses, physical deformities and even death for daring to question their place in society. In literature written by men, women who deviate from the norms often, pay a high price for such behaviour. This representation of women by men is meant to keep women in spaces that are designed for them without questioning the status quo, to their detriment. Wisker (2000:137) explains further that:

Women are used in many texts by great African male writers as metaphors for both ills and potential cures and resolutions. They are either a source of salvation: rich, fertile, dependable, returned to the village; or representing the evil debilitating corruption of the cities and the legacy of colonialism, and so figured as prostitutes. This does not actually enable women in fiction to

have their own voice, and constantly places them in a sexually, politically, and economically subordinated position as objects of the male gaze. Not surprisingly, engaged African women writers often reject the trope.

An example of literary work where women are presented in stereotypical manners is Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. In this novel, women are presented as appendages to men and those who fail to do so are punished with severe sicknesses or even death. The writings by men have received a lot of criticism and continue to do so, leading to the rise of novels by female writers. Generally approach writings by female authors with hopeful anticipation because, they are seen as a beacon of hope in the fight for authentic representation of women. Previous research shows that some writings by female writers continue to perpetuate the same stereotypes as men. Mibenge (2007) explains:



The tendency for African women authors has been, for example, to portray the woman character as educated yet lacking self-empowerment. For example, in Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions, the protagonist Tambudzai aspires to become like her educated aunt, Maiguru; however, she eventually discovers that although educated, Maiguru is a subservient wife who leaves most of the household decision-making to her husband, Babamukuru. If depicted as powerful, the female character may lack substantial education.

This statement shows that there continues to be challenges in the way women are presented in literature, and this may be due to socialisation, pointing to a need to study literature across cultures to identify authors who bring hope in the fight for the emancipation of women. This study then explores isiXhosa literature and focuses on how women react to the challenges placed by society against them.

Regarding isiXhosa literature, it is noticeable that the most popular books are those that are written by men and in these books the female characters are always at the centre, whether they are being fought about, fought for, or personally being fought by being called

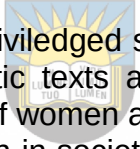
names, or beaten or forced into polygamous marriages or marriages that they do not want. An example of the list of books that have these aspects in the isiXhosa culture are *Ingqumbo yeminyanya* (1940) by S.E.K Mqhayi, *Ityala lamawele* (1914) by A.C Jordan, *Kwazidenge* (1980) by R.L Peteni, *Ithemba liyaphilisa* (1979) and *Buzani kubawo* (1958) by W.K Thamsanqa, *Amadoda la afuna ntoni ezintsaneni* (1998) and *Yeha mfazi obulala indoda* (1997) by L.L Ngewu. Looking at the above literature one cannot help but feel that female voices are necessary so that it can be put into perspective what women think, what they go through, and why they do the things they do. That is, the literary space requires women, who can represent women in authentic ways as people with dreams and aspirations. Lastly, literature should reflect the changes that exist in society, to speak to the current fight for women emancipation.



1.2 Problem statement

Notable research has been done on gender studies in isiXhosa literature by researchers such as Mtuze (1990), Jadezweni (2013) and Simani (2002) among others, particularly on the depiction of female characters but their focus was on male writers. But not much research has been done on female representation, hence, this study. The reason why focus has mostly been on literature written by men is because men had access to education first, giving them dominance in the field. Odumowo (2017) explains that “African women arrived on the literary scene much later than their male counterparts. This was a result of cultural restraints on the African woman coupled with the western sexism of the colonial system which kept girls out of the earliest mission schools”. Mutumba (2009:10) explains further that since the 1970s, gender has been a central concern of literary studies in Africa, as feminist theory precipitated a critical debate around the representation of

African women in literature, which until then had been dominated by men. Unfortunately, men populated their literature with women but in an idealised manner, leading to stereotypes that affect women negatively. For that reason, there was and is a need for female voices in the field to change the way women are presented in literature and are viewed in society. Women writing in Africa arose from the desire to introduce a feminine perspective to the socio-political vision of Africa as portrayed by male writers and to also address issues relating to female subjectivity to expose the cultural impediments to the female agency (Odunowo, 2017). The representation of women in literature is a very important element in the fight for women emancipation and empowerment. Robbins (2001:51) explains:



And if literature is one of the privileged sites of representation, if the images presented in literary and artistic texts are powerful because of the power accorded to literature, images of women are the obvious start point to begin to a critique of the place of women in society at large. Representation is not the same thing as reality, which is of course, part of the problem. It might also be seen, however, as part of the solution. The analysis of literary representations of women and their differences from real women's lives, might as well be a fruitful place to begin a politicised analysis of that reality, through the means of representation.

Women, therefore, need to be presented authentically not as 'imagined' versions, as stereotypes have a negative impact on the way society views women. This study thus explores the use of non-conformity by female writers to challenge gender roles in society. That is, the researcher explores how female writers use and depict female characters in selected literary works to challenge societal issues that affect women, especially the division of labour. This is done by analysing six literary works that are written by five female writers post independence in South Africa. The research question that is answered in the study is: how do female protagonists use the concept of non-conformity to

challenge gender roles in isiXhosa prose? It is of hope that the study will contribute to new knowledge of female representation in literature and showcase the importance of writers assuming a responsibility towards their readers when they write.

1.3 Scope of the Research

A lot of research has been carried out on the way women are represented in literature, but this has been from a male perspective. Not much research has been done on how female writers represent women in literature, more specifically in isiXhosa. Additionally, the subject of gender roles has been explored so many times in African writing but mostly from an African male perspective. No study was found that focuses on non-conformity as a vehicle to challenge gender roles. This study is limited to issues of female representation and division of labour in isiXhosa literature.



This study enhances how female characters are portrayed and how women characters are used to fight against societal problems. African literary studies have mostly focused on analysing women characters on literature that is written by male figures, this could be because there has been not much available literature that is written by women until recently. This study then contributes towards the elevation of women's voices, with particular focus on isiXhosa literature.

The study focuses on analysing women characters from the perspective of other women to contribute to a better understanding of how women want to be depicted. This study seeks to ask how women are writing themselves into history, within that how are the women characters doing what they think is right for them without feeling pressured by the expectations of society. Mutumba (2009:12) states that it must be considered that women

writers have claimed that male writers have in their writing created stereotypical views of women. This claim encourages the other side of the spectrum which is to look at whether female writers agree to these stereotyped ideas about women or do these women writers show that isiXhosa women have autonomy. Other key questions include seeing how women characters are dealing with division of labour in the private sector and how they position themselves in societal structures in opposition to their male counterparts and most importantly how they are thriving and lifting other women.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the study of literature through producing new knowledge of women representation, fight for liberation and division of labour. The issue of representation, as shown earlier is important as it influences how women perceive themselves and are perceived in society. Stereotypes place a ceiling on what women can do and to what extent. Stereotypical depictions of women continually force women to fit into a box that is created for them, pointing to a need for a new and hopefully unbiased perspective about women. This study thus explores how women are depicted in novels written by women with the hope that stronger depictions of women will contribute to the fight against the oppression of women. The study also appreciates the role played by African female writers in fighting for the equality of gender. The study serves as a guide or foundation for future scholars who want to take further the concept of African women and painting their own image by writing themselves into history.

1.5 Research aims and objectives

The aim of this study is to explore the use of non-conformity by female writers to challenge gender roles in society. That is, the researcher explores how female writers use and

depict female characters in selected literary works to challenge societal issues that affect women, especially the division of labour. The following objectives are based on the main aim above:

1. To explore how female characters are depicted in isiXhosa literature that is written by female writers.
2. To explore how non-conformity is used as a tool to challenge societal issues that affect women.
3. To explore gender roles that are assigned by women in literature by women.

Thus, the questions examined when analysing the Xhosa prose are as follows

- How are female characters depicted in the prose?
- What gender roles are there that women must adhere to?
- How are the female characters not conforming to these gender roles?

1.6 Methodology


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This study adopts the qualitative approach because it is concerned with the human as an instrument (Jackson, Drummond & Sakile, 2007:23) and in understanding richly textured experiences and reflections about those experiences. Additionally, qualitative research is conducted in the natural setting of social actors, and the focus is on the process rather than the outcome (Babbie and Mouton's 2009 in Made 2019:147). On the issue of natural setting, Lincoln to and Guba (1985:3) claim that qualitative research involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach: 'This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them'.

This approach is relevant to the current study because it gives the researcher room to study, analyse, and interpret literature in order to deduce new information, meanings and interpretations. In the study, six prose writings that are written by women are selected for analysis to determine how women are depicted and to see how female characters utilise non-conformity to challenge roles in the private space. As mentioned, the books were written after 1994 which is the post liberation era, thus, analysis is done in a series with the novels divided according to the decade in which they were published. The first decade which is from 1995 to 2004 analyses Nomlamli Mayosi's novel entitled *Iqhina Lomtshato* written in 1995 and Yoliswa Taleni's drama book entitled *Nyana nank'unyoko* published in 1997.

The second decade which is from 2004 to 2015 analyses Thenjiswa Ntwana's drama book entitled *Akwaba* (2004) and *Hamba nam ndipheleke* by Nompumelelo Buzani (2015). In the third decade, two books are analysed, and these are Yolisa Madolo's *Uzenzil'akakhalelwa* 2016) and Nompumelelo Buzani's drama book entitled *Imida* which was also published in 2016.

Using decades to analyse these books allows the study to trace the women characters in the literature and their responses to gender roles especially since the literature is published post-apartheid where women have rights that are enshrined in the constitution (Ntshangase, 2017:92). It is interesting to see whether they conform to particular gender roles or not. It is also interesting to observe whether the non-conformity happens subtly or not.

The six books are selected because they are written by women and have strong female characters who can be studied to understand their challenges, dreams, and aspirations. The characters are analysed in line with challenges that women encounter in their everyday life, especially with regards to their identity and roles in society. In conjunction to choosing six books only, the books that are chosen are written in isiXhosa. The choice to focus on isiXhosa written literature stems from the fact that there is a need to add to the growing literature analysis of African women writers and pay homage to the culture of isiXhosa before seeking to pay respect to other women writers around the world. Additionally, culture plays a big role in the way women are defined, thus, it is important to observe how Xhosa women are defined in literature and how they deal with challenges that they encounter in life.



1.7 Theoretical framework

The study is guided by two theories African Feminism and Afrocentrism which are used in a complementary manner in the study. African feminism is a theory that has its roots in feminism but is a different shade of feminism. This type of feminism was developed by African women, who felt that their needs and experiences were different from those of the women in the West, thus, they needed a theory that would consider their needs and experiences. For example, in the West women were fighting for the right to work, women in Africa are fighting for their responsibilities to be lightened, as in many cases, they find themselves burdened with too much work and responsibilities. Race and culture are other factors that affect women differently in different countries. With regards to race, black women felt judged and overlooked by feminism, hence, they started African feminism that can speak to their experiences. The African feminism theory tries to address the fact that

African women experience othering because of their race, cultural, political, and economic differences which means that Western feminism cannot explain this (Bester, 2016). This in Hudson-Weems (1994) means African women and White women come from different segments of society and, thus, feminism as an ideology is not equally applicable to both. Obianuju (1995) in reaction to race issues within the feminist movement stated that “feminism cannot continue to erase Africa or African women from feminist theory or feminist advocacy, because as the Mother Continent of humanity, the narratives and experiences of Africa's women will always be relevant”. The differences are principle led to the rise of African Feminism.

African feminism is a theory that emerged during post-colonialism when black women could define themselves as individuals (Bergman (2016:7). The theory upholds African thought systems, philosophies and values and questions features of traditional African values without denigrating them, understanding that these might be viewed differently to the different classes of women (Mekgwe 2008:167). African feminists seek to liberate and empower women, without alienating men, destroying their families or cultures. To them family and community are important in the fight for empowerment. Ahikire (2014:16) elaborates that to African feminists, empowerment is important and empowering women does not mean excluding men, it is important that men be brought on board for empowerment to take full form.

As stated above, African Feminism is complemented by the Afrocentrism framework. Afrocentrism is a theory that upholds the history and values of black people. Afrocentricity deals primarily with self-determination and African agency and is a Pan-African point of view for the study of culture, philosophy, and history (Asante, 2009). According to

(Ntseane, 2011:3) African values must be placed at the centre of African epistemology. Afrocentricity is about Africans assuming one's place in the world by being self-conscious. It has helped African women formulate their own unique kind of feminism. The emphasis of the Afrocentric paradigm is the need to research, analyse and interpret African experiences from the African perspective (2011:4). According to Asante (2009:5) there are five characteristics of Afrocentricity:

1. The Afrocentric method considers that no phenomena can be apprehended adequately without locating it first.
2. the investigator must know where he or she is standing in the process.
3. The Afrocentric method is a form of cultural criticism that examines etymological uses of words and terms to know the source of an author's location.
4. The Afrocentric method seeks to uncover the masks behind the rhetoric of power, privilege, and position to establish how principal myths create place.
5. The Afrocentric method locates the imaginative structure of a system of economics, bureau of politics, policy of government, expression of cultural form in the attitude, direction, and language of the Phenom, be it text, institution, personality, interaction, or event.

Afrocentrism upholds the identities, worldviews, philosophies, and cultures of black people as valid and a point of departure when dealing with the world. In this way it is like African Feminism in that it fights for the right to be within the communal and cultural structures. African feminism fight for equality and empowerment is tied to that of men and should happen within the family structure. Afrocentricity represents all black people and African Feminism represents women who are aware that they suffer further discrimination and oppression at the hands of their men and at times other women in the name of culture.

1.7 Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations

1.7.1 Assumptions

The researcher departs from the assumption that female writers depict women in a more authentic way than men, though socialisation may also be a factor in the way they represent women. Another assumption is that female writers utilise literature as a tool to fight for women empowerment. These assumptions may be proven wrong in the study.

1.7.2 Limitations

As it has been mentioned in the problem statement that the most prominent writers of literature have been male figures including the African literature. As women are still finding themselves as writers this means that there is not a lot of pool of literature books written by women to choose from, hence both novels and drama books were selected: four drama books and 2 novels. The limitations in terms of books written by women means the stories of women continue to be told by men, which is something that needs to be addressed urgently. The misrepresentation of characters of the literature may be another limitation as the literature is open to different interpretations.

1.7.3 Delimitations

The data chosen which is specifically books are those that have had a wide reading such as in the context of a school and two of the books that have been chosen are written by the same writer. This is helpful because it allows the study to have the same thought process in two of the data materials which is easier to follow and understand the change of behaviour in the characters.

1.7.4 Chapter Overview

The primary data is analysed using structural analysis which focuses on division of words and their meaning in context. This analytic method helps in deducing the thoughts and feelings of characters through their dialogue. The chapters of the study are organised as follows:

Chapter 1 introduces the study and outlines the background statement, problem statement, aims and objectives, and the theories that are used to understand the issues under discussion.

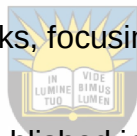
Chapter 2 reviews literature on gender studies, especially in the South African context.

Chapter 3 analyses the selected books, focusing on the First Decade.

Chapter 4 analyses books that are published in the Second Decade 2005- 2014.

Chapter 5 analyses books that have been published at the start of the Third Decade from 2015 to 2019.

Chapter 6 concludes the research and provides summaries of the conclusions reached.



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CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the study and clearly stated the aims and objectives of the study, which are to explore how non-conformity is used by female isiXhosa writers to challenge gender roles in society. This chapter reviews literature on gender, dwelling on previous studies that have written on this topic, especially in the South African context. The main aims in the chapter are to understand the underpinnings of dramas and novels, the approach of the next chapter is the structural approach, the analysis of different gender studies which focuses on studies by male writers separately and female writers separately, the more recent studies on gender, the feminist theory, and lastly, what it means to be a woman in isiXhosa culture. This study analyses six literature works: two novels and four dramas written in isiXhosa by female writers. The books are titled *Iqhina lomtshato*, *Nyana Nank'unyoko*, *Akwaba*, *Uzenzile akakhalelwa*, *Hamba nam Ndipheleke* and *Imida*.

2.2 Theoretical framework

This study adopts African Feminism to guide it. The theory is chosen because it places emphasis on African ways of doing things, meaning that it is Afrocentric which is different from the Western way of doing things. African feminism emphasises that Western feminism is generic when it comes to beliefs and values about Africa. The important concepts of the Afrocentric paradigm are then highlighted and then an explanation of how they work together in this study is given.

2.2.1 African Feminism

African feminism emerged during the post-colonial era as explained by Bergman (2016:7) that “African feminism stems from post-colonial feminism”. As stated earlier, the theory concerns itself with the liberation of black women from the shackles of domination, discrimination, and subjugation. The theory has its foundation in Western feminism and according to Kimberle Crenshaw (in Anuredha and Surena, 2018:97) the feminist movement became a social theory for women's self-awakening and self-emancipation, which always focuses on awareness of women in society. Feminist writers and activists raised their hands to support women's rights, freedom, and independence. African Feminism however is different from Western Feminism because it sees the struggles of black women as tied to those of black men who are also victims of colonialism and racism. The point of departure for African feminism is that the struggle on the African continent represents a critical stance against the mainstream of patriarchal power. Ahikire (2014:16) explains that women empowerment is important and empowering women does not mean excluding men, it is important that men be brought on board.

Contrary to Western feminism, African feminism is based on “the idea of a cooperation or complementarity with men, the affirmation of motherhood and the family, and, secondly, the concern to criticise patriarchal manifestations in African societies in a differentiated way (Arndt 2002:32).” This means African feminism weighs precisely which traditional institutions are agreeable and positive for women, or at least can or could be, and which disadvantage women so severely that their abolition seems imperative (Arndt, 2002:32).

African feminism is represented by terms such as Motherism, Womanism, Stiwaism and these terms are central to this study. The subject of motherhood and other kinship relations are the main argument points of many African feminists. Mohanty (1999:11) states that “in my research I have tightly linked this to the theme of cultural relativism. For example, in the West, motherhood is respected, but it also can be seen as a sacrifice and an obstacle in a woman’s life”. Wisker (2000:137-138) agrees about motherhood by claiming that motherhood is central to the lives of many women in African states, their position and self-image within the community. As such, then, it is not surprising that the issue of mothering and motherhood is pivotal in writing by many African women writers.

Western feminism sees motherhood as a confining factor within the patriarchal system that affects the hierarchy of the society. The change in the tradition of motherhood is not the only fear, but the cultural critique fears that the whole foundational ideology of African women might change while motherhood and its meaning is being questioned. While some Western feminists might view the role of mother as problematic, preventing economic freedom and self-realisation, many African women writers generally reject that view, whilst still critiquing a society which denigrates and marginalises childless women. Buchi Emecheta, for example, writes of enjoying the sound of children’s voices while writing.

The theory of Womanism which is a sub-sector of African Feminism explains the link between African women and their communities and cultures saying “African women in their efforts to remain authentic in their existence, such as prioritizing their needs even if the needs are not of primary concern for the dominant culture. African feminism seeks to answer questions such as what is the relationship between an African woman and her

family, her community, and her career in today's society that emphasizes, during oppression, human suffering, and death, the empowerment of women and individualism over human dignity and rights?" (Hudson-Weems, 1994:18). Womanism believes in the freedom and independence of women like feminism; unlike feminism it wants meaningful union between men and women and will wait patiently for men to change their sexist stance'. Ogunyemi's emphasis seems to be that womanism seeks to create a space in which women and men work together in partnership rather than one in which women exercise control to the exclusion of men (Nkealah, 2006:138).

From the discussion above, Nkealah (2006:134)'s words ring true that African feminism seeks to give the woman a sense of herself as a worthy, effectual, and contributing being, while it rejects stereotypes of woman that deny her a positive identity. Hence, an African woman who identifies herself as a feminist recognizes her potential as a human being – not necessarily a female human being and is proud of the areas in which she excels, be it on the home front or in the workplace. However, although African Feminism has done a lot and continues to fight for the liberation of women, it is important to state that the theory is not without criticism and there are many challenges associated with deep rooted patriarchy, traditions and cultures that continue to block the path of women in Africa. Gqola (2001:15) explains that the task of representing black women in postcolonial ways is challenging since it demands that we create and refashion forms of representation which continue to break new ground. Also, "while the postcolonial feminist/womanist project is undeniably concerned with creating and subverting colonial and patriarchal systems of logic, its focus is on opening the terrain of Black women's representation and theorisation to new identity creation. These representation spaces within which Black

women with a feminist consciousness congregate are about breaking new ground, making new meanings and redefining the terms of our participation in all discourse” (Gqola, 2001:15).

In summary, Black Feminism is a central theory in the fight for the emancipation of women and in this study, it is used to critique novels written by women and their ability to depict women in more authentic ways than men.

2.2.2 Feminism in literature

Arndt (2002) suggests three paths that a literature work can take when being analysed. These are important as they can bring direction to this study as a book needs to be placed alongside one of these three paths.

- 1. Reformist African-feminist** writers want to negotiate with the patriarchal society to gain new scope for women but accept the fundamental patriarchal orientation of their society as a given fact. In these texts, alternatives to what is criticized are always discussed. It is assumed that the society is capable of reform; in keeping with this logic, the texts usually have a conciliatory 'happy end'. Moreover, a liberal treatment of men is very typical of this branch of African-feminist literature: Men are criticised as individuals, not as representatives of men as such. In these texts, we often find women characters who share the responsibility for the criticised aspects. But this complicity of women tends to play a subordinate role. Only seldom is the criticism of patriarchal discrimination combined with criticism of other mechanisms of oppression. In these cases, it is usually indicated that men and women are allies when it comes to taking a stand against these circumstances (p.33).

2. In **transformative African-feminist literature**, men are criticised much more sharply and more complexly than in reformist literature. Though, as a rule, the demands which are directed at men are more fundamental and extensive than those made in reformist literature, transformative texts start off by assuming men's capability to transform. It is suggested by having a man change his way of thinking and behaviour radically during the plot. Much more often it is symbolised by the fact that the man, who embodies the behaviour to be criticised and overcome, is contrasted with one or more positive counterparts. Another important aspect is that transformative African-feminist literature thematises explicitly the view that men are not only accomplices, but also products of patriarchal patterns of thought. Analogous to the negotiation of men, the behaviour of women who reproduce structures discriminatory to women is depicted as surmountable in principle. The majority of these literary texts also describe a way of life which represents a positive counter-concept to what is criticised (p.34)

3. In contrast, **Radical African-feminist** texts argue that men (as a social group) inevitably and in principle discriminate against and mistreat women. The men characters are, 'by nature' or because of their socialisation, hopelessly sexist and usually deeply immoral. Men characters who depart from this pattern are rarely found - and those who do are powerless. This powerlessness is symbolised either by their premature death or by their inability to realise their positive ambitions. A further fundamental characteristic of these texts is their use of tragedy and violence. The women characters suffer physical and psychological violence at the hands of men. Even a partial improvement in the situation of women is unthinkable. The radical texts are distinguished by a disturbing lack of perspectives. Thus, for example, death and murder carry the end of most of these texts.

This approach is often tied to the fact that their women characters are also oppressed on the basis of, for example, their socio-economic status and/or racial identity (p.34).

Hudson-Weems (1994:30) provides solutions by stating that the problems of African women, including physical brutality, sexual harassment, and female subjugation in general perpetrated both within and outside the race, ultimately must be solved on a collective basis within African communities. The concept of working together as communities, in the case of African feminism is supported by the Afrocentric paradigm and this is the cue to discuss the concept of Afrocentricity.

2.3 Afrocentric Paradigm

As stated in the first chapter, African Feminism is complemented by Afrocentrism in this study. Afrocentricity is about Africans assuming one's place in the world by being self-conscious, it has helped African women formulate their own unique kind of feminism. The emphasis of the Afrocentric paradigm is the need to research, analyse and interpret African experiences from the African perspective (Ntseane 2011:4). According to (Ntseane, 2011:3) African values must be placed at the centre of African epistemology.

According to Asante (2009:5) there are five characteristics of Afrocentricity:

1. The Afrocentric method considers that no phenomena can be apprehended adequately without locating it first.
2. the investigator must know where he or she is standing in the process.
3. The Afrocentric method is a form of cultural criticism that examines etymological uses of words and terms in order to know the source of an author's location.
4. The Afrocentric method seeks to uncover the masks behind the rhetoric of power, privilege, and position in order to establish how principal myths create place.

5. The Afrocentric method locates the imaginative structure of a system of economics, bureau of politics, policy of government, expression of cultural form in the attitude, direction, and language of the Phenom, be it text, institution, personality, interaction, or event.

Afrocentrism sees Africans as a collective, who shared a bitter history of struggle under slavery, colonisation and apartheid and who continue to share experiences of racism, underdevelopment and different forms of subjugation the world over. The theory has many overlaps with African Feminism, hence, the two are used together.

2. 3.1 How Afrocentricity and African feminism work together

African feminism and Afrocentricity work together in this thesis because they are both challenging the Eurocentric perspectives. Afrocentricity fights for the liberation of all black people, while African womanism focuses on black women but still recognises the need to free black men as well. It is within Afrocentricity that African women formulated their own feminism which is called African feminism. Both these perspectives are going to highlight that in the African culture, gender equality struggle emphasizes the necessary complementarity rather than the conflict that exists between African men and women (Ntseane, 2011:5).

These two perspectives work together to highlight the importance of community and shared roles in the African home, essentially what these two concepts are highlighting is the women having a voice. The study is hoping to say that the isiXhosa books that are written by women show how women in the isiXhosa society and broader African society prove that there are more essential things to them in life than the equality to men which is one of the aims of the study. One of these aims is to say that a woman can do anything

that she sets her mind to, she can strive in that male dominated engineering field, a woman can walk in that beach without fearing judgement from other women. These are basic examples which the current study is hoping to achieve.

2.3.4 Being a woman in the isiXhosa culture

Soga talks about the Xhosa culture in his book entitled *intlalo kaXhosa*. One of the points that Soga (1974:132-133) makes is that of newlywed brides being given a name by the family she is marrying into. It is part of the isiXhosa culture to give the bride a new name. According to the culture a woman marrying a man was a rebirth of a girl which is why the woman was given a new name. In addition to this a new bride was required to not use a name that is in relation to her husband's surname. If the bride is caught saying her father in law's name, she would have to go and ask for a goat at her home to cleanse herself of the shame of calling her father-in-law by name. These cultural practices may have certain connotations which nowadays may be seen as oppressive to women.

Another interesting point in Soga (1974:176-177) is that the aim of marriage was to have the woman give children to her husband so that the husband has people to leave his house with when he is no more "*izifumanela iqabane umgushanxa mntwana-ndini wokuyizalela apha kumkayo*". He finds himself a perfect partner in his wife, a person who is going to give him children". It may happen that the husband dies or vanishes into thin air, or the wife is sent back home by her husband's family. It was seen as very respectful and good behaviour for the wife to not pack her things and go back home because her father would have advised her not to come back home, she must endure her marriage thus the wife ends up staying in her marriage even though her husband has left which

would be acceptable for a widow but not someone who is left by her husband out of the blue. When this happens, the woman would stay in her marriage home and make her own family by giving birth to children, surprisingly this would not be a problem to the people of the family *“azihlalele apha emzini wakhe awenzele usapho awayelotyolelwe lona/* She would stay in her marriage home and have children as that is what lobola was paid for” (Soga, 1974:177).

Young women and older women in the Xhosa society used to pride themselves in carrying water from the river. This is something a young girl was taught at a young age. Soga (1974:207) *“kumntu wasetyhini libhongo ukukha amanzi emzini wakhe, ade endiswe ngokuthengelwa iemela yokukha amanzi emzini wakhe/* for a female fetching water is pride. When she is getting married, she was bought a bucket for carrying water.” Fetching water from the river was an everyday activity for a wife, if she does not go a particular day, it is seen as though that home has no wife. It had to be an everyday thing because if it happens that a visitor comes and there is not enough water or water at all then the whole village would know the wife as very lazy. In this day, a married woman would be offended or feel disrespected if a bucket was bought for carrying water as some would see it as a way to assert that it is the only thing, they are good at.

2.4 The underpinnings of dramas books and novels

A drama or a play is written or designed to be performed on a stage by actors. Sirayi (1993:6) defines a drama or a play as an action that is presented through role playing before an audience. The concept of drama dates back to the times of Aristotle, as the concept of drama was based on performances that took place during that time. The definition that Sirayi (1993) gives is supported by Wallies and Shepherd (2002:3) when

they say that when a written play is opened, one thing that must be realised is the fact that the words that are written in the text do not work the same way as the words in the novels and other genres. The words in the play are designed to be a performance.

Drama differs from other genres because in the drama the reader feels confronted with the representation of the characters whereas in other genres such as a novel the characters are mediated by a narrator figure (Pfister, 1988:3). Drama is said to be dynamic and there are four aspects which explain the concept of drama being dynamic and these four aspects will be compared with four aspects of a novel. Firstly, it is said that drama occurs in the physical action because as mentioned above that drama is meant to be performed while on the other hand a novel according to (Bo, 2008:58) describes something abstract which is people's feelings and inner world. Secondly, it is said that drama is a group art as it involves a group of people that are in direct and indirect interaction while on the other hand a novel is set on showing people's changing attitudes through detailed description (Bo, 2008:59).

Thirdly, it is said that in all literary works there is a relationship between the artist and audience and in drama there is a degree of direct communication and this communication becomes palpable which means it is felt and in a novel there is a no direct communication because people are told the story while drama shows them the story (Bo, 2008:59). Fourthly, drama is dynamic because it is multi-media. This means that drama can present itself in different contexts and these contexts are complex and never reproducible while the novel can only describe things through words and can be reproducible (Bo, 2008). These are the four aspects of that define what drama is as compared with a novel as presented by O'Toole (1992:7).

Since this study is dominated by drama books, it is essential that it is understood what drama entail which gives ground on how they should be analysed. As highlighted above the main difference between a drama and a novel is that when one analyses a drama book, they are led by the dialogue that happens between the characters thus must use their own understanding to deduce what a certain character is like. Whereas in a novel the narrator makes things easy by making the reader see the character through their eyes.

2.5 The structural approach

As stated earlier, the structural approach will be used to analyse the selected isiXhosa books. The aspects which will be the focus point of the study are plot, theme and dialogue in order to make sense of the lives of the characters. The six books were classified according to the decade in which they were published.



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The overall aim of the analysis of the books is to see how the plot brings about gender issues and how they are challenged by female protagonists in the books. Thus, the four aspects of the plot that will be investigated as stated by Makosana (1991) are the exposition which is referred to as the type of atmosphere that is presented by a text, where characters are assigned roles and relationships. The complication in dramatic work usually comes in a form of a new character, what is called the catalyst. The catalyst turns things around in for the other characters. Thirdly there is the climax, which is the moment of realisation of the characters, everything reaches its highest peak. Lastly dramatic texts have a denouement which is when the story is rounded off. Things are dealt with by finding the right solutions for them (Makosana, 1991).

In the investigation of the four aspects in literature books, characterisation will be looked at as a way to see the manner in which the five female writers symbolise their thoughts through fictional characters, the meaning with which they are trying to give to the audience.

2.6 Gender studies analysis

A lot of research has been done with regards to characterisation of women in African literature. In the following section, several studies are reviewed in terms of how women are represented or depicted and the silences that are found in these studies in terms of the representation of women. In this section, focus will be on the depiction of women from the perspective of male writers and followed by the depiction of women by female writers. Concentration is mostly on African literature studies, in particular the studies that pay homage to African female authors.



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2.6.1 Perspective of male and female writers

This section focuses on reviewing the work that was done by both male writers and female writers. The review is based on the time of publication.

Mtuzze (1990) carried out extensive research on the depiction of women in different decades from the first written works in 1909 to contemporary literature written in 1980. The aim of Mtuzze's study was to establish whether the images of women changed in line with social, legal and political changes. The researcher explored how women are depicted in isiXhosa novels and found that stereotypes of presenting women as submissive wives, sex objects, lonely women, dominating wives, and tempting beautiful women was prevalent across epochs. In a novel titled *Ndawo*, the writer emphasises the main

character (Nozizwe) 's beauty which is said to lead men astray. Mtuze (1990:26) states that he merely emphasises her beauty to such an extent that it becomes elevated, if not denigrated, to being an object or end in itself. Viewed in this light, beauty becomes a commodity that can be used for good or bad purposes and the woman is held accountable on how she uses such beauty.

Another book where a woman's beauty is presented as bewitching is *UNomsa* where the man focuses his attention on a girl's blue or grey eyes that 'always sparkle, twinkle or shine' and subtly reveal 'love she wants to hide, anger she tries to overcome, and merriment she should suppress'. The woman in the novel does not have an identity of her own but is tied together with her husband. This presentation of women is in line with what Ngara said in Chapter 1, that most male writers see women as appendages to men, without their own identity. In the novel, every girl is conscientised right from early girlhood that her destiny is marriage. She soon has to learn that she cannot pass a certain age without becoming someone's girlfriend and subsequently his wife. What can be gathered from the novels that were analysed by Mtuze is that male writers cannot imagine women actively leading men but can only visualize them as power behind the throne of every leading man. (Mtuze (1990:29-40) expands that women are generally regarded as pillars of strength in many households. Even in civil and political matters women only appear as wives or supporters and not as leaders or initiators. Mqhayi also sees the woman's social responsibility as revolving around the home and keeping a check on the chastity of young girls. Such representation of women is bound to make women believe their ultimate achievement in life is marriage, which is a limiting view of life.

In the novel *Ndawo*, the author presents a strong female character whose name is Nolishwa. She is bold, wayward, and sometimes very uncompromising. She breaks social norms by fighting, punching elderly women such as Nompi, biting her teacher's ear, having premarital relations with men, murdering and stealing, besides many other aberrations (Mtuze,1990:45). Nolishwa is a non-conformist, and in the novel all bad things happen to her, which is a similar trait that is found in novels by men. Women who have a voice are usually punished severely in literature. *Ndawo* deliberately depicts her as a contemptible character on whom all the bad luck must be showered by way of retribution. Misfortune dogs her so much that in the end she almost suffers the greatest humiliation of all - unwittingly marrying her own son whom she had tried to murder by throwing him near the banks of a flooded river (Mtuze,1990:46). What can be noticed here is that the male writers continue punishment of women who are strong and independent as a bid to keep women within set boundaries.



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With regards to the period between 1930-1949, two female writers arose and these are Swaartbooi, in 1934 and Futshane in 1939. Swaartbooi made it clear in her book role acting and socialisation start very early in children's lives. That is, girls are conditioned from a young age to care for children and homes through playing with dolls, cooking, cleaning and preparing doll-houses. Swaartbooi was cautioning readers that gender linked roles define who children become in adulthood, pointing to a need to challenge these roles. Swaartbooi's greatest contribution to the female cause is certainly her total silence in the book about boyfriends and husbands. Her female characters are not dependent on man, be it husbands or boyfriends. Mandisa the main character ends up battling hard to educate her brothers and sisters rather than battling to look after a

husband (Mtuzze, 1990:49-50). This is an interesting depiction as in novels written by men, women are always linked to men as wives or girlfriends.

Futshane, the second female novelist addressed the issue of polygamy and its challenges in her book. In the novel, a man marries two wives Nowayiti and Nomasayi who form a rivalry in need of the attention of their husband. Nomawati is falsely accused of witchcraft leading to her suffering. The second wife, Nosayini, flees the common home as a sign that polygamy is a losing game for all who are involved. Although the female writer's critique some of the practices that affect women, they also affirm some, pointing to the fact that socialisation is a strong factor in the way we view the world. During the period however, against the background of traditional life, women are depicted as home-bound and performing their normal household chores. Female writers such as Futshane find it easy to write about male characters and life than about women.



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The third decade from 1950-1959 saw writers such as Minazana Dana and Liziwe Tsotsi emerging, and both were female novelists. Minazana in her novel confirmed most if not all the stereotypic views on women (Mtuzze, 1990:62). She presented women as helpers of men and continues to perpetuate the stereotype of women who cannot co-exist. Mtuzze (1990:62) explains that the attitude by the writer is not at all surprising, considering that women internalize subservient roles from childhood. Dana however tried to present a character (Nomthandazo) that is educated but still fell into the trap of stereotyping educated women as willful and difficult. Mtuzze (1990:63-64) commenting on the author said Dana shows the effectiveness of women in mobilising forces against issues that threaten or concern them, the powerful force of socialization and acculturation is clearly

demonstrated, however, her writing is an absolute acknowledgement of all popular female stereotypes.

Another writer at this time, Gwashu in the book *Intombi yolahleko*, addressed the issue of education during the colonial era and showed how young girls were heavily ensnared by distorted parental myths that prevented thousands of girls from equipping themselves for competitive employment in the economic structures of the land (Mtuze, 1990:69). They had to be content with inferior education which led them to a generally inferior role in life. Male dominance, as pointed out by Gwashu, is normally so overriding that women hardly hold a higher status than children (Mtuze, 1990: 69). Gwashu shows some sensitivity to women's plight while obviously bent on retaining the status quo with men taking a leading role (Mtuze, 1990:80).



Writers in the Sixties concentrated on several problems that affected women in general. The first of those problems was lack of equal educational opportunities for boys and girls, with some novels showing that parents opted to see their daughters married than attain secondary education. Jongilanga is one of the few authors of the time who showed that women are better off given higher education so that they could take care of themselves, than getting married early. Jongilanga in his novel also highlighted the evils of forced marriages and women's determination to fight the injustice. Jongilanga can be credited for advancing the cause for equal access to education between men and women.

It is interesting to note that most novels during this time presented women in a stereotypical manner, with a few exceptions. For example, Mafuya viewed women as totally helpless and dependent on men (Mtuze, 1990:102). In cases where women are

independent and strong in character, they are presented as assertive and domineering, with men as their victims. This presentation of women is meant to manipulate women to cultivate meek and appealing characteristics. Silinga comes with one new dimension in the woman question- women do have the power to rule provided this is done unobtrusively and from behind the scenes. This notion is also confirmed by Tamsanqa with reference to the character of Nobandla's powerful influence over and successful stand against Chief Lindikhaya. Finally, Mda depicts woman as virtuous, loyal and self- sacrificing. Opposition, albeit subtle or covert, is a discernible motif in most of these works (Mtuze, 1990:102). Mirsky is one of the few writers who makes it abundantly clear that, given the opportunity, women can do anything that men can do. Hopefully, women will be presented in better light in the following decades



During the decade between 1970-1980, Bongela's first book still depicted woman as passive and contingent in the same way as some of his successors, his second book heralds the final image of woman as assertive, independent, shrewd, free and unrelentingly opposed to male dominance, as seen in most of the subsequent discussions. In these works, there is a permeative air of counterattack and revolt that was not distinctly discernible even in works such as Mzamane's *Izinto zodidi*, a book which clearly champions woman's cause (Mtuze, 1990:133). Mtuze (1990:133) adds that male writers such as Qangule, Dikana and Peteni stand head and shoulders above the rest of the writers of this decade, and perhaps even those of other decades, in their sensitive presentation of the plight and the aspirations of contemporary women. While both sets of writers, male and female, still throw in a negative stereotype here and there in their depiction of women, and while total androgyny is far from being realized yet, there are

clear signs of a discernible blurring of the lines of demarcation between the activities or the outlook of men and women (Mtuze, 1990:133).

Mtuze, (1990:135-140) claims that the literature in his study can be summed up in the following points that there are writers who are conservatives who have internalised stereotypes, and reproduced them for public consumption, then there are liberals whose paucity underlines that they are clearly in the minority. Additionally, Mthuze included few female writers in his study. This study differs from Mthuze because it focuses on female writers only and on post-independence publications.

Gqola (1999) followed swiftly after Mtuze and examined the images of women in the Staffrider magazine. Her study concentrated on the analysis of short stories written in English. Her study focused mostly male writers with exception of a few female writers. Gqola's study aimed to investigate the position of black women within writing that exhibited black consciousness, and this was done by looking at the images of black female characters (Gqola,1999:2). She found that women were presented as mothers and/or loyal wives to male activists. They did not have a separate identity in the struggle that wasn't attached to men. Gqola (1999:7) states that scholars of African literatures have written in depth about the 'mother Africa' trope. In it, the ideal position for a Black woman character is that which sees her as silently suffering and supportive of the male in her life. Her body becomes linked and paralleled to the fate of the African continent. She is denied voice and agency. The same depiction is found in Staffrider, where Black women who to receive attention are characters to support their sons and husbands who are involved in political resistance to apartheid. The contributions of black women are undermined in the struggle.

Public politics derive meaning for them through the interpretations of the men they are attached to. This characterization effectively distances these Black women characters from participating in the public challenging of racism, even 'as they are constantly affected by it (Gqola,1999:70). The female characters occupy an ambiguous position because their race positions them as subjects of apartheid, while their gender alienates them from the way in which apartheid is theorised and racial oppression articulated in the Staffier stories.

The mother figure is presented as mother to her own children and defining herself in relation to them and their lives, existing only as an extension of the lives of her offspring, especially of the male persuasion. She is often the phallic mother (Gqola,1999:72). This is particularly the case when her son is a political activist. Since her role is defined simply in terms of her body's ability to bring forth activists for the struggle, she is seen as lacking any capacity to contribute to the liberation of her people as a human being per se (Gqola,1999:72). She is ever-present when needed, often shown be silently suffering, dedicated to not only mothering her own children but also forced to mother the children of others outside her community. She is uncomplaining and does not engage in political activity in her own right. She is almost always portrayed as doing 'the right thing' by her children (Gqola, 1999:72). Occasionally female characters are required to mother more than Black activists. Instead, they are called upon to leave their children unattended as they raise white children. Positioned thus, they mother both Black and white children (Gqola,1999:94-95).

In Chapter 3, Gqola looks at a theme which seeks to demonstrate that, in the stories of Staffrider, Black women characters' bodies and behaviour are regulated through

sexuality. These experiences usually take one of three forms: her ability to perform sexually and/or her rape, her physical appearance, and how she deals with a lonely pregnancy (Gqola, 1999:105). Her character is then condoned or condemned according to the manifestations of her sexuality. She is (de)valued in accordance with the way she chooses to deal with various sexualised experiences (Gqola,1999:105). Depending on whether her behaviour on these three fronts is acceptable or not to the narrator and the society of the story, she is then either put on a pedestal or condemned. Her sexuality is often the only means through which her character has any significance. She is defined solely in terms of what the sexual (im)possibilities in her life are (Gqola,1999:105). Moreover, when the woman is violated and/or raped in these stories, she is often forced by the narrator and the violator to bear responsibility for her status as if she were to blame for what happens to her. Her story is told through the words of a male narrator in all the stories examined here; and in the few occasions where she is allowed to speak, it is never to interpret what has happened to her or to state her side of the story (Gqola, 1999:105).

In Chapter 4, Gqola (1999) concentrates on the literature which examines Black women characters represented as complex and dynamic characters who have agency regardless of whether this is perceived as 'positive' or 'negative'. Their characters are shaped without the prohibitions imposed by a crude repetition of the virgin/whore axis explored in the last two chapters. Often these characters are presented as central agents to the progression of the narrative, different from the mainly supplementary roles projected earlier in chapters 2 and 3. In this chapter, for the first time in this study, there is evidence of Black female characters who inhabit roles unexplored before, who repeatedly are equipped with the ability to present their own perspectives, and so forth (Gqola, 1999:148-149). Gqola's

study is valuable to the current study that focuses on the depiction of women in post-colonial South Africa, focusing mainly on their use of con-formity to challenge gender roles.

Mathye (2003) carried out a study that compared novels written by Tsonga male and female writers and established that because of patriarchy these writers differ markedly in their portrayal of female characters. In all the novels analysed, she found that the socio-cultural context influences the way in which the writers portray female characters. She found that male writers promoted traditional values while female writers sought to discard them. In a novel titled *Masungi mfana kamxelele* which was written by a female writer, two characters are contrasted. Khanyisa is depicted strictly according to traditional although they do not please her husband. Masungi's second wife, Nobayeni, is described as a good housewife because of her ability to perform modern domestic duties. The distinction between Masungi's wives indicates the author's acknowledgement of modern values.

On the other hand, female characters in the novel *Mibya ya nyeka nyeka* present varying images. N'wa-Basana is portrayed as a submissive wife. Cheyeza is a nurturing, caring and loving mother. N'waMdanisi is portrayed as an adulterous woman who seduces Nyiko into adultery. The author's emphasis shows adherence to cultural sex-roles. He blames N'wa-Mdanisi for adultery by intentionally inviting Nyiko into her house and thereafter seducing him (Mathye,2003:67). Female characters in *Madyisambitsi* portray conflicting ideologies. N'wa-Mpon'wa undermines traditional patriarchal roles. She is jealous, aggressive, violent and insubordinate. While the character of Javurisa on the other hand

subjects herself to traditional patriarchal roles. She is submissive, tolerant and subjects herself to familial abuse (Mathye, 2003:71).

Female characters in Chauke's novel titled *Ndzi ta n'wi kuma* are liberated women. Their objective is to strive for equal opportunities for men and women in society. They emphasize the development of social stability and advocate a mutual respect between men and women which will bring about social change (Mathye, 2003:85).

Mathye concludes that male and female authors reveal a difference in the portrayal of female characters. Tsonga male authors portray female characters who adhere to traditional gender sex-roles, e.g. wife, mother and housewife whereas female authors transcend gender sex-roles and portray female characters with androgynous life-skills such as professional teaching and nursing. Female characters in female-authored novels advocate for social changes whereas female characters in male-authored novels stick to traditionalism. Female authors are directly involved in the lives of their female characters whereas male authors stand aloof and detached from their actions. As the study underway focuses on the work of isiXhosa female writers and their female characters challenge gender stereotypes, the work of Mathye (2003) will work as a guide into pinpointing the different things and decisions that females take when they challenge the gender norms that are set out for them in society.

Kwatsha (2009) carried out a study that explored concepts of gender and equality. The distinction between sex and gender is made by defining sex as the physical, biological components of masculinity and femininity, there are two sexes, male and female, and correspondingly, two genders, masculine and feminine (2009:128-129). A person is

gendered when they subscribe to masculinity or femininity, the term gender has been used to refer to social, cultural and psychological aspects of masculinity and femininity (2009:129). Gender is also known as the amount of masculinity or femininity found in a person. The emphasis is on the social differences between females and males and it is this difference that prevents women and men from participating equally in social, political, economic and cultural life (2009:129). The physical differences between men and women as differentiated above are important to note for the current study because the literature analysed seeks to find if really the difference can be a factor in the roles that men and women occupy respectively.

Gumede (2002) carried out a study on how Zulu male writers portray women and found that most male writers tend to follow stereotypes in their writings when they are describing. Gumede (2002) claims that traditional Southern African society is very patriarchal and conservative. A woman's role is generally viewed as the life giver and nurturer of the new generation of her husband's offspring. A woman is in charge of the gardens, where she grows the family food, while her husband is busy with his wars, cattle raiding venture and politics. The implication of this study is that women are portrayed as conformists to the patriarchal world order and according to the article the language that is used is very important to be observed as it can create certain expectations for women.

Simani (2002) examined the influence of culture on how men and women are portrayed in an isiXhosa novel titled *Kode kubenini na* by L.L Ngewu. Simani found that when misused, culture can be a tool that is used to oppress women. Simani (2002) concluded that Ngewu's novel does not present women as people who live in a democratised society, the novel still represents women as oppressed under the isiXhosa society and

tradition. The implication of these findings to the current research is that women are still limited and expected to conform to certain cultural and gender expectations placed for them by society and it is interesting to find out if female literature writers feel the same way.

Peter (2010) examined selected isiXhosa literary texts to understand how female characters are portrayed. He found that the image of the female characters has begun to change dramatically in literary works, partly because of the growing interest shown towards females and their writings, coupled with scholarly enquiries on, by and about female characters. Peter (2010) noted that although the space that is allocated to the writings of females in public institutions and in curricula is still minimal, some progress has been made, where some of their literary works are now being prescribed in schools and universities



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Peter (2010) lambasts the biased presentation of literary texts that has portrayed female characters in a poor light, and enforces the continuation of all male domination in African society. Female characters are not democratically portrayed as free if they keep on speaking solely with the blessing of men because, if this occurs, then their voices are not the voices of female because they do not show a positive image in their actions. Females should see themselves as people who really exist; as total human beings; and as those who can live with dignity. For example, Cikizwa in Mmango's uDike noCikizwa does not show her disagreement in a violent manner, but her falling in love with uDike whom demonstrates a rebellious attitude to her father's wishes (Peter, 2010). The psychotic disorders suffered by the characters, because of cultural injustice are clearly displayed in these literary texts such as *Buzani kuBawo*. NomaMpondomise committed her suicide as

a result of her personality disorder. Literary works can be defined as a form of literary-text representation in which gender relations are routinely indicated (Peter, 2010).

Peter's research shows that there are still a lot of stereotypes that are portrayed in literature when it comes to women and their actions. But although there are stereotypes against women, there are writers who deviate from the norm of stereotyping women by introducing the reader to female characters who behave very differently from the way a typical female is expected to behave by the society. The research done by Peter (2010) is very important because it shows that although there are stereotypes, there are women characters portrayed by male writers that fight against these stereotypes thus it would be interesting to see if female isiXhosa writers who have written after the post liberation era portray women who do their best to defy gender norms or not.

Langa (2012) explored how specific gendered practices, whether religious or political, perpetrate gender biases and gender stereotypes in a Zulu family. The study shows the difference of views between urban women who think the Zulu culture is oppressive and those in rural areas who do not think it is oppressive. Those who think it as oppressive, respondents simply want to wear what they like but cannot because of the prescriptive nature of the Zulu culture (Langa, 2012:36). To be told like a child that you cannot walk on certain designated areas of the homestead, as the first respondent stated, is the worst form of discrimination and oppression. The rural women don't think it is oppressive think that rules and procedures are only aimed at maintaining respect, particularly to a man. They sound like African feminists who are at peace with their state of being African women (Langa, 2012:39). Their attitude is not helping to achieve transformation because while it is understandable for the African feminist to fight their struggle within an African context,

it may not be a quick and effective way of realising the ideals of feminism (Langa, 2012:39).

Langa (2012:40) concludes that due to the changing times it should just be left in the hands of these women and girls to decide what they want in line with their right to dignity and freedom of choice as enshrined in the South African constitution.

In summary, what the studies above show is that male writers have a tendency to view women in a stereotypical manner and this problem is also found in some female writers. Research shows that men benefit from the present situation as it frees them from responsibility of a lot of things.

2.6.2 Perspective of female writers

This section reviews literature on female writers and their portrayal of women. Guzana (2000) examines women's silence in the isiXhosa written and oral literature in an article titled the key word is silence. Female silence according to (Guzana, 2000:76) is often described as a 'good' quality in women. It is men who decide that silence is a virtue for women and that the 'goodness' of a woman is associated with silence. This form of silencing is, in other words, one means by which women's behaviour is controlled. Religion; ceremony; political rhetoric; legal discourse; science and poetry. "In these, women's voices, for the most part, are silenced. It is not just that women do not speak: often they are explicitly prevented from speaking, either by taboo and restriction or by the more genteel tyrannies of custom and practice. women do speak (as men do) but that they are controlled by practices that are imposed on them. oral voicing preceded the written word and played an important role in educating and voicing women's heritage, and

provides evidence that women have found ways to overcome and subvert the imposition of silence” (Guzana, 2000:76).

Guzana (2000:75) argues that isiXhosa women had a voice as proven by oral traditions. Oral conversation of women and men from published and unpublished sources, dialogue in literary texts between men and women and proverbial sayings illustrate the different kinds of reality concerning the concept of silence. Guzana states that there are elements that overpowered the voices of women and these include male dominance, male control of language, informal training at home, institutions such as the church and the school which teach women to be silent, traditional values of community and the fear of being characterised as insane, evil or scolding (Guzana, 2000:75).

The use of oral literature helped women use their voices as Guzana (2000:77) claims that before women had the power to write and to publish in isiXhosa, they had other means of communicating their ideas, feelings and anxieties. They would sing about their frustrations to other women who would reply with comforting lyrics, sometimes with solutions to problems and encouragement to endure a difficult situation. In gatherings they would sing songs in a murmuring style only heard by the closest. “Women found a way to share their problems through song. (Guzana, 2000:78).

Guzana argues that men were also vulnerable, even though they were dominant. They chose a space where women are excluded to share their weaknesses and ask for advice.

Wisker (2000) carried out a study on writing and productions of women written mostly in English. In one of the chapters, he concentrates solely on women’s writing from South Africa, looking initially at the historical and political context in which women have written

since the beginning of the century. Wisker states that if the writers wished to write, inevitably, about racism, they were banned, or had to do so from a position of exile, some exiled writers became established and published, but for women, publication was slower due to lack of money. There were few outlets for novels until recently.

According to Wisker (2000:160) female writers such as Schreiner explore the possibilities of the new woman. Schreiner, like Woolf her contemporary work, investigates the crushing results of gendered roles in her society, a correlative to her polemic and her utopian writing (e.g. 'Three Dreams in a Desert'), (Wisker, 2000:160). In both *When Rain Clouds Gather* and *Serowe, Village of the Rain Wind*, the writer Bessie Head concentrates on celebrating the stoicism, the working realism of the women who throw themselves into agricultural work and child-rearing, recognising that romance is an irrelevant Westernised pastime and not a foundation for marriage. Head's work, like these other fictions, moves away from mere protest and towards suggestions for development and change. She finds separation of people an intolerable evil (Wisker, 2000:163). In *Maru* (1971) she confronts the horrors of racism directly, concentrating on the life of missionary-educated teacher Margaret Cadmore. Her treatment of women is realistic and emphasises the need for social and political recognition of equality.

Wisker (2000:174) concludes that creative isolation has been damaging to generations of South African readers and writers. Now their work is being written and read, and many women are recuperating versions of their past lives through the explorations and expressions of autobiography, producing oral or scripted poetry, publishing abroad and at home, and being studied on the syllabi of their own country, and across the world. In her study, Mibenge (2007) focuses on the notion that the portrayal of females in the work

of African women authors could depict women in terms of reality, such that if depicted in this era, for example, then they should also reflect African women who are dignified, grounded, successful and powerful. The study recognises that women have faced and continue to face obstacles to self-fulfilment as a result of cultural restraint, lack of education and barriers to power. However, more and more African women are successfully overcoming these barriers.

Mibenge (2007) carried out a study that focused on women in relation to culture and education. Mibenge found that culture puts boundaries on what women can do in society. Women are expected to grow up, get married and bear children, while sons have a responsibility to carry forward the family name. It is deemed culturally imperative that young women be socialised from an early age to aspire to married life and motherhood; they are thus taught how to handle marriage and motherhood from a fairly young age. For example, in the book *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego cannot bear children and is abused by her first husband. In her second marriage, however, she has several children, boys and girls. In her bid for cultural recognition, Nnu Ego is happy to continue bearing children, and takes pride in them, especially her sons. Nnu Ego bears sons and daughters for her husband; nevertheless, her life is marked with loneliness, poverty and strife (Mibenge, 2007:20).

In the book titled *so long a letter*, Ramatoulaye, chooses to endure an oppressive and polygamous marriage until her husband's death. She subscribes to a culture where a woman's quality is docility and therefore, in order not to lose respect in her community, Ramatoulaye opts to stay in an unsatisfactory marriage. It is through Ramatoulaye's best friend, Aissatou, that Ba portrays a woman in control of her life to some degree. For

example, when Aissatou's husband, Mawdo Ba, takes on a younger second wife, she divorces him, trains as an interpreter and leaves for the United States with their four children. Her move to the United States, however, can be questioned, as it may be thought to be avoidance of alienation and embarrassment (Mibenge, 2007:22). The two characters, Ramatoulaye and Aissatou, are depicted as intelligent women in their own right; however, they respond quite differently to their circumstances and thereby their culture. The novel is summed up as being about "women caught in the fetid purgatory of indecision, with one foot firmly planted on the pavement of progress and the other equally firmly planted on the grave of custom and tradition." This description is depicted not only in Ramatoulaye's character, but also in her co-wife, Binetou, who submits to her mother and finally marries a much older man for prestige and position (Mibenge, 2007:23).



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Mibenge argues that education hinders the progress of women. For example, in *Nervous Conditions*, Tambu, yearns for education to escape poverty and subsistence farming (2007:29). As she makes money through petty trading, she determines that not only her sons should benefit from this endeavour in terms of education, but that her daughters should too. However, Nnu Ego and her husband subscribe to the notion of educating boys before girls as Nnu Ego believes the girls need basic literacy skills as opposed to the boys who are meant to be sent abroad to acquire a profession (2007:30). The decision to take Tambu out of school in preference of her brother was in fact influenced by the cultural belief that Tambu would eventually be groomed to become a wife and mother. Tambu develops great aspirations for her personal education despite the obstacles she faces: race, class, and sex. She grows up to become a young woman of note as she attains an education and is able to make her own decisions later in life. She defies the

notion reflected in the novel that the daughters would eventually bring in cattle as dowry which would then enable fathers to work on their fields and the family to prosper.

Mibenge also examined the problems that pregnant schoolgirls in Dow's *Far and Beyon'* have to deal with. At times these students are forbidden to continue with school, and if allowed back, they are "often preyed upon by the very school masters who should be encouraging them to study." In *Far and Beyon'*, Mosa and fellow girl-students are constantly sexually harassed by male teachers. This goes unnoticed until the girls take it upon themselves to expose it. They effectively reveal what goes on at their school through drama, poetry and song at a prize-giving ceremony where the Minister of Education is guest speaker (2007:30).



Mibenge concluded that African women authors contribute to the empowerment of women through their writing hence there is a need for more writers on the African woman's condition and thus a focus on women, by depicting them in primary character roles (2007:48). Emerging African authors, both male and female, should be aware that they could further contribute to African literature by enhancing the female character depiction alongside that of the male character, if this is so in reality, as literature is said to mirror reality (2007:48).

Mutunda (2009) did a study that pays homage to African women's writing by looking at how masculinity is represented in works from Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular from Cameroon and Senegal. This study examines how men behave according to women writers by looking at the characterisation of male protagonists. The male characters are

analysed in a variety of roles such as fathers, single men, and political figures (2009:11) and they are conforming to masculinity through these roles.

This current study is very important as it enhances what Mutunda is saying but also on top of masculinity the study wants to see whether the women characters in the literature written by women are conforming to gender roles such as femininity which is the opposite of masculinity. In short, if masculinity which is a social construct says men must behave a certain way then how are women characters opposing that and not conforming to the social construct of the concept of the opposite of masculinity.

Chaudhry (2014) carried out research on African women's writers and the politics of gender. The work of African women writers in her thesis underlines African women's specific problems and their emancipation and empowerment within their own particular cultural positions. Chaudhry (2014) argues that in their diverse discussions of women's oppression, they also critique the part played by older women (usually mothers-in-law) and younger women (sisters-in-law and co-wives). However, by speaking for other African women, these writers do not appropriate women's experiences, but rather speak 'out of concrete analysis of the particular power relations. Therefore, their work and their characters are struggling against patriarchal values at home and persistent Eurocentrism abroad. Against this background, their characters are negotiating identities which are neither essentialised nor unified but rather multiple. African women's negotiations of motherhood, feminism, marriage and religion (Islam in the context of this thesis) need to be gauged within their own cultural and material realities; otherwise, there is a danger of producing misrepresentations (Chaudhry, 2014:12-13).

Chaudhry (2014) explored Mariama Bâ's book that deals with women's marginalised status and struggles against the patriarchal structures of contemporary Senegalese society. In the words of African critic Abiola Irele, Bâ's work is 'a testimony of the female condition in Africa, while giving that testimony a true imaginative depth.' Bâ's fiction has provoked both keen appreciation and stinging criticism. An important though largely unremarked facet of both positive and negative appraisals is the assumption that the women who contest polygamy or demand greater autonomy and respect are doing so under the influence of western ideals of feminism. What these reductive assessments overlook is Bâ's subtle and searching negotiation between tradition and modernity. Her incisive responses to the cultural phenomena and institutions of 'marriage', 'mother-in-law' and 'negritude' are by no means anti-African or anti-Islam.



Rather her fictional explorations can be measured against Femi Ojo-Ade's observation on *So Long a Letter*: 'Bâ's feminism, especially as expressed by Aissatou the interpreter, smacks of Beauvoirism; the traditional marriage is a deterrent to woman's promise. No marriage. No attachment. No master. The home becomes a transitory institution. Love is a passing sentiment secondary to other elements of existence (Chaudhry, 2014:79).

Chaudhry (2014) found that Buchi Emecheta's work is predominantly feminist. Emecheta questions the fundamental institutions of African tradition in relation to their treatment of women, particularly family, marriage, tribal authority, and motherhood. Moreover, her work shows no sympathy for those women who are not ready to fight for themselves. Chaudhry (2014) adds that African women writers' reluctance to accept the 'feminist' label is due to the influence of western hegemony on the ideals of feminism, and the absence

of the categories of race and imperial history in western feminist discourses. Susan Arndt declares that 'African women view gender in the context of political, economic, cultural and social forms and mechanisms of oppression such as racism, neo-colonialism, (cultural) imperialism, capitalism and imperialism, religious fundamentalism, as well as dictatorial and/or corrupt systems. Moreover, issues that have not been traditionally defined as feminist, such as access to clean water and housing, must be included.'¹⁵ Therefore it is difficult for African women to relate to western.

In a study done by Kwatsha (2015) the focus is on single women and how they are portrayed in African literature by other women. The first thing that this article does is acknowledge women characters as being strong, independent people who resist male dominance and patriarchy. It is important to highlight that Kwatsha (2015) uses literature written by women in this study and establishes that through the work of women, other women have rights of their own and they uphold the same values as their male counterparts (2015:10). This study is very enlightening to the study underway as it paves the way. It is starting to show the positive depiction of women, this opens up a way to want to know what women did, what norms and stereotypes did they have to question to be depicted as strong and independent.

Kwatsha (2015) found that women can be depicted as being able to handle entrepreneurship, and they can have free will to choose their main partner from having multiple partners, what is most important and highlighted is that a woman does not need to be in a marriage to be successful, this thought makes one want to see the institution of marriage in another light, not in the light that Fonchingong (2006:139) observes by stating

that the heavy hand of tradition is visible in the marital institution. The intensity of marriage in the sociology of African life is heralded. He posits marriage both in real life and fiction, is perhaps, the most circumscribing factor in the life of an African woman. Marriage acts as an avenue for violence and a plethora of injustice against women Fonchingong (2006:139). This thesis seeks to enhance what Kwatsha has put forward in her study but also focus on other societal structures such as marriage, motherhood, sisterhood, the workplace and the community in general to see how women show their strength and independence by challenging gender norms in society.

Staying in the African diaspora in terms of studies, Jorgensen (2018) did a study on the depiction of African women through the eyes of African women writers. The main comment that is brought forward by this study is the fact that women are seeking to form identity through the affects and effects of colonial rule. The study uses *The Joys of Motherhood* by Buchi Emecheta (Nigeria), *Efuru* by Flora Nwapa and *Nervous Condition* by Tsitsi Dangarembga.

According to Jorgensen (2018:8) The character of Nnu Ego in Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* cannot produce a child for her first husband thus she is sent to harvest in the farm. She then remarries but she is again treated as a possession that is brought, these are words that come directly from her second husband that she was bought. Meaning that this representation depicts that a woman in Igbo culture is meant for motherhood and to prove her efficiency as a mother and wife and not to enjoy life as an individual outside of these socially defined roles (Jorgensen, 2018:8). Emecheta depicts how Nnu Ego's inability to forge a path out of gender oppression and co-

dependence on cultural expectations and social roles, leaves this step to future generations. This new path, which Nnu Ego's character declines to forge, takes strength and perseverance. Thus, the character does not see the need to do anything about the fact that she lives under people's expectation (Jorgensen, 2018:8).

In Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*, the character of Efuru after marriage is unable to get pregnant in the first year, she becomes a subject for the neighbours' gossip. It is related that woman's identity is once again tied with marriage and motherhood in this alternate representation of Igbo cultural expectations. It is therefore posited that adherence to these socially constructed roles without conscious choice is what holds individuals back from self-realization (Jorgensen 2018:10). It is important to highlight that the difference between Efuru and Nnu Ego is that Efuru does something by taking steps to transition her life by leaving her husband, cleansing herself, her return to her childhood home should be seen as her character being on the path to identity progression (self-realization) and has experienced a re-birth (Jorgensen, 2018:13).

In Jorgensen (2018) it is noted that the first two novels start of narrating co-dependence of women to a particular system and cultural ways of living while the third novel which is *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga, Tambu is in competition with the male gender and her expected role as a female in Rhodesian, Shona culture. This significant difference at novel's beginning relates a marked change in cultural dynamics (Jorgensen, 2018:18).

It is important to note that the three female characters in the three books internalize and often follow cultural expectations without conscious awareness through an engrained fear

response. It is these expectations set from the outside that all three authors detail exists as patriarchal expectations that when left unchallenged, disrupt identity progression and hinder characters' self-realization. In *Nervous Conditions* we specifically see overt physical oppression in addition to this deeply engrained, often silent, type (Jorgensen, 2018:20). However, very importantly in *Nervous Condition* the character of Tambu challenges these harmful cultural expectations and sees the reality of her situation when she mentions that she has observed her father being insensible thus Tambu's ability to challenge her father allows her to progress in her identity (Jorgensen, 2018:20).

The three novels that are analysed in Jorgensen (2018) show how the family serves as a microcosm for the oppressive practice that occurs on the larger cultural level and that to challenge these roles at the family level, as Tambu's character in *Nervous Conditions* represents, will lead to needed gradual cultural shifts (Jorgensen: 2018:23). This thesis seeks to pay homage to Jorgensen's study as it focuses on the works of African women writers. However, the focus of this thesis is that it discovers that women are capable of challenging gender norms in one of the novels. But it ends there at just highlighting that women can challenge gender stereotypes to realise their identity. It does not go into detail as to what the chosen character does to challenge these, but it focuses on the fact that identity realization is possible, the study underway is interested in the actions that women do to challenge these gender roles for them to claim identity realization. Also, it is important to highlight that this thesis provides or refers to books that are focused on colonial times and then makes reference to post-colonial books.

Observing the study by Jorgensen (2018) one can see that African literature written by women hints at the possibility of self-realization being something doable and possible for women through challenging existing norms which seem to compromise and determine how they do things. International literature written by women is also in support of the notion as exemplified by Anuradha & Suresh (2018) a study done in the same year as Jorgensen (2018) observes the same pattern on Alice Walker's novels. The argument brought forward in this study is that the work presented by Alice Walker depicts the involvement of black women in primarily destructive relationships. They are seen in the literature as being at the mercy of men, their passions, forces of nature and societal expectations (Anuradha & Suresh, 2018:96).

What is important about the study is that it highlights how there are women who are willing to take a different direction from the set norms listed above, it is said that these women dare to do things differently and act on their convictions rather than succumbing to those powers placed on the expectations (Anuradha & Suresh, 2018:96). An example of this is “a character practicing individuality and autonomy in Alice Walker's literature is that of Meridian who is married, with a son and is living with her husband. She is at the start characterized as an obedient daughter, a devoted wife and an adoring mother. But from a young age, Meridian used to challenge a lot of thought processes and things she could not understand. She avoids anything that has to do with tradition and when she graduates, she wants to leave the oppression and suffering that she is getting from society (Anuradha & Suresh, 2018:98).” The key to the above-mentioned statement about the character of Meridian is that she is in a system where she is expected to act a certain way and known to be obedient but she wants to get a better life for herself so that she can leave and be

free from being oppressed and following certain expectations. This is one of the ways one challenges norms by getting educated but in this instant the character risks getting looked at as someone who just got married to gain something. Thus, examples like the ones of Meridian are looked from the literature to be analysed.

A more recent study such as Gumede & Mathonsi (2019:3-4) looks at Zulu's novel *Umsshado* that is historically conditioned by several factors relating to public morals in a patriarchal society. It challenges human sexuality and the new outlook on women in society. It also explores some of the modern problems resulting from the 'liberated' approach to sexuality, as exemplified in *Umsshado*. The author's portrayal of the protagonist, Tholakele's, behaviour, however, actively casts her in a negative light for the reader because she is a woman, whilst Bhekani's behaviour does not seem to warrant the same opprobrium or censure. This echoes an imbalance in the treatment of men and women in the Zulu society (Gumede & Mathonsi, 2019:3-4).

Tholakele's behaviour is negatively perceived because she is a woman, as she strives for the role that would allow her to be free from traditional norms and restrictions. Whilst women were kept quasi-slaves by patriarchy, which imposed a strict control over their sexuality and reproductive faculty, they now want to break away and enjoy freedom in their dress code without any restrictions. What used to be 'open hunting season' only for men has now become possible for women as well, if they have the independence of character and the beauty and winning ways to attract men (Gumede & Mathonsi 2019:3-4).

The character of Tholakele is depicted as breaking the rules of the Zulu patriarchal tradition. If a man is allowed to make advances on a woman during their first encounter, the woman should be able to do the same. In a patriarchal society, a woman may even be scolded and accused of having loose morals when she openly shows her affection to her partner on their first encounter (Gumede & Mathonsi 2019:5).

The author seeks to depict Tholakele as a liberated woman representing women who flaunt their sexuality. Tholakele is not shy of revealing her sexual feelings when the occasion is suitable. She is a very 'open' and 'easy-going' person when it comes to expressing her sexual interests and desires (Gumede & Mathonsi 2019:5). According to the Zulu culture, Tholakele should not initiate the move so early and should have waited for Bhekani to take the initiative. For Bhekani, this is the first time he meets a girl of the type of Tholakele, who is not shy about displaying her feelings for him (Gumede & Mathonsi 2019:6). In patriarchal societies, women are seen as inactive, because they cannot initiate the process of making love: only men are supposed to take the first step. Evidently, in a patriarchal society, men are hunters and women are the prey. Tholakele wants this reversed, and equality achieved and does not need any justification or approval from anybody (Gumede & Mathonsi 2019:6).

The article by Gumede and Mathonsi can be summed up by stating that gender stereotypes about African women have been identified as one of the barriers for women achieving their full potential. Stereotypes against women are often based on preconceived notions of what women are assumed to be capable of, and this has been proved a fallacy (Gumede & Mathonsi 2019:6). It is important to remember that gender

must be understood as a social construction rather than a physiological construction. By encouraging males to analyse their socially constructed gender profiles, it is possible to educate them on how their social roles may have an impact on gender equality. This will involve analysing the entrenchment of traditional male stereotypes in society and their consequent impact on women. Certain masculinities preserve and promote the inequalities experienced by men and women (Gumede & Mathonsi 2019:6).

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter reviews literature related to gender studies in South Africa and isiXhosa specifically. The chapter began by outlining the theories that were used to guide the study and these are African Feminism and Afrocentricity. Both theories were selected because they uphold African values and cultures, whilst noting that there are elements that are oppressive to women, that need to be eliminated. The chapter then explored research studies that have focused on male and female writers. It is noted that most male writers present women in stereotypical ways in a bid to place boundaries on who women become. Women are presented as mothers and wives and good wives were those who did not challenges their husbands. Female writers in contrast presented women in better light as people with dreams as aspirations. Most female writers tackle issues like education, culture and the roles of women at home. A few female writers presented women in stereotypical ways due to socialisation. These studies lay a good foundation for the current study that explores how women utilise non-conformity to challenge gender roles.

CHAPTER 3: Analysis - First Decade

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the analysis of two books that were published in the first decade of the post liberation period from 1994 to 2004 - a novel by Nomlamli Mayosi entitled *Iqhina Lomtshato* and Yoliswa Taleni's drama book entitled *Nyana Nank'unyoko*. The first part of the chapter focuses on the analysis of *Iqhina Lomtshato* and then the second part of this chapter looks at *Nyana Nank'unyoko*. The aim of the study is to examine the language and actions that the female protagonists use to challenge gender expectations.

***Iqhina Lomtshato* by Nomlamli Mayosi**

The analysis of this Novel focuses on the following points

- Introduction of Sindiswa, the protagonist
- Expectations that Sindiswa comes across as a young woman
- How Sindiswa challenges these expectations
- The type of literature the book is
- Conclusion

3.2 Introduction of Sindiswa

The main character of the novel Sindiswa is a young girl, fresh from high school and looking for a job to fund her studies so she moves to Mthatha. The introduction of the story does not dwell much on the setting of Mthatha but as one reads the story, they are taken to a moment where Sindiswa is in a car of a mature male by the name of Maxhwele. So, what is important to take note in this section is that Sindiswa is in a car that she does not know, she does not know the person who is driving this car so it can be deduced that

she is in a state of fear. She is alerted by this male that she might be subjected to prostitution if she continues living with her friend in Mthatha. At first, it can be said that Sindiswa possesses vulnerability as a result the reader may feel pity for her and feel as though, they want to warn her or take care of her at that matter. Her journey continues and in this journey the gender norms and expectations that she comes across and how she challenges them are laid out in the following analysis.

3.2.1 Expectations she comes across and how she challenges them

This novel is centred around Sindiswa's heart being in two places at the same time. One of the important things to note about Sindiswa is that she is finding herself in a car, she is driving with a person she does not know. As the car drives away from Mthatha where she was, she tries to fight her way out of the vehicle by shouting and asking the driver whose name is Maxhwele to stop so that she can get off. He blatantly refuses to stop. In this moment, Sindiswa is expected to give in and just go to wherever the car is taking her. At first, she swears, screams, threatens and even sulks to no avail.

It turns out that Sindiswa in her silence during the drive is sad because she misses her high school boyfriend who left to look for work after they both matriculated. They promised one another that they will stay with each other forever, but she decides that she is going to keep herself busy while she awaits him. Sindiswa however falls into temptation and decides to date Maxhwele whom she met in Mthatha. Whilst she knows deep inside that she loves her high school sweetheart whose name is Skhungo as he had promised her, “**Ngenene wena ungowam, ngenene mna ndingowakho kude kuse emaphakadeni/ In honest truth you are mine and I am yours until forever (Mayosi, 1995:17)*”. These are the words that Sindiswa remembers from when last she saw Sikhungo in a place they knew

as “*indawo yedingala meeting place” which is a place where they used to meet known only by the two of them. To the reader, this sounds like a marriage vow, when Skhungo said this to Sindiswa they were not in front of a marriage officiator, but this is a vow that he made but because Skhungo had to go and look for employment, Sindiswa decided that she was going to get into a relationship with Maxhwele.

It can be noted that in the moment where Sindiswa decides to give Maxhwele a chance as the writer says when referring to Sindiswa,

*“*Lasele lide laba bunyibilika nelo lakhe inenekazi kuba laqonda ukuba ukusoloko lifing’iintshiya akusayi kulinceda nto. Labona ukuba maliyamkele loo meko lizifumana likuyo enye into loyibona kamva/His lady was now opening up a little bit because she knew that frowning would not help anything. She saw that accepting the situation she was in was a better choice and she would think about other things later (Mayosi, 1995:31)”.*

The writer is falling into the trap of presenting women as promiscuous people who cannot keep to a promise. The above act by Sindiswa in the isiXhosa society could easily influence people to call her names such as “*umadodeni” which loosely translates to “the one who loves males” but she continues in the novel to break that stereotype by doing what she thinks is suitable for her and her future. Even though Sindiswa is presented as a villain who lies to get what she wants, she achieves her dreams of an education by making Maxhwele pay for her studies. Maxhwele buys her a house but, on the side, she knows that there is Skhungo, the love of her life that she hopes will one day come back and get her. Sindiswa is doing what she thinks is right for her then according to African feminism then it means that she is valuing her everyday experiences as mentioned by Gqola (2001) that what is at the centre of African feminism is to value, the everyday

experiences of women. This is what Sindiswa does, she decides to live her life by taking situations as they come. By enjoying her life in the everyday moments.

Another aspect that the reader can be certain that Sindiswa possesses is being very loyal to her high school boyfriend Sikhungo as she after having a conversation with Maxhwele she is heard saying,

“ Hayi, Max awukamazi tu uSindiswa. Ucinga ukuba ndinganikela ngoSkhungo wam ngenxa yemali? Sis! Nokuba ningabeka izigidi phezukwentloko yakhe, sokuze. Nokuba ibingengoSkhungo na kakade. Yhu! Akandazi tu uMax. Ucinga ukuba ndingangungcothoza wakhe, impimpikazi yamapolisa ngenxa yemali! Kutheni sengathi izinto izinto ziza kukhawuleza zicace Phakathi kwethu nje? Kanti bekufuneka ndichul’ukunyathela. Zimbi izinto xa kunje. Nam ndingazibona sendibanjwa.”*

“No, Max you still don’t know Sindiswa. You think I would hand over my Skhungo because of money? Sies! Even if you would put millions on for his head, I would never. Even if it was not Skhungo, I would never. Max does not know me. He thinks I would be his spy, a pimp for the police because of money? Why does it look like things are going to be clear between us? I need to be careful. Things are not looking good; I might get arrested too.”

(Mayosi, 1995:66)

The above words by Sindiswa raise a question of whether Sindiswa is dating Maxhwele because of the life he affords her or not because if this is the case then it means that morals such as “It is wrong to date someone because of material things” were challenged by Sindiswa as she received everything from Maxhwele. She takes this a step further and does not oppose Maxhwele when he is proposing to her after she told him she was pregnant with his child, *“*Yini, Sindi, ungathini ukundifihlela into enkulu kangaka ungandixeleli. Ndandikhe ndayikrokrela ke le nto...Oko ke, Sindi, kuthetha ukuba masijonge kumalungiselelo omtshato kwalapha enyakeni/* Sindi why would you hide this big news without telling me. I once suspected this... This means we should look into

wedding preparations during the year (Mayosi, 1995:67)". It sounds as though Sindiswa is not being truthful to Max about something because after she went to the doctor, she decided that she was not going to tell him about the pregnancy.

This is because she is secretly hoping that Skhungo, the person she loves and is loyal to would make an appearance any time, *"*zihambile iinyanga wasoloko ejonge enkalweni uSindiswa ecinga ukuba angafane alibone lisithi gqi igerila lakhe, kodwa alakhe litsho ukubonakala/* Months went by with Sindiswa hopefully thinking that her cadre would show up, but he never appeared (Mayosi, 1995:67)". The fact that Sindiswa is not sure about when and if Skhungo will ever return from exile makes her choose to continue the relationship with Maxhwele, this means now that she has announced her pregnancy then she has the security of emotional and physical support from him. The continuous choice to date Maxhwele by Sindiswa is explained better by the concept of womanism because Sindiswa seems to be putting her needs first which are education and getting a job and the concept of womanism states that women should be allowed to put their needs first even if they are not supported by the dominant culture. This idea that is proposed by Womanism is supported by Igardjan and Markov (2012:305) when they state that the concept of womanism proposes that women are fearless, playful, compassionate to be who and do what they feel is right for them. This is an extreme where a person might get hurt in the situation, Sindiswa might be deemed selfish, she might be painted as someone who is playing with other people's feelings for her personal gain.

Things seem to be aligning with Sindiswa's heart as it turns out that she is carrying Skhungo's child. This explains the hesitation that she had in telling Maxhwele after she came back from the doctor however, Sindiswa still continues to defy the normal route of

telling the truth as the book says, “... **lada lasondela ixesha lokubeleka kukaSindiswa...Nakuba uMax wayesaluphethe uphando ngokuya lisondela ixesha aya esonyukela amabhongo kulindelwe umntu omtsha/...*Sindiswa’s delivery date was close...Although Max was still busy with his investigation, with the due date approaching, the pride was increasing waiting for the new person (Mayosi, 1995:78)” Sindiswa continues to lead Max on into thinking that she is carrying his child, at the same time when Skhungo was present they discussed her pregnancy and he promised that he was going to make things right when he comes back for Christmas. This situation that Sindiswa is in coincides with the notion that she still has two men that she lives different lives with and continues defying the expectation that a woman cannot or is not supposed to be dating two men to an extent that she falls pregnant by one of them and makes both believe that they are the father.



The last straw of a young isiXhosa woman challenging, and defying gender expectations is when Sindiswa stands Maxhwele up on their wedding day as she decided to marry and elope with Skhungo the night before her wedding. When Sindiswa was preparing for her wedding with Maxhwele as she was at her home to get married the following day, “**Ufazana phandle lwaluxa kekile lubhaka izonka lumana ukutsho Nguwo! Nguwo! Nguwo! Iza kuphuma inzwakazi! Uzuhlamb’amehlo/* Young brides outside were busy baking bread, occasionally going it is a wedding! It is a wedding! It is a wedding! Watch the space, a beautiful woman will appear (Mayosi, 1995:95)”. Even though there were these preparations Sindiswa got a visit from her friend who took her to see her high school sweetheart that she had given up on.

When she sees Skhungo during the night, “*Wamchazela konke ngoMax/ She told him everything about Max (Mayosi, 1995:101-102)”. When Sindiswa finally tells Skhungo the truth about her relationship and the reasons why she became involved with Maxhwele he decides to move past it without feeling any strong negative emotions towards her by saying,

“*Sindi, mandikuxelele phandle ukuba andizange ndiluthandabuze uthando lwakho. Ngethuba ndingekho ndandikhe ndicinge ukuba mhlawumbi ndakufika sowutshintshile kodwa ndiphinde ndizithembise ngokuthi uSindi wam akanakutshintsha. Konke oku ubundixelela kona masikuthathe ngokuba ibiyindlela yokusiphazamisa. Kodwa ke akuphumelelanga.

Sindi, let me tell you explicitly that I have never doubted your love. The time I was not around, I used to think that maybe I would arrive to a different you, but I would convince myself by saying my Sindi will never change. Let us take all that you have told me as a something that was meant to distract us. But it has not succeeded (Mayosi, 1995:102)”.

According to the feminist theory, the understanding and Sindiswa working together with Skhungo to cement their relationship could be considered as complementarity by the African feminism and Afrocentric paradigm. Peter (2010) supports this claim of complementarity by quoting Acholonu (1995:39-41) when she says men and women are complementary opposites in the traditional African society, such that no gender dominates the social life of the people. This stems from the fact that unknowingly from Skhungo's side, these two have both been working together by making sure that Skhungo is in a place of safety all the time as he was hunted by the police. After Skhungo is made aware of Sindiswa's attempt to keep their relationship going and his life safe he shows his cooperation proposed by the Afrocentric paradigm and African feminism by proposing marriage and having a brief conversation with Sindiswa stating,

“*Sithandwa ndilapha nje ndize kucela ukuba ube yinkosikazi yakowethu. Uyavuma ukutshata nam, Sindi?”

“My love, I am here because I want to ask for your hand in marriage. Do you want to marry me, Sindi?”

“*Sindi, asisenakuphinda sahlukane ngoku. Uyaqonda ukuba oko kuthetha ukuba kufuneka nawe ulishiye eli?”

“Sindi, we can never be separated now. You do understand that this means you need to leave this place?”

“*ndibenegerila kuloo ndawo likuyo? Yintoni enye endingaphinda ndiyinqwenele?”

“Be with my soldier wherever he is. What else would I wish for?”

(Mayosi, 1995:102)

Taking note of all these actions that Sindiswa does, in a typical African society it could be said that all her actions are a disgrace, they don't make her a woman, that she is shaming her family, that she is not a real woman or respected woman. All this is frowned upon by the African feminism theory. What Sindiswa did is the ultimate challenge to gender norms, more specifically how women are supposed to act and carry themselves when it comes to relationships. Throughout the story Sindiswa prioritises her needs and she would be called out by society because her prioritisation of her needs is not according to the African feminism in line with the primary needs of the isiXhosa society. By this it means exploring two relationships by a woman has always been a taboo in the African society. To sum up this point, Nkealah (2006:134) explains Sindiswa's actions by saying that Feminism, therefore, has as its ultimate goal the triumphal emancipation of the woman as a unique, distinct individual with a mind uncluttered by patriarchal beliefs and abusive submission to tradition.

3.3 Type of literature

Iqhina lomtshato falls under the reformist African-feminist literature because this form of feminist literature provides new scope for women in society. Men are criticised as individuals in this type of literature. However, in this book, there is not much criticism on

the way men behave towards the women in their lives. The reader is introduced to a woman who was willing to prostitute Sindiswa in Mthatha when she was looking for work, this then affirms the fact that the book is reformist because there are women alongside men who are criticised for negative treatment of women. This is explained by Nkealah (2006:33) when saying that in these texts, we often find women characters who share the responsibility for the criticised aspects. But this complicity of women tends to play a subordinate role. *Iqhina Lomtshato* seems to propose alternative ways of living for the African woman, in this instance Sindiswa choosing to remain loyal and hopeful that the person she loves the most will return for her while also finding a way to survive by choosing to love a man who is capable of taking care of her and the text has a happy ending for Sindiswa who finally makes a decision to marry her high school boyfriend and elope with him.



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3.3.1 Summary

It is very important to understand that a lot could have gone wrong in Sindiswa's life for dating these two men but the fact that nothing happened highlights the bravery that she possesses to carry on living her life with these two men. One might say that she came out lucky and victorious. What is interesting about Sindiswa is that she is a ball of characteristics and for a young isiXhosa woman or as a woman it is rare to find especially when it comes to relationships. Sindiswa comes from a traditional family, and she chooses to love two men at the same time but without them knowing about each other until she decides at the end whom she is going to marry. At the end she finally decides to marry her high school boyfriend and elope with him. The theory of African feminism and Afrocentricity does not support Sindiswa's actions as she puts herself and her needs first.

These needs are not the most dominant in the isiXhosa society, so she does not concern herself much about societal expectations but her own happiness. Even when she decides to come clean to Skhungo, she is supported by the concept of complementarity as she has a firm argument as to why she did what she did. Thus, the life of Sindiswa paves the way into the fact that young women have the will to challenge prescribed gender norms, will this be the same case or not in the life of Balise in the following section. The next book to be critiqued is the drama book *Nyana nank'unyoko*.

***Nyana nank'unyoko by Yoliswa Taleni**

The focus of this analysis revolves around these points:

- Introduction of Balise, the protagonist
- Expectations that Balise and other women come across
- How Balise and other women challenge these expectations
- Other strong female roles
- Women working together for a common goal
- Type of Literature
- Conclusion

3.3.2 Introduction to Balise

The first introduction in the drama is of the character of Balise who is the lead character. Balise finds out that she is pregnant while she is still studying at UNITRA, she decides to tell her boyfriend, Thamsanqa. He denies having impregnated her, he goes as far as telling her that she is going crazy as shocked as he is, he says,

*“*Intoni? Uthi kutheni? Unzima inyanga yesithathu? Ke uyixelela bani loo nto? Hayi thetha eny’into, ungaphambaneli kum uyeva? Ndizokufunda mna eUnitra ukuba uzokudlala wena, mna ndiyayazi into endizokuyenza apha (Utsho sele emi ngeenyawo)”*

“What? What do you mean? You are three months pregnant? Then who are you telling that? What do I have to do with it? Tell me something else, don’t be mad, if you have come to play then I have come to study here, I know what I have come to do! (saying this while on his feet)”

(Taleni 1997:3)

Thamsanqa continues and says,

*“*Ndithetha ukuba Balise Ludidi ungasayi kuze uphinde ulubone unyawo lwam lunyathela apho ukhoyo. Hamb’okufuna uyise wosana lwakho, Andingoyise weenkedama mna....”* / “What I mean here Balise Ludidi is that you will never see me set my foot in the path that you walk on. Go and search for the father of your baby, I’m not the father of orphans”



(Taleni 1997:3-4)

When Thamsanqa says this to Balise, she reacts in an unexpected way for a female, by remaining calm, a character trait she possesses throughout the novel. In the story, her calmness presents her as a flat character. Bernardo (2013) states that a flat character is only noticeable for one kind of personality trait or characteristic. Whereas a dynamic character is a character that changes over time, usually as a result of solving a central conflict (Bernardo, 2013). What is admirable about the character of Balise in her interaction with Thamsanqa is that she swears and takes a decision to take responsibility for her actions by keeping the pregnancy and is willing to deal with the consequences. Balise does not even sit and think about whether she wants to get rid of the pregnancy or not. That says a lot about her character and how responsible she seems to be.

When Balise gets a visit from her fathers' younger brother at school and is asked whether she wants to go and report the pregnancy to Thamsanqas' family she says, "**kunyaizelekile ukuba lisiwe Tamnci*" / "It is imperative that we go and report it uncle"

(Talení 1997:17)

In this short interaction, there is an image of a very strong woman who has acceptance over her mistakes and is willing to take responsibility for those mistakes without involving so many parties. One would consider where isiXhosa young women come from when it comes to institutions such as marriage. A girl child agreed to whatever her father wanted when she made a mistake of falling pregnant, even if her father wanted to marry the girl to a man who had five wives, she would have to accept it. Balise is portrayed as a woman who possesses so much independence.

When Balise is chased out from her home by her father, which brings the analysis to the first expectation that Balise seems to have defied with her actions. Balise falls pregnant out of wedlock which is an action that is outside of the societal expectations in the isiXhosa culture. She goes and asks Thamsanqa for help, but Thamsanqa continues being rude to her and he tells her where to get off. The focus here is on how Balise reacts to his rudeness, although Thamsanqa is giving her a cold shoulder by being rude towards her in this situation, she still refers to him by his nickname "Thamie" which shows how calm she is about this matter. Balise in this situation could be realising that being angry or replying to Thamsanqa with the same anger is not going to help her situation.

Balise loses her belongings, she asks for places to stay but she is kicked out, she resorts to one thing, and she speaks to God and says, "**Ndinike intliziyo eyamkelayo*"

nengakhalaziyo ze ndingasoli mntu, ndingabasoli abazali bam koko ndibathande” / “Lord, grant me a heart that does not complain so that I don’t point fingers at anyone including my parents and just love them.”(Talení 1997:34)

Balise asks for strength from God. She possesses the strength of a strong praying woman who becomes vulnerable and lets out all her issues in front of God and asks for forgiveness and Balise is trying to say that she understands why people around her including her parents reacted the way they did after they found out about the pregnancy. She is asking for strength to remain the person she was before the pregnancy happened.

After Balise survives the attack that was planned by Thamsanqa, she decides that as she does not have anything her child deserves a whole lot more than she can give him as she takes a decision that she will give away her child to a person who will feed him and clothe him. This shows how selfless she is. Balise here realises that she needs to start thinking about the life that she has brought into the world and what is best for it. She may have not gone with this the proper way, but she followed the saying that says “desperate times call for desperate measures”. This is certainly commendable because a lot of young women would have gone and threw the child in a rubbish site somewhere, where the child would die by itself, but Balise realises that she needs to preserve the life of her child, she carries the child by leaving a letter with it saying she needs help. After leaving a child at a home she fights for a chance to go back to school and become a teacher.

In this drama both the Afrocentric paradigm and African feminism are at play. Firstly, the Afrocentric paradigm allows the reader to sympathise with the choice that Balise makes when she decides that she does not have anything therefore her only option at that point

would be to leave a note with the baby on a veranda of a home she does not know. In a literal sense it could be said that Balise had the idea in her head that says “it takes a village to raise a baby” because the wife and husband took her baby in and raised him as their own until he was old. A family raised Balise’s child, unconsciously they could have been applying a sensitivity that Izgarjan and Markov (2012:311) claim women from Africa have embraced especially towards mothers, new mothers as they are vulnerable. In the mist of her struggles, she realised that there is a community which the Afrocentric paradigm advocates for that could help her in raising her child.

3.3.3 Other strong female roles

In this drama, there seems to be two kinds of women, those who experience patriarchy in their households such as Nomawonga who is Balise’s mother, and those who encounter it outside their home such as the character of Balise. These two types of women react differently to what and how men present themselves. In the end the reader is presented with a sense of community and friendship in the women’s relationship.

The reader’s first encounter of Nomawonga and how she receives negative treatment is when the family receives news by letter from Balise telling them that she is pregnant. The first reaction of Langa who is Balise’s father is

Langa: “*O! Ujikeleza nje ungad’uphum’entweni ubuyazi le nto yalo mntwana hi? Mna ndikhuph’imali zam ndisa umntwana esikolweni kanti wena uyayazi le nto iqhubekayo.”/“Oh! You are going round and round you knew the situation of this child? I spend my money paying for school whereas you know what is going on”

Nomawonga: “*Umntwan’eneBhele ndaza ndavelelwa bantu, ndiyazela phi mna?”/ “Child of Bhele here comes trouble, how do I know?”

Langa: *“*Unyanyela phi wena? Ugqib’ukuthi ngoku ingathi kanti lo mtwana umke nala nja akunjalo? Ubusitsho njani xa ke ungazi nto. hi? Phendula. Sukukhuph’amehlo. Thetha. Yabona ke qalisa ngoku upakishe lonke idlavu lakho nelentombi yakho endlini yam ndingaze ndiphinde ndibone mcondo wenu apha undiva kakuhle?”* / “How do you know? You just said that the child better not have gone with that dog. Why did you say that if you don’t know anything? Huh? Answer. Don’t widen your eyes. Speak. You, see? Start packing everything that is yours with your daughter from my house. I never want to see you guys here again; do you understand me?”

(Talení 1997:10)

From the above exchange, Langa shows how he does not have respect for his wife. He has placed the burden or responsibility of raising children on the mother. He is not mindful of the fact that the positive growth of children is dependent on both the parents of the child. The way Langa reacts to Nomawonga shows the way she is socialised in this marriage, this is visible in the brief statements that he utters towards her, these statements seem to want to prove how he is the powerful person in the household for example he says:



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*“*Mandile ndihluthe ndilale wena emzin’am, undivile?”*

“I must eat and be full and sleep in my house, do you understand me?”

(Talení 1997:19)

The above statements uttered by Langa may suggest that Langa is a possessive husband as he uses the words *“endlini yam/ my house”* *“emzin’am/ my house”*. From the outside perspective, a person sees that Langa and Nomawonga are united through holy matrimony, but he speaks to his wife as though she had no contribution towards building the home that he is possessive over. In the story, it is not said that Nomawonga is a working woman. A reader can then deduce that Nomawonga and Langa are married traditionally which in the African setting could mean that Langa is the one that is working and the provider for the family. This then gives him the authority to dictate to his wife and

say the statements above. But the focus of this is Nomawonga and how she reacts to her husband, in the incidents prior this statement that Langa uttered. Nomawonga seems to not possess the energy to stand up to her husband because at one stage, Nomawonga tries to stand up for herself, but controls herself as she remembers her place when speaking to her husband.

The difference between these two types of women is emphasised when Balises' mother who is Nomawonga suggests that she must have an abortion:

Nomawonga: “*...*Bakhona abantu abanokunceda. Uza kube usanyisa usana olungenayise kule mpucuko, yinto obuyikhathalele ngantoni leyo?*”

Ndingakunika nalo mali usuke umxelele uyihlo ukuba uthe kanti ubunengqele”

Nomawonga: “...There are people who can help you. You are going to be nursing a baby with no father in this richness, why did you care about this? I'd even give you the money and tell your father you had a cold”

Balise: “**Hayi enkosi Bhelekazi kodwa leyo into soze ndiyenze. Ndidanile ukuba iphume kuwe loo nto. Ndixolele ukusokola kunokub---*”.

Balise: “No thank you Bhelekazi but that I will never do. I'm disappointed that you are the one saying this. I would rather suffer than...”

Nomawonga: “**Kulungile ke Nobhetele hamba uzibonele (Uyaphuma)*”

Nomawonga: It's fine if you think you are better, you will see for yourself.

(Talení 1997:20)

Nomawonga threatens Balise because she is feeling pressure from her husband who has put the blame on her. This is unfair to Nomawonga because raising a child to have awareness and take responsibility should be what both parents do. Langa is distancing himself from the teachings that his daughter carries with her. According to the Reformist feminist theory, Nomawonga, because of the way she has personally been socialised in her marriage she now acts and possesses the criticised aspects of her husband because she puts Balise in a corner and kind of dictates and implies to her that she needs to have an abortion for her to stay at her home or else she must leave. Wisker (2000:133) asserts that complementarity is essential for feminism to work as it is what they advocate for not

for it to be conflictual which is the definition of the relationship between Nomawonga and her husband as she is socialised to act a certain way.

Nomawonga has been socialised this way, which would make it easy to say that Langa is proving to be a coward because Balise is also his daughter so he should be taking responsibility that he may have not raised his daughter the right way also. Yantolo-Sotyelelwa (2005) agrees with the above by saying that male bullying tendencies in the African society are based on male domination because males are free to accuse their wives of a child's misconduct to the extent of disowning them.

This brings another point about the difference between men and women in the African society. Women are seen as nurturers and men as providers. Langa could be reacting this way about his daughter, he could be blaming his wife about the mistake that Balise made because the responsibility of nurturing has been placed on Nomawonga. However, this does not make his behaviour right. If anything, that this paper is trying to do is to highlight the fact that the responsibility of raising children, the responsibility of disciplining children, the responsibility of instilling values in children is for both parents.

In this drama this could highlight the change of times which is what this study is about. The young women can hold their own and stand up for themselves while older women such as Nomawonga are still controlled by the patriarchal structures in society. This is evident when Balise refuses to listen to her mothers' suggestion about getting rid of the pregnancy because she chooses to take responsibility rather than being pressured into doing something that does not feel right to her.

3.3.4 Women working together for a common goal

Credit must be given to how Balise, Thembele and Nobantu in the last scenes seem to work together. It begins when Balise first discovers that she is pregnant. Nomonde, a friend from Unitra stands up for her to Thamsanqa who refuses to take responsibility by saying,

Thamsanqa: “*UBalise bekutheni yena az’angazikhuse---”

Thamsanqa: “Why didn’t Balise use protecti---”

Nomonde: “*Utheth’ububhanxa. Kukho nto ongayaziyo ukuba umhlaba ungqukuva. Akuzilibali uhlekisa ngoBalise umphelelisa nesikolo, ngaphezulu umkade ngomntwana ongenayise, kodwa ayinye into exak’umntu...”

Nomonde: “You are talking nonsense, ... You are making fun of Balise taking away her chance at education, on top of that leaving her with a child without a father, but then there is no a one thing that challenges a person....”

Thamsanqa: “*Yintoni ebuhlungu endakha ndayenz’ emntwini mntwanandini?”

Thamsanqa: “What have I done to hurt anyone young girl?”

Nomonde: “*Ungandixoxisi wethu mna. Ungaze ngaphezulu uphinde uvule umlomo nam, ngaphandle kokuba ulungise into oyenze kuBalise. Namhlanje wena uya kowenu uBalise yena akagoduki ngenxa yakho! Ulungile mkhanyele uBalise, kodwa uya kuchancatha phezu komgca welishwa ude uyokubhubha nalo Mfundo yakho yepeni”

Nomonde: “Don’t put me in a courtroom. Don’t you ever speak to me again not unless you fix what you did to Balise. Today you are going home but Balise isn’t going home because of what you did to her! It’s fine deny Balise but you will be walking on top of badluck until your last days with that education of yours.”

(Talen 1997:8)

The above exchange proves how Nomonde is willing to lose her own friendship because Balise’s friendship with her means that much more. This friendship contradicts the popular idea of female friendships being viewed as an institution that is filled with jealousy and envy. According to Martinussen et al (2019:9) women friendship is a source of mixed modes of therapy where it is expected that strong opinions are expressed without being

melodramatic. This is exactly what the reader witnesses when this group of women interacts.

Towards the end of the story, the reader finds that the responsibility of men falls and the role of Balise, Themabela and Nobantu as women comes to life and shines. To prove how they make things come to life, an example would be the instant of giving birth, making things right when Balise's father starts admitting his faults and sharing responsibility, understanding each other's life and struggles, it is just a good scene to imagine because they give the reader the idea that everyone wins at the end of the day and indeed everyone is a winner because Balise's child is grown and healed, so does Balise and the rest of the people. They all find closure.

Most of the women in this book prove that "friendship is a refuge, time-off, a site where women support each other to perfect the self and to navigate the demands of their lives (Martinussen et al, 2019:14)".



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3.3.5 Type of literature

Nyana, nank'unyoko is a drama book that seems to take the Reformist-feminist approach. There is a happy ending, because Balise's father realises his mistakes and he reconciles with his daughter and has better treatment of his wife. Nomawonga, Balise's mother falls under the group of women who are taking part in promoting patriarchy by failing to stand up for themselves. Nomawonga's role is that of a subordinate, as she follows her husband's instruction and turns on her daughter asking her to terminate her pregnancy.

In terms of the tragedy that Balise has been through as highlighted above, the book can also be explained by what Arndt (2002) deemed the Radical African feminist approach

which highlights the bad treatment that women go through physically or psychologically. Taking the things that Balise went through such as being denied by her boyfriend, being chased away from home by her father, her boyfriend sending people to hunt her down and murder her because of refusing to abort the child. Although things don't stay bad for Balise as she reunites with her father and her child and people in her life but a big part of the novel asserts that she had to carry herself and be carried by other women as the men in her life mistreated her.

In summary, the main character, Balise has been shaped to portray strength, resilience, a person who can take responsibility for her actions. She had to come across a system that perceives her as a threat to lives and managed to escape death. The most important thing about her character is taking responsibility. A lot of women fear quickly as a result make instant decisions to please other people, but Balise chose herself and what she thought coincided with her principles and values and it works out for her. She reconciles with her son, and she tells the truth, and she is happy. So, three things that describe Balise as a woman are that she is responsible, honest with herself and the situation around her and she is selfless. Balise is also supported by other women, and these are portrayed throughout the book and supported by the theory of African feminism and Afrocentricity.

3.4 Conclusion

Overall, the two books discussed in this chapter pave a way for the next chapters because the protagonists seem to be able to hold their own when it comes to challenging prescribed gender and societal norms. Interestingly the first book which has Sindiswa at the centre seems to epitomise the objectives of this study as Sindiswa goes against the

backdrop of what it means to be a young woman in the isiXhosa culture. In her path, she seems to challenge one of the biggest misconceptions of what it is to be a woman, how womanhood is categorised by not having the free will to choose the suitable partner from the choices that a person is presented with. This is a challenge to one of the oldest norms where a woman was often married to whoever man came to ask for her hand in marriage even though she may not even know that man. This is while the second protagonist by the name of Balise shows the reader what it means to take responsibility, being selfless and most importantly how the community plays a role in changing a person's life through complementarity and cooperation. Thus, the character of Balise and in particular Sindiswa lay the foundation of what is to be expected from the next chapter as it deals with two books that have been written in the second decade after 1994.



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CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS - SECOND DECADE

4.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on two books that were published in the second decade from 2005 to 2014, a drama book by Thenjiswa Ntwana entitled *Akwaba* and Nompumezo Buzani's drama book entitled *Hamba nam ndipheleke*. The first book that is going to be looked is *Akwaba* followed by *Hamba nam ndipheleke*. The aim is to look and examine the language and actions that the female protagonists use to challenge presented gender expectations.

4.1.1**Akwaba* by Thenjiswa Ntwana

In this book, the life of Phumela as the protagonist is examined closely to see how she challenges gender norms. The following points will be taken into consideration when examining the characters:



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- Introduction of Phumela
- The expectations she comes across as woman
- How she challenges these expectations
- Type of Literature
- Summary

4.1.2 The introduction of Phumela

Phumela is introduced to the reader as a young girl who is very hard working and smart, she is raised by her grandmother under very poor conditions. Phumela stays in a shack with her grandmother, they do not have much. The money that they have which comes from social grant for the grandmother is for necessities, the shack does not have

electricity. She has been wearing the same uniform which her grandmother sows for her because it is old. This could be an influence in her attitude towards the life that Yaleka introduces to her because she longs for independence and a life where she can afford herself and her grandmother. One needs to take note that Phumela appears to be all about herself and the things that she wants which is what the concept of womanism is about in African feminism and how this works together with the Afrocentric paradigm. She is determined to succeed; she excels in high school and gets a bursary to go and study at the University of the Western Cape where she meets her husband whom they go through rough patches with but then end up as a happy family.

4.1.3 Expectations Phumela comes across and challenges

The reader is at the beginning introduced to the generational difference between Phumela and her grandmother. In their first conversation, the grandmother seems to have an expectation that Phumela must marry and abide by the rules that are set for marriage by society which is waking up very early in the morning and serving tea to her in-laws. This notion seems to be a universal expectation as Mibenge (2007:19) states, it is expected that a young woman will grow up, get married and bear children, especially sons who will continue the family name. It is deemed culturally imperative that young women be socialised from an early age to aspire to married life and motherhood; they are thus taught how to handle marriage and motherhood from a fairly young age. The grandmother says:

Mankwali: “*...Wowi! Hayi nithambile bantwana beli xesha. Uyakwenda njani ke ntomb’am xa usoyiswa nazizitya ezibini? Emzini akufunwa mntu unambuzelayo. Kufunwa izinqina-nqina ezivuka ngonyezi, zitshis’oomamazala nootatazala ngento ephungwayo. Kufuneka bathi bevuka abanye abantu abe umakoti selevela kutheza, ii-emele zizele qhu ngamanzi, iimbiza zindyondya eziko. Wena ungaxothwa kusasa (Bahleke).”

Mankwali: “Wow! The young women of this generation are quite weak. How are you going to cope in your marital home when you can’t cope with the dishes? If you are married then it means you cannot be this weak, you have to wake your mother and your father-in-law with a very hot cup of tea early in the morning. When the rest of the family wakes up, the new bride must be up already with buckets of water filled with water already. You would never survive in your marital home (They laugh)”

Phumela: **“Yhu! Nkwali ucinga ukuba ndinexesha lokwenda mna? Andinakube ndisiya kuzixhaphazisa emzini mna. Kumaphupha onke endinawo ngekamva, alikho tu elinento yokwenza nokwenda. Ndinezinto ezininzi ezicaphukileyo nezibalulekileyo kunokwenda.”*

Phumela: “Nkwali, do you think I am interested in marriage? In all the dreams that I have about my life, being married is not one of them. I have many important things to take care of than marriage. I’ll never go and abuse myself in another home”

(Ntwana 2004:1)

In this exchange, Phumela is aligned with Womanism that criticises the point of view that says woman need to act a certain way when they get to their marital home. According to Chaudhry (2014:106) a girl child is conditioned from an early age to see her main role or aspire to be a wife and bear children. In her words, it sounds as though it is being abused and taken advantage of by the marital system. Therefore, in her view she wants to not even attempt to be a part of the marital system as it might compromise her dreams and her individuality.

The second expectation comes from Phumela’s best friend Yaleka when they are having a conversation in Phumela’s room at the University of the Western Cape. Yaleka introduces the idea of a man who is interested in Phumela but she does not show interest. The conversation goes as follows,

Yaleka: **“(ethethela phantsi) He sana, kukho umntu ofuna ukusikhupha asise kula Jazz Festival iza kuba seGoodHope Centre. How’s that gal? Uyazi ke*

sana, siza kukhutshwa ngegama lakho! Hayi sana ndakuhlamba ezantsi kwakho inene. Ithamsanqa likuncumele tshom'am"

Yaleka: "(speaking softly) Friend, there is a guy who wants to take us to the Jazz festival happening at the Good Hope Centre. How's that girl? Just know that you are the reason he is taking us out. You are very lucky; I so wish I could be you."

Phumela: *"*(uphele tu umdla) Khawutsho ke Yali, kwezi uzithethileyo ke tshom'am yeyiphi eyona Lotto? Okanye ke mhlawumbi ndikungxamele ubungekafiki kuyo?"*

Phumela: "(Not showing interest) Tell me Yali, from all these things that you have mentioned, which one is the lottery? Or you aren't finished talking yet?"

(Ntwana 2004:14)

Phumela responds as follows:

Phumela: *"*Yali tshom'am lixesha elingakanani uyitshomi yam ukuba ube akukandazi nangoku? Andingomntu uhoye ezo zinto mna. Ukuba ubusazi zonke ezi zinto uzithethayo zezona zimtshabhisayo apha kum. Ndiza kumenza ntoni umntu ofunwa ngumntu wonke? Olu hlobo uthetha ngalo ngaye akangowam tu. Xa ndimthanda umntu ndiza kumthanda "nokuba", hayi "kuba". Nditsho ndisithi ke tshomi xa ndimthanda andizukumthandiswa yinto ayiyo okanye izinto anazo, ndiza kumthanda nokuba uyintoni. Xa ndimthanda ndakumthanda nokuba akanayo nalo moto uhamba ebetha ubhontsi."*

Phumela: "Yali, my friend. How long have you known me for you not to know the type of person that I am. I couldn't care less about such things. If you know me, you'd know that the things that you are mentioning are the things that make me not have any interest in a person. What am I going to do with a person who's wanted by many girls? The way you describe him proves that he is not my type. If I love a person, I love him in whatever state not because of what he has. When I love him, I will love him even if he does not have that car."

(Ntwana 2004:15)

Phumela continues to express what she wants and what works for her despite the pressure to settle down. She may not have everything but that does not deter her from her values and principles of choosing and doing what is right for her. In the above statement she expresses the kind of man that she wants, meaning that she is not going

to succumb to the expectation of her peer pressuring her into giving attention to a man because he has money. It is very important to note that Phumela does not oppose a relationship at this stage, but she is not going to fall for anyone she does not have a connection with. One will note that in a conversation with her grandmother, Phumela had said she would never marry but she is entertaining the thought of a relationship now. Time is an important factor in her decision making and making the right choice matters to her. Emecheta is quoted by Chaudhry (2014:106) in her writings as claiming that woman must assert her self- confidence, self-positioning. She is responsible for her self-empowerment. Phumela's reply shows this self-confidence to choose what she wants to do with her life, and she shows the free will to change her mind and whatever given point as she has done with wanting a partner that she said she didn't want at first.

Phumela faces a big challenge in her life when she discovers that she is HIV positive as told by her doctor after she was called in, she was tested during her time of pregnancy.

Phumela: *“(Selede wampatshampatsha kukuxhalaba.) Zithini, kukho inyo engalunganga gqirha?”*

Phumela: *“(Worried sick) What are the results saying, Is there anything wrong doctor?”*

Khanya: *“(Eziqinisa kodwa ebonakala ukuba uyoyika.) Ingaba kukho nto ityhulu Ta Doc?”*

Khanya: *“(trying to remain strong but fearful) Is there anything wrong doctor?”*

Gqirha: *“(Elungisa ukuhlala) Ewe mandithi ikho. Kuye kwafumaniseka ukuba unentsholongwane kaGawulayo. You are HIV Posi...(Akaligqibanga, wasitsho esofelweyo uPhumela...)”*

Gqirha: *“(Sitting properly) Yes, there is. It has been found that you are HIV posi... (He didn't finish, Phumela was balling with tears)*

(Ntwana 2004:60)

After this revelation by the doctor, Phumela decides to stay with her husband. She shows the strength and the independence that she possessed when she was still living with her grandmother as a young girl when she makes the choice of staying with her husband. By being her and her husband's strength, she is not particularly challenging gender norms but rather societal norms that come with a stigma saying people with HIV cannot be together or live long or have a happy marriage because Phumela is adamant that she is going to live her life with her husband and continue creating a happy home. "Ukubambisana/ working together" is a very important concept that is shown by this couple when they decide that they are going to hold on to each other and be each other's strength. The union after the struggles the couple faced can best be explained by Chaudhry (2014:314) when she says that Womanism continues to reinvent itself and functions as an operational paradigm which carefully monitors processes of creation and definition of the roles women play in their communities so that previous mistakes can be avoided, and essential balance maintained.

Womanism is still dedicated to the struggle against oppression and fragmentation and against any kind of behaviour whose goal is to denigrate a community, or an individual based on the difference in race, culture or class. It can therefore be asserted that womanism evolved from a policy to a philosophy of life. Walker (2005) voices this philosophy in her call to all women to create a platform based on the communality of female experience which would allow them to communicate better with one other. As Phumela points out in the following,

Phumela: *"Sthandwa sam okwenzekileyo kuyafana nokudaliweyo. Ayiloxesha lika- Akwaba eli, kuba sekukwabekile. Asingobafi tu sisaphila kwaye siseza*

kuphila Akukho nto ishotayo tu kuthi. Siza kubakhulisa abantwana bethu, sikhulise nabazukulwana ngaphezulu.”

Phumela: “My love, what has happened is the same as something that has been created by God. We can't be having regret in this moment because things have happened. We are not dying; we are still very much alive and we are still going to live a healthy life. We are going to raise our children and our children's children”

(Ntwana 2004:65)

The decision that these two take, to stay together can be explained by the African feminism theory as Womanism as proposed by Ogunyemi (1985) that there is more growth if when men and women work together and form relationships where there is no exclusion of one gender or the other gender looking to be more powerful than the other; which is usually a practise that males do in the relationships from the concept of being the head of the household. This is supported by Nkealah (2006:138) when quoting Ogunyemi (1985) who says that ‘womanism believes in the freedom and independence of women like feminism; unlike feminism, it wants meaningful union between men and women and will wait patiently for men to change their sexist stance’. Ogunyemi (1985)'s emphasis seems to be that womanism, unlike radical feminism, seeks to create a space in which women and men work together in partnership rather than one in which women exercise control to the exclusion of men.

This point is emphasised by Phumela's friend when she says,

Phindiswa: “*...uyazi eyona nto indivuyise nangakumbi kulaa nkcazo kaKhanya izolo, kukufumanisa ukuba nguwe omomelezileyo nomnike ithemba. Yazi Lala, olu hlobo lothando lwakho noKhanya lunqabile. Mbulele uThixo ngaloo nto. Baninzi abantu ababebenokuncama konke xa bebenokulufumana. Ndiba uvile futhi wazibona iimeko zabantu phaya kulaa ntlangano izolo. Sana, akukho nto ibaluleke njenge-support xa ukule meko. Into ebulala abantu abaninzi kukuzithwalela bebodya lo mnqamlezo. Ubulaleke ke uwedwa de uphelelwe ngamandla woyisakale”

Phindiswa: “You know what makes me happier in Khanya’s speech yesterday is finding out that it was you who gave him hope. You know Lala your love with Khanya is rare, you must thank God for it. There are people who would die for it. I trust that you have seen and heard other people situations in the meeting yesterday. There is nothing more important than support when you are in this situation. What kills a lot of people is carrying this load all by themselves. You lose the will when you alone and then you give up”

(Ntwana 2004:71)

Phindiswa in her statement affirms the theory that Womanism makes about men and women finding the common ground in working together. Afrocentricity also suggests a sense of community and the support and motivation that comes with the institution of marriage is also advocated for by the words of Phindiswa and the actions that Phumela and Khanya took to support one another in their challenging time.

However, this raises another point that can be debated or may highlight the different reactions that males have to the situation. For example, Phumela is infected with HIV by her husband Khanya but she makes a decision to stay in the marriage and find a way to make the marriage work with her husband, whereas Phindiswa who is married to Mthuthuzeli is the one who receives results from her doctor that she is HIV positive and her husband Mthuthuzeli leaves her. Phindiswa narrates this experience to Phumela at a time when her husband had left her as she says:

Phindiswa: “**Ngelishwa ke akukhange kube njalo. Okokuqala mandikuxelele ukuba njengokuba ndikwela qela nje; andiphelekanga mntu. Kwafunyaniswa ukuba ndinale ntsholongwane kaGawulayo ngeliya xesha bendinzima*”

Phindiswa: “unfortunately, it was never like that. Firstly, let me tell you that I am part of the group because I am not accompanying anyone. I was found to have contracted the HIV virus while I was pregnant.”

(Ntwana 2004:71)

Phindiswa here declares the start of her trauma, the trauma to her marriage. This was a start to the challenge the institution of her marriage was to face. In this challenge she declares that she had no idea where she might have contracted the virus which could have created another strain in her relationship with her husband. In Phindiswa's case, things worked out the opposite as she confirms:

Phindiswa: *"*UMthuthuzeli wandishiya kwesinomhlwa engafuni nokundibona esithi ndimphathele uGawulayo. Wathetha washiya angalaziyo, endenyelisa, endibona okomntu oziphethe kakubi. Ndaba ngazama ukumbonisa ukuba nam ndibhideke nje ngaye yile nto, akafuna nokuva. Andisokuze ndibulibale obo busuku."*

Phindiswa: "Mthuthuzeli left me in the wilderness not wanting anything to do with me, saying I have brought him AIDS. He uttered all the words he knew, disgracing me, viewing me as someone who has not been carrying themselves with respect. I tried showing him that I was as confused as he was, he didn't even want to listen. I will never forget that night."

(Ntwana 2004:72)

When this happens to Phindiswa, her husband leaving her after she received her results

Phindiswa: *"*...Wandigqibezela ngokuba abuthe konke okuthi yena kwangobo busuku aphele emehlweni. Ungalibali ke ukuba ngelo xesha ndinzima umntwana lo wethu owokuqala ke phofu".*

Phindiswa: "He finished me off when he decided to take everything that belonged to him and vanished into thin air. Don't forget that at the time I was pregnant with our first child."
(Ntwana 2004:73)

When Phindiswa's husband leaves, he takes everything including furniture. She is left while still pregnant and the stress she endures affects the baby. She does not only stress about the end of her marriage but must also stress about her newfound status and what it means for her unborn child.

She is expected to start from scratch, with little support and still must face scrutiny from society:

Phindiswa: “*Ndithetha ukuba mna, andizange ndibuye ndimbone ukususela ngoko. Ezalwa nje unyana wam wemkayo yena. Into endiyifumanayo zizithuko zabantu bakowabo. Bandibiza ngawo onke amagama akhe amabi apha emhlabeni. Kangangokuba andisayiphenduli ifowuni phaya endlwini, iphendulwa ngumzala wam uSamkelwa ondihlalisayo”

Phindiswa: “I am telling you that I have never seen him since. I gave birth to my son, he was already gone. What I get are rude remarks from his family. They call me by all the ugly names you have ever heard as a result I stopped answering the telephone, my cousin Samkelwa who stays with me, answers it.”

(Ntwana 2004:73)

Phindiswa in this instance confirms that she is subjected to harassment, which could have easily given her stress to a point where she may have lost her child. What is prominent here is that no one wants to listen to Phindiswa's side which is isolating to a certain extent. This is a loss of family, and the marriage institution crumbles. She is expected after everything to raise a child by herself and take care of the child and provide everything for it.

Phindiswa and Phumela's stories are on the opposite ends showing how men and women deal with infidelity in relationships. In the book there is no evidence that Phindiswa was promiscuous, she only tested first leading to the husband abandoning her for bringing the disease home. What Phindiswa experiences is common in African culture where women are blamed for crimes they never committed or for things going wrong. For example, when a man cannot bear children, the blame usually falls on the woman. What Phindiswa experiences drives her to a state of depression and feelings of unworthy and low self-esteem. She ends up joining a support group to cope:

Phindiswa: “**Ngumalume wam endingathi wasindisa ubomi bam. Ukuba wayengandizisanga kweli qela labaxhasanayo, iThemba, ukuba wayengandizisanga ngalo ngesele kuthethwa ezinye ngam...*”

Phindiswa: “I would say my uncle saved my life. If he had not brought me to this iThemba support group. Had he not informed me about it, you would hear something else about me now”

(Ntwana 2004:73)

Joining the support group essentially means that Phindiswa gains a new family which entails support as highlighted by the Afrocentric paradigm which introduces a sense of community that comes together in support of one another. This support group becomes a place where Phindiswa learns to be conscious about her life choices as she is going to be raising another person by herself. This consciousness is what the Afrocentric paradigm advocates for, and the fact that it is influenced by the community around a person which Phindiswa has found in the support group.

As Phindiswa attends the sessions with the iThemba support group for people with HIV and those in support of the ones with HIV. She maintains a good and positive life. She goes to the gym, takes care of her child. This sense of independence that Phindiswa possesses at this point means she had come to terms with herself and the life that she is supposed to live. This sense of independence that she now possesses is supported by feminism as her recognising her potential as a human being, this according to (Nkealah, 2006:134) means she seeks ways to inform herself and others of her worth especially in the support group.

Phindiswa discovers that she is not positive, that her results were a mistake. In the end she reconciles with her husband Mthuthuzeli with the help of Khanya.

Mthuthuzeli: *“*Awazi ukuba mna yandichulumancisa kanjani into yokufumana usapho lwam kwakhona...ndiyakuhlala ndizisola ubomi bam bonke ngobutyhakala endabenzayo.”*

Mthuthuzeli: “You don’t know how happy I was to find my family again...for the rest of my life, I will always regret the nonsense I did”

Phindiswa: *“*Uthando luthwala izinto zonke, kwaye alunanzondo. Bendisoloko ndiyixinzelela into yokuba ndiyakuthanda ndizama ukulwa neemvakalelo zam, kodwa ndoyisakala. Eyona nto yandihlaba nangakumbi yavuselela isazela sam yintetho kaThulz ngalaa mhla womfihlo ka Yali, Kwakunye nalaa ncwadi yayibhalelwe uLala nguYali. Laa nto ithi thina bazali masingacingeli thina sodwa, masicingele nabantwana abathi bachaphazeleke bengenzanga nto bona. Ndacinga ukuba nam ndiyafumaneka kweso sono kuba, kukucingela esam isiqu sodwa andimcingeli umntwana wam xa ndibhebhetha uyise. Uthando lwenene alukho-selfish.”*

Phindiswa: “Love carries everything, it also does not have hate. I always suppressed the fact that I love you trying to fight off my feelings, but I gave up. What got to me even more and woke up my conscious was the speech made by Thulz during Yali’s funeral that day, plus the letter that was written for Lala by Yali. The saying that said us as parents must know be selfish in our thinking, we need to think about the children who are affected having done nothing. I felt responsible for that aswell because it is selfish thinking when I push his father away. Real love is not selfish”



(Ntwana 2004:115)

This is the point in the story where the couples show that they have reconciled with each other. What is important to note is that Khanya their friend is the one who was instrumental in bringing them together again. This is in line with Afrocentricity that promotes collective effort and finding solutions that are home grown in line with people’s cultures.

4.1.4 Type of literature

This drama book resembles the reformist African feminism literature. It does not criticise men harshly instead it proposes ways that people, or rather how men and women can find a way to love each other through the challenges they face especially in the institution of marriage. Phumela and Khanya’s discovery of the HIV status was very challenging to two of them, what was also difficult was the fact that they lost their friend which could’ve

put a strain on their relationship. Despite the challenges, the couples have a happy ending especially after Phindiswa reconciles with her husband.

4.1.5 Summary

Phumela comes across as a young woman who has her mind set on her goals and is constantly and consistently living by her own values and principles of what is right and wrong. As a young woman she comes across a lot of challenges and expectations, but she is determined to live by her own rules. More than anything the book proves that there are ways to live happily in the institution of marriage even through the hardest challenges that happen.

4.2 *Hamba nam ndipheleke by Nompumezo Buzani

4.2.1 Analysis

In this book, the life of two sisters, Thandiwe and Mhizana as protagonists is examined closely to see how they challenge gender norms. The following points will be taken into consideration when examining the characters.

- Introduction to Thandiwe and Mhizana
- The expectations they come across as women
- How they challenge these expectations
- Type of Literature
- Conclusion

4.2.2 Introduction to Thandiwe and Mhizana

This drama book allows the reader to focus on two female characters, Thandiwe and Mhizana who take two different paths in life. Thandiwe and Mhizana are orphaned sisters

who are at the care of their mothers's sister. They both experience very bad treatment from her which tests their strength as women. The story follows the two characters from their teenage years to adulthood, giving the viewer a front seat to their life choices.

The story starts off as Thandiwe just recently got married and she is about to give birth. She loses her child while she is giving birth, this is the first hardship that Thandiwe faces, this happens when her husband is very far away from her. She is in the Eastern Cape while her husband, Melumzi works in Cape Town.

Thandiwe is in the watchful eye of her mother-in-law, who is domineering. The first gender role that Thandiwe has to adhere to is submitting to her mother in-law. Everything that her mother in-law says, she must do. If her mother in-law does not approve then Thandiwe is not allowed to do it. Even money that is sent to her by her husband is kept by her mother-in-law. She is heard asking for money from her mother-in-law:

Thandiwe: *"*Ndicela imadlana mama khe ndolule imilenze ndiye kwagqirha"*

Thandiwe: "Mother, may I please have some money so that I can go to the doctor"

(Buzani 2015:15)

This statement emphasises the point that Thandiwe, as a wife is dependent on her mother in-law for basic things. Thandiwe has lost her child during birth; one would feel as though the mother in-law would know that she needs to be examined by a doctor but the mother in-law is waiting for Thandiwe to ask to affirm the role that she is more powerful than her. Thandiwe then asks the following question:

Thandiwe: “*Ndingumfazi onjani ke lo ungasoze abenayo imali evela endodeni yakhe?”

Thandiwe: “What kind of a wife am I who does not use the money that comes from her husband?”

(Buzani 2015:16)

Lingiwe, the mother-in-law asserts her dominance by saying that Thandiwe does not need money because she gets everything that she needs. In this conversation, it can be concluded that Thandiwe as a bride is expected to be reserved and do everything that her mother-in-law says she must do. She is expected to be timid and not have a voice about what she thinks is right and what she wants for herself. Thandiwe is expected to act in this manner because of socialisation, the difference here is that her mother-in-law is the oppressor. She seems to carry in her or have this engrained idea that as a mother-in-law she is supposed to dictate to her daughter in law. This is further explained as an exclusion and subordination of women as ‘naturalised’ within culture, described and enacted as if obvious and biologically determined. Various rules made to protect female morality contributed to the continuation of women’s economic marginality (Wisker 2000:135). What is important to note is that Womanism addresses issues of female abuse in African household and the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship is one of the most complex relationships. Womanism calls for women to work together instead of against each other for the betterment of their homes.

Thandiwe challenges the norm by deciding that she is not going to stay with her mother-in-law any longer. She decides to go and look for her husband in Cape town. Thandiwe does not fight when she is leaving, she decides that she is going to leave without her

mother in-law's knowledge which can be deemed selfish but for a person who has just lost a child she feels the support she needs is from the person with whom she made the child with. As she says in her words:

Thandiwe: *"*Ndiza kushiya yonke into elapha kule ndlu. Elapha kum esiqwini yanele. Olu sana lusemva kwale ndlu andazi ukuba ndakuphinda ndilubone nini na lona... Apho ndiyakhona ndiya kubhut'Melumzi. Ndifuna ukumbalisela ngayo yonke le nto indehleleyo"*

Thandiwe: "I am going to leave everything in this house. The items on my body are sufficient. I am not sure when I am ever going to see the baby that is sleeping behind this house because I am going to Melumzi. I want to tell him everything that has transpired"

(Buzani 2015:24)

At this moment, Thandiwe goes against all norms associated with a new bride in a home. Her actions can be attributed to the pain of losing a child and she needs her partner to be by her side during this challenging period. In the African society, the relationship between a new wife and the mother of the husband is very tricky. It is stigmatised as one of the most toxic relationships there is, as characterised by Lingiwe the mother in-law who she refuses to take Thandiwe to the doctor the first time, she opens the letters that are coming from Thandiwe's husband, she refuses to give Thandiwe her share of money that she is sent by her husband. Thandiwe resorts to theft by stealing money from her in-law to travel to the city to find her husband. Thandiwe states:

Thandiwe: *"*Khawufane ucinge bethuna! Imali yomyeni wam ingcwatywe kule tyesi. Imali ebekumele ukuba isetyenziswa ndim nantsi ibole apha".*

Thandiwe: "Just think about it, all the money that my husband sends is buried in this suitcase. The money I am supposed to be using is rotten here"

(Buzani 2015:24)

In the words of the African feminist theory, Thandiwe digs deep and finds a way to make her life better by deciding that leaving and looking for her partner is the right way to go about things. The womanist theory explains this as escaping from cultural bondage is African women's remedy as it means that they are rejecting and questioning their subordination (Wisker, 2000:132). It is worth mentioning that Thandiwe in this instance is rejecting an aspect of culture that dehumanises her. Although Thandiwe may be well aware of the fact that there may be consequences for the actions of leaving but she is prioritising what she needs in the moment which is one of the things that African feminism advocates for when it comes to African women's everyday life experiences.

A woman is not expected to walk in the dark by herself, but Thandiwe does it when she leaves her home and her mother-in-law behind having put her trust on the protection of her rainbow baby and her mother as she yells out while she is on the way:

Thandiwe: *"*Ndidiniwe mna ngoku, Ndilambe nokulamba. Mama uphi?"*

Thandiwe: "I am hungry and tired right now, Mother where are you?"

(Buzani

2015:30)

Her mother passed away, but she calls on her because she is the strength and the protecting hand that Thandiwe knows. What Thandiwe is doing when she walks in the dark and hoping for the best is to prioritize her needs, at that point the needs of others around her were not that important in that moment.

The Afrocentric paradigm comes to play when Thandiwe gets a hike from a man she does not know, and the man seems to be concerned about her and how young she is. He suggests that she goes back to school. Afrocentric paradigm suggests the sense of community amongst Africans which is what is experienced in the conversation that Thandiwe has with the driver of the car. He offers her food and notices that she is not well and takes her to the clinic to go and get checked up. This is exactly what the Afrocentric paradigm is about, Africans helping one another despite the background.

This sense of community is carried on when Thandiwe is staying in Mr and Mrs Mpini's house and when they talk about her, they address her as though she is their child in the following exchange

*“UNkosk uMpini: *Ilele na intombi yakho?...”*

*UMnu Mpini: *uzakumvusa na dear?...*

UNkosk Mpini: umfazi uzalela omnye kaloku. Intliziyo yam ndiyive ilihlwili xa ndimamele

indlela angene ngayo nakuloo mtshato...”

“Mrs Mpini: Is the girl sleeping?...”

Mr Mpini: Are you going to wake her up love?...

Mrs Mpini: Another woman's child is my child; I was really pained when I heard how she got into the marriage”

(Buzani 2015:36)

These two are showing great concern about Thandiwe, a person they barely know, and this shows how much community and helpfulness they possess as African people which is emphasised by the Afrocentric paradigm.

Mhizana the older sister to Thandiwe is chased away by her aunt, and she decides to go to Port Elizabeth to seek opportunities to better her life. She boards a train from East London in Alice heading to Port Elizabeth. In this train she sits alongside a woman who is with her two children who offers her food. Sharing food is a custom in Africa, whereby food is shared with family, neighbours, visitors and strangers. The older woman is showing that she is rooted in the spirit of *ubuntu*. The older woman says to Mhizana:

*“*Masimunde yintlanzi le namagwinya...”*

“Let us eat fish and fatcakes”

(Buzani 2015:40)

The best part about this is that the older woman offers Mhizana seconds and more food as she says:



*“*Thatha elinye igwinya ukuba awanelanga...”*

“You can have another fatcake if you want”

(Buzani 2015:41)

This shows the generosity that is possessed by African people towards one another. It is also shown in the fact that people who do not know each other can have a full-blown conversation and not feel like they are imposing on each other which is what is happening between Mhizana and the older woman.

Secondly, it is noticeable that after being sent away by her aunt, Mhizana takes her things and leaves to go and look for better opportunities in the city. As a young woman, she is expected to sit at home and wait for her marriage, but she challenges this thinking by leaving to go and look for opportunities to better her life. African feminism is about women

uplifting one another which is what the older woman does to Mhizana starting from when she asks her:

“...Uyintombi kabana nale intle kangaka? Ungumamni?”

“...Whose daughter are you, you are such a beauty? What is your clan’s name?”

(Buzani 2015:41)

She is asking her to introduce herself by complimenting her beauty and asking her for her clan name. In the African culture, there is nothing that brings more pride than knowing and introducing oneself with a clan name. As Mhizana introduces herself and is asked about her parents. She laughs off the fact that she does not remember her father because he left when she was very young.



“Older Woman: Uphi uyihlo?”

“Mhizana: (ehleka) Ndingaba samazi na kanene? Wemka ndiselula kakhulu. Ngathi wabuyela eGoli”

“Older woman: Where is your father?”

Mhizana: (Laughing) “Would I remember him? He left when I was very young to Johannesburg.”

(Buzani 2015:41)

This could mean that Mhizana has long accepted the fact that she has a father, but she does not have a relationship with him. If she was sad about the issue, then she would not be laughing it off. This is one of the issues that African feminism might be advocating for, the fact that Mhizana is not seeking revenge for the fact that her father left her while she was young but she instead is seeking to better her life by going to look for work and she

does not sound bitter at all about men, fathers and brothers which might give her more focus for whatever she wants to do in her life.

The older woman does not only stop at complimenting the looks Mhizana has but moves to being motivational towards her as she says,

Older women: “*Ezizweni ke mntanam uncede ufane nebhakane. Ibhakane ibhudlwa yimimoya nezichotho, intlithwa ziingqele ilale iqabaka ebusika, ingqatsini yelanga lehlobo izimunda itheko. Kodwa soze igungqe nakanye, ungasoze uve sikhalo. Ndiyakomeleza mntwan’am xa nditshoyo*”

Older women: “In the nations that you go to you need to act like a “Bhakane”. Ibhakane is blown by winds and storms. It is abused by colds and fog in the winter, the bright sun in the summer but it stays strong, you will never hear it cry. With these words, I encourage you to stay strong.”

(Buzani 2015:42)

This is a way that the older woman uplifts, motivates and empowers Mhizana with words to carry to wherever she is headed. Another characteristic that is visible in the older woman is the fact that she is nurturing of Mhizana, the things that she says and the fact that she is the one that fed Mhizana reveals the motherly characteristics that she possesses which is very important to highlight as they show the strength of African feminism and its aspects. Mhizana in this train is blessed with a mother for a few hours and this correlates with the African saying that “A child is raised by a village”. This is heard from the way the older woman addresses Mhizana as she says

Older women: “...**Mhizana uze ukhonze, umazi umntu apho uya khona ukuze ubomi bakho bube lula. Umntu ngumntu ntomb’am*”

Older women: “You must go to church, respect people where you are going so that your life is easy because a person is a person though other people my girl”

(Buzani 2015:42)

It is very important to pay homage to the relationship that is formed by strangers who have just met each other. This is to say that Africans are like that. The concept of Afrocentricity does not only translate to women looking out for each other but to African women and African men working hand in hand for the betterment of the community. This is shown when Mr Mpini and his wife seem very concerned about Thandiwe's whereabouts when they had just met her when she was escaping to her husband in Cape Town.

Mrs Mpini: “(Ekhathazekile) Angathini lo mntwana ukusuke azimele olu hlobo?”*

Mr Mpini: “Besendinenjongo zokumbuyisela esikolweni”.

*Mrs Mpini: “*Ndawuthi ukuze ndiqonde ukuba umdali uyayiphendula imithandazo, ndakubona ngokuqengqa uThandiwe amzise phambi kwam. Nokuba kwakuba kuphantsi kweyiphi na imeko. Ndakuhlala ndimlindile”*

Mrs Mpini: “(Worried) How could this child leave like this?”

Mr Mpini: “I was looking forward to sending her back to school”

Mrs Mpini: I will wait for her to come back; I will know that God works in mysterious ways when he brings Thandiwe back to me in whatever condition.

(Buzani 2015:44)

We meet MamThembu and Shuta who live together. Shuta left his wife in the village and is now staying with mamThembu with her children in Cape Town. In this scene, we come across Shuta and MamThembu having a conversation at night. In an oppressive or patriarchal household, decisions that are taken must be approved by the husband for them to go ahead. In traditional marriages, for the husband to assert himself sometimes physical violence is used towards the female. When reading this piece of literature, one would assume that as a woman mamThembu is expected to follow and abide by the rules that Shuta sets for his household. Because males design customs in a way that suits them as the dominant group in society. These customs display the dominance of males in the family because the negative effects of these customs only apply to women. These

customs also perpetuate the socially inferior status of women and other prohibitions governing the everyday life of women. In isiXhosa culture, there is a phrase that is used when a woman enters her in-laws' household, even in this day and age, namely *Umfazi kufuneka ahloniphe indoda yakhe!* A woman must respect her husband, illustrating the discrimination imposed on women, and which goes beyond respect because the woman is also expected to be submissive (Made 2019:146).

However, things take a different turn when Shuta seems to be following the commands of mamThembu. Putting this in simple terms. MamThembu challenges the concept of conformity by practising power over her man, Shuta. In one of the scenes, MamThembu starts apologising to Shuta for beating him up by saying:

MamThembu: “*...ungaze uphinde undilahle sithandwa sam. Asoze ndiphinde ndikubethe”


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MamThembu: “...Don't desert me ever again my love, I will never hit you again”

(Buzani 2015:46)

MamThembu's words in this scene bring out the concept of abuse. This is what abusers are known to say, what to notice here is that the words that are uttered by mamThembu usually come from the males but in this section mamThembu unconsciously challenges that action by showing the signs of the abuser in the relationship. To highlight the persistence of the abuse, we are confronted with mamThembu and her manipulative ways:

Mamthembu: “Mamela ke, uSweety, umntwan'am ucela ideposit yemoto.”

Mamthembu: "Listen, my child Sweety wants money to deposit a car"

Shuta: *"Neepokotho azifani. USweeti akanakusoloko efumana yonke into ayifunayo."*

Shuta: "Sweety can't get everything that he wants because households are different when it comes to finances"

MamThembu: *"(etshintsha ebungqwabalala) uthetha ukuthini ke?..."*

MamThembu: "(Showing signs of aggression) What do you mean?"

(Buzani 2015:46)

Little by little mamThembu is changing and controlling her man. MamThembu is challenging that gender norm by being the one that is controlling. This is explicitly shown when she commands Shuta to sell his car in order for him to get money for her child:

MamThembu: *"landa laa veni kula makhenikhii, ungenise yona akwazi ukufumana le nto ayifunayo lo mntwana..."*

MamThembu: "Go and get your car from the mechanic and sell it so that my child can get whatever he wants"



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(Buzani 2015:46)

Shuta: *"Isentsha le veni mamThembu ndingayithengisa njani?..."*

Shuta: "That van is still new mamThembu, how can I sell it?"

MamThembu: *(Sele engxola nyani ngoku) "sufuna ndiphume esimilweni shuta!*

Ngumntana' kabana lo ufuna ukuhlelisa ngaye kweli Kapa?"

MamThembu: (Shouting loudly) "Please don't try me, whose child are you trying make a laughing here?"

(Buzani 2015:47)

MamThembu is demanding, she shouts at her man and promises to beat him up if he does not yield to the demands that she is making. This continues to prove how the roles are reversed in this extract. This is explained by Brown and Olson (1978:285-286) as being a rare occasion where unpleasant female characters can be used to make a

feminist point. This is characterised by the portrayal of significant female characters who are not subordinate to a male point of view. Deviation from stereotypes, and a sensitivity to the question of whether women are inherently vicious or rather victims of society resemble feminism in such novels. Feminism is also evident in the attention given to the details of the lives of women, especially attention to the areas ignored or sentimentalised, such as the unusual influences of mothers on sons instead of the usual development of relationship between mothers and daughters.

Although MamThembu does not possess good behaviour as a person in general, but she surely does not conform to the imagery of a timid woman who abides by the rules and commands of her man. MamThembu eventually turns her relationship with Shuta into a business transaction,



MamThembu: ...Ndakulala phaya ebantwaneni mna.

MamThembu:.....I am going to sleep with the children tonight.

Shuta: Njani na ngoku. Yinyanga yonke undishiya ndedwa kule bhedi, Nono.

Shuta: How? I have been sleeping by myself for a whole month in this bed my love.

MamThembu: "Imali phambili Shuta! Ndakukunyamezela oko kurhona kwakho xa imali iphezu kwetafile..."

MamThembu: "Money first Shuta! I will tolerate your snoring when you put the money on the table..."

(Buzani 2015:47)

Shuta ends up regretting this relationship because of the controlling behaviour that mamThembu possesses. The important point of this relationship is that the roles seem to be reversed, mamThembu challenges the norm of women submitting to men rather she practises her power by using threats, manipulative tactics, physical and emotional abuse towards her partner to get what she wants.

In this text, Buzani (2015) highlights and makes a clear distinction between the older generation of women and the younger ones. In this literature Buzani highlights how the older generation practise patience all the time and the young ones are deviant. This could be the result of socialisation into the concept of **ukunyamezela*/Holding on, which always results in women being subordinates. The older generation of women are not quick to think for themselves and their sanity while the younger generation like Thandiwe are very quick to think about themselves and their sanity.

Another female character that brings a different perspective in this drama is Noklentyi whose husband stays in the city of Cape Town; her husband is Shuta who stays with MamThembu his girlfriend. Noklentyi falls under the category of the older generation of women, she has to follow her husband's commands on everything. It is her husband Shuta who is responsible for the lobola negotiations of Thandiwe. Noklentyi states that the husband took all the money, and she was left with nothing.

Noklentyi: **(Egixa emva kokufunda ileta) Wenza ntoni uShuta ngabantwana bakasisi.*

Ndingathi ndingekayazi nale bayishiyelwayo ngunina ukuba wayithini na?

Noklentyi: (Crying uncontrollably after reading a letter) What is Shuta doing with my sister's children. I don't know even know what he did with the money my sister left for her children.

(Buzani 2015:96)

What is important to note about Noklentyi's life is that she is a traditional woman, as such, she is expected to listen and do what her husband wants. She is expected to let her husband deal with finances at home as he is the head and breadwinner for the family. She does not feel the need to follow her husband like Thandiwe did. Her husband finally

returns home after a long time in the city. He arrives in the middle of the night. As a traditional wife, one expects that she would be scared of him, but their conversation goes as follows:

*Shuta: “*Ndibuyile”*

Shuta: “I am back”

*Nonklentyi: “*Uza nantoni?”*

Nonklentyi: “What do you bring?”

*Nonklentyi: “*Uvela phi?”*

Nonklentyi: “Where are you coming from?”

*Shuta: “*Uya kuthini ukundibuza imvelaphi emzini wam? Ndilapha phambi kwakho ngoku. Ndaweni yokubonakalisa uthakazelelo uphuphuma ulaka. Ndiphe into yokutya”*

Shuta: “Why would you ask me where I am coming from in my house? I am right in front of you now. Instead of being happy, you are showing me anger. Give me something to eat”



(Buzani 2015:157)

Shuta, the husband expects his wife to welcome him with open arms after years of neglect and he calls the home that he left, his, even though his wife is the one who looks after it.

Shuta continues as follows:

Shuta: “(Esondlala ibhatyi yakhe phantsi) Belulude olu hambo Ngqovu wam. Ndibuyile ngoku ndize ekhaya. Ukuba ungandiphakela nje isitya esishushu sona, ndingaxola”*

Shuta: “(Placing his jacket on the floor) This journey was long my love. I am back home now. I would be at piece if you could dish up a warm meal for me.”

*Noklentyi: “*Entl’apha, Shuta ngumzi katata, ndiya khona ke ngoku. Ndingaze ndiphinde ndikubone ngala wam amehlo. (Athathe ii-orenji nesonka sikaShuta amjulele ngazo) Khawube uchuba ke loo ngcombolo yakho! Akwaba bendenokulibala bonanje! (Aphume uNonklentyi, Ushuta uhleli wachuba ecaphuka)”*

Noklentyi: “My father’s house is around the corner, that is where I am going now. I never want to see you again. (Taking Shuta’s oranges and bread and throwing it back at him) Go right ahead and eat your stuff! I wish I could forget you! (Nonklentyi walking out while Shuta is peeling his oranges in anger.)

(Buzani 2015:159)

Noklentyi defies her husband by refusing to give him food, especially considering that he came back empty handed after neglecting her for years. This is a woman that challenges a norm that says in a marriage one must hold on even though it is challenging, she shows that she has been through a lot, and she cannot hold on any longer therefore she is going to go to her fathers' house. Later, in the story, the reader witnesses Noklentyi packing her bags and leaving her husband in the house. Noklentyi proves to every woman that it is not late to leave a marriage that does not serve her. Nonklentyi's realisation at the end can be explained as her being an African womanist who realises, respects and recognises herself to acquire true self-esteem, self-worth and self-love (Peter, 2010).

4.2.3 Type of Literature

This book can be categorised as a Radical African-Feminist literature. This book falls under this category because it seems to criticise men as a social group. For example, in this book the criticised group of males that reside in Cape Town for work purposes such as Melumzi and Shuta have a separate life from the life at the village that they have left their wives. The life that they live in Cape town is a life that may be hurtful to their wives that they left behind at home thus they meet challenges which may be taken as the criticism of their behaviour. Another character of these kinds of text is the amount of physical and psychological violence that women suffer because of their male counterparts. This is exactly what mostly transpires in the story as the women characters suffer from neglect of their father, neglect and being left by their husbands and these partners find other partners while they are away from them. Very importantly this type of feminist literature is characterised by death of the male counterparts and on the other hand other male counterparts are powerless, an example of this is when Melumzi is killed

by his girlfriend and Shuta is powerless when he must deal with his abusive girlfriend. The female writer has turned the tables of punishing men harshly for mistreating their wives.

In this book, the women realise their independence and autonomy which is the reason that the study has chosen to focus on two women. Most women in the book, encounter challenges that break their souls, but they rise to those challenges in ways that best serve them or their families.

4.3 Conclusion

The two books that were examined in this decade reveal more than anything the choices that women have about their lives. The autonomy is present in the way that they choose what they want to do, especially in the institution of marriage. In Akwaba, although Phumela experiences challenges with her husband, she makes the decision to stay while in Hamba Nam Ndipheleke Noklentyi makes the decision to leave because of the realisation that the marriage is not serving her anymore. Their choices are in line with African feminism and Afrocentricity. Overall, the objectives and aims of this study are catered for by both the books as they make the reader realise that no matter how old you are, no matter where you are staying and what you do as a woman, you have a right to choose yourself every day. The one other prominent aspect that these books reveal to the reader is the sense of community that the characters possess. It is as if the strength is also elevated by the fact that a person is sure of the support structure that they have in their lives for example Phumela and Phindiswa get a happy ending because they are supporting each other and get support from other people.

The next chapter explores the challenges that women experience in the third decade (2015-2020) and the decisions they make to improve their lives, some of which deviate from the norm.

CHAPTER 5 – ANALYSIS - THIRD DECADE

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on two books that were published in the first half of the Third decade from 2015 to 2020, a novel by Yolisa Madolo entitled *Uzenzile Akakhalelwa* and drama book by Nompumezo Buzani entitled *Imida*. The first book that is going to be looked at is *Uzenzile Akakhalelwa* followed by *Imida*. The aim is to examine the language and actions that the female protagonists use to challenge presented gender expectations.

****Uzenzile akakhalelwa* by Yolisa Madolo**

The focus of this analysis will revolve around these points in no order:

- Introduction to Linomtha
- The expectations she comes across as women
- How she challenges these expectations
- Type of Literature
- Summary

5.2.1. Introduction to Linomtha

In the novel *Uzenzile akakhalelwa*, the main character Linomtha is a hardworking teenager. She stays with both her parents. What shines about her in this narrative is her work ethic which is what everyone seems to know about her in the community. Her hard-working trait makes her father proud of her, they get close and develop a very strong

relationship even more than the one Linomtha has with her mother. The fathers' pride in her daughter stems from the fact that she is hard-working which means that one day she will work hard and achieve great things

5.1.2 Expectations and How She Challenges them

Linomtha is loved so much by her parents, but her father shows it more than the mother does through compliments and wanting her not to overwork herself with house chores. Linomtha is a hard worker at home as her mother emphasises, “**Lo mntwana nguye yedwa kweli khaya kufuneka afunde ukuzimela, angancediswa/* This child is the only child here at home, she needs to learn to be independent without getting help (Madolo, 2016:2)”. It would be safe to say that the amount of effort and good behaviour that Linomtha puts in at her home when she is doing her house chores is the same amount of effort that is expected by her parents when it comes to her schoolwork as her father utters in an effort to stand with her,

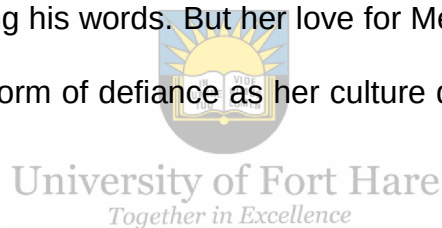


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*“*Andifuni mntu uza kudlala ngomntwanam. Lo mntwana ufundile yaye useza kufunda ayityekeze, kunjalo nje andifuni xathawana wamfana ungaze athi udlalela ekumzekeni. Andifuni nkomo ngalo mntwana ndifuna imfundo qha. Ibe intombi le yam ayityhafisi, ikrelekrele ayidlali!//* I don't anyone playing with my child. This child is very well educated, I don't want any boy thinking about marrying her. I don't want dowry with this child, I want her to just be educated. On top of that my daughter does not disappoint, she is very smart, she does not play (Madolo, 2016:9)”.

Linomtha's father praises her daughter in the most amazing way, and he shows protection over her. Parents always expect their children to commit themselves to school so that they can have the opportunities they have never had and better their lives. This is the expectation that Mzamo has for his daughter, and it is mostly disguised as praise.

Linomtha who is the pride of the family meets a young man when she is walking with her friends in town. The young man introduces himself as Menzi Malombo: “**Uyazazisa umfana ukuba nguMenzi Malombo/He asks her out and she agrees (Madolo,2016:4)*”. At the end of their conversation with this young man, they are dating. In the relationship, Menzi spoils Linomtha a lot and one day he takes her to East London. When they arrive, he claims, “**Kuzakunyanzeleka ukuba silale egumbini elinye ke, sithandwa sam. Andinayo imali yamagumbi amabini/We are going to have to sleep in one room, my love. I don’t have money for two separate rooms (Madolo, 2016: 5)*”. Linomtha is placed in a complex situation that forces her to share a room with her boyfriend even if she is not ready. Her reaction to Menzi tells that she is uncomfortable with his proposal as she swallows hard after hearing his words. But her love for Menzi makes her sleep with him. Sleeping with Menzi is a form of defiance as her culture does not allow her to have sex before marriage.

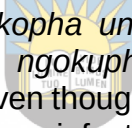


Her decision to sleep with Menzi came from her desire to thank him for treating her well as a girlfriend. The writer states that: “**uLinomtha aphinde acinge ukuba kuninzi asele ekwenzelwe nguMenzi...ngubani ke yena ukuba angala neyona nto kukuphela kwayo anokumbulela ngayo/ Linomtha thought again that there is a lot that Menzi has done for her already...who is she to say no with the one thing that she can thank him with (Madolo, 2016:7)*”. During this encounter, Linomtha falls pregnant which raises the question, how will her parents react, especially her father who has so much vested in her?

Linomtha hesitantly tell Menzi, “**Ndikhulelwe, Menzi/ Menzi, I am pregnant (Madolo, 2016:12)*”. Menzi suggests that they get an abortion or rather expects her to do an abortion as he says, “**Mna bendicinga ukuba simhlise ngomlenze/ I was thinking that we*

secretly do an abortion (Mandolo, 2016: 13)” because according to him they are still young and have to live their lives first before they can take care of another person. He manages to convince Linomtha to go to the clinic. Up until the point Linomtha makes the decision to go to get the abortion it can be said that she seems to not have established what she wants for her life or what she thinks is right for her. She is reliant on Menzi, perhaps the reason for this is because this is her first relationship and thus in this institution, she has not found her independence and therefore, feels the need to do what will appease Menzi.

She agrees to do the abortion however, when she arrives at the clinic and talks to the nurse, she changes her mind abortion and chooses to keep the baby. The nurse tells her,

“...zingakhona neengxaki ezinxulumene nokukhupha isisu, nangona zingaxhaphakanga nje. Usenokopha ungayeki, ube nefiva, ube nosuleleko oluthile, okanye singaphumi ngokupheleleyo isisu/* There are issues concerning doing an abortion, even though they are not popular. You can bleed non-stop, you can have fever, an infection, or it may not be done properly (Mandolo,2016:16)”.  University of Fort Hare
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Linomtha realises that abortion goes against her values, hence, her change of mind. Her decision does not take in consideration the fact that she is a child herself and has no means to support her child. Her decision leads to the end of her relationship with Menzi and is likely to put her at odds with her parents, but she sticks to it. The rejection by Menzi at a time of her need when carrying their child is a sign of patriarchy, where men get away with such decisions without consequence.

Linomtha also faces rejection from a lot of people. When her family goes to claim damages for her pregnancy from Menzi’s family they are told that Linomtha was the one who may have assumed a permanent place of residence in another man’s house implying that she may have wanted to get pregnant or was as much a part of it as Menzi was. This

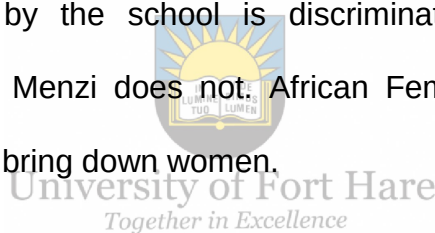
is articulated by Menzi's father when he says, "**Ukuba kukho isisu esikhalazisayo, ngunyana wam omele ukusiwa kuni, nina maKhwalo, kuba emithiswe yintombi yenu!* If there is any claim for pregnancy, it is my son who is supposed to be sent to the maKhwalo house as he is impregnated by your daughter (madolo, 2016: 33)" thus she does not deserve to be paid damages for. When complementary is spoken of, men and women in society could also take it in this situation as a way to assert that complementary is expected by society from the side of females as well. Menzi's father is calling the question the tradition of paying damages, arguing that both children are responsible for the mess they created, so he should not be made to pay. His argument is that Linomtha was a constant visitor at his home, so she should have known what was bound to happen. The Afrocentric paradigm supports the idea of calling into question and putting to an end tradition that do not serve the best interests of the people. This in a nutshell means that the Afrocentric paradigm has the courage to challenge societal and cultural expectations to ensure that there is fairness in society.

Linomtha is forced to take a break from school because of her pregnancy. This is done in line with the school policy, by so doing defying the government bill on the matter. The management at the school decides: "**sigqibe ekubeni sikhe simnqumamise esikolweni umntwana de abeleke. Nalapho kufuneka achithe unyaka ekhulisa usana phambi kokuba abuyele esikolweni*/We have concluded that we needed to suspend the child from school until she gives birth. Even then she must spend a year raising the baby before she comes back to school" (Madolo, 2016:27)". When the school forces her to take a break, she finds support from her community by seeing her as capable of continuing with her studies while she is pregnant. They said, "**Lo mntwana yinkwenkwezi yale ngingqi. Ndiyanicela bazali*

nani botshitala ukuba khe niyicingisise le nto yakhe/ This child is a star of this village. I am pleading with you parents and teachers to just think carefully about this (Madolo, 2016:25)". Her father also supports her when the school decides to suspend her for close to 2 years,

*"*Oo! Ninje ukungabi nambulelo? Yindlela enimbulela ngayo le umntwana wam akuba esibeke ezinkwenkwezini esi sikolo? Uza kufunda lo mntwana. Ndiza kunimangalela kweyona nkundla iphakamile/ Oh! This is you being ungrateful? Is this how you thank my child after she has placed this school at the top. This child is going to study. I am going to report you to the high court (Madolo, 2016:27).*

Although she did not win, she has the support of the policy and could have taken the matter to court as the country allows girls to go back to school during pregnancy. The approach that is taken by the school is discriminatory, as Linomtha faces the consequences alone and Menzi does not. African Feminism seeks to change such policies and practices that bring down women.



Things get worse in Linomtha's life as she has to accept the fact that she was missing a whole year of school because of her pregnancy, and she was not taking it well. She tried begging just to go and write her exams, *"*Abazali bakaLinomtha bakhabe ngaw'amane bancedisa nangomsila, besithi akukho mntu uza kuhlala nomntwana/* Linomtha's parents refused profusely saying that no one is going to babysit the child (Madolo, 2016:36). Linomtha saw an opportunity, but her father was punishing her with his refusal, at this point which could be said that he was being selfish because of the anger he had also forgotten that Linomtha is a smart child who was known to always be at the top of her class and therefore in this moment Linomtha lost all the power to change her life.

The last straw in this endurance test is when Linomtha scrubs floors, “**lyaphela nqunqe iminyaka emihlanu, ekorobha emakhitshini, esebenzela usana lwakhe/* five years ended with her scrubbing floors as a job, working for her child (Madolo, 2016:41)” to make sure that her child gets to eat and has clothes on his body. This is a difficult test because the father of the child was nowhere to be found in terms of support. Her resilience proves how strong and independent she is. Menzi becomes successful, but still fails to take care of his child. Linomtha whose future was bright is reduced to being a maid and suffers the brunt of her mistake, but Menzi goes on to succeed. This approach places the burden of pregnancy on women which is a sad reality even today. Linomtha goes on to see the father of her child driving a beautiful car and working but not taking responsibility which is unfair to her. She then decides to make a change by starting to challenge a system that was oppressive to her. She writes a letter to her school which asks,

*“*kutheni engatshutshiswa nje yena umfana okhuleliswe intombi? Mna zange ndibuzwe nokuba bendinabani na kwesi senzo sam. Ndasuka ndanqunyanyiswa esikolweni umfana yena wayekwa waqhuba nezifundo zakhe ngathi akwenzekanga nto. Kungani kunjalo?/ Why is the boy who impregnated the girl prosecuted? I was never asked who I was doing this with. I was just suspended from school but the young man was allowed to continue with his education as if nothing happened. Why is that? (Madolo, 2016:41)”.*

In this letter Linomtha seeks cooperation of the system so that it recognises that there needs to be rules that apply to both males and females equally. As supported by the African feminism that weighs precisely which traditional institutions are agreeable and positive for women, or at least can or could be, and which disadvantage women so severely that their abolition seems imperative (Arndt, 2002:32). She is requesting that the schooling system recognise that both males and females need to be held accountable for the pregnancy that happened. This makes Linomtha according to the African feminism

theory seek ways to inform others of her intrinsic worth, so that she may be afforded dignity and respect, not as a favour but as a matter of giving honour where honour is due. As in the end she manages to put her life together, study further and better herself and the life of her child independently.

5.2.3 Type of literature

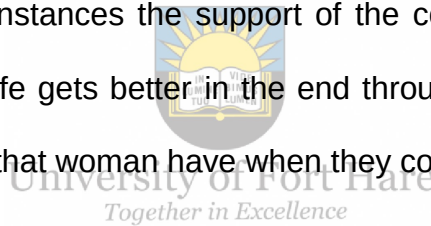
This book is part of the Reformist African-Feminist literature. This literature is criticising a patriarchal system that holds women, teenage girls included, responsible for pregnancies while men structure but of how socialisation work, this means that men and women are allies when it comes to take a stand against these circumstances (Arndt, 2002:33). The story is centred around a young girl who goes through being challenged by different structures of society which treat her unfairly.



This however stems from the problem that she experiences when she takes her first important decision, thus the book shines the light on the issues that females face which can be oppressive to them. That structure in this text focuses on the unfairness of the school system in Linomtha's life. How both her parents and some in the community were unfair to her. This type of literature also criticises the females on their unfairness towards other females which is what happens when Linomtha's mother does not put up a fight when her child is suspended for a year and is not even allowed to write her exams that might make her pass. Things towards the end are promising a happy ending for the protagonist.

5.2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter the first book that was analysed is *Uzenzile akakhalelwa* which focuses on Linomtha's life as a protagonist. She experiences challenges after she becomes pregnant and her boyfriend asks her to have an abortion, which she refuses. Linomtha shows great strength for someone so young as she takes responsibility for her life and that of her baby. In this moment she shows independence and strength to take charge of her life. This is the definition of African feminism when African women in this sense young and old find ways to make use and elevate the value of their everyday life. Although, at the end Linomtha has a happy ending but during her pregnancy her life bounces back and forth from the paradigm of Afrocentricity when she finds support of her parents and community and in some instances the support of the community is not there but that strengthens her and her life gets better in the end through the help of another woman which highlights the bond that women have when they come together.



5.3*Imida by Nompumezo Buzani

5.3.1 Analysis

The book is about the lives of three women, Nosizwe, a mother and Phumeza and Hlobo who are sisters. As the protagonists their lives are going to be examined closely to see how they challenge presented gender norms. The analysis of this drama will focus on the following points:

- Introduction to Nosizwe, Phumeza and Hlobo
- The expectations she comes across as women
- How she challenges these expectations

- Type of Literature
- Conclusion

5.3.2 Introduction to Nosizwe, Phumeza and Hlobo

In this drama we are introduced to Nosizwe who is married to a pastor by the name of Michael Mpekana also known as Mfundisi. They have three daughters by the name of Phumeza who is a lawyer, Bhelekazi who is finalising her studies in Medicine and Hlobo the last born who is studying at the university of Fort Hare. Nosizwe's struggle is that her husband is hiding a big secret from her and she feels as though she is being shut out. So, she must endure the pain of not being trusted and lied to by her husband. Phumeza is the first-born daughter of Michael from his first relationship. She is a lawyer in Grahamstown, married to Jimmy, a white male who is much older than her and Jimmy happens to have left his wife for Phumeza. This seems to create tension between Phumeza and her father and he does not seem to approve Phumezas' husband.

Hlobo is the youngest daughter of Michael who is studying at the University of Fort Hare. Hlobo meets a guy with whom she falls in love, but she discovers that the relationship is not healthy for her. In the following paragraphs, gender roles with whom the above characters are expected to adhere to and how these expectations are challenged.

5.2.3 Gender expectations and how they are challenged - Nosizwe

Nosizwe as a wife of a traditional Xhosa man describes her husband as a person who is used to fighting in a war and the politics of it, who is now a dedicated church pastor. Michael around whom the story revolves has a secret that he is hiding from his wife. Mfundisi as he is referred in the story first receives a letter from a man who used to work

together with him which declares news of his son being alive and needing to be told the truth because he has a twin sister. He doesn't disclose this news to his wife preferring to suffer by himself.

After reading this letter, Michael seems to be far away in his thoughts. His wife Nosizwe asks him what the matter is but he does not respond to her. The following exchange shows this:

Nosizwe: “*Xa usuke undivalele ngaphandle, uthi mandithini mna, Mike?”

Nosizwe: “When you suddenly shut me out, what do you expect me to do Mike?”

Mfundisi: “*(Ngesikhalo esikhulu, efixiza, egixa)”

Mfundisi: “(Crying uncontrollably)”

Nosizwe: “*Mike, ulilela ntoni? Kukuthini ukundivisa kabuhlungu olu hlobo? Siqhele ukwabelana nje ngentlungu, yetheni le uzithwalela wedwa?”

Nosizwe: “Mike why are you crying? Why are you hurting me like this? We usually share our pain with each other, what is it about the one that you want to carry by yourself?”

(Buzani 2016:12-13)

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Mfundisi: “*Ndicela ukuba ndedwa. (Kukhale umnxeba. Umfundisi ujamele uNosizwe, aphinde ujamele uNosizwe, aphinde ajonge umnxeba, angawucholi. Ukhale umnxeba ixesha alide)”

Mfundisi: “Can you leave me for a moment (The telephone rings, Michael stares at Nosizwe and then stares at the telephone. Don't pick it up, the phone rings for the longest time)”

(Buzani 2016:13)

Mfundisi seems to be pushing his wife away and shutting her out of his problems to a point that she reminds him that they usually share things together. As the partner or his wife Nosizwe is expected to understand him and the situation as it may be expected in

any kind of relationship, and she give him the space that he needs. Michael reaches a state of uncontrollable sadness and in that state, he still must understand him as his wife to understand him he says when asked what is wrong. He does not realise that this is pushing his wife away. Perhaps Michael is doing this unconsciously and is doing this as a coping mechanism other than a conscious decision to alienate his wife from his problems. Michael makes the following statement to his wife:

*Mfundisi: “*Ndinezizathu zam, ndilinde sithandwa sam ndiza kukuchazela yonke ingcombolo ngomso. Ndisothukile okwangoku”*

Mfundisi: “I have my own reasons, be patient with me my love, I will tell you everything tomorrow. I am still in shock for now”

(Buzani 2016:19)

This is an emphasis of the expectation that Nosizwe is given. Considering the theory of African feminism and Afrocentricity, the relationship that Nosizwe has with her husband can be looked at in two ways. There is a part of African feminism that advocates for complementarity between men and women, where there is a meaningful union between them (Nkealah, 2006:138). In the above extract of a conversation, Michael reaches a state of confusion and not being able to figure out how he is going to handle his secret that he has hidden from his wife. This calls for empathy from the reader, Michael uses a coping mechanism that he thinks is going to work for him not being individualistic. Individualism goes against the principles of marriages and Afrocentricity. The secret is now a threat to his marriage and family life. Michael not even considering the feelings of his son who is looking for him and had to grow up without a father. He is living on faith that his wife will accept his son as shown below:

*Mimi: “*Ucinga ukuba uMam’ umfundisi uza kuzithatha njani ezi ndaba? Cingisisa sidalwa seNkosi.”*

Mimi: “How do you think your wife is going to receive this news? Please think this through”

*Mfundisi: “*Uza kuzamkela xa kufika ixesha, andilindelanga mimangaliso Mimi.”*

Mfundisi: “She will accept the news when the time comes. I am not waiting for wonders to happen Mimi”

(Buzani 2016:92)

Michael wants to believe he knows his wife enough to assume that she will accept the news when the time comes. However, he knows that the decision is up to his wife, hence he says, “andilindelanga mimangaliso Mimi/ *I am not waiting for wonders to*

happen Mimi”

As the paper focuses on expectations and how they are challenged, this section focuses on the second form of expectation that Nosizwe is confronted with. This begins with Mimi’s words that are directed to Michael:



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*Mimi: *Xa le ntwana inganikwa bheyle, siza kuhlalela ntoni apha? Uthini*

ngoMam’uNkosikazi?...

Mimi: if this boy is not granted bail, what is the reason for us to stay here? What about your wife?...

(Buzani 2016:111)

In this statement Mimi seems to show a lot of concern for Michael’s wife. He seems to consider the fact that the puzzle is not complete without her input in the situation that they are in. Mimi is a family friend and seems to be steering Michael in the right direction with his questions. This can be considered a brotherhood – looking out for one’s best interest. The concept of looking after your brother forms part of the spirit of *ubuntu*. It is noticeable that a man is calling another man out on his behaviour which seems to suggest that men

can be allies of feminism or the fair treatment of women which means it is a way for black men and women to negotiate negative treatment in a way that reinforces their collaboration (Mathye, 2003:32).

This is what Mimi's question seems to suggest, because after this question Mike decides to write a letter to his wife. Although Mimi did the right thing, it is still not certain whether Michael is going to just be expecting his wife to understand him or he will be looking for complementarity and find a way in which his wife could understand the situation. He is telling her about the long-lost son that is in prison and how he has kept this a secret from her for so many years. He tells her everything about Phumeza being his daughter and the twin sister of Mphuzi the one who is in prison.

Mfundisi: “... Apho kwelo khaya ufike ndihleli noPhumeza, ndaxoka kuwe ndathi akanguye umntwana wam. Ndilapha ePitoli nje ndize kulanda iwele lakhe, eli lingundaba-mlonyeni ngobunqolobi, uMphumzi Mlonzi. Abazani Nodlomo, KwaPhumeza lowo akandazi ndinguyise. Lo yena ndize kuye akazi enotata ondim. Akamazi uPhumeza. Andazi ke xa ndingenakuyihamba nawe le ndlela ukuba ndakuba ngokabani na. Ndicela kuwe obobubele bakho, nalo mandla akho angummangaliso, undifunqulise lo mthwalo. Andikwazi kubuya ndize kujongana nawe Vumisa. Kungenjalo, ndiyacela ukuba ndithi xa ndibuya nalo mfana, ibe seyithambile intliziyo yakho, usamkele. Umyeni wakho okuthandayo wethu”*

Mfundisi: I was staying with Phumeza when you arrived in this home. I lied to you and said she is not my child. I am in Pretoria to fetch her twin who is famous for being killer. The twin I am here doesn't know me as his father, he doesn't even know Phumeza. I would be lost if I didn't walk this road with you. I ask that you help me carry this burden with me with your kindness and strength. I can't come back and face you Vumisa. I am also asking that you open your heart when we come back with this boy and welcome us. From your loving husband.

(Buzani 2016:116)

In the above letter, the noticeable line is the one that says “*ndiyacela ukuba ndithi xa ndibuya nalo mfana, ibe seyithambile intliziyo yakho, usamkele/ I am also asking that you open your heart when we come back with this boy and welcome us”. This might sound

like a plea, but it comes across as an expectation disguised as a plea. In this letter, Michael does explain what has been happening but, in his way, he realises that his wife is an important piece of the puzzle, and he needs her for things to go according to plan. However, when he says he cannot come back and face his wife he shows a selfish side as he states that he wishes that when he comes back, she will have accepted that things are the way they are. This is an expectation that may say that when Michael comes back, Nosizwe is not expected to enquire and ask about this secret of his which creates a sense of mistrust, a sense of not working together which is needed for Afrocentricity to work and be enhanced (Ntseane, 2011: 5).

In this above exchange Michael assumes that his wife will accept his apology, but it does not go that way. The letter ignites Nosizwe's anger, and she says:



Nosizwe: *“*Andizokuzibhaqa ndinexhaka—xhaka lonyana wabumini mna. Ndimazi ezimbo zinjani?”*

Nosizwe: I will not be accepting such an old man as a son. How am I to understand him?

Mfundisi: Bendiba sithethile nje wethu? Ufuna ndicele uxolo kangaphi?

(Buzani 2016:35)

Nosizwe decides to take some time off to prove to Michael that she deserves more respect. Nosizwe states:

Nosizwe: **...Yabona ke ndiza kukhe ndikushiye okwexeshana, khe ndigoduke ndiye kubantakwethu, ndiyokupholisa ingqondo yam. Ndiva shu, noko ngoku.*

Nosizwe: ... You see I am going to have to leave you for some time, go home to my brothers to cool my head off. I am feeling the heat now.

Mfundisi: **Akunako ukuyenza loo nto, Nosizwe.*

Mfundisi: You cannot do that Nosizwe

Nosizwe: **Uyazi Mike, indlela endikuthanda ngayo ingaphaya kokuqonda. Mhlawumbi yiloo nto ibangela ukuba undibone njengomntu ongenabuchopho. Uya kuthi ke xa ugqibile yonke into oyenzayo undixelele. Andikwazi kuhlala okwangoku.*

Nosizwe: You know what Mike? The way I love you is over the top. Maybe that is why you ended up seeing me as a person who does not have brain. Let me know when you are done with everything, I can't stay for now.

.....

Mfundisi: **Wabhubha unina waba bantwana, andiphosisi nkosikazi.*

Mfundisi: The mother of these children passed away a long time ago, I'm not lying to you.

Nosizwe: ** Andinakube ndiphinde ndiyikholelwe into ephuma kuloo mlonyana wakho. Uze uncede ungandifuni okwangoku. Sala kakuhle. Xa ndiva kum uya kubona ndingena. (Aphume uNosizwe)*

Nosizwe: I will not believe anything coming out of your mouth. Please don't look for now. Goodbye. I will come back when I feel like it. (Nosizwe leaves)

(Buzani 2016:136)

Nosizwe's actions are challenging patriarchy that expects her to turn a blind eye to her husband's infidelity. Nosizwe wanted to prove to her husband that she deserved to be loved for the sacrifices she has made for the Mpekana family. Her life has been dedicated to her husband and family and for that she was not going to accept the disrespect of infidelity. Generally, marriage comes with a lot of sacrifice for women and at times they sacrifice their mental health and values. Nosizwe's actions of taking time away from the marriage to deal with her pain is something that should be applauded. A woman takes a conscious decision to put herself first, and find what works for her, her consciousness and autonomy is advanced at this instance thus it became easier to make the decision to leave (Ewing, 1997:5) This decision takes courage, and it comes from a place of exhaustion and having had given so much to an institution just as Nosizwe has done in the institution of her marriage. It is very important to note that Nosizwe is not leaving Michael for good, but she gives him space to help him realise or decide whether he loves and respects her as much as she does him. This according to the Afrocentric feminism of

this paper is complementarity. As a woman, Nosizwe challenges the fact that her husband is shutting her out on very important issues, very importantly she is not leaving him for good. This is a way to challenge her husband to see the need for both to complement each other which means that they need to work together. Nozizwe asserts that:

*Nosizwe: *Khawuyeke ukundibona njengentsika yokosulela umkhunyu; khawuyeke ukundibona njengomagxa-makhulu wokuthwala iinzingo zakhe. Ukuba ubunokungena kum ngaphakathi ubone ukucikideka nobu ethe-ethe bentliziyo yam. Khawuyondle le ntliziyo ngothando. Ndicela ukuba ngenye imini ukhe undixelele nje ukuba uyandithanda. Nantso qha into eya kundiphilisa. Ndinovalelo ngathi uVuyelwa uvukile emangcwabeni, ngathi izingqi zakhe ziza kuvakala kungekudala.*

Nosizwe: Stop viewing me as a strong just to wipe your nose; stop viewing me as broad shouldered to just carry your issues. If you would see inside how weak and vulnerable my heart is, please feed this heart with love. Some days I need you to tell me that you love me, that is the only thing that will make me feel alive. I am anxious as if Vuyelwa has woken up from her grave, as if she is going to walk up here anytime.

(Buzani 2016:173)

The above lines are the last of Nosizwe's words to her husband. She is giving him reason why she is leaving him for a short time. This is very respectful on her part as she is showing Michael what he is supposed to be doing in terms of communication with her. She has spent her everyday life with Michael but in this instant, she is showing that she feels as though her everyday life experiences are not valued by her husband which is why she takes a chance to change that for her and for her children and even for her husband.

Phumeza

At the beginning of the story, Nosizwe who is the main character hints at the feud between their eldest daughter and her husband Michael by saying

Nosizwe: *“*De kube nini? Yintoni embi xa umntwana etshata umntu amthandayo? Ibala alithethi nto ngoku, uthandwa nguye nje.”*

Nosizwe: “Until when? What is wrong with the child marrying a person she loves? Skin colour does not mean anything at this point, she is in a relationship with him”

(Buzani 2016:10)

This is a statement that Nosizwe utters when her husband Michael refuses to speak to his daughter over the phone. Michael refuses to speak to Phumeza because he feels as though she is disobeying him by not listening to him. Patriarchy places Michael as the head of the family, whose decision must be followed and, in this case, he wants to decide who his daughter should marry. Phumeza goes against her father's wishes for a black son-in-law and marries a white man. Phumeza's defiance is in line with womanism which stipulates that women have a right to choose how they live their lives and with whom they settle down with. Womanism revolves around free will for women to make their own life choices and living with them (Ewing, 1997:5).

In the story, Phumeza is a goal driven woman who has her own business. Unlike many women, she is independent and can take care of herself financially, which is what Womanism promotes. As Phumeza and her husband work in the same industry, Jimmy has an expectation that when he wants to have a conversation with Phumeza he can have it even if it means disturbing her at her workplace as displayed in the following exchange:

Jimmy: *“*(Ebhekisa kumfo ohleli esitulweni sokuxelenga) Mhlekezi, ndiboleke lo sisi, ndiza kumbuyisela ngoku. Ubonile ukuba ixesha ngubani? Intsimbi yokuqala ibethile, ungakhathazeki.”*

Jimmy: "(Speaking to a client sitting on a chair) Sir, will you please lend me this lady, she will return in no time. Have you seen the time? It is one o'clock, don't worry"

Phumeza: **Hayi, Jimmy, akuzokuqhuba ngolo hlobo, uza kuqhwaletisa ishishini lam, tyhini! Undiqeshile lo mntu, yayeke ubungamelanga kwa ukuba ungene ndixakekile.*

Phumeza: No Jimmy, you can't go on like this because you are going to cripple my business. This person is using my services and you weren't even supposed to come in here while I am busy.

(Buzani 2016:26-27)

Phumeza's reply to Jimmy in the above exchange shows that she is defying the expectation that her husband has, and she is set on setting boundaries between their personal relationship and when it comes to their working relationship. This is very important in African feminism because a woman shows that she has a voice and she uses that voice to show that she wants to be respected (Nkealah, 2006:134).



The defying of the expectation works because Jimmy listens to what his wife said to him as he replies to her:

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Jimmy: *"*Ndicela uxolo, sithandwa, ndiza kulinda emotweni ke."*

Jimmy: "Please forgive me my love. I will wait for you in the car"

(Buzani 2016:27)

This says that there is partnership and understanding in this union. The understanding could be coming from the fact that they are both in the same field, they understand how things operate and Jimmy respects his wife and listens to her. This is the complementarity that is advocated by the Afrocentric feminism paradigm stated by this paper. A woman has a voice to state what she wants, what she will accept and what she will not accept - her boundaries and she has a partner who listens which shows complementarity.

Lastly, the expectation that Phumeza comes across from her father is then emphasised in the interaction that her husband has with the police captain. This adds on to the fact that the beliefs with which families live by at home are usually societal beliefs that people grow up to be socialised in. With this said Jimmy opens up about the love that he has for Phumeza and how his father-in-law does not approve of the relationship. This may be taken as a positive stance which is in support of the two genders working together towards a common goal. In the conversation below, Jimmy is voicing out his frustration to the police captain:

*Jimmy: *UPhumeza intombi le kaMike yinkosikazi yam. Asityani kakuhle tu nala ndoda. Ubonile nawe ukuba khange afune nokundijonga. Ndiyamthanda laa mntwana, Nogcazi.*

Jimmy: Phumeza, Mike's daughter is my wife. We misunderstand each other with that man. You saw for yourself that he didn't want to even look at me. I love that child Nongcazi.

*Kapt Nogcazi: *Yithi uyadlala, Jimmy, lusana oluya.*

Kapt Nogcazi: Tell me you are joking, she is a child

(Buzani 2016:109)

The issue that the police captain raises is the age difference between the two. It is evident that one of Michael's concerns for his daughter is the fact that there is a big age difference between Jimmy and his wife Phumeza. This is an expectation that society has, that a young woman cannot marry an older man. This is something that is not accepted by the community but Phumeza challenges this by sticking with her husband although she knows very well that the relationship jeopardises her relationship with her own father. It can be concluded that Phumeza is a strong, independent woman who challenges many norms that are set for women. She defies her father and chooses who she marries. She

has her own career and money and has a voice in her marriage. The writer should be applauded for presenting a strong character who does not get punished for her views.

Hlobo

Hlobo is the youngest daughter of Michael and Nosizwe, and she is studying at the University of Fort Hare. She decides to visit a boyfriend she only met once in Port Elizabeth. Their relationship at the start is a typical relationship between young people where the young woman is spoiled by the young man.

Hlobo: “(Ekhuza) Yintoni le? Monde! Imali engaka?”*

Hlobo: “(In shock) What is this? Monde! So much money?”

*Monde: “*Ndizakuqengqa, ndikugruzule de udikwe, uthi hayi ngokwakho sana.”*

Monde: “I am going to spoil you until you can’t take it anymore”


University of Fort Hare (Buzani 2016:38)
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In this extract, Hlobo is in shock because she is seeing an amount of money she probably has never seen before. As a young woman she probably has the idea that love means being given a whole lot of money by your partner, as this is the beginning of the relationship Hlobo does not show scepticism towards this huge amount of money that she is receiving from her boyfriend. She does not ask about it. For any woman that gets into a relationship, they always hope that they are going to be treated well and that includes being spoiled. Very importantly, a woman as young as Hlobo may get into a relationship because she is looking for a partnership in which they will be respectful towards each other and build a foundation where they will be able to complement each other. However, things take a swift turn around for Hlobo in her new relationship when her boyfriend

Monde shows aggressive behaviour towards her. Monde starts controlling Hlobo as shown in the following extract of their conversation:

*Hlobo: *Ndikhumbula ekhaya mna ngoku*

Hlobo: I miss home now

*Monde: *Ungandenzi ndikucenge kakhulu, kuba andikwazi. Ukuba ufuna ukuhamba nam kulungile... Vala umlomo ke ngoku ungabe uphinde uthethe*

Monde: Don't make me beg because I cannot. If you want to come with me then it is fine...Shut your mouth and don't say anything again.

*Hlobo: *Andifuni kuhamba namajit'akho mna.*

Hlobo: I don't want to go with you and your friends.

*Monde: *Mamela! Ndakukuqhwaba ngomva wempama. Uyeva? Ndithe, vala umlomo! Uvile? Ndigqibile ngoku. Phakama sihambe! Phakama! (Utsho emtshova ngesixhanti)*

Monde: Listen! I will give you a very warm slap. You hear me? I said shut up! You hear me? I'm done talking now. Stand up, we are going, get up! (While pushing her by her neck)

(Buzani 2016:139)

Hlobo visited her boyfriend for a short period of time and she was asked to stay a bit longer and he promised to take care of her. Considering that African feminism affirms a sense of partnership that woman desire from their male counterparts, a partnership which womanism uses to rather it lures them into accepting to live harmoniously with them by abandoning their self-perception as superior partners in the collective struggle for a better society (Peter, 2010).

It would be deemed a normal reaction for Hlobo to voice out that she is nostalgic and a reaction from an equal partner would be compassion which would be followed by plans that were needed to be made to make sure that Hlobo finds a way to contact home. However, Monde reveals another side of him which is oppressive to Hlobo's feelings. He instils a sense of fear in her by threatening to beat her up, this which has a potential of silencing her and being not confident enough to voice out how she feels in the long run.

As the interaction between these two progresses, Hlobo's expectations are then unravelled the interesting question is how she challenges them. The conversation takes the reader after Hlobo has had a beating from her boyfriend.

*Hlobo: *Ndifuna nje oku kokuba ndiye kwiX-ray, iyaqaqamba le ngalo ngathi yaphukile*

Hlobo: I just want to go to the X-ray, my arm is painful, I think it's broken

*Monde: *Uza kuthi utheni phaya? Ufuna ukundibambisa?*

Monde: What are you going to say happened. Do you want me to get arrested?

*Hlobo: *Soze ndiyiphathe into yokuba undibethile, ndiyathembisa. Ndiza kuthi bendisilwa nootsotsi, okanye ndithi ndifumene ingozi yemoto.*

Hlobo: I will not even mention that you hit me, I promise. I will say that I was fighting with thugs, or say that I was involved in a car accident.

*Monde: *Siza kuvuka kusasa siye, yiza ebhedini maan (Esebeza ngathi uyoyika)*

Monde: We will go tomorrow morning. Now come to bed (Whispering as though scared)

*Hlobo: *Andizi kulunga xa silele kunye ndiyathunukala. Ndiza kulala apha esofeni le ngalo ndiyixhomile.*

Hlobo: I won't be able if we sleep together. I will sleep on the couch so that I can hang my arm.

*Monde: *Uyabona ke iinkani zakho ukuba zikubeke phi? Mna andiyifuni icherry yam ithethe ndithetha, uyaziva ngoku ufuna ndithini? Andikuniki imali?*

Monde: Do you see where your stubbornness has put you? I don't my girlfriend to speak while I am speaking, what do you want me to say now? Do I not give you money?

*Hlobo: *Uyandinika*

Hlobo: You do

*Monde: *Ungabe uphinde ke undingxolele ngokugoduka mna. Ndakukucima igama, ndiyakuxelela! Kufuneka simkile apha ekuseni*

Monde: Don't ever tell me about going home again. I will kill you; I tell you! We must leave this place in the morning.

(Buzani 2016:153)

Abuse be it emotion or physical is something that is rampant in South Africa and the writer should be commended for tackling the issue. Hlobo is an intelligent girl with a bright future ahead of her, but she is trading that for immediate benefit, a boyfriend with a lot of money. Hlobo stays in the relationship despite seeing all the red flags of aggression. Her staying is giving the boyfriend to do more and worse each time, until he breaks her arm. This is

otherwise known as Conditioning or in more formal terms Operant conditioning which is a behaviour controlled by consequences, which refers in this instant to an expectation of a certain reaction for every action that in this case Hlobo takes (Cerutti, & Staddon, 2003: 116). When Hlobo's arm is broken, and she requests to be accompanied to a doctor and Monde only does it upon her request. His failure to show compassion when she is in pain shows that he self-centred abuser. The writer is using this story to warn young girls to focus on their studies and not chase after easy money.

The story does not end there; Monde asks Hlobo what she is going to say happened to her when she gets to doctor. He continues to manipulate Hlobo to lie to officials about how she got hurt, provibg that he knows that what he is doing is wrong. He manipulates Hlobo into thinking that the beating is her fault. Monde keeps bringing up the idea that he is giving Hlobo whatever she wants then she is expected to do and follow all the rles that Monde sets for her or there will be consequences.

What is visible in this relationship is that Hlobo does not challenge any of the things that Monde says. She does not challenge any of the things that are expected of her by Monde. It may be because Hlobo is in a constant state of fear. Hlobo is saved by the system at the end. When she is in deep trouble, she gets rescued by police officers who arrest Monde:

*Polisa 2: *Faka amahandibhoyi sicaka. Kunini sikufuna mgewu-ndini! (Esotha uHlobo ngetotshi) Ungowaphi wena? Heyi! Utheni ebusweni? Ubethwe ngubani? Ungowaphi ntombazana? Khangela indlela omncinci ngayo. Nihamba nizifohla nje kwaba tsotsi? Ukubethe kancinci, yiza! Nantsiya iveni, khwela. Hamba!!!*

Police 2: Put handcuffs on him. We have been looking for you, you big thug. (Shining a torch on Hlobo) Where are you from? Hey! What happened to your face? Who hit you? Where are you from young girl? Look at how young you

are. You go around dating these thugs. He should have hit you hard, come! There is the van, go.

*Polisa 1: *Siyakubamba ngoku ndoda. Yiza*

Police 1: We are arresting you now man. Come!

*Monde: *Mkhululeni noko yena Mhlekezi, bambani mna. Mseni ke esibhedlele, ndithe kuni ndiyaleqisa.*

Monde: Please let her go sir. Arrest me. Take her to the hospital, I said to you I am in a hurry.

(Buzani 2016:156)

The above interaction between Monde and the police is an addition to the work that the Afrocentric paradigm brings forth (Khokholkova, 2016:117) which is a sense of agency and service at the centre of this paradigm. The police are working to better the community by arresting criminals such as Monde. The police represent communal service and a safer environment for all.

5.3.4 Type of Literature

The exploration of the characters in the drama book *Imida* provides the idea that the book is a Reformist African Feminist literature (Arndt, 2002:33). The reason this book can be classified into this type of literature is because every male character that is mentioned from the analysis above can be criticised individually according to his actions. This may be because the men are socialised differently and thus their reaction to females is different. Secondly, the reason it can be classified as a reformist feminist literature is because the book is a critical piece of how men operate in society individually from their own socialisation which is a foundation of a patriarchal society.

Michael is criticised for not noticing or taking into consideration his wife's feelings about his secret. He is challenged by his wife when she decides that she is going to leave the marriage for some time until he came to his senses, and he eventually changes his behaviour. The same thing happens to Jimmy who is Phumeza's husband, He is the one

who quickly notices that his behaviours is not appropriate. He is the one who continues to show society that he will stay with his wife no matter what which is a sense of reform on its own. Lastly, the text introduces the reader to Monde who is abusive which needs external forces such as the police to stop him. It is important to note that the drama book has a happy ending for all the characters which can be alluded to the fact that the job of the reformist feminist literature is to create a space where characters are given a chance to try new ways in which they will make their choices.

In summary, it can be said that the three women in this book, in particular the mother and Phumeza the oldest daughter seem to have the power to challenge the expectations that they come across. Hlobo had her difficulties but through the challenges that she faces, she is saved by the community of police. Thus, the theory of African feminism and Afrocentricity are working well with the actions of the characters in this book as it can be discovered that Nosizwe chooses herself for some time until she is ready to go back to her married life when she feels that her husband is going to work hand in hand with her which is explained as complementarity by Womanism and Afrocentricity. Hlobo's saved life is also explained by the concept of Afrocentricity as her life is saved by the police.

5.4 Conclusion

The two books provide this chapter with four women who face different challenges in life in their relations with their husbands, boyfriends and fathers. In both novels, patriarchy is a dominating factor, with men expecting to rule or make decisions for women. An example is Linomtha's boyfriend who opts for abortion and leave her when she refuses to get an abortion. Linomtha also suffers the wrath of the school system as she is expelled for being pregnant and yet Menzi who impregnated her is not.

Hlobo and Phumeza experience emotional and physical abuse at the hands of men who should love and protect them. The female writers depict strong women who not only survive abuse, but challenge norms. For example, Phumeza's mom taking time for herself after her husband cheats. Linomtha challenges the school for not expelling Menzi as he was as responsible as she was for the pregnancy.

In the two stories, women skilfully challenge the gender and societal experiences that they go through. A lot of what is visible is their want for cooperation and complementarity from the opposite gender as in the case of Nosizwe to her husband, as in the case of Linomtha when she challenges the school to treat girl children the same way they treat boy children when it comes to pregnancy. Hlobo tries by all means to find ways that are going to make her get out and get away from her boyfriend and is eventually saved by the community. The next chapter provides a summary of the study and conclusions.



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CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This research has taken a critical stance of gender norm that are imposed on the female gender by looking at isiXhosa literature written by women. This is to see how they portray their female protagonists to challenge these gender expectations that they come across in the different institutions of society. The Afrocentric paradigm which encompasses African feminism were both used to explain the behaviour which is the way the female protagonists challenged the gender norms presented to them.

6.2 Thesis summary

The main aim of the study as stated in Chapter 1, is to examine post liberation isiXhosa prose from the lens of women, focusing on how they portray women and how women use non-conformity to challenge gender roles. and how they portray their female protagonists. The three objectives of this study which are based on the main aim looked at how the female characters were depicted in the prose, the gender roles that were presented for the women and lastly how the female characters were challenging and not conforming to these gender roles.

The main findings of this research project are found in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. After the analysis of the literature in these chapters, it is found that women show courage when it comes to challenging the expected gender norms, for example in Chapter 3, Mayosi in her book *Iqhina lomtshato* portrays the character of Sindiswa as being not sure about when and if Skhungo her high school lover will ever return from exile and that makes her choose to continue the relationship started with Maxhwele. The continuous choice of dating Maxhwele by Sindiswa while she knows that she is still in love with her high school sweetheart is explained better by the concept of womanism because Sindiswa seems to be putting her needs first which are education and getting a job, both of these are what Maxhwele afforded her. The concept of Womanism says that women should be allowed to put their needs first even if they are not supported by the dominant culture.

Throughout the story Sindiswa prioritises her needs where she sticks to dating Skhungo in secret and continues lying to Maxhwele about her pregnancy since she knows she is impregnated by Skhungo. This would get her called out by society because her prioritisation of her needs is not according to the African feminism in line with the primary

needs of the isiXhosa society. By this it means exploring two relationships by a woman has always been a taboo in the African society. Taking note of all these actions that Sindiswa does, in a typical African society it could be said that all her actions are a disgrace, they don't make her a woman, that she is shaming her family, that she is not a real woman or respected woman. All this is not agreed upon by the African feminism theory as what Sindiswa did is the ultimate challenge to gender norms, more specifically how women are supposed to act and carry themselves when it comes to relationships.

In the second part of chapter three, Teleni in her book *Nyana nank'unyoko* portrays the character of Balise who falls pregnant and decides to keep the pregnancy, Balise falls pregnant out of wedlock which is an action that is outside of the societal expectations in the isiXhosa culture, so she has defied an expectation or plans that maybe her parents have had for her which is marriage after school. She goes and asks Thamsanqa, her boyfriend for help but Thamsanqa is rude towards her telling her where to get off.

Nomawonga her mother, threatens Balise because she is feeling pressure from her husband who has put the blame on her. This is unfair to Nomawonga because raising a child to have awareness and take responsibility should be what both parents do. Langa, her husband is distancing himself from the teachings that his daughter carries with her. According to the Reformist feminist theory, Nomawonga, because of the way she has personally been socialised in her marriage she now acts and possesses the criticised aspects of her husband because she puts Balise in a corner and kind of dictates and implies to her that she needs to have an abortion in order for her to stay at her home or else she must leave.

In this drama this could highlight the change of times which is what the study is about. The young women are able to hold their own and stand up for themselves while older women such as Nomawonga are still controlled by the patriarchal structures in society. This is evident when Balise refuses to listen to her mothers' suggestion about getting rid of the pregnancy because she chooses to take responsibility rather than being pressured into doing something that does not coincide with her.

Chapter four begins with Ntwana's drama book titled *Akwaba* where the character of Phumela makes a conscious decision to stay with her husband after discovering that she got HIV from him which is a challenge they face in the book. She shows the strength and the independence that she possessed when she was still living with her grandmother as a young girl when she makes the choice of staying with her husband. By being her and her husband's strength, she is not particularly challenging gender norms but rather societal norms that come with a stigma saying people with HIV cannot be together or live long or have a happy marriage because Phumela is adamant that she is going to live her life with her husband and continue creating a happy home. "Ukubambisana" which can be loosely translated as holding on to each other and working together is a very important concept that is shown by this couple when they decide that they are going to hold on to each other and be each other's strength.

The decision that Phumela and her husband take, to stay together can be explained by the African feminism theory as Womanism as proposed by Ogunyemi together with the Afrocentric paradigm which suggests that in Phumela and khanya's situation, the institution of marriage puts emphasis on the fact that there is much growth of when men and women work together and form relationships where there is no exclusion of one

gender or the other gender looking to be more powerful than the other which is usually a practise that males do in the relationships from the concept of being the head of the household. This is supported by Nkealah (2006:138) when quoting Ogunyemi saying Ogunyemi as stating that 'womanism believes in the freedom and independence of women like feminism; unlike feminism, it wants meaningful union between men and women and will wait patiently for men to change their sexist stance'. Ogunyemi's emphasis seems to be that womanism, unlike radical feminism, seeks to create a space in which women and men work together in partnership rather than one in which women exercise control to the exclusion of men.

Phindiswa another important character experiences less harmony than Phumela as she confirms that she was subjected to harassment by her inlaws when she got news that she was HIV positive and her husband Mthuthuzeli through shock reacts by blaming her and leaving her while she is pregnant, this could have easily given her stress to a point where she may have lost her child. What is prominent here is that no one wanted to listen to Phindiswa's side which is isolation to a certain extent. This is a loss of family and the marriage institution crumbles. She is expected together with everything to raise a child by herself and take care of the child and provide everything for it, this all could have driven her to a state of depression and feelings of unworthy and low self-esteem. She however defies this all by joining a support group.

Joining the support group essentially means that Phindiswa gains a new family which entails support as highlighted by the Afrocentric paradigm which introduces a sense of community that comes together in support of one another. This support group becomes a place where Phindiswa will learn to be conscious about her life choices as she is going

to be raising another person by herself. This consciousness is what the Afrocentric paradigm advocates for, and the fact that it is influenced by the community around a person which Phindiswa has found in the support group.

The second part of chapter four introduces the character of Thandiwe in Buzani's *Hamba nam ndipheleke*, she has to go through the expectations of her mother-in-law and fight through escaping to look for her husband. It is as if a woman cannot live her life without an expectation thus, she has to put up a fight against a certain system or institution in order to assert that she wants to live a life of autonomy. Thandiwe experiences the generosity that is possessed by African people towards one another when she gets taken in by Mr and Mrs Mpini. It is also shown in the fact that people who do not know each other can spark up and have a full-blown conversation and not feel like they are imposing on each other which is what is happening between Mhizana and the older woman she meets on a train. She shares food with her, she gets words of encouragement from her.

However, in the book, there is a diverse group of female characters. Such as MamThembu who can be seen as an unfavourable character that is used by the writer to reveal a feminist point. Because MamThembu, is portrayed as a physical and emotional abuser which for a female character is unfavourable as that is mostly given to male characters. MamThembu challenges the concept of conformity by practising power over her man, Shuta. What this book has in common with the books in chapter three is the difference in the approach to the expectations that the older generation of women have in comparison to the younger women, for example the character of Noklentyi has been socialised to endure negative treatment from her husband although she eventually leaves

and chooses herself , she was not immediate in her reaction like Thandiwe was when she decided to leave her mother in law for Cape Town to look for her husband.

Chapter five focused on the book titled *Uzenzile akakhalelwa* by Madolo where the character of Linomtha's parents refuse to take care of her child so that she can go back to school-she gives in and accepts that she is not going to be studying as a result leaves school completely to go and work for her child until she decides to study part-time. She however does not stop there; she decides to write a letter to her school questioning how they have disadvantaged her but not the boy who impregnated her. This is a challenge by Linomtha to the school as she realises that the same disadvantage may happen to another girl child thus, she decides to question it.

When it is discovered that Linomtha is pregnant, she faces rejection from a lot of people. Firstly, when her family goes to claim damages for her pregnancy from Menzi's family they are told that Linomtha was the one who may have assumed a permanent place of residence in another man's house implying that she may have wanted to get pregnant or was as much a part of it as Menzi was. Thus, she does not deserve to be paid damages for. When complementary is spoken of, men and women in society could also take it in this situation as a way to assert that complementary is expected by society from the side of females as well. This means that Menzi's father could be right by saying that Linomtha assumed duties of being a resident in his house, she willingly stayed with Menzi in his home and when she did she knew of the consequences thus she is in no position to claim that she was damaged which is why the meeting was concluded that she was not going to be paid for falling pregnant. This in a nutshell means that the Afrocentric paradigm has

the courage to challenge societal and cultural expectations to ensure that there is fairness in society.

The last book looked at in this research is Buzani's *Imida*. The reader is introduced to the character of Nosizwe who goes through challenges with her husband which shows a relationship that can be looked at in two ways. Nosizwe realises that she needs to take some time off from her marriage to prove to Michael that she deserves more respect meaning she is not experiencing complementarity.

Thus, it could be said that when she decides to take the above action, she is challenging a norm that says as a woman you must hold on to your marriage. When a person holds on to an idea of marriage sometimes, they do that while sacrificing their mental health or values. Thus, in this instance Nosizwe according to the African feminism's womanism decides that for a moment she is going to put herself first, this is what the womanism strives to achieve. A woman takes a conscious decision to put herself first, and find what works for her, her consciousness and autonomy is advanced at this instance thus it became easier to make the decision to leave (Ewing, 1997:5) this decision takes courage, and it comes from a place of exhaustion and having had given so much on an institution just as Nosizwe has done in the institution of her marriage. It is very important to note that Nosizwe is not leaving Michael for good, but she gives him space to help him realise or decide of whether he loves and respects her as much as she does him. This according to the Afrocentric feminism of this paper is complementarity. As a woman, Nosizwe challenges the fact that her husband is shutting her out on very important issues, very importantly she is not leaving him for good. This is a way to challenge her husband to see the need for both to complement each other which means that they need to work together.

The second female focused on is Phumeza's who is lucky to experience a sense of partnership and understanding in her marriage. The understanding could be coming from the fact that they are both in the same field, they understand how things operate and Jimmy respects his wife and listens to her. This is the complementarity that is advocated by the Afrocentric feminism paradigm stated by this paper. A woman has a voice to state what she wants, what she will accept and what she will not accept-her boundaries and she has a partner who listens which shows complementarity.

Lastly, the expectation that Phumeza comes across from her father is then emphasised in the interaction that her husband has with the police captain. This adds on to the fact that the beliefs with which families live by at home are usually societal beliefs that people grow up to be socialised in. With this said Jimmy opens up about the love that he has for Phumeza and how his father-in-law does not approve of the relationship. This may be taken as a positive stance which is in support of the two genders working together towards a common goal.

This is an expectation that society has, that a young woman cannot marry an older man. This is something that is not accepted by the community but Phumeza challenges this by sticking with her husband although she knows very well that the relationship jeopardises her relationship with her own father. Thus, it can be concluded that Phumeza's life as a character revolves around challenging the stereotypes of marrying a person of colour who is older than her. This challenges her relationship with her father who still believes that her daughter is ought to listen to her with her life choices. Phumeza sticks by her choices and defies all these expectations and live happily.

6.3 Type of Literature

All the books are from the post liberation period and five out the six books fall under the Reformist-Feminist literature approach. This type of feminist literature supports the actions of the female protagonists. The other reason for the classification of the six literature books as reformist feminist literature is because every male character that is mentioned from the analysis can be criticized individually according to his actions and not as part of a group. This may be because the men are socialised differently and thus their reaction to females is different. Also, the books are a critical piece of how men operate in society individually from their own socialisation which is a foundation of a patriarchal society. Although males are criticised in the literature however it does not criticise men harshly instead a proposal is lay forth of the way that people, or rather how men and women can find a way to love each other through the challenges they face especially in the institution of marriage.



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Although there is one book that still practises the Radical Feminist literature approach but seeing as though it is the only one out of the six literature books means that the working together of both males and females in the isiXhosa or African society is a very prominent thing to consider moving forward. In terms of the theory that is used by this study, it could be said that most of the actions that females take are explained very well by the theory of African feminism and Afrocentricity because the Afrocentric paradigm is very central to the isiXhosa culture, and it then fuels the theory of African feminism when it comes to the language and actions of the female protagonists.

6.3 Concluding remarks

What makes this research useful is analysing six books that are written by women means that women are writing themselves into history which is what is important as women want their everyday experiences to be documented. Women know and are aware of who they are and who they thrive to be and who better to document this than women themselves. This study attempted to highlight the influence of the generational gap between the protagonists and how they react to certain structures of society. This is important because it may put forward the idea to the other writers or studies of how the future female should behave in order to assert herself. The study is also useful because it pays tribute to the elevation of the voices and experiences of women. It also contributes to the balance of how women and men are portrayed in literature which influences the recommendations that can be made.



Perhaps what can be recommended for future work when it comes to literature in general, and the studies that are still yet to be done is that female writers in their writings need to always put women at the centre and not as respondents of certain structures and institutions. This means that when a study is done, it will focus solely on the actions of the females as the stories revolve around them. Also, when women write their female characters there is need for positive representation, in that way the stereotypical representation of women in literature will then not be paid much attention to as women are leading the way on how women should be positively portrayed in literature.

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